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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, March 3, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. I am sorry to announce the passing of Tom Butters.

Tom Butters, a long-time Northerner, was first elected to the NWT Legislature in 1970. From 1970 to 1975 he served as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Western Arctic and in 1975 as MLA for Inuvik until his retirement in 1991. In 1994 Tom was made a member of the Order of Canada. Tom is the longest serving Member of the Legislative Assembly. Although Tom lived in British Columbia in his final years, he is fondly remembered by many people in the Mackenzie Delta where he and his wife, Peg, raised their family.

Tom was predeceased by his wife, Margaret "Peg" Butters, and his son Alan Butters. He leaves to mourn children Christine Cross, John; Ian Butters, Vina; and Meg Innes, Alan; and five grandchildren.

Thank you, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 170-17(5):
REAPPOINTMENT OF
COMMISSIONER TUCCARO

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to advise Members of the Legislative Assembly that the Honourable George Tuccaro, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, has been reappointed to his position for another one-year term.

---Applause

The appointment was announced by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, last week. Commissioner Tuccaro's second term will begin on May 11, 2015, and end on May 10, 2016.

The role and relationship of the Commissioner's Office and the Government of the Northwest

Territories has always been a close one. Only 30 years ago the Commissioner would have been directly involved in the day-to-day running of government and would have had many of the same responsibilities the Premier now has.

As our people and territory have evolved, so has our political system. Today elected representatives serving the people of the Northwest Territories have the responsibility for the daily direction and control of the government.

At the same time, the role of the Commissioner has evolved into a more ceremonial and symbolic office similar to that of a provincial lieutenant governor. In this role, the Commissioner symbolizes and expresses the values and aspirations of all residents of the Northwest Territories. In representing the interests we all share, the Commissioner is a powerful symbol of the things that unite us as Northerners.

The Commissioner is also an important symbol of our belief in our democratic institutions of government, both in Canada and the Northwest Territories. Through his relationship with the Governor General, Lieutenant Governors and other Commissioners, the Commissioner symbolizes our participation in the Canadian federation.

The demands of being Commissioner require a person with unique characteristics. To represent and reflect their interests, the Commissioner needs to know and be in touch with people all across the Northwest Territories. A Commissioner needs dignity and tact to help foster respect for the institutions of government, despite political controversy and human error. Also, a Commissioner needs selflessness to rise above personal interest and represent the interests of all Northwest Territories residents.

I think everyone will agree that Mr. George Tuccaro has demonstrated all those characteristics in private life and in his term as Commissioner. Mr. Tuccaro is well known across the North, both as a broadcaster and through his travels. His support for Northern arts and culture is well known. He has served on the NWT Arts Council, promoted Aboriginal language programming at CBC North, served on the Legislative Assembly's Cultural Enhancement Committee and been involved in many cultural

events throughout the years. His more recent work before becoming Commissioner, involving issues like healthy lifestyles, drug and alcohol abuse prevention and residential schools, proved that he is still in touch with the issues that affect so many Northerners today.

Mr. Speaker, it has been an honour to have worked with Mr. Tuccaro during his term as Commissioner. He is traveling in the Mackenzie Delta this week promoting the anniversary of the Canadian flag, but I would like to invite all Members to join me in congratulating him on his reappointment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 171-17(5):
WEAVING OUR WISDOM GATHERING –
MARCH 3-5, 2015

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services is pursuing the 17th Legislative Assembly's goal of healthy, educated people by investing in prevention, education awareness and early childhood development. By working in partnership with community and Aboriginal governments, non-governmental organizations, health professionals and other stakeholders we can achieve our vision of best health, best care, for a better future.

To help all partners align their efforts, we are holding a Territorial Wellness Gathering from March 3rd to 5th at the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife. We are partnering with the NWT Association of Communities to host this event, and I would like to thank the association for their assistance.

Community leaders, elders, and youth from all 33 communities will come together, along with representatives of Aboriginal governments and non-governmental organizations, staff from the health and social services authorities, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Health Canada to take part in the Gathering.

Participants will learn about how social determinants and economic factors influence people's health and explore how we can work together to improve the overall well-being of our residents. The gathering will focus on three themes: Closing the Gap; Healthy People and Communities; and Building Stronger Families.

It will be informative and inspirational, with compelling presentations from prominent experts. It will provide opportunities for participants to actively engage on the three themes and share ideas on how they can improve residents' quality of life. It offers individuals and organizations a venue to learn from each other, share their wisdom and

exchange knowledge on best practices that enhance the well-being of our communities.

The sessions will also be available through live webcast so that all residents have the opportunity to hear these presentations.

A number of key speakers from across Canada will be attending the gathering, along with our own local experts and residents. They will share their wisdom and stories and will be a valuable resource that participants can learn from.

I look forward to hearing from respected professors, researchers and physicians such as Dr. Janet Smylie, one of the first Metis doctors in Canada, and Dr. Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, there are many factors that negatively influence the health and well-being of our residents. These include struggles with income, education, early childhood development, food insecurity and housing. Other issues include mental health, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, diabetes and even the impacts of climate change.

The gathering will offer participants an opportunity for open and honest dialogue about these issues and help foster awareness and understanding and will give participants ideas for addressing issues in their communities. It will also provide information and real life experiences from Northerners on successful efforts to improve the well-being of our residents.

Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories have an increased burden of chronic disease and the trends will continue to worsen unless we intervene. We know that better promotion of healthy lifestyles is one of the keys to improving this situation.

Because so many NWT residents are Aboriginal, especially in the smaller communities, improving the health status of the Aboriginal population is one way the Department of Health and Social Services is working to accomplish our goals.

We continue to develop effective, culturally-appropriate prevention and promotion programs and work with our health centres to create a welcoming environment where Aboriginal people feel respected and supported. The Northwest Territories has an opportunity to become a leader in culturally-sensitive approaches to care.

Improving the health of all NWT residents will require the cooperation and effort of many groups and organizations, Mr. Speaker. We need to continue to develop strong partnerships with community and Aboriginal governments, non-governmental organizations and health and social service providers to form an integrated approach in order to have a collective impact.

This is why having events like the Territorial Wellness Gathering is important. We hope that from the gathering we can collectively develop solutions that give residents greater opportunity to enjoy the benefits of healthy lifestyles.

Mr. Speaker, exchanging information and finding new, innovative ways to address the social and economic factors that negatively influence our residents' well-being will help us achieve our goal of having sustainable, vibrant, safe communities.

This gathering also moves towards achieving our commitments in the GNWT Anti-Poverty Action Plan, Early Childhood Development Action Plan and Pathways to Wellness: An Updated Action Plan for Addictions and Mental Health.

By strengthening our partnerships and weaving together our collective wisdom, we will realize our vision of best health, best care, for a better future. I look forward to sharing the findings from the gathering with my colleagues in this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 172-17(5):
MACKENZIE RIVER NAMES

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has approved five traditional Aboriginal names for the Mackenzie River under the NWT Geographical and Community Names Policy.

As the department responsible for community and geographical names in the Northwest Territories, we place a special emphasis on traditional Aboriginal geographical names as they are important to the culture, history and languages of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie River is the largest and longest river system in Canada and continues to serve as a transportation corridor. It provides key support to communities along its length, while serving to foster economic development. In this way, like a strand of sinew, it ties the Northwest Territories together. The Mackenzie River is one of our most important geographical features and helps to define the Northwest Territories' place in Canada.

In 1984 the Geographical Names Board of Canada declared the Mackenzie River a geographical feature of pan-Canadian significance in recognition of its historical importance and prominent place in the Canadian landscape. With that decision, both the French and English names for the Mackenzie River became official. Previously, only the English place name was an official name.

Through the NWT's Geographical and Community Names Policy, we have the ability to also make the traditional names for geographical features official to assure their cultural continuity. In accordance with this, the five Aboriginal names for the Mackenzie River are now approved and join the English and French versions as official names.

The Aboriginal names are:

- Kuukpak, the Inuvialuktun name;
- Nagwichoonjik, the Gwich'in name;
- Deho, the North Slavey name;
- Dehcho, the South Slavey name; and
- Grande Rivière, the Michif name.

All of the Aboriginal names translate as a variation of "big" or "great" river, underscoring its importance as a geographical feature.

Mr. Speaker, now that the Aboriginal names for the Mackenzie River have been recognized, an elder from any community along its length can stand on its bank and tell his or her grandchildren that their name for the river is known by all. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
STATUS OF REGIONAL LAND
AND WATER BOARDS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that the Northwest Territories three regional land and water boards as well as the Mackenzie Valley superboard have been prominent in the news these past three days.

Just this past Friday, on February 27th, the NWT Supreme Court granted an injunction requested by the Tlicho Government. This injunction effectively stops, for now, the elimination of the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board and the launch of the new superboard, which is supposed to take place effective April 1st.

What catches my attention is that the court's decision doesn't only affect the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board because the superboard would have replaced the Wek'eezhii as well as the Sahtu and Gwich'in boards. All three will now continue until the Tlicho case is decided.

Recently, the Sahtu Secretariat also filed a case to maintain the Sahtu Land and Water Board. The outcome of these cases will now have a significant impact on how land and water are managed in the Northwest Territories, particularly on how First Nations engage on decisions respecting their

traditional lands. For example, the Gwich'in First Nation currently nominates two of the four positions on the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, with all four members nominating the chair. Under the new superboard, they would nominate just one person of 10 without a guaranteed spot on proposed three-person panels to hear new applications.

Later I'll have questions for the Premier about the status of the Gwich'in Land and Water Board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DAYCARE INSPECTION REPORTS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Alberta, Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia, information about daycare inspections is posted online. Parents and the broader public in those jurisdictions can freely scrutinize whether a daycare facility is in good standing with government regulations.

CBC recently filed an access to information request for five years' worth of child care inspection reports in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment put a \$3,000 price tag on retrieving these records. When CBC modified the request, asking for only records since 2012, the cost was lowered to \$1,700. Sadly, the government decided to put a hefty price tag on information that is vital to public interest, and a bit of a back-story will demonstrate just how grievous that is.

Since 2010 the department has been under fire from the Auditor General on daycare inspections. By law, the government is required to inspect facilities annually, but the AG found long gaps between inspections. For up to half of the facilities, the government wasn't keeping track of compliance, and in response to the AG findings, the department promised to inspect facilities annually.

In 2012 the AG followed up and once again the department was given an unsatisfactory grade. The reason was appalling. The department had managed to bring inspections nearly up to date but by only glossing over major violations. Things like blocked fire exits, electrical outlets left uncovered and chemicals within reach of small children. The Auditor General was so concerned that she ceased the audit and sent a letter directly to the deputy minister for immediate action. To this day we are still following up on many issues of this audit and are still concerned at gaps in our system.

About 70 percent of our child-bearing Canadian women are employed in the workforce. Their families' needs for high-quality daycare facilities cannot be overstated. However, if our jurisdiction can't even meet minimum standards, what hopes

do we have of providing our youngsters with safe, healthy and stimulating care?

I will have questions later today for the Minister involved. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MED-RESPONSE CALL CENTRE SERVICES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Early in February of this year I spoke in this House about the new provider for the medevac contract and questioned the Minister of Health and Social Services about how this will benefit those in small and remote communities. At that time the Minister spoke about contract guarantees of two hours to get to a community and the upcoming implementation of the new Med-Response program.

Last week the Minister of Health and Social Services advised this House that the Med-Response call centre is officially open and ready for business. Just to recap, this is a system that will give all health centres in all the communities a one call direct access for emergency clinical support and to coordinate expediting of medevacs.

I am especially interested in how they will assess patients and dispatch medevac flights quickly when needed. I have had several failings in my riding over the past years because quick and critical dispatch medevacs never happened.

I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services during question period about how exactly residents in small and remote communities benefit from the new Med-Response system. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER HEALTH CENTRE MAINTENANCE SERVICES

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you well know, we have a new health centre going into Hay River. We're hoping later this year that it will be open, and it looks like it might even be a bit ahead of schedule.

One of the situations with the new health centre that we've been hearing rumours about for the last year is maintenance staffing may change. With the current health system, we have a hospital and we have our own maintenance crew that takes care of all the maintenance in the facility, takes care of room temperatures and any medical equipment that needs to be adjusted or repaired is done by that maintenance crew. The majority of the snow removal is done by that maintenance crew several

times a day. It's a high-demand, highly necessary service that we get at our authority.

About a year ago my colleague and I from Hay River started hearing rumours that Public Works and Services want to take over the maintenance of the new health centre. I guess we have some concerns on how that's going to roll out. We've been asking both the Ministers of Health and Public Works what the plan is going forward on this maintenance. We continue not to get any answers on it. We're continuing to not get any direction.

The maintenance people who currently work there are a hardworking group, and they need to hear what the plan is going forward. These people have lives; they have families that are dependent on their employment situation. They want to know exactly what's going to happen in the future.

We also know that we need that high maintenance. We need that service immediately. We don't want to have to put in a request to Public Works and Services and wait for three days to get a response, or even a day later. Some of this stuff has to deal with clinical response time and needs to be immediate. We need to have staffing in the health centre directly for maintenance.

I will have questions for both the Ministers of Health and Public Works and Services later, to ask about where we're going for maintenance, and we need these answers sooner than later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR TULITA YOUTH INITIATIVES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning a youth from Tulita called and said that they are organizing themselves. The youth was talking about the challenging times they're having in the community and that they are working on various program initiatives to get out on the land. The youth are now starting to see the benefits of going out on the land, learning about their way of life and just to get out to certain areas around Tulita.

Also, the youth in Norman Wells are also finding it difficult to meet some of today's challenges with the issues they have to deal with. Later in life, if they don't take care of those issues, it will show up in our health system, in our correctional system and maybe in our education system.

The youth are looking for a place where they could have a building, especially in Norman Wells, where there is a lot of interest in having the youth get together to learn training in school, learn sports and, as I talked about the other day, education. The people want to help the youth, but they need to get together and get the partnerships and see what

type of support can be given to the youth through the partnerships and through the programs.

I want to say this because the youth are asking for help, and sometimes we're so busy in life that we forget that they are watching us as leaders and seeing what we can produce for them in the small communities by working for them. More importantly, I guess, I take it from the youth in Tulita that sometimes we need to show the youth how to organize themselves and get something that they really need.

I'll be asking questions later on, to the appropriate Minister, on programs and skills that they can help with the youth in the Sahtu communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF TWIN FALLS TOURISM AMBASSADOR DOUG LAMALICE

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As you drive into the Northwest Territories along the Mackenzie Highway, near the hardworking communities of Enterprise and Hay River, you have the opportunity to stop just off the highway to appreciate some of the natural beauty of the Northwest Territories. If you drive this route often, or if you haven't driven it in some time you may have forgotten, but looking ahead to spring and summer hiking, camping and other outdoor recreation, I need to remind you. Today I want to talk about Alexandra Falls or, as it's known in Slavey, Xahtl'o Ndeh Naili Cho.

The falls offer fantastic views. Whitewater kayaking opportunities, hiking trails and a day-use area are all part of the Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park. The park also includes the Louise Falls and Escarpment Creek campgrounds. So whether you want to stop for photographs and have a picnic lunch, or a multi-day camp, the falls facilities have something to offer.

[English translation not provided.]

Today I'd like to recognize Mr. Doug Lamalice. Mr. Lamalice is a member of the K'atlodeeche First Nation. He isn't only a father of seven and an active artist, he is also a celebrated tour guide, leading cultural and nature tours around the falls, and a former member of the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council. One of his tours, called Walk a Mile in My Moccasins, shares stories of Dene culture while visitors walk the trails. Through his work as a guide, Mr. Lamalice has been an ambassador of the Northwest Territories and for the K'atlodeeche First Nation, teaching visitors from all over the world about his culture and the land.

In 2013 two of Mr. Lamalice's daughters discovered a fossil near Louise Falls, preserving their find until

it could be studied by a curator from Alberta's Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology. The Lamalice family does exceptional work, and it's not just me that thinks so; Mr. Lamalice was recently honoured with a hospitality award.

The next time you're passing by the falls, make a point of stopping. Let's keep supporting those on the front lines of tourism and the people on the ground and on the trails and viewing platforms that keep tourism coming in the NWT.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SNOW GEESE EGG HARVEST

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because of waste grain in the South, snow geese are overpopulating Banks Island and destroying wildlife habitat. Egg harvest can contribute to their control while addressing nutritional deficiencies and cost of living for NWT residents facing food insecurity.

More than two decades ago, Canada and the U.S. amended the Migratory Bird Convention to allow for the spring harvest of migratory birds to aid in management such as addressing the overpopulation of snow geese. But despite American states and some eastern Canadian provinces instituting spring sport hunts to complement traditional spring hunts, an NWT proposal at the time to institute spring bird and egg harvests was ignored. Since then the problem has become dramatically worse and long-term habitat loss of all wildlife is now measured by satellite as snow geese populations soar ever higher.

Although I can't go into the detail on my authority on this, snow geese eggs are delicious and nutritious, and millions are laid on Banks Island each year. Meanwhile, many northern families go hungry and schools and medical facilities seek traditional foods to complement the diets of students, patients and elders, and the overpopulation of snow geese still needs to be controlled. There is such a practical, common sense opportunity for a win, win, win here that I fear government will let yet more decades go by without the simple local action required for continental benefit.

Now, two decades since the first opportunity for action, the federal government is finally permitting a spring hunt of snow geese by all residents in the NWT. But it's too little too late. If states and provinces, electronic decoys, electronic calls and 50 per day bag limits for years haven't done it, a dozen more Northerners popping away won't even be noticeable.

It's time to get serious. Hire traditional harvesters in Sachs Harbour to harvest goose eggs and

distribute them throughout NWT communities wherever there is a high cost of living and a demonstrated need for nutritious food.

A million-plus snow geese on Banks Island means about 400,000 nests each spring or about 1.5 million eggs. A modest start of 5 percent would equal 75,000 or 6,500 dozen goose eggs. A modest start of 5 percent.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: For 15 communities with demonstrated need, about 500 dozen goose eggs would go to each community, the equivalent of over 1,000 dozen chicken eggs. A significant contribution to the health and well-being of residents while helping to solve a North American wildlife population issue and provide some modest employment in Sachs Harbour.

A smaller harvest the first year could prove up the methods of harvest and distribution, followed by larger harvests in subsequent years as assessed and approved by federal and territorial government biologists. International funding would undoubtedly be available. Here we have a straightforward wildlife population issue with a straightforward win, win, win northern solution.

I will have questions. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE LAND DEVELOPMENT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in Committee of the Whole yesterday, the City of Yellowknife has a land issue. A quick look around the city shows that this city's expansion is hampered by water bodies and large rock outcrops. That's why Yellowknife is so compact and the lack of urban sprawl is something that Yellowknife has been recognized for. This is something that other cities strive for.

Right now with lands withdrawn from development by Aboriginal government and the territorial government releasing little land to the city, Yellowknife is reaching the end of available land to use for future development, whether it be for housing, recreational use, commercial or industrial use.

It's gratifying to see my local government planning ahead, but frustrating for me that they are not getting great cooperation from the territorial Lands department. From my time on city council, I know that the acquisition and development of land takes time, years in fact. The city is on record that they wish to take over all Commissioner's lands in the

city and have asked for it from the GNWT and have been denied that.

That the GNWT will only release small parcels at a time has hampered the city's planning efforts. It means the city is unable to get access to or ownership of a significant quantum of land for development and it's pretty hard to plan in a vacuum when receiving land in dribs and drabs. There's no opportunity to plan for the big picture, to plan for future expansion in a coordinated and timely manner.

On top of the lack of a significant quantum of land, it's my understanding that several parcels in Old Town will not be released in fee simple title. It will only be given to the city under lease arrangements. It's hard to understand why that is, and I appreciate the Minister's offer yesterday to look into that for me.

Things are not yet dire. The city does have some space for development of single family dwellings in some parcels which were developed in the past. Niven Lake area, Block 501 and Grace Lake still have some lots available. But as they should, council is looking to the future and planning for a potential influx of residents due to several construction projects on the horizon. The city needs a large parcel to plan for the next subdivision and they need certainty to plan properly.

I understand the need to consult with local Aboriginal governments. That's part of the land release process. I'm not asking for that to change, but the GNWT must be more understanding of the needs of community governments where land is concerned.

Thank you. I will have questions for the Minister of Lands at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REPATRIATION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE SOUTHERN PLACEMENTS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of years ago when the Dene K'onia Young Offender Facility in Hay River was closed down, a need came to light which the GNWT responded to, and a facility called the assisted living facility in Hay River was built for adults who needed to be in residential care. It was an excellent addition to the infrastructure and the economy and to the service spectrum in Hay River and in the North for adults primarily with intellectual challenges.

This facility is managed by the Hay River Health Authority, and I believe it is doing an excellent job. They have 10 permanent beds and I believe that they have two placements for respite care for intermittent use by others.

This organization is involved in the lives of these adults living in this facility. They can be seen out doing recreational activities, out in our community, going out for lunch, participating in community events and being cared for by the numerous people who are employed at the assisted living facility. I would like to thank these folks for the good work that they do and say that I'm very proud to see Northerners being cared for in the North by Northerners.

It raises the issue of how many other adults and children who are Northerners are in the care of southern placements and southern institutions at this time. I will have questions later today for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

When we take our residents and put them in southern placements, they lose out by not living in their home territory. We lose out on the economy of the jobs that are created by caring for them, and I think that there could be a tendency for out-of-sight, out-of-mind. We have to ask ourselves regularly as a government, what are the opportunities for repatriation of those NWT residents that are living in the South? Sometimes I think that, like I said, out-of-sight, out-of-mind, we may forget about them and forget about the opportunities that may arise to bring them home and have them in all regions of our territory.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services for more specifics about case management and about how often we review the opportunity for economies of bringing these folks home to the North to be cared for and to live here with us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EAST THREE SCHOOL GARDENING PROGRAM INNOVATION AWARD

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian Education Association's 2014-2015 Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning recently honoured seven award-winning programs from across Canada that challenge and rethink our traditional concept of schooling. This year's Ken Spencer Award winning programs tap into students' passions which lead to increased motivation through meaningful, relevant learning. These models exhibit well-nurtured growth, creativity, flexibility and potential scalability to additional classrooms and schools. Their success relies upon trusting relationships built between students and teachers, mentors, business leaders and parents, which serve to reconnect many disengaged students to a love of learning.

This is the sixth year of the award. The Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and

Learning was established with the generous contribution of Dr. Ken Spencer, to recognize and publicize innovative work that is sustainable and has a potential of being taken up by others, to encourage a focus on transformative changes in schools and to provide profile for classroom innovation within school districts, schools and the media.

Today I am honoured to recognize the East Three School gardening program with their honourable mention for this award in receiving \$1,000. The East Three School gardening program, entitled "Growing Student Engagement Under the Midnight Sun" was originally developed to combat poor diets and a low level of nutritional understanding among the student population. This gardening and ethnobotany program was gradually grown into a multi-faceted educational experience.

Students grow several dozen crops, from herbs, heirloom tomatoes, First Nation beans, lentils, rye, along with einkorn and other heritage grains. Last fall students grew, harvested, processed and prepared as well as consumed over \$1,000 worth of produce.

Food grown has been used in the healthy lunch program and in a local dinner fundraiser featuring wild and local foods such as char, muskox and reindeer. Students also participated in other service learning projects using produce that they've harvested as ingredients in meals for the local soup kitchen. This program represents a model for other northern schools wishing to increase student engagement while improving attendance and nutrition.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MOSES: I'd like to acknowledge the departments of ECE and ITI for their contributions and beginning to build strong support for school food initiatives and also recognizing the important role that health and nutrition have played in learning and development.

Some future projects that East Three School gardening program plan to do include a traditional food snack program as well as an ethnobotanical garden with medicine and food plants. They're also looking at doing a cultural lunch program featuring northern games as well as knowledge sharing and looking at creating prototypes for indoor aquaponic and hydroponic veggie production as well as creating a mini school greenhouse and planters.

I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank teacher Mr. Patrick Gauley-Gale and his staff and students who have committed to healthy living and nutrition for their peers and staff at East Three Secondary School and for their kind-hearted community outreach initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

In the gallery today, colleagues, we have with us from the office of the Auditor General of Canada, Mr. Ronnie Campbell. I welcome Mr. Campbell to the Assembly. It's always a pleasure to have you here.

Colleagues, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the impending retirement of Mr. Campbell. Mr. Campbell was recruited in Scotland by the Hudson's Bay Company and began his life in Canada and his Canadian career in the North.

Ronnie, the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories is very grateful for your expertise and your insight and candour over the years. On behalf of all Members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to extend our warm wishes for a long and happy retirement. Thank you very much.

---Applause

Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my constituent from Ndilo, Brent Betsina, also winner of the national level silver medal from the Canada Games.

---Applause

More on that a little bit later. Welcome, Brent. Also, of course, my constituency assistant, Bob Wilson, resident of Weledeh. Of course, I'd like to join you, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming Ronnie Campbell to the House. It's been a pleasure working with him, and I also wish him all the best in retirement. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to welcome Mr. Campbell. It's been a great pleasure to work with him over the years that I've been here. I know that he's approaching retirement with the same mindset as I am: looking forward to it. I wish him well and thank him for all the work that he's done for us over the years. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Mr. Ronnie Campbell and thank him for all his hard work working with committee, especially for his guidance, his experience and knowledge in helping us guide and direct government into making some good decisions and making programs a lot better in the Northwest Territories.

I'd also like to recognize and acknowledge Mr. Brent Betsina. Good job. You've made the NWT

proud during the Canada Winter Games. Good job. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Again, I'd like to welcome everybody here in the public gallery. Thank you for coming and taking an interest in our proceedings here today.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Dolynny.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 17-17(5): REAPPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER GEORGE TUCCARO

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge a Range Lake constituent who needs very little introduction to Members of the House. I wish to acknowledge and congratulate the Honourable George L. Tuccaro, who has been reappointed as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories for a term of one year, from May 11, 2015, to May 10, 2016, and this will be his second term.

Mr. Tuccaro, who is a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation of northern Alberta, has played a prominent role in the lives of Northerners, even prior to his initial appointment as our Commissioner.

Mr. Tuccaro enjoyed a long and illustrious career in public broadcasting with CBC North in Yellowknife, and we are the lucky few to get to hear his silky voice and smooth delivery when the Commissioner joins us here in the Chamber to open sessions of the Assembly or to provide assent to legislation passed by this House.

On behalf of all Members, I wish to extend my congratulations to Mr. Tuccaro and his wife, Marilyn, on his reappointment to our 16th Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. It's a well-deserved honour and we wish him every continued success. Mahsi.

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 18-17(5): CANADA WINTER GAMES MEDALIST BRENT BETSINA

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to acknowledge and congratulate my Ndilo constituent Brent Betsina on his outstanding performance in the sport of judo at the Canada Winter Games in Prince George, BC.

Master Betsina, an active member of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, is 18 years old and competed in the over-100 kilograms category at the Games. Brent has been active in the sport of judo for eight years and contributes his success to his role model and coach, Mario Desforges.

Brent went into the Games with a goal of having fun, having a positive attitude while competing and doing his best. Winning the Northwest Territories first medal since 2007, a silver medal in judo was a sweet bonus to these goals.

I invite all Members to congratulate Brent on his national achievement on behalf of the Northwest Territories at the Canada Winter Games – I wouldn't be surprised to see him in this chair one year – and say well done, Brent. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 7, oral questions. Mr. Blake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 728-17(5): STATUS OF GWICH'IN LAND AND WATER BOARD

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in follow-up from my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the honourable Premier. I'd like to ask the Premier, as stated with this latest injunction that effectively has put on hold the superboards, can the Premier confirm that the Gwich'in Land and Water Board will be maintained like the Wek'eezhii Board until the related court cases are decided?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories suspended Section 253(2) of the Northwest Territories Devolution Act with regard to the MVRMA, all plan to come into force April 1, 2015. This will result in the preservation of all the regional land and water boards for now, including the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, and a delay in implementation of regional studies and cost recovery authorities.

MR. BLAKE: As I mentioned, the regional boards, including the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, were scheduled for elimination as of April 1st.

I'd like to ask the Premier, how will the board's effective operations be maintained and supported while the court case is being decided?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There will be no change in the operation of these boards and we have confirmed with AANDC that they will be assessing not only the court decision but also how to keep the current system functional. Our Department of Lands will also be doing a preliminary scan of significant projects that are currently within the MVRMA.

MR. BLAKE: Can the Premier confirm which board members will be able to continue their work and how will any empty spots be addressed to ensure smooth operations? For example, with the Gwich'in, we don't have a chair at the moment, so how will that position be filled?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: My understanding is that all of the boards that have vacant appointments, they'll fast track the appointments. The Gwich'in Land and Water Board has total members of five. They need three for a quorum. There is one current vacancy of a chair, one appointment expiring in the next year on November 8, 2015. With the fast-tracking of board appointments, we expect that it will be business as usual.

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

QUESTION 729-17(5):
REPATRIATION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE
SOUTHERN PLACEMENTS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement today, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In a budget document that we have just been considering during this session, there is an item under program detail called residential care, adults and children, and that number of \$45.807 million is for children and adults who are receiving care for an extended period of time to meet their physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological needs, and it includes such things as long-term care facilities, group homes for adults and residential care both inside and outside of the Northwest Territories. I believe that there is also a supplementary appropriation being proposed to actually cause that number to go higher.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services to break down that number, if he could, between northern and southern placements.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The budget for '14-15 was \$17.6 million for southern placements, and that covers 69 adults and 37 youth.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I think everybody would agree that that is a very substantial sum of money that this government pays out to southern facilities for the care and keeping of Northerners.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, when is the last time that repatriation opportunities for some of these 69 adults and 37 children were contemplated and considered by his department? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Last fiscal year the Members actually requested that we do that work, and the director of territorial services did conduct a review of all the individual files of all of our residents who happen to be in the South looking for similar conditions or similar treatment requirements so that we could repatriate a block of individuals. Unfortunately, the cases are so unique and so many of them are of such high demand we weren't

able to identify a similar group that would be reasonable to repatriate.

But I will say that we do review the files of our individuals biannually to see if there is any opportunity to repatriate the individuals whether or not or regardless of a similar condition where we can repatriate a block of individuals at one time. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'd like to also ask, in the facilities that we do have here in the Northwest Territories, could he tell us on any given day, like today, are there vacancies available in those facilities, or are we completely maxed out and couldn't it be that referrals that are made to the South are actually, in fact, because there is no room in the facilities we have here? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'd actually have to have the department do a bit of an analysis. There are so many facilities that we support, whether it's hospitals or the type of facility that the Member brought up in her statement, I couldn't say for certain what our vacancy rate is on those.

I will say for an individual to be eligible for out-of-territory placement they must meet specific criteria. One of the following: they must have a diagnosis of a mental illness or a traumatic brain injury; a genetic disorder or a significant development or physical disability; they must have a serious emotional, behavioural, psychological or medical needs that can't be met here in the Northwest Territories; they must require a higher level of care or services that are not available in the Northwest Territories; they must require residential or institutional services as the result of being declared not criminally responsible, and this is something we work on with the Department of Justice; or they must require regular psychiatric hospitalization services, services that aren't available here in the Northwest Territories. If we can deliver it here in the Northwest Territories, we do, and if we don't have the capacity, we do have to ship our residents south from time to time.

As I said, the director did a thorough review of all the files and we were really looking for an opportunity to bring a bulk or similar-type conditions north, keep the money in the North, employ in the North. But given the huge variety and the different conditions, we weren't able to find a like condition or patients with similar conditions that could be accommodated in a facility here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Specifically with regard to group homes for adults and children, are there any vacancies currently available here in the Northwest Territories in the group homes that already exist? It only makes

sense to me that if there is no vacancy, the tendency would be to have to send them to southern placements. Thank you

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'll commit to get that information on our current vacancies. They change from time to time. But once again, I go back to my previous comments about the specific individual conditions that an individual must have and it's for services that aren't available here in the Northwest Territories, you have to meet those conditions. So if we can provide it in the Northwest Territories, we do our best to provide it here in the Northwest Territories. Unfortunately, we do have individuals with incredibly high needs, 24/7 care that we can't meet. We don't have the expertise to provide those services here. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 730-17(5):
MED-RESPONSE CALL CENTRE SERVICES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. About four years ago a child from Trout Lake could not get authorization for a medevac plane for a serious illness. The grandparent was deeply concerned, not to mention the stress of the mother. He consequently chartered his own plane because the child's lips were turning blue.

While in Fort Simpson, the doctor said, "It's a good thing you brought her here," because she had a case of severe croup, potentially life-threatening for a child without medical attention.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services explain exactly how the new Med-Response would handle a situation like this? Would it be the same, or would they be able to make a call for a medevac that will save a life? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Prior to the implementation of Med-Response, a nurse in a region, regardless of the region, would call a physician who was associated with that particular region. For instance, in the Sahtu, if there was no doctor available, and Simpson, they would call the medical director who may be located in another province, which was often the case, who may not have known exactly the current status of our air ambulance team. Now with Med-Response, rather than trying to figure out who, a CHR or CHW in a community like Trout Lake, they would actually call one number in the Northwest Territories. On that number they would have air ambulance dispatch, but they would also have direct access to health professionals who can make decisions and provide immediate diagnosis

and direction to the CHRs in the communities, which in the case of that child would likely have resulted in a much quicker time for an air ambulance to get into that community and get the child out.

The bottom line is the CHRs and CHWs throughout the Northwest Territories as well as all nurses in our health centres have a number to call that will give immediate access to health professionals, whether it's an emerg doc, pediatric doc or any other specialist, plus NPs and, at the same time, have the air ambulance dispatcher on the phone at the same time so they can all make a united decision together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I am very pleased to hear the explanation from the Minister. Of course, this is not the first time the residents of small communities had to call their own plane because a medevac was thought not to be necessary.

I would like to ask the Minister about what assurances and successes has the department had to date, because they have been up and running since November, I believe. What assurances and successes have they had to date in responding to emergencies? Is there documentation or evaluations in place or contingency checks on the effectiveness of the Med-Response system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Since November 30th we have been in a soft launch phase, which is basically a trial phase to work out some of the bugs that we assume would come in with this new state-of-the-art program. We wanted to make sure that we got it right. We have only just recently gone live and we continue to evaluate. There is actually an evaluation mechanism in place to monitor the calls and help us continually improve and evolve as the times change.

In the test phase we coordinated 698 clinical consults from all the authorities; 351 were air ambulance flights. We were actually – and this is, I think, incredibly good news – able to coordinate one aircraft to pick up two patients from different communities, both going to Edmonton, and we used the same aircraft to get them down there, so we were actually able to combine our resources and get some serious benefits.

Also, during the test phase, there were nine different situations where a health practitioner from a community called into the Med-Response unit believing that they needed an air ambulance, but once they received full consult from doctors and specialists in Yellowknife they were able to avoid the need for air ambulance. So we were able to reduce the number of air ambulances that have actually been dispatched. We have been able to get economies of scale by having a pick-up of more than one patient and we have been able to provide significant clinical advice and consults to our

communities when they are in need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I am pleased to see some of those results and, as well, it's about restoring the confidence of the people in the smaller communities that our system will be there for them. Further to that, how will they augment the training for community health workers to work and learn this new system? I would suggest perhaps bringing them to Yellowknife to see the facilities and to meet some of the staff of the new Med-Response centre that they will be dealing with, hopefully not on a daily basis but it is always good to have a familiar face when you're on the phone, especially in times of emergency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: At this time there hadn't been plans to actually bring professionals into Yellowknife to see the facility. What is important is the dialogue that occurs between the health practitioners in the field and our Med-Response team. We have put together some documentation manuals to help individuals understand the terminology and how things work. I do take the point; it would be good for our employees to see them become more familiar. I will certainly work with the department to explore training opportunities to ensure our staff are as familiar as possible and have an opportunity to be effective with the use of Med-Response. So we will certainly look at opportunities for training. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I noticed that the Med-Response system is not open to the general public. Maybe the Minister can explain that. In previous emergencies and times of distress, not only the health care worker was calling the regional centres but the family themselves wanted to hear the answers from the nurse in charge or whoever's in charge while they wait however long for the medevac and that kind of stuff.

What kind of public information is out there to help families in times of distress? Perhaps it will complicate things if everybody is phoning, but what does the Med-Response system see for the public? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Med-Response is not a public program. It's a program for the staff to help coordinate the internal workings of the system to make sure our staff on the front line have the information they need. They will be able to transmit or translate any of the information received from professionals on the line to anybody who happens to be in their health centre or health station. It's not open to the public. The public aren't expected to call that number. It is a functional, internal process that helps coordinate all health services in the

communities when required by the health practitioners in the communities. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 731-17(5):
DAYCARE INSPECTION REPORTS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I described the revealing back-story that gave rise to a recent CBC request for daycare inspection reports. Instead of seizing the opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the law, the department put a hefty price tag on information that is freely and publicly available in many other jurisdictions. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

In 2010, in response to the Auditor General's criticism on daycare inspections, the department said it was short on staff. Can the Minister indicate what has the department done to address the staff shortage since 2010? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Auditor General's recommendations came out, we have done a considerable amount of work following through with those recommendations. Within my department we have increased the number of regional early childhood consultants to better serve the small communities. We also created and hired a territorial inspection coordinator. Those are just some of the key aspects of how we remedied the situation. Mahsi.

MR. DOLYNNY: Can the Minister indicate what significant improvements have been made in daycare facilities since the Auditor General's unsatisfactory grade in 2012? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I stated earlier, we have made significant improvements within my department on the recommendations that were brought to my attention. We are in compliance at all levels. All annual inspections are completed in all licenced daycares and all the day homes in the Northwest Territories. Those are front and foremost done by my department to follow through with all the inspections that are happening. It's in place, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: My question was: What significant improvements are there? We still didn't hear what they were. Can the Minister clearly assure the public, does the department have corrective actions and plans for daycare facilities which were found to have blocked fire exits, uncovered electrical outlets and chemicals within reach of small children? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: All these inspections are completed, and if there were any deficiencies found during the inspections, they were followed through with by early childhood consultants who are in regular contact with the contractor and also in communication with the licenced operators.

We're doing what we can to work with the operators so there's a safe environment for our children in care, and also my department is working very closely with the regional health inspectors, as well, and not only that but the fire inspectors to ensure compliance with all the regional centres and the community centres as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "Doing what we can" seems to be a common response these days. The governments of Alberta, Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia provide online links to daycare inspection status reports or the reports themselves. Clearly, ATIPP is not a barrier to this transparency.

But to the question, will this Minister follow suit and make daycare inspection reports freely and publicly available? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Since that information came to light in my department, we have been working very closely on ways to share relevant inspection information in a format that allows parents to make informed decisions on child care while, at the same time, protecting the privacy of child care staff. My department is also committed to making inspection information available to the public, and this will be available starting 2015-16. We're making improvements within our department and we're moving forward on that. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 732-17(5):
EAST THREE SCHOOL GARDENING
PROGRAM INNOVATION AWARD

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll follow up with questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on my Member's statement.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he in fact is familiar with the Canadian Education Association and the Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning and if any of those programs that this organization has awarded, if he's looking at ways to better our education system through these programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the national awards that have been recognized throughout the Northwest Territories, and I've been trying to get some more information on that since the Member addressed that information to me. We are doing what we can as a department to recognize those talented individuals or organizations in the Northwest Territories. We're working with those organizations to make some sort of recognition and even go further beyond that. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: I mentioned that the East Three gardening program in Inuvik is doing some great work and they want to do some more innovative thinking in terms of how they're going to grow veggies and create produce for lunch programs in Inuvik. I want to ask the Minister if he's familiar with that program, have talks with the East Three staff and look at how they can support them so they can purchase these materials and continue to build on their national successes that's been recognized so we can help them and support them in getting the materials that they need to continue with this program and the successes that they've shown.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Obviously, ECE supports healthy foods in our school system. The growing program, obviously, we've heard just recently, as well, and we believe and support innovative thinking. How can we have those vegetables in our school system as possibly part of our lunch program? So, we're open to those ideas. I have to work with the local DEAs and DEC's, if they're acceptable to that initiative. I need to sit down with my counterparts and see where we can go from there, but this is a brilliant idea that we should carry forward.

MR. MOSES: This program has helped students engage. It's helped with attendance. It's given them nutrition so that they can excel in school work. They've got a really great program that I don't think has to be reinvented, and it's something that's unique and brought forth from the local people and is something that can be forwarded to the schools.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he'd be willing to work with the staff who developed this program and take it out to the regions and to the schools so they can develop their own programs and have the success that Inuvik has shown and has been recognized nationally. Will he be working with the schools to create some type of framework that they can take into the schools, as well, and help other schools in the success of attendance, healthy eating and education?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we talk about healthy foods, obviously we provide funding towards this initiative as well. Approximately \$650,000 we distribute on an annual basis for healthy eating programming in the Northwest Territories. We give the funding directly to the

schools, so it's part of their initiative. There is already funding in place. My department will be working with the organization on how can we best move this forward as well. We have to keep in mind that we have to deal with all the schools across the Northwest Territories as well. Then again, there is funding in place already, and we will continue to move forward working with the school boards.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask the Minister whether or not he would review the funding policy in terms of this healthy nutrition program so that students in regions that have a higher population will get more funding so that they can feed a higher percentage of the population in the school? Will he review that based on population size?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I indicated earlier, we're open to some ideas on how we can generate funding, based, obviously, on students. Currently, it's based on students. Those are discussions that we need to have with the local organizations and also the DECs and DEAs as well.

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

QUESTION 733-17(5):
SNOW GEESE EGG HARVEST

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement from earlier today with questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

The grain harvesting practices throughout North America have been a windfall for the snow goose. As we've heard, large amounts of waste grain left in fields after harvest has made them fatter, enabling them to survive better and lay more eggs when returning to Arctic nesting grounds. This has caused overpopulations to where hunting can no longer control them and habitat destruction for all wildlife including caribou is the result.

I'm wondering what plans the Minister has to address this growing snow goose overpopulation disaster.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are no imminent plans at this point. I have listened to the Member's statement with interest and I will be following up with the department.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that follow-up. As I mentioned, this issue was highlighted 20 years ago. I know the Minister is about as long in the tooth as I am with this

department. With an NWT proposal to address this issue and benefit our people at that time, yet almost every province and state in concert with their federal government have recognized both opportunities and need and acted to try and address this issue, we, who are holding the solution in our hands, have done nothing.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he has any ideas why, given the clear benefits, the many opportunities for our people and the likelihood of international financial support to implement the simple actions required, again, why have we done nothing?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I think the key question, of course is, is there something we can do? The Member has raised a good issue. I've been Environment Minister now for quite a number of years and I must confess this is not one of the issues that has been high on the priority list that I've been aware of. Now that it's been raised and the Member has provided the history, I will restate my commitment to go back to the department and see what options there are to try to address this issue and look at some of the suggestions and advice provided by the Member.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, I appreciate the Minister's commitment and I am happy to work with him on that to provide any background and resources there. There is clear opportunity for northern benefits here, as I mentioned, including halting the habitat destruction, providing modest local employment in a remote community that has need of that and addressing the issues of high cost of living and food security in many of our communities that are in most desperate need.

I'm asking the Minister one last time, in his considerations, will he commit to providing committee with a full accounting of the cost and benefits of the management action called for today?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, I will report back to committee on the results of the discussion with the department. I will make sure we go back and look at the documents the Member has referred, and we'll look to what we think is possible and share that with committee. We will be happy, of course, to appear before committee to have a further, more detailed discussion.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, again, appreciate the Minister's return there. I just mentioned that I focused on eggs today. The same thing could be true for the birds themselves which are a well-known source of nutritious food, and so I just ask the Minister that he include the possibility of harvesting the birds. The Sachs Harbour hunters have had a lot of experience with them and are fully capable of answering this need if directed and provided with the support. I'll leave it at that.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, we will ensure that we look at not only the eggs but the harvesting of some of the birds as the Member has suggested.

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

QUESTION 734-17(5):
HAY RIVER HEALTH CENTRE
MAINTENANCE SERVICES

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement on the new health centre, we've been informed that there is going to be a new maintenance system.

Can the Minister of Health tell me how this new system will roll out when the new health centre is opened?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with the direction provided in 2010 which basically established that PWS would be responsible for providing operations and maintenance services to buildings owned and operated by the GNWT, eventually when the building is completed, the maintenance of the new facility, the boilers and structural maintenance will be done by Public Works and Services. We in Health and Social Services believe that there are a number of residual functions, maintenance functions that should be retained by the authority and by the health system, maintenance specific to technical equipment and other factors in the authority and in the new building.

We have been working with the authority. We have been working with Public Works and Services to identify what some of those residual functions will be. We're really not going to finalize that list until we start moving into the new building to see what some of the actual realities of being in that new building are. In the meantime, we're also going to keep the existing H.H. Williams open for a period of time because the extended care residents will stay there until such time as we've done the upgrades to Woodland Manor.

We know that Public Works is going to be doing the maintenance. We have approached the staff to see if any of them are interested in moving over to Public Works and Services, if they could be part of that structural maintenance team. But in the meantime, we still have the role for the maintenance staff that we have to maintain the existing buildings in that authority as well as to maintain the existing authority.

We have a bit of time to work through the details with our staff, and we have been working with the union and the Hay River Health and Social Services

Authority to find the most reasonable and appropriate methods to resolve these issues.

MR. BOUCHARD: I'm not sure. I have some questions about those statements the Minister just made that he's talked to the authority, he's talked to the employees, because at my last constituency meeting those weren't the comments coming from all those people and the fact that they don't know where this plan is coming from.

Is there a set plan, and if not, we've been asking for a plan for over a year. We built the facility in a year and a half and now we're looking for the plan in one year. Can we get a plan going forward of how this is going to lay out for the maintenance? We have people that have their jobs on the line. They're questioning whether their jobs are on the line. Can we get this plan going forward as soon as possible?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I have confirmation from the authority that they have been in contact with the staff and they have articulated that the structural maintenance and the boilers and whatnot of the new facility will be done by Public Works and Services and that they've asked the staff if any of them are interested in transferring over.

We have been working closely with the Department of Public Works and Services who will ultimately have the big picture of maintenance responsibilities for all of the government assets here in the Northwest Territories. But at the same time, and I want to continue to articulate, not all the functions need to be transferred to Public Works and Services. There are a number of residual functions that we're attempting to quantify at this point. Once that is fully quantified, we'll be in a far better position to articulate what the health and social services needs are and what functions are truly going to be with those in Public Works and Services.

I will commit to working with Public Works and Services to put together a more concrete sort of analysis so that we can share that information with our employees in the authority. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Will the Minister commit to giving me some of that documentation? He says they've consulted with the employees. They consulted with the authority, because at the meetings that I've had they don't know where this maintenance project is going. They know that between Public Works and them having responsibility, but there's nothing defined, nothing laid out. Like I said, there are employees' jobs that are being considered, and without the information people are making up stuff and people are thinking that there's going to be job elimination. So, we need to get this plan forward.

Will the Minister commit to getting me that information? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I've already committed to working with the Minister responsible for Public Works and Services as well as Hay River Health and Social Services to put together the information that we have so that it can be clearly articulated to the Member as well as to the residents of Hay River who think they may be affected by these changes in infrastructure in Hay River. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister give me an indication of when this plan would be available and talk to the people, because the people want to know sooner than later. Can we get a date or even a month when this would be available? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The new hospital in Hay River, as the Member has indicated, is moving along smoothly and we anticipate to be moving staff over in the near future. We will get the information to the Member and to the individuals who are potentially affected before the move is finalized. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 735-17(5):
CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE
LAND DEVELOPMENT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Lands and I want to follow up on some of the questions and the information sharing that we had yesterday in Committee of the Whole.

The City of Yellowknife has expressed interest in gaining ownership of all of the Commissioner's lands within the city's territory. In my mind, that's a good thing. It's a consolidation of lands. It clears things up and it makes it clear just what the city has and gives the city control over the whole area.

That request has apparently been turned down by the Department of Lands, and I'd like to know from the Minister why the department, why the Minister would not turn over all of the Commissioner's lands in the City of Yellowknife in one application. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister of Lands, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're continuing to engage the city on the transfer of Commissioner's land within the municipal boundaries to the city. We have advised them that when it applies to acquire Commissioner's land, our preference is they do it incrementally and indicate to us the proposed use of the land. This approach to applications improves the ability of the general public to focus on a

particular parcel. So, we are continuing to engage with the city. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I didn't hear much of a rationale there, except that we want to do it in small pieces. I'm struggling to understand why the public would be involved. This is generally something between the city and the GNWT.

My city is being proactive, planning for the future and for future developments, and yet the length of time that it takes for some land applications is quite long and, as I've mentioned, the size of the parcels is really quite small.

I'd like to know from the Minister if he would go back and look at some of the recent applications from the City of Yellowknife and if he would consider to increase the size of the parcels so they can have a decent size of land to do the next subdivision development and/or that they can get that land to the city sooner. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Since 2006 we've transferred over 700 hectares to the city. There are a couple of applications that are in the process right now. We're working with city officials on completing one particular transfer. The consultation survey work is done and Lands is working on completing the transaction. As well, we have another application that we are working on the city with for 102 hectares. Now we're just in the final stages of transferring the land. So, if the Member wants, I can speak to the Member and give her the information on which pieces of land we're talking about. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that offer of getting some information. We'll have to get together on that.

One of the things I mentioned yesterday, and I'd like to revisit the interim land withdrawal for the land around the city of Yellowknife. The agreement, I believe, was first put in place in 2006 for five years. It's been extended three times after that one year at a time, and yesterday I heard that there is apparently an intention to extend it forever or until there is a land claim settlement. So, if there's going to be extensions, I'd like to know from the Minister, is it going to be a one year at a time extension, because that adds to a great deal of uncertainty in terms of lands around the city, or is it possible that it's going to be a multi-year extension? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member is correct; it was a five-year interim withdrawal to begin with. It's been extended three times for one year. It expires in November of this year.

Again, until there's a land claim settlement we'll continue to keep extending it. As far as the one-year term or multi-year term, I will confirm that and have that discussion with the Member as well.

As I said before, we are engaging with the city. We're actually engaging with the YKDFN, too, to see how we can move some of these issues forward. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. Yes, I was going to ask whether or not there's been any consultation with the Akaitcho or the Yellowknives Dene, and I'm glad to hear that there is.

Before this interim land withdrawal agreement is extended yet again, will the Minister and the department be consulting with both the city and with the YKDFN to see how it's going to be done going forward? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will commit to having further discussions with the city and the YKDFN. I'll point out that I actually met with the mayor of the city this morning and we had a very good conversation, and we've had some conversations with the YKDFN. There is a desire there to move some of the issues forward and address some of the issues that are facing both the city and the YKDFN. We'll continue to have those discussions and I will keep the Member and Members apprised of where the discussions are going. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 736-17(5):
PROMOTION OF TWIN FALLS GORGE
TERRITORIAL PARK

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Parks are an integral part of the Tourism Development Strategy in the NWT. In my riding the Alexandra Falls was recently recognized and gained notoriety in that there was a magazine that listed it as one of the top 10 sites in Canada to visit. It's got a rich history of First Nations and Dene people, so they figure prominently in the operation of the parks. My questions are for the Environment and Natural Resources Minister.

How will the Department of Environment and Natural Resources promote this area this year? Mahsi.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The roadside parks are the responsibility of ITI. We work closely with ITI, and as the Member has indicated, ITI clearly has done a very fine job in advertising and promoting and maintaining and building up the park. As a government, we have every expectation that we're going to maintain that level of service. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for his reply. These parks, particularly the area that is situated in Alexandra Falls is a geological gem.

What plans can ENR report for development...(inaudible)...outdoor crews or other new projects involving the Twin Falls Gorge Territorial Park? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I will commit to get the response to that question from ITI and make sure that it's shared with the Member. I just want to reiterate once again, the strong commitment demonstrated, high level of practice and investment in the parks by ITI is going to continue. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Part of the distinctive attraction of the area is the fossils, and the Minister's department is responsible for at least the management and the protection of fossils.

Are any paleontology projects planned for this region in the near future? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Not that I'm aware of. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: How are paleontology and archeology recognized in tourism planning for this region? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Clearly, that's one of the attributes that draw people to that particular location. I listened, as well, how he pointed out the young ladies that found a fossil and brought it back. It's part of the ability to see that just by following the walking trails and that type of thing. So, it's a critical selling point of those particular sites. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 737-17(5):
HAY RIVER HEALTH CENTRE
MAINTENANCE SERVICES

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up my questions and my statement with the Minister of Public Works and Services. I know Public Works and Services doesn't control the current facility, and my first question to that Minister is: Why is Public Works and Services so interested in the new facility now, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There was direction given back in 2010. Any GNWT buildings coming on would be looked at under the consolidated maintenance program which is run by Public Works. This is a new building coming on

stream so Public Works will be maintaining it. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I'd like to ask this Minister why we haven't seen a plan going forward, how this maintenance is going to roll out, what his department is going to take over and what the Department of Health is going to take over. Why is it taking so long to get this plan completed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. One of the key factors is that the staff at Hay River Health and Social Services is under a different union agreement than the GNWT staff. Although the buildings have been transferred under that consolidated program, all the buildings that were at one time ownership of the Health and Social Services Authority in Hay River are now GNWT buildings. So, what has happened is that we need to be able to have a discussion not only with Health and Social Services and Public Works that would be providing the maintenance but also with HR labour relations to ensure that we're going into an area where there's another union agreement in place for people providing current services that we do this in a phased approach. For now we're talking about the hospital; in the future we'll be phasing in the rest of the buildings that are with Hay River Health and Social Services. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I guess that's to my point; the complexity of this and the fact that we need a plan of this is what Public Works and Services is going to do, this is what Health is going to do, and then we can bring that to the union and see how this is going to roll out. Right now we don't have a plan.

When will the two departments get together, have a plan and bring it to the MLAs and the union?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Department of Public Works and Services, Department of Health and Social Services, HR and the Hay River Health and Social Services will have a plan on the disposition of the employees, whether they're coming over to work for Public Works and maintain the hospital, or if they're going to remain there for a period of time. Overall, we will have a plan in place before the new hospital is open. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: As I indicated, these are people's jobs, people's lives that are on the line, so they would like to hear this sooner than later.

My question is: Can we get this resolved as soon as possible? Not a set date, not when it opens, but as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We'll have this done. The intention, of course, is to have the building open this summer, so within the next several months. We will have a plan prior to then, so we can talk to the

departments. I will talk to HR and Public Works. The Minister of Health and Social Services is going to have a discussion with his staff, and we'll put a plan together as soon as possible. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 738-17(5):
REPATRIATION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE
SOUTHERN PLACEMENTS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk more about the \$26.95 million that this government spends every year on southern and, may I say, Alberta institutions for placements for northern residents. The Minister indicated that there were 106 including adults and children. That works out to an average of \$255,000 per placement.

I'd like to ask the Minister, first of all, when is the last time these placements where these referrals are being sent to, when was the last time those facilities were visited by somebody from our government, either standing committee or members of his staff? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a large number of facilities that we actually are utilizing – there isn't one facility – because the residents who we actually have down at these facilities have a huge range of needs. We have some individuals who require 24/7 with multiple attendees in order to provide them the services that they need.

As far as when I've been down to them, I haven't visited them. I don't believe standing committee has visited them. But if that is something standing committee is interested in doing, I'm willing to entertain that and have a discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I just want to reiterate my phrase out-of-sight, out-of-mind. I don't know what support there is for families, either, for seeing these folks' family members who get referred to southern institutions.

Previously, in another Assembly when I was on the Standing Committee on Social Programs, we actually went and did a tour and visited many of the facilities. That was way back in the day when Michener Centre was still operating and we went to the Alberta Hospital. I believe Minister Miltenberger was the Minister of Health and Social Services, and off we went to see where our people were living.

It still seems like a lot of money to me, \$30 million a year every year, year in, year out. I know they're specialized needs, but I'm a little bit, I don't want to say suspect, but I'm a little bit curious that if we

don't have any capacity here in the Northwest Territories that every referral that is made is for these specialized reasons and for this very specialized care.

I'd like to ask the Minister, could we use another group home in the Northwest Territories for adults and children? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we actually have contracts with accredited agencies located in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to provide these incredibly specialized skills. It's not just specialized skills but it's different skills. I mean, we have our residents who have really unique conditions who require significant supports, and we don't actually have programs or the specialists to provide those skills here in the Northwest Territories for one person. Whereas, they have institutions in the South that provide it for similar causes or conditions where they've got a large number of people in there, so they've got economies of scale that they can administer these.

I, like the Member, am very concerned about these numbers, and this is something that I've asked the department to look into. Following on the recommendation of committee, the department did a thorough analysis. Honestly, we are hoping that we would find some like conditions where we could bring them together and utilize a northern facility with northern professionals to provide these supports for our residents. Quite honestly, we want our people home. We want our people in the Northwest Territories. But given a unique file-by-file review, there weren't enough conditions that were similar that we could justify creating a unit or a function or a service in the Northwest Territories to provide those high-level services.

But it may change. As we continue to evolve here in the Northwest Territories, as patients are coming forward with new conditions we may find that there are conditions similar enough that we can house them, which is why we do the biannual review to make sure that we're on top of these. Every once in a while we're lucky where we do have an opportunity to repatriate individuals and we work with the southern institutions to develop great repatriation plans for the individuals who we can bring back, so we're always looking for ways to bring these people home. We hate spending the money in the South; we'd rather spend the money in the North; but sometimes requirements are so different, so unique, we don't have a choice but to work with one of our southern partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The planes fly both ways. Maybe we should be looking at building some facilities here in the Northwest Territories, and if we didn't have enough people with specialized need that required that care, we could

actually probably take some of the pressure off some of the provinces and have the people come this way.

I would like to ask the Minister if he ever gets any pushback or any concern raised by families. I mean, we're raising this here in the House and we're talking about it from the point of view of economics and economy and work. But from that personal human interest side of the folks that are referred to these southern institutions, does the department ever hear from the families about whether they would like to see their loved ones closer to home? Thank you.

HON GLEN ABERNETHY: The department hears from time to time, but we also hear it the other way as well. We have individuals who would prefer to be in southern facilities because they don't feel that they're getting the supports they need here, and at the end of the day, we make referrals to the South that sometimes are declined. So it goes both ways, and we do hear from residents on both sides of this issue. As I said, we really would prefer to have those people back here. I hear the Member talking about opportunities for maybe bringing people from the South up, but we would still need incredibly specialized professionals to come with those positions, and many of them are working in large facilities where they have a huge clientele and maybe wouldn't be that interested in small facilities that have maybe 10 or 12 patients.

We're always looking for opportunities to bring our people home and we will continue. We'll do the biannual reviews, and we'll continue to keep committee up to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the residents that are in southern placements, are there particular social workers or people assigned to monitor their cases specifically, and when are we up for the biannual review? What date are we looking at on that? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We've just finished the most recent one as a result of recommendations from committee, so I'm assuming biannual would be two years from now. We did just finish one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request unanimous consent to go back to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize and welcome to the Chamber the chief negotiator who's helped us negotiate the agreement with Alberta on transboundary water that we're going to soon conclude, with a similar one in Saskatchewan and hopefully, as well, with British Columbia. She's also the chief negotiator on the Thaidene Nene file. I would like to welcome Ms. Merrell Ann Phare to the Chamber. She's one of the best in the business.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 8, written questions. Ms. Bisaro.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 24-17(5): TRANSITION HOUSING INCOME SUPPORT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment:

1. Does the Department of Education, Culture and Employment income support division have a definition of "transitional housing" that they use to determine a client's eligibility for income assistance?
2. If yes, please provide it. If no, how does the department determine if a client is in transitional housing, and if they are, how does the department determine if the client is eligible for income assistance?
3. What policy governs clients whose only accommodation option is a motel or hotel room? Why are they not eligible for income assistance?
4. Explain what a client in an emergency housing situation, i.e. no housing options, should do to find accommodation. Who should they go to?

WRITTEN QUESTION 25-17(5): GNWT STAFF RETENTION POLICY

My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources. The GNWT Staff Retention Policy Section 6.2 – Reporting, requires an annual report of layoff and voluntary separation statistics, with eight required components in the report as laid out in the policy.

1. Would the Minister please provide this report for fiscal years 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014?
2. Would the Minister please advise when this report will be available for the 2014-2015 fiscal year?

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

WRITTEN QUESTION 26-17(5): DAYCARE INSPECTION REPORTS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Can the Minister provide to this House and make publicly available the entire set of inspection reports for registered daycare facilities in the Northwest Territories, beginning in the 2010-2011 fiscal year up to and including the 2014-2015 fiscal year?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Moses.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 209-17(5): CANADIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION – 2014-2015 WINNERS OF THE KEN SPENCER AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a document from the Canadian Education Association, entitled "2014-2015 Winners of the Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning." The document, as I mentioned, highlights East Three Secondary gardening program.

TABLED DOCUMENT 210-17(5): REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – 2015: CORRECTIONS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. I wish to table the Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly – 2015: Corrections in the NWT – Department of Justice.

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Abernethy.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 47:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 47, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, be read for the second time.

This bill includes amendments to the Child and Family Services Act that would add a new definition of youth and add provisions respecting the protection and services available to youth, add a new provision requiring the director to notify a child and a child's parents of the right to be represented by legal counsel, add a new provision providing for mediation, amend the criteria for determining that a child needs protection, add a new provision requiring an application for an apprehension order to include a statement of alternatives to apprehension that had been considered, add a new provision requiring notification of the applicable Aboriginal organizations of an application for an apprehension order in respect to an Aboriginal child, amend the maximum amount of time the child may be placed in a temporary custody by the director or of the director, add a new provision authorizing new roles of the child and family services committees, add a new provision requiring the Legislative Assembly to conduct periodic reviews of the act and make minor technical changes and corrections.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 47 has had second reading and is referred to standing committee.

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 12, Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act; Bill 36, Health and Social Services Professions Act; Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement 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), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016; Tabled Document 205-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2014-2015; Tabled Document 206-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2014-2015; and Tabled Document 207-17(5),

Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Good afternoon. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order 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, with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will resume after a brief break.

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CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. The next department before us is the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like to ask Minister Lafferty if he would like to present his opening comments on the department. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I am pleased to present the 2015-16 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. This budget strives to strike a balance between being mindful of the economic outlook of the NWT and making critical investments in key areas. These include early childhood development, education renewal, reducing the cost of living, improving support to those most vulnerable and bringing services closer to the people. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$4.2 million, or 1.4 percent, over the restated 2014-2015 Estimates. These estimates continue to support the objectives of limiting expenditure growth in order to sustain the long-term sustainability of the fiscal framework. Despite the government-wide fiscal situation, ECE's budget identifies significant investments. Either through re-profiled or new funding, ECE will invest in key initiatives all of which will have tangible, direct and concrete benefits for the people we serve.

Highlights of the proposed estimates show that ECE is not standing still. They include:

- \$1.75 million to increase benefits for food, clothing and other incidental expenses. This will ensure income assistance clients receive adequate benefits to meet their needs and to stay current with the cost of living. This amount is part of the planned \$6.6 million investment to

be phased in over the next four years. It will provide a direct benefit to those most in need.

- \$548,000 for increased costs associated with the Income Assistance program. This is largely coming from increased client uptake and projected increases for rent, fuel and utilities.
- \$390,000 to be invested in the Early Childhood Staff Grant Program for licenced daycare centre staff. This \$900,000 program will begin to address the fact that early childhood staff are paid some of the lowest wages in the country. It marks a real benefit to the people who care for children.
- a two-year pilot project to create five new employment service officer positions for each region of the NWT. This will reduce income assistance caseloads by providing intensive individual support to targeted income assistance clients in finding work or entering training programs. This initiative not only supports our government's decentralization objective but improves services to people in our communities and regions.
- a transfer of \$1.6 million to the NWT Housing Corporation to add 75 new public housing units specifically for income assistance recipients. This cost neutral program will provide income assistance clients in new public housing units with decreased rent. It will also allow for an easier transition to the workforce because of the NWTHC's graduated rent to income scheme.
- a reduction of \$1.95 million as part of the government-wide expenditure reduction in 2015-2016. This money comes from various discretionary areas internally throughout the department, paying attention to avoid program cuts that affect people. I also note that we have sheltered education authorities and the Aurora College from passive restraint.
- \$4.7 million for Collective Agreement increases for education authorities, the Aurora College and the department.

The proposed departmental estimates continue to support the priorities of the 17th Assembly. Specific activities in support of these priorities include:

- ECE has initiated an ambitious system-wide review of the education system. We have finalized a 10-year Education Renewal Framework, supported by a three-year action plan. The plan has been developed in collaboration with our education partners. It includes significant investments totaling \$6.2 million over the three-year time frame. Many of the initiatives are one- or two-year pilot projects. This will provide us the opportunity to test our ideas and correct our course of action based on our experience throughout their implementation.

- This budget proposes an investment of \$1.24 million to continue the activities listed in the Early Childhood Development Action Plan. As you know, the plan focuses on families and their children from birth to five years of age. Each of the 22 actions together will go a long way to ensure that every child, family and community, including those most at risk, have access to high quality, comprehensive, integrated early childhood development programs and services that are community driven, sustainable and culturally relevant.
- The revitalized Territorial Nominee Program has demonstrated early success and is projected to exceed all expectations in 2015-2016. It will be a major contributor to supporting the growth strategy. The NWT Express Entry System will see employers linked with potential skilled immigrants, growing the population and improving our skilled NWT labour market.
- Our Skills for Success initiative promises to ensure Northerners have the right type of skills for the jobs our economy will generate now and in the future. As we reach out beyond our borders to grow our population, it is just as important to ensure Northerners derive direct benefits from our economy by becoming active participants in our wage economy.
- an investment of \$2.2 million dollars for the implementation of ECE's French Language Services Operating Plan, which will ensure that we meet our obligations as directed by the Supreme Court of Canada, and
- \$6.7 million for Aboriginal language services to promote and support the nine official Aboriginal languages of the NWT. This includes \$3.5 million in funding to Aboriginal governments to help them implement their five-year Aboriginal language plans.
- Lastly, ECE proposes to do its part in support of a key priority of this Assembly. We propose to decentralize an additional nine positions into regional centres. This brings our total to 16 positions being decentralized. By doing this, we will increase employment opportunities in the regions and bring services closer to the people we serve.

We could do a lot more with additional money but I believe that we are making best use of the already considerable investment in our education system, early childhood development programs, income security programs, post-secondary education, official languages and culture and heritage. That concludes my opening remarks. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. At this time I'd like to ask the

Minister if he'd like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. To my left I have Gabriela Eggenhoefer, deputy minister of Education, Culture and Employment; to my immediate right is Olin Lovely, director of corporate services; and to my far right, associate deputy minister Dana Heide with Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. I will now turn to Members and ask if they have any general comments on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to welcome the department here today. This is a very complex department and leaving it to the end of business plans usually is probably for a good reason. It allows committee to have a more thorough time with other departments to prepare for this very large department. In fact, it almost begs the question that with this department's size and stature, it should almost be looked at as two departments in some respects, given the complexities that we have.

That being said, I appreciate the opportunity to talk with respect to some of the opening comments we heard from the Minister. I want to dive into a topic that didn't get a lot of attention in the opening comments which I think is fundamentally a driving force for the department over the next little while.

First and foremost, I want to raise attention to a comment in the opening comments of the Minister when he said, "I also note that we have sheltered education authorities and the Aurora College from passive restraint." As much as I appreciate that comment, I have to chuckle somewhat. Because although that might be true in one sense, we know that education authorities have not been immune to some of the clawbacks for some of the surpluses that they have achieved through good management skills in the last year to pay for things like junior kindergarten. When I do see comments like that, I take some of those comments with a grain of salt and I just wanted to put that on the record.

In as much as I appreciate the efforts – and again it's true the department is not standing still, I will

give kudos to the department for that – what was basically silent in the opening comments and relatively silent in his budget per se is the issue of the Educational Renewal Initiative. ERI has been touted as literally the panacea of change. This is the guiding principle of what this department is going to be embarking on to put a lot of corrective actions in place for the next generation to come. I find it very concerning that, like I say, it was just mentioned extremely briefly in the opening comments. I just wanted to take a minute to air my concerns that I have as a Member. This is also echoed, and has been echoed by some of the Members of the committee, as well, as we embark on what I consider is year two on the ERI Action Plan.

While scouring through the myriad of information that we have at our disposal through Hansard, we know that ERI planned, over that three-year period, just over \$6 million. So, in essence, we are in year two where we were led to believe it requires about \$2 million for the implementation of this action plan. This is over and above the \$150 million that is allocated annually to education authorities under the School Funding Framework. Although it is a smaller amount from an investment point of view, it is still significant. The reason why I want to draw the attention to it is I find there are a lot of complexities. This is a very complex matrix to understand. I would assume it's even more of a complex matrix to deliver from the department's perspective, and with over nine commitments and over 18 action areas, it's clear that the department has its work cut out for it.

I'll give the credit where credit is due. The plan itself is fairly impressive by design. It's definitely a collaborative piece that's taken a very coalescing and maturing approach and it has a lot of deliverables with some very, I would call it a very aggressive yearly target. So for those criteria I give the department kudos for bringing such a fairly complex target or innovation plan to the House. But I do have concerns, and concerns that are not oozing off of the opening comments and concerns that are not really oozing in the budget that we have before us.

Of course, first and foremost, I've got the concern about the resources and the constraint around the resources for this plan to actually come to fruition – as we heard, passive restraint from the Minister today. We've heard from the Minister of Finance that we're dealing with a financial situation that's very challenging. We've heard terms like we're making best use of existing resources. All these broad swaths of comments really put credence to the comments, "how are we funding this monstrosity," which really, as I said earlier, will become the guiding principles for our education system.

So with that, again, the Minister may want to comment to how is it that we're finding the funds to do so. It sounds like we're doing it internally. But given the magnitude and the importance of such an innovation, you would think that we would be putting significant dollars, significant investment dollars annually in the budget to address that in a way that I think the department has touted this as being literally the change that's before us.

More importantly, the concern I have around ERI is how the department is deciding its priorities within it. As I said, nine commitments, 18 action areas. There are tons of project charters imbedded in there and it isn't clear if the commitments within the ERI are actually placed in any type of sequential priority. It's really hard for Members, and if it is hard for Members to understand, I can only imagine how difficult it is for the general public or even people within the education system to understand what the order of importance is to the department. What's happening first, what's happening second, or are they all happening at the same time? I think that's an area to which a lot of us are struggling around.

Again, there's no denying. I've spoken and many people have spoken around the complexities, around our Aboriginal language culture-based education, many layers of governance there that are competing, some redundancy built in there. We're talking about inclusive schooling, the directives around that. Which ones get more priorities and, again, that clarity is a bit lacking and one in which I do challenge the department. If there's one thing you can make better it's to provide better communication on those priorities. What are we working on next? What's the next big hurdle? There is the appearance that we're kind of just all scattered doing all our different initiatives and yet somehow at the end we're going to coalesce to a common point of fruition where we're going to say, "We're done now." Many Members don't see it. If we don't see it as Members, I can't see how the public can see it as being doable, as well, within the life of what we're trying to achieve.

Again, when we talk about priorities, lots of discussion about the area of self-regulation, and I'll be the first to say I appreciate the concept of self-regulation in terms of where it fits in terms of working on attaining graduation standards. But really, is this something, does it have higher importance over other things? As we talked about the other day, we've got various initiatives. There's one big initiative I read there. It says, "new NWT high school system to complete various pathways and recognize school completion milestones." These are the type of statements that I'm reading in the ERI. When I read that I go, what does that mean? If I can't figure it out as an MLA, what does that mean? The general public isn't going to figure it out either. So, very broad. Are these broad statements? I don't want to use motherly because

it's not. I'm sure there are guiding principles in mind, but they are very difficult.

Again, as indicated in the House the other day, I spoke to the phasing out of the Alberta Achievement Test, AATs, and looking at any type of continuity during this overlap as to when these new assessment instruments would be in place. My concern is baseline. The parents' concerns are baseline; the kids' concerns are baseline. We live in a world where we want to know how we fit in the world of competitiveness. So when we hear that AATs are being phased out, many of us are going, well, what are we going to use? Whatever we do use, are we masking potential issues that are still going to be lurking in the shadows of our education system as to whether we're meeting basic standards at a national level? These questions are still not readily available for people, including MLAs.

Finally, the challenge, I know – and it would be a huge challenge to write a document of that magnitude – is how the readability of that document really is in its basic format. What I mean by that is there are so many synonyms imbedded within this ERI where it talks about commitments, initiatives, areas of action, draft plans, project charters. Again, so many moving parts, so many different synonyms that the plain language component sometimes is missed.

So, I did spend a lot of my time on the ERI component, which I think was definitely missing within the opening comments, but I'm sure I'll have more as we get into detail. Those are my opening comments. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Any response, Mr. Lafferty?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. Obviously, when I talk about the passive restraint, we haven't touched the school boards and also the Aurora College. More specifically to passive restraints, obviously it had an impact on our department, all the departments across the Northwest Territories. So I've been dealing with the school boards and the college on this particular subject, notifying them that we're not going there at this time. I've respected that and I continue to work closely with the school boards at this level.

The whole ERI, Education Renewal and Innovation, obviously it's a large initiative, it's a huge undertaking and it will make drastic changes in the lives of our community members. It will be very beneficial. We've identified approximately \$6.2 million of our initiatives. As the Member stated, it's over and above the \$150 million, yes it is, and we feel that it's very important that we highlight some of the worthwhile initiatives within our department to continue implementing this very important piece of work that's before us.

We've highlighted 2014-15, \$2.4 million; 2015-16, \$2 million; and 2016-17, \$1.798 million. So that adds up to the three-year plan of \$6.24 million. This is a priority for my department and also for this government, as well, and we've heard over and over from the Regular Members and even the forum, starting from Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative until today, that we need to improve our overall education system. That's what we're doing. We're making changes to our Education Act; we're making changes to our education programming across the Northwest Territories. We have not made any drastic changes over the last three decades within our education system, so this is very important piece of work.

We're fully aware that Alberta is making some changes, as well, within their overall education system. So we're closely monitoring their system as well.

Yes, we need to have clear communication dialogues when it comes to having some of the programs that have been identified that some of the community members may not be fully aware of, but we will be out there, we will be out to the communities, out to the regions talking about the whole Education Renewal and Innovation. We want that to be planted in everybody's thinking. Even the kids need to be aware of what we're planning and the changes. We're also working with our partners across the Northwest Territories. The Literacy Council obviously plays a key role in developing an overall communication strategy, a plan to deliver plain speak language on the Education Renewal and Innovation. This is an area that we feel that we need to have plain speaking language on the Education Renewal and Innovation.

The AATs, obviously Alberta is going away with that. They're doing another student assessment of their programming. Again, we are working very closely with them and how it's going to look for the Northwest Territories. We are developing some areas of initiatives in that respect as well. As I stated before, the education system within Alberta is also changing, so both Alberta and the Northwest Territories are on the verge of overhauling our education system for the betterment of our jurisdiction.

Those are just, I believe, the key points that I wanted to address on the Member's comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Any further general comments? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a number of comments in no particular order. This is such a large department that it's kind of hard to know where to start.

I appreciate Mr. Dolynny's comments about ERI. It is a huge undertaking, and I appreciate the

Minister's response as well. But it is a huge undertaking and I do have to say that I am still concerned that the department is trying to fund most of the changes that they're making through the ERI Initiative. They're trying to make those changes with money from within. If we are ever going to effect change and do it properly it needs to... In most cases when it's a new initiative, it needs new money.

That leads me right into junior kindergarten, which was an initiative. It was funded basically from within, and I don't think it was funded properly. It took money away from school authorities and put it into the Junior Kindergarten Program, and basically we're robbing from Peter to pay Paul. I have to reiterate that I don't think that a new initiative should be put into place by taking away from organizations which already have a good use for those funds.

I wanted to comment a bit on school attendance. The Minister made a statement the other day about school attendance and the importance of it. I agree wholeheartedly with the Minister. It's absolutely important that we keep the kids in school. We've started on a, the royal we, the department has started on a campaign to try and increase attendance, and shortly after the Minister's statement, Members received pamphlets and posters in our office. I looked at those today and I'm concerned about the money that we're spending on these and whether or not it's going to be for good value. I'm not at all convinced that posters and pamphlets are going to keep our kids in school. I think it needs a broader campaign. I believe at some point the Minister mentioned that there are many stakeholders requiring to be involved, and there absolutely does. We have to involve the parents in getting the kids to stay in school; we have to involve band councils and chiefs and local leaders in getting the kids to stay in school. I haven't seen a plan from the department on how we're going to do that, how we're going to involve the people, more people than just the department in trying to increase our attendance. If we don't have an all-encompassing campaign involving many people, it's not going to succeed. I firmly believe that just having pamphlets and posters in the schools or in the community is not going to work.

The Alberta Achievement Tests have been mentioned. I will have a question when we get there. I'm a little confused about whether or not we are still using those tests. I thought we weren't. I thought in this current school year that we had done away with AATs.

Inclusive schooling is an issue and particularly the funding or how the department funds inclusive schooling. The Minister has been talking about evaluating how we fund inclusive schooling for at least two years, probably more like three or four,

and we have yet to see any results of any evaluation. It has now been lumped into an evaluation of school funding in general, and that's maybe okay, but it's putting off again, for probably another year, any evaluation on how inclusive schooling is funded. This is long overdue. The School Funding Framework is overdue but the Inclusive Schooling Funding Framework is much more overdue, and I think we are not being fair to school authorities and children who need the biggest help, because I believe that they're not being properly funded. Kids end up without assistance when they should have it. I'm disappointed that we are not going to see, I don't think, any kind of a resolution to the inclusive schooling funding formula any time soon.

I've been talking a lot about income security in the last little while. The Minister knows that I have some problems with some of the ways that we interpret some of the policies and some of the regulations under income security. I don't know if there is any intent on the part of the department to do an evaluation of income security. The last one was in 2007. I think it's probably time that we did do another one, and it's time that we compared ourselves to the rest of the country and find out whether or not we have policies which are either contradictory with other policies within government or policies which are punitive for our income support clients, because I think there certainly are some.

At committee in, well, I think it was when we reviewed business plans, committee talked a bit about Aurora College and the desire for Members to see the budget from Aurora College. I believe we were advised that we were going to see that budget and I don't think we've seen it, so I will have a question when we get to that page.

I think the perspective of Members is that we give a huge amount of money to Aurora College and there ought to be some accountability from the college to the House, to the Members and to the committee that is responsible for education, which is the Committee on Social Programs. Yet, the Minister seems to say that any accountability should go through the Minister. I would disagree with him on that. I think that the college needs to be more open, certainly with Members, or the Minister needs to be more open with college information to Members, because we really have no opportunity right now. We don't even get the budget, and we have no opportunity to have any kind of evaluation or consideration of how the college is spending their money.

I think that's about it. I'm a little bit disjointed but I would like to just say that I'll have questions when we get to each individual page, so I don't need a response from the Minister unless he feels that he absolutely has to do that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Member is not requesting a response from the Minister at this time. If there is anything he has a desire to respond to in this, maybe he could add it after the next Member who is going to provide general comments. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just had some opening comments, I guess, some of the things that have been coming up over the last year. Obviously, education is of great importance to most of us here. One of the biggest budgets here, obviously.

Some of my colleagues talked about, obviously, the pressure that junior kindergarten placed on our educators, our DEAs, the South Slave Divisional Education Board. I guess we were just concerned about how that rolled out, and obviously, we're looking forward to reviewing and seeing how that will work out in the future. I think, from Hay River's perspective, we had a lot of early childhood development programs in place, so there is a lot of pressure if junior kindergarten was a mandatory issue or had to be rolled out that it would affect a lot of those organizations, so we were highly concerned in that area. We're looking forward to seeing how we can work with the department on some sort of Junior Kindergarten Program in some of the places that want it, but I think it has to be wanted and it can't be a cookie cutter approach of this is the way we're going to roll it out. I think regions and communities have to make a decision on how they want to affect this implementation of junior kindergarten. I'm looking forward to some of that discussion in the future.

The education renewal, obviously, I guess it's hard for a lot of people to wrap their head around how we're going to renovate the whole building and still be able to live here and live in the facility. I don't know how we re-form education and still have education operational. Making some changes will put a lot of pressure on the cost. I'm not sure where and how we're going to roll this all out. I'm not clear on the complete plan of how that's going to happen. So, I mean, we're hearing concerns about that and obviously we have our DEA and our council that are just a little bit leery of how that's going to roll out. Because of the pressures that they have financially, they're constantly looking at where the dollars are coming from. You know, debating whether they bus or not bus. Just to be able to find some dollars to keep programming going and, you know, keeping the kids educated.

Some other concerns there, obviously. You know, I think as a resource centre we see a lot of pressure, a lot more kids, you know, and obviously the social passing puts pressures in the classrooms. Because of the funding issues there aren't as many assistants that we can put there. So there's a lot of angst when we go to our meetings with our DEAs

and councils to talk about stuff, because it seems like we're asking more of them without any dollars attached to it. They're obviously finding a lot of pressure, and I keep saying pressure because I walk into the building and you can just feel that there's angst there. They're concerned about how it's going to roll out. The pressures that they currently have, how can they do more? You know, it's very difficult for us to sit here and support the way some of the things roll out from the department when the DEAs don't get a lot of consultation. They might get a quick visit, but, I mean, the whole process is they want to be able to implement it the way they want.

One of the things recently in talking in our constituency meeting, in talking to one of the people, was even the sponsored iPads that we've talked about, thinking that putting iPads into schools or putting them into early childhood development would be a great idea. But, I mean, the problem is that with that technology comes more need for support, more technical support, and we don't really have that many people in the schools that have the IT support. So, I mean, we have keen teachers that will take an interest in it and they seem to be the go-to for that technical support but, you know, to get additional iPads, it sounds like a great idea for the youth, but when it puts more pressure on the teachers and somebody to deal with how that iPad broke down today or it's not working the way it's supposed to is a concern. I mean, that's one concern we just heard recently.

You know, in this department, obviously I've talked a fair bit about linking our post-secondary students to the jobs that we offer, the vacancies that we have. I think we need to work harder and I think we've made some strides, some steps, to make sure we have a link, a contact with those post-secondary students. I think that's one key to get more people from the Northwest Territories to come back and work in the Northwest Territories. Once they get back here, they start living here, they get jobs, they buy a house, you know, they're entrenched in the community. So I think we need to work really closely with HR to get that. I don't think we have that many students and maybe the Minister can give some information on the actual amount we're dealing with, but it seems to me it could be manageable to be able to contact those people, especially with today's technology, e-mails and stuff like that, social media, to get out the information of, you know, we want you to come back, and linking, you know, like I was asking this week with the Minister of HR, linking those jobs so that we have the ability to offer them a job before they get their last year done in their degree or their technical institution. You know, we have these skilled labourers that want to come back to the Northwest Territories, not even looking south because I already got a job, you know, in one of the

communities or in Yellowknife or wherever I'm from. I've been able to land a job, so why would I even worry about looking anywhere else? That's most of my comments, Madam Chair. If the Minister could give me a quick response, that would be great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. We talk about the overall ERI. It's a huge undertaking. We're hearing from Regular Members that this is a big initiative, and we also hear about the JK, obviously the decision from October 30, 2014, to put a stop to the second and third phase and to continue with rolling out to the small communities for last year and also next year. So, we continue to work with the school boards on that. We have 19 communities going forward and 18 the following year.

Keeping the kids in school, obviously it's a priority. We've given out posters and pamphlets. Obviously, this is for outside schools where kids usually hang out when they're skipping class. It's a message from their peers. It's a message from the youth that they associate with. It's not our message as a department, but it's their messaging. So, I think we want to make that clear; it's coming from the youth, all these messages. We're hoping that this will get some attention from those individuals who are just wandering around in the community.

Inclusive schooling, obviously the evaluation status, Member Bisaro talked about that, when the report is coming out. Part of the report obviously will be concluded and ready for March 31, 2015. That is our target date, because this is another huge undertaking that we're very serious about, how we currently fund the school boards.

Another one is Income Support, the policy. Obviously, the policy had a dramatic change in 2007 and we are going through another change in 2015, this year. So, with any policy we do make changes that reflect the needs of our clientele, the northern residents.

The college budget obviously will be before you, through my department. We provide funding on an annual basis and they decide operations and maintenance of the college. They have their own expenditure and they account to us, as well, as a department. So, we will be delivering that through this venue.

JK, again, a lot of pressure, as Member Bouchard has indicated. We are currently, again, continuing to work with the school boards on this particular area.

ERI, again, we are working with the Literacy Council to have plain language on what would be the funding, what kind of programs would be available and what changes are coming. We will be

getting into detail, Madam Chair, as we get into our mains.

The iPad system that the Member has referred to, obviously that's an area that we will be doing a pilot project beginning this month, in March. We're dishing out at least a hundred iPads on a trial basis to the parents, and we're going to find out where the kinks are and what needs to be fixed and so forth. Then, in the fall of this year, the remaining iPads will be distributed to the new parents. So we're fully aware of the system support. The mechanism should be place, I fully agree with the Member. This is an area where we are working with the system within the Education department and also DECs and DEAs. They have their own resources that we need to work with on the IT.

Post-secondary students linked to job opportunities, this is exactly what we're doing. It is part of the growth strategy. We have made some changes in our policy about how we can have easier access to post-secondary students. From here on, we are going to have access to those students, take them out for supper and hear their perspective and what their interests are. We have approximately 1,450 students who are accessing student financial assistance. Obviously, we want to see that number increase as well. We have made some changes so we can have access to those individual students so we know where they have job opportunities. Those are some remarks that were addressed to my attention. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the department's budget. I welcome the Minister and his staff. I think in the Minister's opening comments it had a lot of keywords that the Members are very interested in: early childhood development, education renewal, cost of living, supports to those most vulnerable and so on. I was happy to see the capacity to both re-profile and achieve new funding for key initiatives in this department.

On the income assistance side there are a number of expenditures planned to improve that situation. I think it is \$6.6 million over the next four years starting with our first fiscal year coming up. This, based on my written questions earlier in the term, would bring income assistance up to about \$26 million. So we are steadily increasing the amount of subsidy we are putting forward for supporting our residents, but I would ask the question: how many people is this getting out of poverty as opposed to supporting them in poverty? How many people is this getting a job as opposed to supporting them in their unemployment? How many people is this reducing health care requirements for as opposed to keeping them in unhealthy situations and housing and so on?

We saw that a guaranteed annual income was a completely different model in the one comprehensive test done in Canada where it was done in a five-year run with an additional eight years of comprehensive monitoring was proven to test those sorts of things. Where is the innovative thinking? Is there an openness to consider doing this in one region? I would even support this for the Minister's region or the Sahtu or wherever. Rather than just do the same thing harder and bumping up our subsidies every year without addressing these common issues, there is an opportunity to seek a more effective way in dealing with them in a more effective way that removes the issues.

Education renewal is something the Minister is getting a lot of feedback on and I would like to add my voice in support of this. I appreciate, in particular, the bit of focus and the concept of self-regulation, something that teachers are familiar with these days and I have learned a little bit about, and I also think we need the social and emotional learning approach. Perhaps that's already considered in the Education Renewal Initiative.

Ultimately, I prefer to see the Education Renewal Initiative adopt the Finnish education model, as I've spoken about before. Yet, I see the direction we are taking with education renewal is at least a step in that direction and I'm happy to see that.

I'm not sure how this exactly fits in with the system-wide review. I would be interested in hearing more about that, and maybe that's an ECE as opposed to a system-wide review. I'm not sure I have that right. I know the Minister did make a comment, a system-wide review of the education system. Where does education renewal fit in that? Again, I see a real opportunity in that case to explore how we can adopt and adapt the Finnish education system which has proven highly successful to our northern jurisdiction.

The expansion of early childhood development, I know the Minister knows it does my heart good to see investments in this area. Depending how those dollars are spent, are we going to have another iPad fiasco? Is this Chevron dollars or another fossil fuel agency that's getting free advertising, government-sponsored advertising? I hope not. I hope that these are real on-the-ground programs, community-based programs that will work with families, parents-to-be and young families, as the Minister says, zero to five. We need to provide the students with fertile minds when they enter into the education system. They are quite different approaches there.

The Skills for Success Initiative I think is quite good in theory, but I would be concerned, as many others have who speak to me, over the trend to believe that we know through the influence of industry on us exactly what sort of skills are needed out there. To me and others, we are supporting the production

of automatons, the big wheels of some rig, away from home and family with this sort of thinking. So I throw out a caution there. I think education should be focused on allowing students to develop their full potential. That's been demonstrated to be the best for the economy, for the well-being of families and so on. That's treading a line there, so I would urge the Minister to be cautious in that regard.

Decentralization, if there is any department that should already be decentralized, I expect it would be ECE. If or when this happens, I hope the department will look at a region with a very low ratio of government jobs per capita such as the Tlicho and Sahtu regions, for example. South Slave, of course, has a higher ratio even than the North Slave and I don't see that kind of accommodation in the decentralization policy.

This is my last item. There is still a serious deed to provide Aurora College with the academic freedom that every other such institution in Canada enjoys and this one does not. I think that's limiting them. There are some inefficiencies there, still misreporting and whatnot. I see we approved them for budgets in the mains. Their year-end report shows that they way overspend and somehow get the money from the department and not infrequently end up with a surplus, quite different numbers than what we approve. So there is a considerable amount of murkiness still with the whole Aurora College situation. I know we have tried to work on this, but we haven't been successful. I think it's a fertile area to keep examining and tuning up. The fundamental thing provides the academic freedom such an institution should have.

I will leave it at that, Mr. Chair. I look forward to the detail, but I would appreciate any remarks the Minister might have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. First and foremost, obviously, the income security, improved programs. The Member asked if there have been any improvements, whether it be getting people off income security. We've had some changes with income security. Since 2009 we had approximately 3,400 cases and in 2013 it went down to 3,100 cases. There has been a drop of 8 percent over the last five years, approximately. That is a substantial change in our view. Obviously, we want to have a higher margin as well. That's our target that we're going to push forward with.

We are creating five employment service officers into the communities that will tackle those areas, as well, and having people ready for career choices. Those individuals will be working very closely with the community organizations. The 3,400, now it's down to 3,100. Obviously, we want to decrease that

number as well. We will be reporting back to standing committee on the progress at that level.

ERI, the self-regulations. There has been a lot of discussion in that area where we brought in experts, very professional in that field and provided workshops, provided training to our school system. Even the Regular Members attended as well. This has been very successful today even though it's very preliminary. But we will continue to provide those types of services. Through that area, ERI obviously is also working in line with the Early Childhood Development Framework and there's also the Skills for Success Initiative as well. There are three big ticket items within my department that go hand in hand from early childhood, zero to five, K to 12, post-secondary and even beyond to workforce development, having our people with the required tools. This is a prime focus of my department.

Education, allowing students to reach their fullest potential. Obviously, that is what we're focusing on. From what we've heard from the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, they want us to focus on early childhood, and that's what we're doing as part of one of our initiatives. Also, there has been talk about our secondary students are not ready for post-secondary, so ERI will be addressing that, as well, the discussion from the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative. Through that venue it gave us a lot of feedback, and based on that, we have ERD, ERI and Skills for Success before us today.

Decentralization, how can we focus on those low-ratio, small communities. That's our prime target. We are currently addressing that within our department, 15 positions throughout the Northwest Territories. Obviously, I'd like to see that number increase over time, and that is the target that we're going to push forward within my department.

Obviously, Aurora College has been brought up on numerous occasions and how the reporting mechanism should be improved. This is an area that my department has been working very closely with the college board and also the senior staff on how we can improve in those areas. I take the Member's words into serious consideration. Accountability plays a key role. That has been relayed to the college board already.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Committee, I have several Members: Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Blake, Mr. Moses and Mr. Nadli. Next I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a few comments. I was going to wait for detail; however, I'm going to make a few comments and I do not need a response from the Minister. I'm going to make my comments to the Minister and I'll wait for some of the details.

I do want to say to the Minister that there are some really huge initiatives that are happening within his department, and one of the big initiatives is as a result, I'm hoping, from the achievement test results. It's shown clear as day the state of education in our small communities. I'm not very proud to hold up that we are putting our children in that state of education even though we're encouraging them to finish school. I really have to question the quality of their education. Some of my colleagues talked about some new initiatives going forward, and I'm looking forward from the department to move those initiatives and give strength. I have family and the Members have families in the small communities, either nieces or nephews. We're responsible. We have to really fight hard for them in that area. There is a lot of work to be done in that area.

I also wanted to talk about the idea Mr. Bromley brought up about guaranteed income. I like that idea. Some ideas Mr. Bromley and I don't share, but this one here I really like, and I think that we should try that somewhere in our Sahtu communities. I think that's a good idea. I think that's something that we really need to look at. There are so many concepts that could work. I've always talked about our generation that comes up, I mean, working for your own and becoming independent. Growing up in small communities we had to make do with what we had and rely on our own capabilities and skills, because, at that time, welfare wasn't handed out so easy like this. We become so used to these, benefits you call entitlements. That's not a good way to put it. But see if we can make it work where they can work it off and gain skills. I know that when they had the oil and gas activity, I know the Sahtu income support assistance went down quite considerably, according to the Minister. You talked about that, and it showed that done responsibly, the oil and gas does have a positive spin on our economics and to our government coffers and income support. But now they don't have any, so it's going back up again and dependency on government is even stronger. It's a real challenging task. It's almost, you know, what do we do? Where is this at in terms of helping our people?

I do want to say thanks to the Minister that you've helped us with the needs assessment in our region. I do want to thank you for that. It's good to know the snapshot of the situation in the Sahtu and I can look at other small communities in the North. I'm looking forward to a phase two of that plan of the Sahtu needs assessment and going forward some of the initiatives here, and the community workers in our region is a real plus. The service centre employees are really making a big difference in our region. It's a really good idea. The elders appreciate that because they can speak...(inaudible)...each other.

They know the policies and they know where to go. That's a really good initiative by the department.

I do want to say that we asked, and the Minister has responded by having the feasibility study for the Sahtu tech, to come out and work with the person and come into Norman Wells. He did his work on if there was going to be a concept, a model on a Sahtu technical institution in our region, what it will look like. I look forward to that report coming back, because that is something that the people have been asking for a long, long time.

There is lots of work that has to be done by this department. These are general comments. Again, I don't need to have a responsible Minister. I just want to make comments there for this department here.

We have a lot of students in post-secondary which is really good to see. I'm very surprised the numbers are increasing. People want to go back to school because they can't really do much in the community because it's limited. There's no economic activity going on. There are only so many teachers we can hire, so many nurses. Those jobs are pretty well guaranteed in the community and it's kind of levelled off. Then we have a lot of young graduates who are coming out. They're doing the best they can to get out of the community and get out of the region. They come here in Yellowknife, Smith or Inuvik and they're going to school. I was very surprised to hear that the Land Corporation is sponsoring 30 students in some fashion. Your region did that, sponsoring young people. We're doing it and other regions are doing it. I'm really happy to see that. They're doing whatever they can. They have to get an education and come back to have a career. But even in that sense, even people who have Grade 3 have a very successful business in the Sahtu region, Grade 7. Some have successful businesses. It means that they know how to work. They've made sacrifices, getting up seven days a week. They know how to work. Their work ethic is strong.

So I guess...(inaudible)...the other equation to this is there are people that know how to work the system. It shows in what money we give out. It's a big task there. I want to push right to when we finish our Assembly here. No slowing down. The train is gone and we're going to keep going. You know what I mean? We have to keep going. We can't slow down. For me, it's a big department and I look forward to the details. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of comments here. It's not all negative. I know there are a lot of challenges in the department. I would just like to start out by saying, under the Aboriginal languages, I think our teachers

are doing a very good job in the communities, in the riding I represent anyway. I can't speak for any others, but it's really encouraging to see young children, five or six years old, singing away in their traditional languages. I know the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit languages are at risk, but it's really promising to see this take place in our communities. I would just like to let them know they're doing a good job in that area.

Some of the other challenges that we are having are with social passing. I brought that up last week. A lot of parents believe we are not challenging our students. That's the bottom line. They feel our students don't really have to try to do their work. They know they're going to pass anyway. It's not like the way it used to be back when you had to get a passing mark. If you were below 50 percent, then you had to redo the grade over. They would like to see that system back in place. That way, our students have to do their best to get good marks, which also helps them when they move to post-secondary. They feel we're setting them up for failure with social passing. I think it's time to change back to the way we do business here.

Also, with junior kindergarten, I know it's not mandatory, but some of the schools do want to try to make this work. But as we said awhile back, we need the proper funds to make this happen if we're going to keep encouraging this. Doing it within our current budget is just not doable. Like anything else, if we want it to succeed, we have to give them the proper resources.

Also, under income support, I had a number of people who brought this up. It seems there isn't anyone making sure that people who are on income support are either trying to find work or doing some sort of community service hours. That's supposed to be mandatory in order to receive income support.

Also on the topic of income support, the community of Tsiigehtchic used to have an income support worker in the community a number of years back. They would like to have this service again. It's time for them to have someone in the community who actually knows the people there and who needs assistance and feel they could provide a better service.

Also, under SFA, it has come up in the last couple of years. We have students who are trying to go to university, whether it's in Alberta or other places, but at times they can't get a full caseload so they're not granted SFA. We're supposed to be encouraging our people to go to university and college down in the South. We need to provide our students with the resources that they need, whether they're taking two or three courses. As long as they're trying to get a university degree, that's the main thing. We need to encourage them.

Also, under the home heating subsidy, a lot of elders really appreciate this. That will help them,

especially the homeowners. The cost of living up in our region is almost double what it is here in Yellowknife with the fuel costs and groceries. Some people are trying to do a little work on the side during this any chance they get, but they have a cut-off of employment. They'd like to see that increased if possible.

Under the small community employment, another great initiative, a lot of communities are taking advantage of this in the smaller communities. They're doing a lot of capacity building in the communities, especially with cutbacks in the bands. This funding really helps to train their people and have employment where it's really needed. With a 35 percent employment rate, it's very challenging in our smaller communities. Those are the opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Yes, the Aboriginal language, obviously we're starting to see results on whether it be the immersion programs, the early learning programming on the language. There have been some pilot projects in the communities. Now we're pushing more into the communities and regions. We are starting to see results. It's a very excellent initiative that we are working with our partners across the Northwest Territories.

When we talk about the passing peer placement, we've heard from various community members, elders, educators, parents, when we did the forum on Aboriginal student achievement, and we've heard mixed reactions from the general public. Some support, some not supporting. So through the educational renewal we want to tackle this area, how we can best mitigate that. Obviously, through my department, as it stands now, the policy does not prevent schools from retaining or holding back students if deemed appropriate or agreed upon by their parents. So it is a parent's wish if they want to retain that student, their child back or move them forward. So we work closely with the district education council and also the authority and also with the parents and educators on what's best for the child, to hold them back or pass with their peers. That has been ongoing for a number of years now. As I stated, there's been mixed reaction. We're doing the best we can to work with that, with our partners.

The JK, obviously, we provide options, in the Member's riding as well, that they opt out. The review is underway, and based on the review, that should be available by this summer. Based on that it would have to be decided upon for the future of how it's going to look for junior kindergarten to be delivered as of 2017 and onwards.

Income support worker, there was one in Tsiigehtchic, as the Member alluded to, a while

ago. There have been some increases in caseloads in some of the communities. I'll have to check if Tsigehtchic is one of them; I can't be sure at this point, I don't have the information in front of me, but we will be gathering that information if a caseload is high in that region. If it is, then we are identifying some of the income security workers to these communities that are in high caseloads in addition to the workforce that they have. So now, obviously Tsigehtchic is served out of Fort McPherson, so we'll gather more information on that.

SFA, obviously the policy that we have is that in order to qualify for SFA you've got to have three courses or higher, and that's been the standard process for quite some time now. Yes, I understand where the Member's coming from that we need to support all students. There are a variety of subsidy programs as well. SFA is just one of the key areas. There's the Labour Market Agreement that we have with the federal government that supports those individuals who want to pursue, whether it be the trades access or other programming and there's also, at the community level, access programming. Then there are a couple more programs that are out there that we encourage those individuals to access as well. With SFA we will be coming back to the standing committee with some changes that we want to undertake as we move forward for short-term and long-term strategy. So, I will be presenting to standing committee on proposed changes that will benefit and also attract our students to come back to the North.

Small community employment has been very successful to date and we continue to support that project as well. We continue to make it a priority for my department on the long-term plans, as well, because it is building capacity at a community level, even at the regional level.

So, Mr. Chair, those are just some of the remarks for the Member. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Next I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate being able to comment on our last opportunity with this department within the life of this government. You do learn a lot over the three years, whether it's through the business planning or the main estimates budget discussions that we're currently having. We've also had a lot of correspondence with this department here and you do learn a lot, especially if you chair the committee that's the oversight for this department, in terms of what was said, reports that were done, documents that might have been tabled or even just more consulting and going out to try to get more information to make the best decisions. I'll make reference later, and I may have had questions in the House about reports that we've done, but we're kind of re-creating the same engagements that we've done before and I think

that, you know, I guess the time for reporting and consulting is over. We need to start creating action within, not for us as a government but for the people and the youth, and I think that the sooner we can make these changes and start investing to create these changes and create action, then the better it is for our youth who are in the school system right now and the better it is for the Northwest Territories as a whole in terms of healthy, educated people free from poverty. That saying, which is one of our priorities, holds more true to this department specifically because of the education component and the income assistance component. I think that's where we need to focus.

With that said, I do appreciate the dialogue that the department has had with standing committee over the last three years. Something that I have told the department is you do have committee support on initiatives that we've done, action that's been taken, and we pretty well have support from all Members in moving forward because we all are here for the same reason, and that's to get our youth educated, quality education so that they can be prepared for life but at the same time help with the economy in the Northwest Territories.

With that said, I know I won't be asking for a response, maybe a comment is what I'm saying. But I know that the department does know that committee is asking for another meeting in the near future to discuss everything that you're hearing here more in depth and get updates on some of these initiatives that were being discussed, because there's been a lot of consultation over the last three years and I know committee wants it, I know the Minister wants it and we want to do it right for the people of the Northwest Territories.

I think this government's been very strong in the sense of trying to support, trying to give the funding, trying to give the resources. Every opportunity in questioning every action that department does, because it really doesn't impact us but it impacts the people of the Northwest Territories as well as our budgets. You know, we have had some small successes and we have the potential for huge successes if we do what we're going to say and stop doing the reports and stop doing the back and forth paperwork and we start putting our words into action.

I want to just highlight some of the successes, and you've heard a lot of concerns from Members here, but with the Board of Governors of Aurora College it's been great to dialogue with them from the committee stance and also when they came up to Inuvik to be able to sit with them in their meetings and get some concerns that we had from the region and also talk about how we utilize all three campuses and make sure that where we're putting money where we're getting the best bang for our dollar.

In your opening comments I'm glad to see that there are investments in income assistance. However, I think Mr. Bromley raises a good point that we have the productive choices. But what good are the productive choices doing if people are just going there to get a paper signed and to receive their income assistance? We're keeping them in poverty, and as a result it's putting us into a more fiscal restraint situation.

Good job on the minimum wage increase. I think there were a lot of people who appreciate that.

Early childhood development, there's a lot of money going into training. However, if we could invest that money, the dollars into an Early Childhood Development diploma or certificate then we get legitimate certification for our early childhood programming staff and I think that's where we need to look at Education Renewal and Innovation. That all started because of Members questioning where the department was going and seeing some of the challenges and barriers. As a result, we had to re-create our whole education system. It's amazing to look at that and to look at all the statistics that we have, especially in the small communities. Good job to the department for responding to that and to the Members for asking the tough questions and being persistent to get those questions answered.

The Aboriginal School Achievement has been hugely discussed right from day one almost, and I know the ASA committee in Inuvik is wondering: okay, well, we've done all this work, we made these recommendations, now how do we implement this? Where's the support? I know it does fall on the education authorities, but there has to be some push from the ministerial department to say this is what they've done. These are front-line workers that are making these recommendations. We need to support them financially or with the resources.

Our graduation rates increased. Good job. However, they're still low, really low. It begs to ask about social passing. These individual education plans, how many people are graduating with that? I know we've got to open up the Education Act and make amendments to that so that people who are on IEPs do get the credentials so that they can get their diploma so they can get out into the workforce.

Another thing that's been discussed and worked on is these wraparound services for at-risk children and families. I don't need to get it now, but when we do meet with standing committee again I'd like to get an update on how well that's working, whether it's something that's been successful and what barriers there are on that. I'd like to give, you know, good program with these three, the e-learning program, as well as, I mentioned here earlier today, the East Three gardening program. Something that we can address. Attendance, getting students engaged, building skills for the future and feeding them, healthy nutrition.

There's a lot of good stuff that this department has done moving forward. I know I didn't highlight all of them, but there are some small successes that we had in the past. However, there are still lots of challenges. I've got a whole other sheet here that I can discuss.

With the time allocated, I think that one thing that I mentioned last week was the Skills for Success strategy, and when I went to look for it online to see what updates there were, I found the labour force development symposium as well as the Labour Force Development Framework, which should be guiding us up until the year 2020, and yet we're going to create a new action plan under Skills for Success when all the information is in there. There were 30 suggestions that were provided. I made this clear in the House last week. Yet, we're going to spend I don't know how many more dollars to do the regional engagements and then do the symposium here in Yellowknife again. That's potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars when we could be taking some of those 30 suggestions, putting them into action, getting people ready for the workforce. But yet we're consulting again and we're bringing people to talk about it, talk about something we talked about four years ago or five years ago. It just doesn't make sense to me and I think that that needs to be a priority looking at why do the same thing over that we've done in the past and not creating action on it.

The DEA funding, the high costs of doing business up in the Beaufort-Delta, travel, when they have board meetings, bringing them in. There is a lot of money that goes to travel. I think that needs to be addressed in terms of formula funding.

Attendance. Our attendance is still low. We need to find incentives. I know in Inuvik at the elementary school they have an incentive program that allows kids to come into school. I know the learning centre in Inuvik has an attendance incentive program to get kids into their seats so they can get educated. That's the first step, is getting the kids in the seat.

Look at the successes that we have across the Northwest Territories and build on them, share them. Have a place where East Three can show people what they're doing with e-learning and with this gardening program. I'm sure every community has a great program. I think in Providence they have the active living where they had people go to the gym in the morning, get ready for school, and it was successful. We need to find a baseline or a framework where we can share our successes.

As I said, I know that standing committee did put in a request to meet with the department on a more in-depth discussion on all these concerns and updates on everything that's been discussed and implemented since the onset of this government. I really don't need a response. The Minister can respond if he wants, but I know that committee is

looking forward to meeting with the department and getting a more comprehensive update and what has the department done in what they've been promising us with action plans and with the Education Renewal Initiative and just moving forward. The OAG report has a lot of recommendations that we pushed in the House, made motions to, and we just want to see that it's just not sending paperwork back and forth and that it's time for action. With that, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Moses. I'll take that as comments. Next I have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of comments. For the most part, I think education is, of course, a lifelong process. I've been hearing comments that as soon as perhaps we finish high school and then go on to university it ends. I just wanted to be clear that I believe that education is a lifelong process and you only stop learning when perhaps you take your last breath.

That's a significant role that education plays in society, and especially here in the Northwest Territories. We're challenged with some very fundamental challenges in terms of the statistics, in terms of population, the distinctions in terms of the non-Aboriginals, First Nations, and we have a very small population base in the communities as well. We're very challenged, and so it's integral and critical that education, this department, being the second largest department of the GNWT in terms of expenditures and revenues, undertakes a very, very clear business philosophy, and as we process clients through the department, whether it's education, whether it's the language initiatives, whether it's income support, we process clients so that we treat them with dignity at the same time we at least embellish them and empower them with at least the tools to be successful. People standing in society that are very proud and have had a very remarkable experience of going through the department and coming out and feeling that, yes, I've been helped, I've been acknowledged, I've been validated, and I should be a very positive contributing member of society. That's how people should feel when they go through their experience with the Department of Education.

That's something, of course, I'm being presumptuous that it's being dealt with. Of course, like in a large operation, you have your human resources, you have your systems in place, and of course you have your financial resources in place, and you're trying to make the best use of it. In some respects, it could be limited, it could be a challenge that we're trying to meet major initiatives head on, but sometimes we're just challenged because there are other priorities that need our immediate attention. That's just the challenge of operating such a large department.

The thing that I strongly view is that in examining and taking a look at our Northwest Territories, at the same time our small communities, we have a lot of social challenges. Colleagues just stated the idea of social passing. Of course, we have some very fundamental issues too like alcohol and drugs that play into being at least some barriers of people leading successful lives.

Education, in terms of ensuring that at the end of the process of university or whatever degree or diplomas that our people might receive is our best hope for the future. It's our best hope for our youth so that they go through that experience of experiencing the role of getting to know the world and getting to know their limitations. At the same time, their potential of being very positive members of society, at least at the community level, and going forth. Being able to serve themselves and at the same time being able to play a role in the greater make-up of the family, plus the community and becoming very positive members of society. So that's our best hope for the future. I'm always reminded periodically in some groups, education, it's almost that you have to become two persons. You become Dene or First Nations and they also have to embrace the non-Aboriginal values too. So you almost have to become two persons.

In that perspective, too, I'm always reminded that some elders have always taken the view that we need to embrace education. It's almost like our people now have to hold the pen and become very productive members of society so that we're equal and on par with other groups throughout the world and that we can make advances in science, research and development. The sky is the limit and we begin perhaps branching out into space and that kind of stuff.

For the most part, I think this department plays a very big role in the community and it's encouraging that there have been efforts to try to make this department very strong and, at the same time, responsive. There have been discussions in terms of the Education Renewal Initiative and fundamental in that there's always the disparity between smaller communities, larger centres and larger big cities like Yellowknife. There's always the stark statistics in terms of how our students in small communities compare to the larger centres. We need to narrow that gap. We need to ensure that our students at the community level have the resources and, at the same time, that they have the best teachers in place so that they're in that support role.

Of course, the other thing I wanted to mention is the early childhood development. I understand there's going to perhaps be a reprinted version almost going back, but at the same time venturing forth. I hope we've heeded to our experience and trying to do things the right way and trying to make at least

all sectors of society, the communities involved, parents, there's the Aboriginal Head Start program, the schools, the district education authorities, we need to involve everyone to make it successful.

The other points that I wanted to also highlight is the idea that our language is always a concern and we need to closely monitor the initiatives that have gone forth. I know there has been some devolving of some responsibility to the regional Aboriginal First Nation groups, but at the same time, I think there needs to be close monitoring of ensuring that there is Aboriginal, at the very minimum, program initiatives going forth, but at the same time we're ensuring that no language comes to the threshold of extinction. We always need to closely monitor that.

The other point I wanted to make is, of course, there's always this idea that because we're involved with language we receive funding from the Department of Heritage through the federal government. There are always initiatives that we could advance and one of them is, of course, local radio stations. We need to ensure that we continue our support. Some communities have advanced, very sophisticated operations. At the same time, there are still remaining challenges in terms of trying to equip each radio station with all the tools that they need to make them successful, at the same time ensuring that, through the airwaves, our language is heard throughout the community.

Those are just some comments that I wanted to close off with, but at the same time one thing that I really experience well and been a product of is summer camps. I mean, there have been discussions in terms of on-the-land initiatives and I think maybe in the short term of the summer the department could perhaps consider summer camps. The idea doesn't necessarily have to be on the land, it could be an academic refresher or courses that the school offers for perhaps two weeks or maybe a month just to ensure that students that are behind are given an opportunity to catch up. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. We'll give the Minister an opportunity to reply. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. It is very true that education, obviously, is a lifelong journey. It's learning for life and when the Member talked about how we treat individuals, that we should be treating them with dignity, I fully support him on that level that we need to treat each other respectfully and with dignity as well. We've encountered that through the Income Security Program as an example that we've improved in so many ways of our professionals, how they interact with the public audience and vice versa. So we take that very serious.

Social challenges, obviously they're always before us whether it be alcohol or drug involvement. This is an interdepartmental strategy. It's not just my department. It deals with all other departments as well. I guess more specifically with Health and Social Services, Justice and so forth. So we have an integrated approach on dealing with issues that come to our attention. So it is a united approach when it comes to these matters.

Early childhood, I agree with the Member that we need to involve all parties, whether it be the Head Start, DECs, DEAs, community leadership. They need to be engaged and involved when there are changes within our programming. We work closely with the DEAs and DECs and Aboriginal leadership. So we'll continue to push that forward.

Aboriginal language, obviously we don't want it to be extinct. So this is an area that my department has been focusing on empowering on to the regions. We dished out around \$3.4 or \$3.5 million as a starting point to have Aboriginal leadership hire their own coordinator to deal with this particular area, language revitalization and cultural preservation.

We know we can do more in this area and it is the grassroots people that we're working with at the community level. This is just a starting point that we're allowing the Aboriginal governments the flexibility to make decisions on the funding that's been allocated to them.

The local radio stations are challenged. We hear clearly from the Members that the languages must be heard throughout the Northwest Territories, nine Aboriginal languages, French and English, and obviously CKLB is being missed out in the communities. It has been a very popular program over the years and my department continuously supports our contribution. The challenge is the federal government at this point. But I did meet with the federal government back in January and I did talk about CKLB, NCS, how we can possibly take over part of their portion of funding, potentially. This is the preliminary discussions that we've had with them. So it is with the federal government. So we're just waiting for them to make some sort of decision so I can move forward on this particular file. I also met with the NCS board chair just last week, and more specifically talking about CKLB, how can we improve in those areas. There's been a lot of great feedback from the chair. We provided some options that we can possibly move forward while we're waiting for the federal government. We've been in contact with CKLB administration on how we can best move forward and provide those options.

I'm a firm believer that CKLB should be back up and running because it is the voice of the North. We'll do what we can as a department to push that forward with the federal government. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Committee, general comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Committee, are you prepared to commence detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. We'll defer page 57 until consideration of all activity summaries. That being said, I'll get committee to turn to page 58, revenue summary, information item. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 59, active position summary. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have a question here in regards to the opening comments from the Minister. The last page of his opening comments talks about decentralizing nine positions into regional centres. I look at the figures on this page and compare them to 2014-15, also on this page, and I don't see where the changes are. There's an additional nine positions. But I guess if we're decentralizing positions, are we adding positions or are we decentralizing positions that exist already? If I can get an explanation of what these nine positions are, that would be my first question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. The nine positions that are going out to regional centres is one registrar of appeals; two linguists, Aboriginal Languages Secretariat; one registrar, teacher certification; and also five service officers that I have highlighted earlier. That's nine in total going out to the regional centres. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. Are they all new positions? There's an increase of nine positions from 2014-15 to 2015-16. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, there are nine positions. Five are new and four are from the existing pool that we have within Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. We have four current positions but there is an increase of nine. So there are five service officers. I understand that. The other four new positions, where are they going? What positions are they? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, we have three positions going to Hay River, one to Beaufort-Delta. The three positions going to Hay River area linguist, Aboriginal language services; a registrar, teacher certification in South Slave; a registrar of appeals in the South Slave, as well, so those three in Hay River and one linguist, Aboriginal languages

in the Beaufort-Delta, so those are the four positions that are going to regions. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: I don't think the Minister understood what I was asking. There was an increase of nine positions from last budget year to this one. Five of them are service officers. The other four are new positions. What are they? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, there are five positions, employment service officers, and one employment service officer for a PY in Behchoko is recorded as North Slave. There's also an assistant deputy minister position that is added to the aid and review of supervision of corporate services. That's Mr. Lovely here. Three French language translators are responsible for the implementation of the department's French language operating plan. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, just to confirm, that's three translators and an assistant deputy minister. Are they the four new positions in addition to the service officers? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, yes, that's correct.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. So, there are five new positions that are being decentralized, the service officers. The other four positions that he's mentioned, the two linguists and the two registrars, I guess, are those positions filled at the moment? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: At this point they're not filled yet. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: I guess I would like to know from the Minister, if these positions are not filled, will they be decentralized first and then filled, or will they be filled and then decentralized? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, part of the plan is to decentralize these positions and then fill the positions from there. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: That's good. Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm done.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, we're on page 59, active position summary, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 61, corporate management. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a few questions here. I see the department or this activity includes the overall development, design and planning of capital infrastructure projects. As we know, there's been a real paucity of infrastructure for the Department of Education over the last three years in the order of 2 or 3 percent of the infrastructure budget. I'm wondering, given the many requests the Minister has heard, at least for

the region I'm in, can we expect that there will be significant proposals coming forward to address some of the infrastructure deficiencies we see in, for example, some of the schools in Yellowknife and other areas. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll go to Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a capital planning process where we identify our needs and the risks associated with each one of those needs and put them forward through with all other GNWT needs as well. Those are ranked according to priority in terms of the highest risks and then it goes through that process and the end result is the capital plan that comes forward to standing committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lovely. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I understand the theory there. Of course, there's a record of us going through that process and then having them fall off that list. I'm just wondering: is the Minister planning on pushing for some capital infrastructure projects that are significant and above the 2 or 3 percent of government infrastructure projects for 2015-16? Oh, I guess we've already proved that. Maybe I better make it the next year. How many years? Oh, my gosh. We have so many years of little to no infrastructure investment by this department, one of our biggest...our second biggest department, I think. Let's look forward a little bit, and maybe this is what it takes is this sort of lead time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. As you are probably aware, over the years we had a number of major infrastructures in the past. Now that we're going through another process of infrastructure debates these coming few months, obviously those high priorities will be brought forward. At the end of the day, the decision will be made by the committee that's been established to deal with the capital infrastructure. We as the department bring forward our priority that we feel should be addressed within the schools or at the community level. We'll continue to push that forward as part of the process. Like I said, at the end of the day, the decision has to come down from the capital planning, the committee that decides on the process itself.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. I appreciate, I guess, that I now know I am dealing with this in a timely way, given that this will be discussed in the next few months. So, I guess I would ask the Minister, is he prepared to push for school projects to finally be addressed in Yellowknife and including Aurora College to try and

get them on the capital as soon as possible as a priority of this department?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: There is, obviously, a 20-year plan for schools, Yellowknife and also across the Northwest Territories. Based on that, if there is a need for a retrofit or a renovation or replacement of schools, those are discussions that we need to have, my department and the PWS, and put into the hopper of the capital planning process. I don't have that information in front of me. We will be debating that. We will be putting forward a proposal on the infrastructure that will be coming forward. What the Member is referring to, obviously the Yellowknife area, if there is going to be any infrastructure coming down the hopper, those are decisions that we need to have as a department and we need to have discussion. It is coming forward as part of the planning process.

MR. BROMLEY: I guess I'll have to leave it at that. Again, I'm not encouraged. This Minister has absolutely failed our education infrastructure in this area and the need just accumulates year after year, as he well knows.

The second area I want to talk about is the reform and innovation section that leads major innovation and reform initiatives. I'd like to talk a little bit about the possibility of a guaranteed basic income initiative. Would the Minister consider looking at that concept, looking at the research that's been done, looking at the Dauphin study and the gains that were achieved and lasted for 13 years, and considering how it might be tested as an innovative way to address some of our income assistance needs and so on in one of our regions, and I don't have a druthers on which region.

I think there is considerable interest in this tool across the country and internationally, and I think partly because of the clear evidence of the Dauphin study. They found that even those families, and this was a top-up of basic income, so for many families they didn't get any dollars. It was just that they had the assurance that if their income fell below a certain amount they would get topped up. Simply that assurance, that security had almost the same effect. Higher graduation rates. Women chose to have children in later years. They delayed having children for a few years. Health benefits and so on. Absolutely amazing benefits, the sort of benefits that we are looking for. I'm serious when I ask the Minister if he would look into it and consider a test case in the Northwest Territories. I don't think it would be any more expensive than our rapidly increasing income assistance budget, but perhaps an assessment could look at that.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I just want to reflect back on, obviously, the infrastructure. Obviously, we have not failed as a department. We spend millions on infrastructure such as Inuvik's East Three School, the Tulita school, brand new schools.

We shouldn't be using those terms when we've done so much as a department. We will continue to push that forward. We're at the end of our Assembly. Usually when the capital infrastructure such as a huge initiative that is coming forward, obviously, it is the beginning of a new term.

At the same time, if there is a request, I would consider looking at a guaranteed income support for clientele. We have been working through a Labour Market Development Agreement that we have. There is flexibility there where having a focus on individuals that can pursue workforce placements. I will continue to push that forward because it's part of the Canada Job Fund and provided flexibility for our department to focus on those individuals that fall through the cracks, individuals that are employable. To have another area of initiative where a guaranteed income support for all people of the Northwest Territories, we can look at it and see where that takes us, how much it's going to cost us at the initial stage.

There was an example in Manitoba, \$17 million in 1974, 1,000 people. If we're looking at 1,000 people at today's number, that's very substantial to guarantee income. But we offset income, as well, through the Labour Market Agreement. We're doing that already. Maybe there is room for improvement. Obviously, that's an area that my department will certainly explore. Having those 3,100 cases of individual clientele, obviously, the number we like to see it go down. We like to see those numbers going to enter workforce development. Those will be my goals and objectives as the Minister responsible to make sure those individuals are ready with the tools that are required to enter the workforce.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Committee, we're on page 61, corporate management, operations expenditure summary. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask a question here with regard to the, I guess it's the org chart for lack of a better way of putting it for the department, and I'm presuming corporate management is where this new assistant deputy minister position is going. I see later on there's an increase in one PY. Could I get, from the Minister, a bit of an outline of how many positions we have in upper management in the department? I thought we had quite a few assistants and a number of high-level management-type positions already. I'm wondering why we need another assistant manager. How many have we got and what are their functions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We have a deputy minister. Today we have a deputy minister, we have an associate deputy minister, we have an assistant deputy minister, two

of them. Now we have added Olin Lovely. We're going to have Dana Heide soon to retire. Basically, Olin is taking over Dana Heide's position. At the end of the day, it's still the same numbers. It's just a change of titles.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, I got a little confused there. So we have deputy minister, we have an associate – I believe that's Mr. Heide – and we have two assistant DMs. Mr. Heide is retiring soon, so we have three now, or we have four now, or we're going back to three? I got lost there. Thanks.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We have three ADMs today. We have an associate deputy, so three deputies and an associate, but the associate term will be up in June. So instead of three, four, five, we'll be back to four again, three associate deputy ministers and a deputy minister. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: I think I got that. Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's enough.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Continuing on questions on page 61, I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just a little bit of follow-up and then one more area. First of all, I want to correct the Minister. I didn't say it was a failure across all regions; I said it was a failure in my region specifically in Yellowknife. If the Minister had been with us on our tour of Aurora College Yellowknife Campus, I probably wouldn't have seen him because we had to squeeze single file through the areas, and if anybody stood up from a desk, that stopped our procession and you would have been out of sight. This has been a known situation for a long time now. Talk about sardines in a tin can. It was pretty amazing. We well know the issues at Mildred Hall, at Sissons and so on. So I just want to correct that.

I think the Minister has done a stellar job in the Beaufort-Delta for example – I didn't say anything about that – and in the Sahtu and so on in terms of infrastructure, but for three years of a paltry \$2 million or \$3 million of education infrastructure across the whole Northwest Territories and letting issues drop off the plans that have been referred to, I'd say, yes, there's a basis for my conclusion.

I want to express appreciation for the Minister being open to looking into the possibility of a guaranteed basic income, a form of that. I'm interested in learning more about how that relates to the labour force issue and how they offset income or supplement income somehow. But I think there's more than one way to skin a cat, so I would be very open to learning more about that.

My last issue is the education system, generally with the large 10-year review or comprehensive review of the entire education system that's being planned, and my reference earlier to the Finnish education system which I gave a Member's

statement on and had some questions for the Minister. He was interested and I know he's explored that system and is aware of their success and their high stature because of that success around the world. I'm wondering, as we do this comprehensive education review, where is the Minister at in terms of looking at how we can adopt and adapt some of the Finnish approach, or is there a perspective already on where we are at with that?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I would like to thank the Member for addressing this particular area where it's been addressed in the House as well. I did show interest a while ago, how the Finnish overhauled their education structure. This is an area that my department has been exploring and continues to do so because we have to learn from the best practices from other jurisdictions as well. If this is an area that will benefit the Northwest Territories, by all means, we will tackle that issue. It is at preliminary stages. We're still compiling that information. It's not only in that country, other countries are very successful that we are collecting information from as well. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: I thank the Minister for that. I will leave it at that, I just wanted to raise that possibility. It sounds like a comprehensive review will take a bit of time. I am anxious to plant seeds, if possible, at the early stages of this. I appreciate the Minister's response. That's all I had on this page. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): I will rise and report progress. I'd like to thank our witnesses here today. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you would please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Good evening. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolyunny.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Do I have a seconder? Mr. Blake.

---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 Wednesday, March 4, 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. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Mental Health Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act
 - Bill 36, Health and Social Services Professions Act
 - Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement 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
 - Tabled Document 205-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2014-2015

- Tabled Document 206-17(5),
Supplementary Estimates (Operations
Expenditures), No. 3, 2014-2015
- Tabled Document 207-17(5),
Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure
Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.
Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until
Wednesday, March 4th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:59 p.m.