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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, October 5, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 232-17(5):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES' RESPONSE TO THE
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION'S CALLS TO ACTION

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an important milestone in Canada's history. The release of their report, Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future, this past June has moved the national discussion to reconciliation and provided tangible actions that need to be taken.

It has compelled Canadians to recognize and accept the history of our young nation. The discussion is no longer about whether the residential school experience happened or not. What it is about is this: Aboriginal people in Canada have suffered from and continue to suffer from the direct impacts of residential school abuse. There is a growing understanding that we must address this legacy now. It is our duty to help support those with lifelong scars to find closure.

Half of the population of the Northwest Territories is Aboriginal. We all know someone who has suffered the direct impact of residential school abuse. Many of their families and loved ones continue to be affected due to the physical, mental and sexual abuses endured at the hands of the residential school experience. It is imperative to the success of the Northwest Territories and its people, socially, culturally, economically, and spiritually, that reconciliation takes place. No one is immune to the impact of our shared history nor should anyone be left out of our shared future.

The Northwest Territories continues to be a model for the rest of the country not only through our policy

of respect, recognition and responsibility but through our many programs and services. Reconciliation is about building a nation where mutual respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples exists. In order for this to happen, there must be recognition and acceptance of the past, acknowledgement of the harm inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to achieve change. The need for reconciliation in Canada is urgent.

Mr. Speaker, included with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report were 94 recommendations as Calls to Action. Since its release, our government departments have looked at each of the recommendations and have considered how we could – and should – respond to those not only directed to the Government of the Northwest Territories but also those where a national dialogue and response is needed. While we are already responding to many recommendations, we recognize much work still needs to be done.

Later today, I will table Meeting the Challenge of Reconciliation: The Government of the Northwest Territories' Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. This document is a way for our government to value the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and for us to say that we have heard and we will continue to take actions. We owe it to our people. We owe it to Aboriginals across this country.

Meeting the Challenge is intended to be our initial response to the recommendations outlined in Calls to Action. The response highlights the many actions that the Government of the Northwest Territories has taken, from recognizing Aboriginal languages and funding Aboriginal governments to revitalize them, to mandating curriculum on the residential school experience. However, this response is just the beginning and there is more work to be done in the Northwest Territories and in Canada.

In our response, the Government of the Northwest Territories commits to further action aimed at achieving reconciliation. We will work with our residents and Aboriginal governments in our territory. We will work with our partners throughout Canada, including sharing with them the residential

schools curriculum we developed in partnership with Nunavut. It's long overdue that we work together, as one nation, to encourage positive and concrete steps forward along the path of reconciliation.

As the 17th Legislative Assembly comes to a close, I am certain that our government will continue to play a role in other ways that support Aboriginal people not only in the Northwest Territories but across Canada. We will continue to participate at national forums such as the Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, to build relationships with Aboriginal governments in the spirit of respect, recognition and responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the contribution of Commissioner Marie Wilson to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to the people of Canada and to the people of the Northwest Territories. On their behalf, I would like to thank Marie for her service and assure her the people of the Northwest Territories will continue to be partners in reconciliation.

I look forward to seeing the benefit of reconciliation in our communities and across our country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Honourable Minister of ENR, Mr. Miltenberger.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 233-17(5):
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, or ENR, Strategic Plan for 2015-2020. This strategic plan, which will be tabled later today, establishes a vision, mission, values, goals and objectives for the department. The strategic plan incorporates the new responsibilities of ENR post- Devolution.

The 2015-2020 ENR Strategic Plan aligns with government policies, including the ENR Establishment Policy, and the GNWT Sustainable Development Policy and the Land Use and Sustainability Framework.

The development of the ENR Strategic Plan was a collaborative exercise. Opportunities were provided for all ENR regional and headquarters staff to engage and provide input into the development of this planning document for the department.

An action plan, which sets out strategic program priorities and key action items with measurable targets, is planned to be tabled during the February session to ensure alignment with priorities set by the 18th Assembly. ENR will continue to engage and consult with its partners on programs and services, consistent with its past and current approach.

The 2015-2020 ENR Strategic Plan sets the stage for ENR to better coordinate its various responsibilities and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program and service delivery. The strategic plan and associated action plan will replace the Framework for Action. These documents will be flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances and priorities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 234-17(5):
DREDGING THE PORT OF HAY RIVER

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I wish to provide additional information to supplement my responses given during oral question period on September 29, 2015, regarding dredging the port of Hay River. The Department of Transportation has received a response from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to our most recent letter requesting dredging and federal marine facility maintenance.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is keenly aware of the critical need to restore the east channel of the Hay River and its approaches from Great Slave Lake back to safe marine navigating conditions.

The Department of Transportation has repeatedly identified Canada's responsibility for maintaining safe navigation conditions throughout the Mackenzie River Corridor in numerous contacts with the federal government.

In the mid-1990s, the federal government accepted the recommendation of the federal Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities that the private sector and entities benefitting financially from dredging should assume responsibility for this work. As a result, the national dredging program was discontinued, except in international waterways where Canada has a shared responsibility with the United States.

As a result of this decision, Canada stopped the dredging program on the Mackenzie marine system in 1993 and transferred the dredging equipment to the Town of Hay River, who eventually sold the equipment to a variety of private interests. The federal government has not performed any dredging since this program was cancelled.

In 1995 Transport Canada issued the National Marine Policy divesting itself of major ports. Ownership and responsibility for the remote northern marine facilities critical to the supply and delivery of essential goods to communities, the military and industry was transferred to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The federal government constructed and still owns the community resupply facilities in the NWT. In the

early 1990s, Canada and the GNWT entered into a memorandum of understanding to conduct the annual maintenance of these federal facilities on their behalf. The MOU arrangement continued until 2013-14, when Canada advised the GNWT it would be cancelled

Mr. Speaker, while the Northwest Territories no longer maintains the marine system on behalf of the federal government, we still have a role to play.

We recognize the importance of a viable harbour in Hay River to the economic well-being of the community, the region and the territory. In the upcoming months, we will convene a meeting of all parties with an interest in the harbour and begin working with them toward solutions. This includes accessing other sources of funding that might be available from the federal government, while continuing to respect the ongoing roles and responsibilities of all levels of government, the private sector and other stakeholders. Dredging is not just a Hay River issue but a territorial one. Other communities have dredging needs as well.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation will continue to work with our partners to maintain a safe and effective marine system for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 235-17(5):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jackson Lafferty will be absent from the House today to attend a funeral. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
UTILIZING THE FORMER
HAY RIVER HOSPITAL BUILDING

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement today is on one of my very favourite topics. That is the hospital in Hay River, not the new hospital but the old hospital.

Mr. Speaker, every time we have anticipated what we are going to do with that piece of infrastructure once the new hospital is fully occupied, I have adhered to my belief and my philosophy that just because it's old doesn't mean it's no good, and it's actually not even that old. I was there for the ribbon cutting. I never thought about the meaning of that.

---Laughter

I really do believe that. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I've hit a brick wall because they say, "Hey, you want a new hospital? You got a new hospital. Surely you don't expect the government to maintain the old one." Then I was in a briefing about the Stanton Hospital and finally a light came on in my head. Guess what? They are going to build a new hospital in Yellowknife but they're going to give the developers of the new hospital the old hospital. I thought the precedent has been set, the template is there. So now we, in Hay River, need to get together a partnership, a coalition, a group of people in the community, perhaps some NGOs, and we need to look as a group at what the old hospital could be used for. I believe the government might even participate in the old Stanton Hospital to a certain level that they've capped off.

If we were going to actually demolish the old hospital in Hay River, there would be a technical review. There would be the cost of demolition and other costs associated with that. What I would like to get a commitment for is could we get... Now the Minister of Health is pointing at the Minister of Public Works, and that's why I laughed. Sorry.

So, if we could get a commitment that would allow us to go into this project and consider what it could be used for. There are many things that the old hospital could be used for. The other good news is that we have a window of opportunity, because there's 10 extended care beds in the old hospital right now and there's been a slight delay on replacing those 10 extended care beds at the new wing of Woodland Manor, and thank you for that. We're going to move those over there. That means we're going to have this empty building, and there are so many needs in the Northwest Territories, even the need for a territorial treatment centre. I know treatment centre is not a word that this government wants to hear about, but it is still a need. It is an expenditure. It's an operations expenditure of this government to send people to institutions in southern Canada. There is money there.

So, I don't know where this would go, but I want to go back to Hay River with my colleague Mr. Bouchard. We would like to talk to people in the community who may want to think about what we could use that for and then I would like this government to commit to giving Hay River the same consideration they gave Yellowknife in terms of giving this coalition in partnership the old Stanton Hospital. We would like the same consideration. You've set the precedent now; the template's there; we would like to move on that. We might just need a little money to hire a consultant to put our whole proposal together, but we'll be in touch with you on that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with my continuing evaluation of the current administration, today I wish to talk about our growth in the GNWT workforce.

It is a known fact that managing the size of government is an important component of fiscal performance. Compensation and benefits for government's departments, boards and agencies account for approximately 40 percent of the GNWT's spending on operations. With the 2015-2016 average costs of compensation and benefits for a government employee at more than \$100,000 per year, we should give this some attention today.

The GNWT workforce, which includes boards and agencies, has grown 30.7 percent from 2000 to 2015 to a total of 5,438 employees projected for the 2015-16 year. But when you isolate just boards and agencies, they have grown somewhat more than GNWT departments at the 33.1 percent respectively, although this rate of growth is significantly lower than the growth of operation spending, as I said earlier, at 115 percent, and our revenue at 149 percent during that same period.

Mr. Speaker, looking at this all from another angle, we need only to review GNWT employees as a percentage of the NWT population as a whole. If you look back to the 16th Legislative Assembly, we witnessed a decrease in this relationship, and it's not until the start of the 17th Legislative Assembly where we see a steady and modest trend upwards in our workforce growth.

We all know this administration was saddled with devolution responsibilities, so we need to evaluate how well all this managed in comparison to the trends in workforce growth. Understandably, we saw a substantial growth in the number of GNWT employees with devolution implementation. This is a given. But this contributed to the GNWT's workforce to rise above 12 percent of the total NWT population for the first time in our post-divisional history.

However, as I indicated earlier, even before devolution this percentage of workforce growth was rising moderately and trending at a much higher percentage than the previous three Assemblies. It is therefore my conclusion that although we saw reasonable stewardship of the devolution responsibilities as a percentage of workforce growth management, it is with the overall trend and management that I have a concern with. It is under this evaluation framework that I recognize the management of growth of the GNWT workforce for this McLeod government to be at a B minus grade. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DREDGING OF THE HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been four years since I've wanted to see a Minister's statement on dredging the port at Hay River. Amen. Hallelujah. We've finally got a statement that made that point.

We know the federal government is still not there and now at least the territorial government is listening. The crack of the door is open. Now we need to kick that door open and get this project going.

Last week I was talking about the fact that we are building roads, which used to be a federal responsibility, 75 federal, 25 for the territorial. If our federal partners aren't going to kick in the door and get this thing going, let's throw our 25 percent in. Let's get a project where we can get this dredging of the Hay River done.

I appreciate the statement and I appreciate the gesture, but a meeting? In four years it took us to get a statement that we're going to have a meeting? We need to get more results than that. We need to have a plan. I've been asking this territorial government to come together with a plan on the costs and how we can go forward from there. We need more than just a meeting. We need to get results.

I will have questions for the Minister on how we get this done sooner than later. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DISCONTINUATION OF HANDIVAN SERVICES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today I must raise a serious concern brought to me by some of my constituents. The Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities and the NWT Council for Persons with Disabilities work together to provide handivan services to Hay River residents.

This essential transportation service helps people with disabilities or reduced mobility. With handivan services they can attend appointments, take job interviews, shop for groceries and complete other daily activities, all with ease and at reduced cost.

Once, Enterprise residents also had access to these services, but the hamlet has had this access cut off for more than the last year. That's not because the organizers want to. It's because the organization can't afford it. They are in a funding crunch.

There is absolutely no doubt that these services are much needed and well used. It's estimated that there are more than 100 pick-ups per month and more than 30 regular users, plus other clients who use a service on and off.

In the past the GNWT has said that this type of funding would be a municipal responsibility, but the GNWT must reconsider this position. Handivan services in Hay River and surrounding communities, including Enterprise, provide a specialized transportation service to individuals with unique medical needs. We must find a solution that will reinstate these services for our residents. Without the handivan, what other options do residents with disabilities have?

I'll have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services at the appropriate time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACTION PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In May of 2001, the Premier of the day then tasked a steering committee to develop a partnership that would work on the issue of disabilities to promote inclusion of persons throughout the Northwest Territories through their disabilities. With that task force, they devolved through their Disability Steering Committee, they developed a partnership that identified five key areas, and I suspect my good colleague to my left, Ms. Bisaro, will be referring to them as well.

Under education: ensuring the...(inaudible)...free lifelong learning opportunities that maximize the potential of individuals with disabilities are realized.

Under employment: enhance the employability of persons with disabilities, encourage re-entry into the labour market and support more work opportunities.

Under income: design a system that is representative to the needs of persons with disabilities and provides for an income safety net which rewards individual's work efforts to the greatest extent possible, but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible and insufficient to meet the basic needs.

Under disability support the goal was to ensure that disability support provide for an active participation at home, at school, in the community and they maximize personal and economic independence.

Finally, the fifth area was housing, a goal to ensure that persons with disabilities will be provided with a range of housing opportunities that are affordable, accessible and that maximizes their independence.

At the time it was very forward thinking and all those involved should be applauded, but in 2008, when the Minister of the day presented to the House the NWT Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities, it was a leap forward. But that's as far as it went. Since that time, begrudgingly, the NWT Council for Disabilities has been trying to follow up to find out where it's gone. They had one question, which was: what's been accomplished? Other than a flurry of activity and scrambling for a little bit of excitement, little has been shown for the great report that was put together to change and improve the lives of people with disabilities.

The NWT Disabilities Council took it upon themselves to get out there into the communities, talk to service agencies, reach out and find out what's really happening on the ground. They found that there are so many people in the Northwest Territories – in the range of 16 percent, I believe it is – 14.6 percent of the population has a disability.

Although time is running out, this issue is still vibrant and very important. Rather than me extending my Member's statement, I'll have my good colleague to my left, Ms. Bisaro, pick up where I've left off. But it's an important issue all the same.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACTION PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The history on this particular issue bears repeating, so there may be some things which are said twice here.

Fourteen years ago the Premier of the day recognized the importance of providing services for persons with disabilities in the NWT. There was an acknowledgement that there were gaps and that something needed to be done to close those gaps. By 2004 a framework had been developed and some 100 needs identified, and those needs were placed into the five building blocks of the framework, as mentioned by my colleague: education, housing, employment, income, and disability supports.

Sometime after 2004, work began on an action plan to address the needs of disabled persons. The NWT Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities was published in 2008. The plan's intention was to remove barriers for persons with disabilities in the NWT. Alas, that did not happen. Since 2008 we've seen and heard of very little action on the action plan. Why is that? Is it the same situation as homelessness was in a few years ago? No one has full responsibility, several unconnected people and

departments doing what they can off the corner of their desks? I suspect so.

In 2012 the executive director of the NWT Disabilities Council highlighted the lack of action on the items in the action plan at the council's annual general meeting. Again, no action by government.

My colleague Mr. Moses asked questions of the Health and Social Services Minister in June of 2013. Again, no action on the action plan.

Recognition that something needs to be done for NWT's disabled residents seems to have disappeared into a black hole. Last year a frustrated Disabilities Council set out to evaluate the 2008 plans and conducted a very extensive survey of the state of disabled persons in the NWT. They reached into every community but one, and heard from 321 respondents. Their findings were published earlier this year.

Unfortunately, of the 100 needs identified in 2001, most have seen little or no action since 2007. The NWT Disabilities Services Project was provided to government some months ago, but the council has heard nothing back on either the contents of the report or the five recommendations in it.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: The government mindset from the previous decade seems to still exist where the issue of services for disabled persons is concerned. The issue is still in that black hole. But it must be removed from that black hole. The decade of inaction has to be replaced with a commitment to action. We have 5,000 to 6,000 persons with disabilities in the NWT and about 50 percent of them are seniors. We have a half-finished action plan. We have residents who need better programs and services so they can lead a better life.

It's not too late to act. This Assembly can send a message to the 18th Assembly. We can tell them, make a commitment to our disabled persons, make the provision of programs and services a priority, take steps to address their needs. We can do this, and I look forward to Members sending this message when we debate the motion later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BOOTLEGGING AND THE SALE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the course of this Assembly I have stood up on many occasions to speak to a very serious issue throughout the Northwest Territories. That is dealing in our small communities, specifically in the areas of bootlegging and the drug deals that

continue to plague our residents of the Northwest Territories and continue to target our youth and our most vulnerable in our small communities. Obviously, as a result, there are devastating effects not only on our residents but our families, our communities, and the territory as a whole.

When we hear about tragedies, whether they're accidental, suicides, homicides, crime, violent crime, it all hits everybody very close because we're a small territory and a small population. When you think about some of these crimes where people are profiting off of some of our most vulnerable in the communities, you only have a handful of liquor stores in the Northwest Territories, yet we still continue to have crime and other issues happening in our small communities. Somehow the liquor is getting in there, the drugs are getting in there and we've got to find a way to address this issue a lot sooner than later.

I bring this up only because we continue to see it, we continue to hear about it and we need people in the Northwest Territories to speak up. We need people in the Northwest Territories to empower and support one another to let the RCMP and their leaders know who are doing these acts of crime in the community by bootlegging, selling to our youth, selling to our elders, selling to those who are battling addictions.

We can start by pushing a lot of funding, a lot more work into prevention and promotion, doing the education, creating more awareness within our people to get them understanding how they can take a big step against this issue. I know we've done stuff here in the House such as the Victims of Crimes Act, seizing property and those kinds of things. Plus we've done a really strong campaign in the Sahtu and here in Yellowknife. We've got to get people in the Northwest Territories to understand, and the drug dealers and the bootleggers, that this is not acceptable, it's not going to happen in the Northwest Territories.

I will have questions for the Minister of Justice later about how he can support our small communities to get the bootleggers and the drug dealers out of the community. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON POST-DEVOLUTION LEGISLATION REVIEW

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's proclaimed legacy of the 17th is devolution of powers from the federal government to the people of the North, but this claim remains a mirage, something shaky and blurry seen on a far off horizon. Like so many of the pickles we find ourselves in and leaving for the 18th to deal with, we allowed Mr. Harper to dictate our actions. The

results are no surprise: First Nations groups left out in the cold, federal legislation on which to manage our lands and resources, a government that listens to Northerners worse than Ottawa does. Are our people better off now than before devolution? I think not.

Devolve and evolve, the Premier said. We will make it made-in-the-North legislation entirely our own, and once the federal legislation had been adopted, he even sponsored a website over the summer so people could give up their time to wade through the highly technical laws and sets of regulations. So, dedicated souls actually did comment, but to no effect. The public soon discerned that this was a hollow offer, a political gesture and the McLeod government had no intent to make this legislation our own.

It remains incomprehensible to me that we can mirror federal legislation without any plan to have an immediate and thorough review of it by the people of the Northwest Territories. What concerns me now is that this government is finding the Harper approach of control and direction much more to their liking than taking things to the people and responding to the public voice. We now hear our leaders parrot the same old things as Ottawa. We need to streamline, reduce regulations that were designed to protect the land and ensure local control of the pace and scale of development. We need to pass laws that subsidize multi-nationals and allow us to get in bed with them to build them big costly infrastructure, or even to train wee children's minds with corporate logos seen from birth onwards, all to let the extractive industry have their own way rather than to maximize public benefit.

How about distributive income, addressing disparate income? How about environmentally and socially responsible development? So, what is required?

Legislation inherited from the federal government needs to be redrafted and assigned to the respective committees of this Legislature for review. It needs to be assigned to committees and presented to the people in plain language for community hearings, discussions, debate and amendment. Until then and until all First Nation governments have signed on, any declaration of devolution is premature and, indeed, misleading.

This government is leaving an awful lot of heavy lifting for the next Assembly. Sadly, it is clear that making devolution a reality can be added to that list. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some time ago when I was reading a book, one of the sentences that I read from the author asked the audience, he said to the audience, "How do you eat an elephant?" One piece at a time was the response. I want to use that phrase in the ways how do you build a highway? One section at a time. The Sahtu is hungry for a highway. We've been waiting. It's about time that we come into the 21st century.

Over the weekend I went to Norman Wells. I purchased 10 kilograms of flour here at Walmart, \$11.97. In Norman Wells it's \$45. Same bag, same kilograms, big difference. People in the Sahtu need a highway. We have heard from the federal government: one highway at a time. So, I ask this government, get that highway to Tuk built so we can start in the Sahtu region. Open up our resources. There's a huge population of young people who want to work. We have a potential of wealth of resources sitting there: our people. That's the potential. There's potential in resources. Our people are hungry for work. They want a highway.

I know there was a submission made to the Minister of Transportation's government to start doing section by section. People are needing to work desperately. It's time to unleash the potential of the people in the Sahtu. Connect us to the rest of the Northwest Territories. Bring down the cost of living. Families want to go out, but you can only go out during the winter months, but then it means the cost of education, or taking time off.

People want to develop their skills, build their roads, build their destination. They want to be part of the Northwest Territories, not always sitting on the sideline.

I'll have questions for the Minister on where is our highway for the Sahtu. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT SIMPSON HEALTH CENTRE REPLACEMENT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Myself and residents of Fort Simpson are looking forward to the completion of the planning study for the replacement of the Fort Simpson Health Centre. During this session, while we deliberated the capital plans, I was very disappointed to see the project on the books seven years from now during the budget of 2022-2023.

This is a 40-year-old building that needs to be replaced sooner than later. A new facility will improve the quality of health care delivery to Fort

Simpson and region. With a new building and new modern health equipment, we can deliver better services.

The health centre was red flagged for the past two years, meaning that the facility was to be built at the next opportunity. It was our own engineers who recommended a replacement due to its age and increasing maintenance costs, so we all are on the same page. We all believed in the importance of replacing this facility. Why is this facility now moved seven years into the future?

I'll be asking the Minister of Public Works and Services questions at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PARKING CONCERNS AT
MOOSE KERR SCHOOL IN AKLAVIK

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year the hamlet council in Aklavik issued a notice to all public places in the community to provide safer parking areas to protect people and property. This is an urgent concern at Moose Kerr School.

As I told my colleagues in the House last week, Moose Kerr School can only offer parking on the road. This makes navigating the school property dangerous for students, teachers and visitors, not to mention more difficult for drivers.

The hamlet council has obtained a quote for the work needed to solve this problem. Costs are estimated at \$27,000, but the budget of the Aklavik District Education Authority is limited, with no extra money to take on a project such as this.

As I said last week, we must be proactive, not reactive. This kind of roadwork can't wait until a student is injured. It has to be done now to prevent accidents and injuries and to make Moose Kerr School a safer place to be.

My questions today will be for our Premier. I will be asking the Premier to direct the department to look into this urgent need and find a way to help build angle parking that will solve this problem for a safer school in Aklavik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Before I open up the floor, I'd like to welcome my sister-in-law, Ms. Vivian Edgi-Manuel, to the House. Welcome.

Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have stood up many times and talked about the value of our Youth Ambassador Program. I'm very proud today to have a number of our youth ambassadors up in the gallery. They were receiving, I think it was the 2015 Pan Am Games team was receiving the Minister's Culture and Heritage Circle Award, so we're awfully proud of their accomplishment. We have four youth up there representing the youth ambassadors. We've got Jacob Peffer from Inuvik, we've got Ryan Tourangeau from Fort Smith, Karl Gardlund from Yellowknife, and we have Stacie Bengts from Yellowknife, and we also have two staff members who work very hard at making sure the program runs smoothly. We've got Colinda Blondin and we have Dawn Moses. So, we'll welcome all to the gallery and recognize the achievement.

We also have, from Inuvik Twin Lakes, Jeannie Snowshoe. Welcome to the gallery.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to recognize all of the Pages who are providing us such incredible services here in the Legislative Assembly. They liquidated us well. That's not the right word, but you know what I mean. Hydrated. Properly hydrated. Liquidated, that's good, eh? You like that? They keep us properly hydrated; they keep the information flowing; so I really want to take an opportunity to thank all the Pages and, in particular, a Page from the Great Slave Riding, Kelsy Nayally. Welcome to the Chamber and thank you so much.

I also want to recognize a constituent of the Great Slave riding who has joined us the last couple of days, Mr. Kieron Testart. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today we celebrate the 5th Annual Minister's Culture and Heritage Circle. In Minister Lafferty's absence, I would like to recognize the recipients of this year's awards. In the Youth category: the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am NWT Youth Ambassadors. Of the 32 youth ambassadors from across the NWT, there are four here today representing the group: Stacie Bengts of Yellowknife, Ryan Tourangeau of Fort Smith, Jacob Peffer of Inuvik, Karl Gardlund of Yellowknife. In the Elder category: Jeanna Graham from the Hay River Reserve. Individual category: Berna Beaulieu from Behchoko. Group category: Yellowknife Ukrainian Association. The award was accepted today by Donna Marie Ouellette and Trisha Graham Minister's Choice category: Vivian Edgi-Manuel of Fort Good Hope. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to you, I'd like to introduce one of our recipients, we've heard earlier today, for the Ukrainian award, and that is a member of Range Lake, Trisha Graham. Thank you for joining us today.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to congratulate Ms. Vivian Edgi-Manuel for her prestigious award on the Minister's Choice for Culture. She has done a wonderful job.

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

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Jasmine Hardisty, my constituency assistant from Fort Simpson who is chaperoning the Fort Simpson Pages this week. Welcome to the gallery.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize a couple of people quickly. First off, I'd like to recognize a constituent of mine, Ms. Karen Wright-Fraser. I've know her for a very long time. We all know Karen is a wonderful woman who is a timeless talent of the ages in the art of Gwich'in traditional arts and crafts, so she is certainly a hero to her community and women alike in her amazing talents. To that, I give a great nod.

The other person I'd like to quickly recognize is Denise McKee. She is up in the gallery here today and I suspect she is here for the motion that will be on the floor later today. She is the executive director of the NWT Disabilities Council. If Denise doesn't pull you aside, I'll remind you that the 2015 Annual Benefit Auction is November 20th at the YK Inn. See you soon.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Ms. Jeanna Graham from the K'atodeeche First Nation. Jeanna is an elder who was recognized in the Minister's culture awards. At the same time, Jeanna serves on the band council, as well, on the K'atodeeche First Nation. As well, to all the recipients of the Minister's culture awards, I'd like to extend congratulations.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to acknowledge Elsie Bouvier, one of my constituents, who is proud to be with her friend

Jeanna, who won an award today at the Culture and Heritage Circle Awards.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Weledeh constituent Dawn Moses. Dawn I don't think is the sister of my colleague here. Dawn is actually a Jane Glassco Northern Fellow of the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation in policy and leadership development, so I am very proud to have her as a constituent.

I'd also like to recognize any other Weledeh constituents I'm not aware of in the audience and also, of course, congratulate all those who are winners of the Culture and Heritage Awards.

I'd also like to recognize Denise McKee and all her work on behalf of the people with disabilities. Mahsi.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a few people I'd like to recognize here today. First, a young gentleman who has really come a long way and is a good role model in the community of Inuvik, Mr. Jacob Peffer, as well as all the other youth ambassadors receiving the Minister's Culture and Heritage Circle Awards today. Obviously, that program could not have been done without great leadership. I'd like to recognize Ms. Colinda Blondin and Dawn Moses for all the work that they do. In a previous job, I know the hard work that goes into making the program successful.

I'd also like to recognize Ms. Jeanna Graham. In another job that I had as a CHR and tobacco coordinator for the territory, we did a lot of work together, and she was a very strong advocate for the people of Hay River and Hay River Reserve.

As well, a couple of relatives of mine, Ms. Jeannie Snowshoe and Ms. Karen Wright-Fraser. Welcome to the proceedings and congratulations to all the award winners here today.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Ted Blondin, the chair of the Tlicho Community Services Agency. Welcome to the Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Also, I'd like to welcome Mr. Jacob Peffer, my friend and ordering all my skidoo parts every year. Thank you for all the hard work. Then my daughter Kirstin Jacobson here in the House today.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 919-17(5): DISCUSSION PAPER ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on questions I started last week with the Minister of Public Works and Services on the Energy Efficiency Act and discussion paper. The other day the Minister outlined some of things we have done to reduce energy consumption. I was pleased to hear of that progress. However, we've got a long overdue Energy Efficiency Act and a commitment to getting that in place. Since we didn't do that, we committed to at least doing a discussion paper. Where is that promised document for our review? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister for the Department of Public Works, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The discussion paper on the Energy Efficiency Act has been drafted. The Department of Public Works is now consulting with the other departments that are impacted by the act. After that they will then be discussing that more broadly. I think that by the time the department finishes looking at the discussion paper it will probably be in the next Assembly, but the discussion paper has definitely been drafted. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Another commitment not made and this is what's slowing us down on our work to deal with the cost of living, environmental issues and so on and causing people to leave or not come to the North. So, very disappointing.

I'm wondering: will the paper, should it be done soon, as the Minister indicates it might be, actually prepare the 18th Assembly to efficiently do what we have not done, and that is put an effective and timely act into place.

So, will the promised discussion paper be comprehensive, ready and waiting and enabling for the 18th Assembly as they begin their work? Mahsi.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: That is the plan, that we do present a discussion paper that's thorough to the next Assembly and that a lot of the legwork will be completed in the discussion paper. Hopefully, once that is done, soon after the next government they will start to move forward with the act. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Given that the whole government can see this except this side of the House, I'm wondering if the Minister could share with us what are the major elements that the paper will address when finally delivered. Mahsi.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't have that information with me, but I am prepared to have the

department share the major elements. I can provide a briefing in written form to the committee that will highlight all of the major elements that we're looking at in this Energy Efficiency Act.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has indicated he was prepared to answer my questions, so I'm wondering how the Minister sees this legislation helping us to reduce our cost of living, our energy and electricity bills and our energy consumption. Mahsi.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As a result of the act, the department will be able to develop a lot of the policies that would be directed to corporations, to be directed to the government, directed to the public on ways that they can reduce energy costs right across the territory and all aspects of our business. I'm hopeful that this act will allow government to work with the public and with industry in all areas to allow everybody to become more efficient energy-wise. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 920-17(5): DISPOSITION OF THE FORMER HAY RIVER HOSPITAL

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that there is a pre-set method by which capital assets are disposed of by this government. To the fact that the hospital in Hay River, the old hospital, at some point in the next two to three years, two years perhaps, will no longer be used by this government, I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services if this government would entertain an unsolicited proposal from a community partnership coalition in Hay River for the acquisition of that building and land. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister of Public Works, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't believe that would be part of the regular disposition process. That would be first released by the Department of Health and Social Services, the building, then the second part would be to see if any departments in the government have any use for it, then after that it would be available for NGOs. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: We also know that there's been a precedent set many times whereby the government has made a contribution to create a proposal for a program or activity, and a proposal would have to identify revenue sources, potential sources of grants and contributions to run a program.

Would the government also entertain, please, a contribution agreement to such a coalition or partnership in Hay River to develop this property? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I can't make a commitment from the Legislative Assembly today to contribute to a proposal, but we would be pleased to look at your proposal. If there's a proposal coming forward, the government would be pleased to look at the proposal. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 921-17(5):
ACTON PLAN FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question will be to the Minister responsible for disabilities. In 2012 the NWT Disabilities Council asked for an update on the NWT Action Plan for Disabilities. Part of their launch of the action plan originally identified a hundred concerns and they were further refined down to five particular themes. Of course, things like education, employment, income, and disability supportive housing were the themes that they had refined them down to.

The question to the Minister is: When will there be a progress report on the success of that action plan and when will we see it either tabled in this House or tabled publicly for us to move forward on this initiative? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The departments have taken a number of actions to address a number of recommendations that were in that report. The Department of Health and Social Services, as an example, has included a number of the recommendations in many of the different strategies were dealing with, like early childhood development. But I'd be happy to pull together a summary of what we've done with respect to each of the action items in the different areas within the department and I will certainly work with the other departments to pull that together.

We probably won't be able to get that done in the next four days, but I will commit to having that available for the future government and the new Members coming in early in the life of the next Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: I certainly appreciate that answer. In 2014 the NWT Disabilities Council decided on their own initiative to conduct their own territory-wide survey. So, they reached out to clients, caregivers and certainly professionals obviously connected to disabilities. Their survey reached out to more than 320 people in all communities but one.

My question for the Minister of Health and Social Services is: What is the Department of Health doing with that valuable survey information gathered by the NWT Disabilities Council, and are they able to put it into some type of use and action, because it is incredibly important information. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I've reviewed that, as well, and it is an incredibly good document. I do want to applaud the NWT Disabilities Council for their initiative and incredibly hard work.

As I've indicated, we've taken action on a number of items that were in the initial action plan that was provided and they've been included in a different strategies or different action items that we've been moving forward, like the early childhood development. We've done a significant amount of work around respite. Moving forward, the type of information that was provided to us is going to help us inform these different program areas so that we're meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: As my colleague had said, this is a multi-disciplinary issue. So, in other words, what that really is, is government jargon that's spread across multiple departments and it's difficult to nail one person as responsible.

The initial action plan identified five key areas. I won't go through them again, but maybe the Minister can talk about how the department has helped facilitate better housing for people with disabilities and found ways to help them work through poverty to ensure we can get them back into the workforce to do better things, because they want to be in a meaningful role in society and we should be facilitating that. So let's target the area of housing and how we've made their lives better.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are always working with the other departments, sharing technical expertise and information.

With respect to housing, we have occupational therapists who are available to do some assessments for individuals to determine what, if anything, they need in their individual homes, grab bars, ramps, many other things. So we do work with that. The Housing Corp has put in a program – I believe it's called CARE, but I'm not 100 percent sure and I will confirm that later – where people can actually apply for money to do those ramps. We have occupational therapists and others who can come in and do assessments to determine what is needed in those homes.

Mr. Speaker, the Member may want to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corp a couple of these questions, but they are also putting in housing throughout the Northwest Territories and much of it is accessible so that individuals who are living with disabilities can have homes and access to living units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was on the tip of my tongue on the last question, but I was trying to find out if the Minister of Health and Social Services was tasked with the lead role on the Disability Steering Committee for these initiatives. So, he is somewhat responsible for all the areas.

My last question is really focused around employment, and some people say the best poverty plan is jobs, an action plan, creating employment for people. I did talk earlier in my statement about stabilizing income and helping people so they can have a meaningful quality role in society that they so truly deserve and desire.

What is the Minister doing and what can the Minister explain to this House that the department has done to help provide opportunities for employment initiatives to help people with disabilities live meaningful lives while they can contribute and make an income? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has taken the lead on the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities. The labour agreement was signed with the Government of Canada in February 2014 to provide funding to better support education and training and to put more employment participation for persons with disabilities. This agreement is one of a series of labour market agreements successfully negotiated between the GNWT, particularly the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and the Government of Canada with some targeted initiatives for some older workers and others. So, the Department of Education has taken a lead on this and has negotiated the agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 922-17(5):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask my questions to the Minister of Transportation about transportation in the Sahtu region, specifically the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I know that the Tulita district has submitted a submission under the Community Access Program in an effort to see that some work can get done in the region to prepare the young workers to be ready once the Mackenzie Valley Highway is under construction, which is an initiative the federal government has undertaken.

Can the Minister update this House and people in the Sahtu as to this community access proposal that has been submitted by the Tulita District Corporation?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many aspects to the Mackenzie Valley Highway. I recognize that each of the groups are interested in having an opportunity to train some of their people and start to build some access to materials that they would need to build a Mackenzie Valley Highway should we see approval. The Tulita district, I recognize that their proposal, I believe is what the Member is referring to, was to come south from Tulita to access the first gravel access further south, which I believe is 32 kilometres. They are also looking at the possibility of staging the Mackenzie Valley Highway, should we get approval. That is staging the highway so that the Bear River Bridge would be the first piece of the Mackenzie Valley Highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells. That would give them a closer access to the first bit of material, which would be on the other side of the river from Tulita and not too far away from Tulita.

With that, I know the department has been looking at all of the access road proposals, which is beyond the scope of what we would consider community access. These are access roads, more capital, that is working towards the eventual construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Over the years the people in the Sahtu, specifically the Tulita District Corporation, have worked for a number of years on a proposal to look at building infrastructure. They have looked from Norman Wells south to Tulita. They actually put in the Canyon Creek proposal.

Where is that proposal within the federal government's infrastructure, capital planning? Where is it in this government? What can the people expect from that proposal in the coming years from this government and our government? When can we start building our roads in the Sahtu?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Another important part of the Mackenzie Valley Highway has been the Canyon Creek Road. Canyon Creek Road will give people the ability, who are eventually going to be building the highway, to access material for the highway. Canyon Creek proposal has been reviewed, approved at our level, GNWT. We've now included it in the overall Building Canada Plan bundle number two. We are presenting three different bundles to the government. We had bundle one approved last June. What we are hoping to do is have bundle two approved anywhere between January and March of 2016, and we're hoping as soon as that's approved, we will be able to start some construction on the Canyon Creek Road. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: That is good news and that it comes through from bundle two and the approved Build Canada projects.

Does this give enough incentive for this government to say we can look at a proposed highway transportation office in the Sahtu? Will that give enough to move your thinking to start planning a transportation office that's needed in the Sahtu? I have asked this question over 100 times and I got 100 different reasons why this government said no to a regional transportation office in the Sahtu. Is this enough? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Prior to potential construction of a Mackenzie Valley Highway, we will have probable opportunities to have year-round or an independent region in Norman Wells would be of all of the major access roads. We are talking about the access road and the new proposal that's taking the access from Good Hope to Jackfish Lake, and the new proposal that would take the next step from Tulita south, and also Canyon Creek. If all of those were funded, there may be a lot of summer work that may be required in conjunction. If that Mackenzie Valley was approved, there would be probably enough work to have a highway section based in Norman Wells that could ultimately become a region on its own.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So that's 100 no's so far. I want to ask the Minister, given that the lights are going to be closing pretty soon on the 17th Assembly, and this is going to be my third government that I've been asking for a regional transportation office – this is the third one now – I want to ask if this is enough, you know that the work that is going to happen in the Sahtu, to put even an interim or a part-time or something to show that maybe the next government will have the might and determination to say yes, we can do this. I want to ask him if that's something that's going to go into some report, because after 12 years you still get a no from this government, as much as we could show it will be a while if you follow the Minister's projection, it will be a while before we get a full-time transportation office in the Sahtu.

I wonder how it would be if we had something like that in Yellowknife where the regional office was in Behchoko or Gameti or Lutselk'e and see how they like it.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: It's more an issue of the volume of work. Right now, all of the airport divisions, the airports in the regions all report to a regional superintendent. One of the solutions that the Member at one time proposed was that perhaps the first step would be to move the airport operations in the Sahtu to report to headquarters here in Yellowknife, and we had looked at that. Right now that would be a bit of hybrid from what we're doing. What we wanted to do was continue to move forward on the Member's demand to have basically a highways section, a marine section and

an airport section all in a regional office. When we come to that conclusion, the only highway basically is the winter road. So far what's been happening is by servicing the winter road out of Simpson, and placing people in the Sahtu throughout the whole winter road season seemed to be an effective way to deal with all of the DOT operations in the Sahtu at this time.

As I indicated, if there was more highway, like the Mackenzie Valley Highway, for sure that would become a possibility where there would be enough volume of work in the Sahtu that we could have an office in Norman Wells, but today there just isn't.

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

QUESTION 923-17(5):
PARKING SAFETY AT
MOOSE KERR SCHOOL IN AKLAVIK

MR. BLAKE: m Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have some questions for the Premier. Will the Premier ensure the Department of Education, Culture and Employment meets with the Aklavik District Education Authority and Moose Kerr School to investigate this problem with parking and to find the funds needed?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government and the Department of ECE takes the concerns raised by the school representatives very seriously, and of course, our children and our students' safety is of utmost concern. For that reason, we are working closely with the Aklavik DEA as well as Public Works, and certainly, we will facilitate that work gets done to deal with this issue.

MR. BLAKE: I'd like to thank the Premier. That sounded like a definite yes that this work will be completed. But we've had four months to ensure that this work is completed, and in the Mackenzie Delta the ground is starting to freeze. We are running out of time to build this parking lot. We'll be lucky if we have another week or two before everything starts freezing up, the material. You know, that makes costs go up slightly. I'd like to see this work completed within the next week or two if the Premier can ensure that that happens.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We first became aware of this issue in the summer of 2014 when the hamlet raised concerns with potential public safety issues. When ECE met with the DEA in February of 2015, the hamlet indicated that they would use signage to restrict parking in the area around the school, and they put up appropriate signage to that effect. But to fix the problem longer term, the hamlet has advised that they need to do some drainage improvements, so we see the solution as being part

of that, and certainly, we will follow up with them to see if we can get the work done this year.

MR. BLAKE: Just so I'm very clear, will the Premier ensure that that \$27,000 is provided to make sure this work is done?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The hamlet advised us that they needed to make some drainage improvements along one of the streets near the school, and they see it as an opportunity to make some further enhancements to allow for some off-street parking. The total cost for the drainage improvements including creating a leveled area for parking is in the order of \$32,000. This work will be done by the hamlet, and the hamlet has infrastructure money to do that. Our Public Works and Services will contribute surplus gravel for the angled parking area and they will contribute something in the neighbourhood of \$3,000 worth of surplus gravel.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is clearly the government's property here. We're putting a lot of burden on the community that have those funds designated for other projects. They have done all the work to the drainage that is needed. This property is Public Works' property and I feel that these funds should come from this government, from Public Works, because that is their building.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Public Works consulted with ECE and the DEA. We have received confirmation that the hamlet is agreeable to establish some off-street parking in conjunction with the proposed drainage improvements. Now it's a question of the timing. As the Member indicated, winter is coming, so we will follow up to see and to try to make sure that the work is done on a timely basis.

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

QUESTION 924-17(5):
FORT SIMPSON HEALTH CENTRE
REPLACEMENT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I spoke about the much needed Fort Simpson replacement health centre. I'd like to ask the Minister of Public Works a few questions on the planning study and, as a result, the capital planning process as well.

I'd just like to ask the Minister, what stage is the planning study at currently?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In February 2011, an RFP was issued for phase one of the planning study, including needs assessment, operational plan and a functional program and

feasibility analysis. A planning study services was awarded to Western Health Planning and Associates since then.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to thank the Minister for that answer. I'd just like to know, well, that's the current stage of the planning study, perhaps the Minister can explain how the planning study affects the capital planning process. The Fort Simpson Health Centre was slated for '17-18 but it's, like, five years further down the line. I'd like to ask the Minister, why has that been deferred so far down the line? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. There will be two phases in the planning study. The first phase will be completed in February of 2016. Phase two, which will be complete with schematic design and class C estimate and then used for the peer review committee. The peer review committee will be discussing the need, the capital need for the Fort Simpson Health Centre in comparison to all of the other capital needs put forward by all of the departments. We're expecting the peer review process as part of phase two, the planning study, will be completed by fall of 2016. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. That provides a little bit of clarity about how far they're progressing with the planning study.

Is it typical for the department to go to the communities to show them the type of floor plans and the layout that they have at these facilities? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, it is. Once the planning study is done and the peer review has indicated that this is going to go into a capital plan, then the people that are putting the project together will consult with the community. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 925-17(5):
61ST ANNUAL REPORT: NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES LIQUOR COMMISSION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the multiple number of reports being tabled in the past four session days, and no doubt right up to the bell later this week, I think Cabinet is hoping that Members will be a little too busy to follow up on all the plethora of paperwork before us. But there is one tabled document, 314-17(5), that was tabled on September 30, 2015, to which I'd like to ask the Minister responsible some questions.

The Minister of Finance tabled the NWT Liquor Licensing Board and Liquor Enforcement Board's 61st Annual Report, 2014-2015, and within this report it indicates the number of class A to class B liquor licence holders in the NWT. Interestingly, Yellowknife holds 40 percent of these class

establishments in the territory. It is plagued with 66 percent of all inspections in the NWT.

Can the Minister indicate why Yellowknife businesses are so unevenly targeted with his Liquor Enforcement Program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe anybody is being unfairly targeted. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Again, the numbers don't lie, and to take this one step further, the report also shows from 2013-14 to the 2014-15 year a decrease in inspections of licenced premises in every community in the Northwest Territories except the Yellowknife community. In fact, inspections are up in our community by 3 percent.

So, can the Minister offer an explanation to this trend? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: One of the benefits to Yellowknife is they have potentially a full complement of liquor inspectors. I know that in the smaller communities it is much more problematic finding qualified liquor inspectors. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: The report also indicates that enforcement offers what is called server training and conducts these courses free of charge to all NWT licence holders. This is voluntary, but the Liquor Board can order a business to attend at their discretion. Interestingly, for the past two years of this report, three communities, Fort Simpson, Inuvik and Norman Wells, had zero server training participants, yet once again it appears that in this 2014-15 report, 67 percent of the participants targeted and voluntarily forced to attend were from Yellowknife.

So once again, can the Minister indicate why the perceived unbalance toward Yellowknife businesses? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I don't believe it's unbalanced. Yellowknife also has just about 20,000 people, the majority of establishments and the majority of people in a high, high influx as a territorial centre where folks come in and out of town. So they have way more volumes than anywhere else as well.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, Yellowknife has 40 percent of these establishments, not way more that we heard from the Minister.

Finally, it shows in the statement of operations that in 2014-2015 there were three compliance hearings in the NWT for a total compliance penalty collection of \$2,800 from NWT businesses. For this measly

\$2,800, the Liquor Commission spent \$25,000 in travel and amassed \$34,000 in honouraria.

Again, can the Minister inform the House, does he still feel we're getting good value for money? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There's a price to be paid for running effective regulatory processes in ensuring compliance, and I would hope and think that people would say if it was a lot worse we would be having a different conversation about why we are spending so much and why are there so many fines. So I think we just have to recognize that there is a cost to doing business as a government that's not always revenue-based. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 926-17(5):
DREDGING OF THE HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Transportation about his statement today.

Can the Minister indicate to me when he expects this meeting to occur on getting all the parties involved in dredging for the Hay River area? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are going to be meeting and getting the group together. It's going to be ourselves and industry, obviously. So I can't determine their schedule, but we're going to try to have our people ready at any time and definitely before the next bargaining season. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: One of the parties that we can't get to the table is the federal government. Are we inviting the federal government to get into this deal?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We can, as the GNWT, bring them to the table and ask them to come to the table. But again, it would be their call on whether or not they wish to attend such a meeting. But we can, as the GNWT, invite them to come. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Obviously, the obvious question is: Is the territorial government willing to put any kind of dollar figure towards putting this on the capital budget and getting this project moving?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: It will likely not be a capital budgeting process. It would most likely be an O and M item. This would be, again, most likely a contribution if it was to be capital. I think this may be something that could occur, I think dredging would occur every five years or so. I think that's what has been happening in the past. So for something like that, it would be most likely a one-

time contribution and then maybe setting up some sort of schedule, but I'm not sure that the Department of Transportation is going to get into the purchasing of the dredging equipment. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would there be an opportunity to commit to a multi-year approach? As opposed to spending millions of dollars in one year, maybe going to a multiple year, like going \$400,000 and \$500,000 a year for 10 years, as opposed to giving \$12 million to the project.

We're looking for a commitment financially to the project. Is the department willing to put that into their own end budget? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The very initial discussions that we had was dredging is commonly done on a five/six year basis. A lot of dredging has to occur for the whole Mackenzie River right away. So not only the Hay River Harbour but there are some spots along the Mackenzie River. So, likely it would be multi-year dredging. But it's really early to get into it because we need to figure out who's going to pay for the equipment if the federal government will participate. If we participate, do we come forward with money here in the House? I suppose that's part of the process. So those questions have to be answered and a plan has to be developed. That's what we're hoping to do this winter. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 927-17(5):

DISCONTINUATION OF HANDIVAN SERVICES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services, specifically for persons with disabilities. Residents at Enterprise have very limited access to services, especially if people are disabled and they have very limited services in the community. That's more likely a general statement that could be upheld in smaller communities.

My question is to the Minister. How will the Department of Health and Social Services support continuing the handivan services in Hay River and the surrounding communities? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Public transportation is the responsibility of the municipalities, and this includes things like the handivan services. At the present time, the GNWT doesn't have any available funding through

the Department of Health and Social Services to support this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I was expecting an answer like that. Has the Department of Health and Social Services discussed this matter with other departments if there's no funding, like MACA or with the Town of Hay River, to look for a partnership solution to these problems? We need an answer today. Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Aside from medical travel, the Department of Health and Social Services isn't actually involved in transportation, but I have had this issue raised to me and we have shared this information with MACA, who has indicated to me that the community government could choose to use either their gas tax or community public infrastructure funding to purchase handivans in their communities to provide services to their residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Perhaps you could sum up the situation like this: We need to do something today and now. I think persons with disabilities lack the services and support that they could have in larger centres, but in small communities people struggle. The town can't afford to maintain the services, and at the same time, local costs cannot be absorbed by the Hamlet of Enterprise. The Minister is mandated with his department and also has the responsibility to look after the general interests of residents of the GNWT.

Can the Minister step in and commit to assist and providing the funding to the Town of Hay River immediately so that disabled persons can access the handivan? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It's my understanding that the Town of Hay River actually did have a handivan in place, and for a period of time they did provide services throughout the community for persons with disabilities, including services to Enterprise as well. That service was actually discontinued by the community.

I would strongly encourage the community to continue to have dialogue with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs around what money they can use that has been allocated already. Unfortunately, the Department of Health and Social Services, as I said, doesn't have a responsibility for travel of people in the Northwest Territories outside of medical travel, and this wouldn't fall under that scenario. But I will certainly share the information once again with the Minister responsible for MACA and strongly encourage the Member to work with the community and have them continue their dialogue with MACA.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a very disappointing lack of commitment and a lack of a

very substantive answer to an everyday problem that we experience in small communities.

I don't know; what is the role of the department, then, and the Minister, the role of this government in addressing persons with disabilities that require services at the local level? What role is this Minister going to play and what role is this government going to play in addressing services that could be directed towards meeting the needs of disabled people?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It's a shared responsibility across the Government of the Northwest Territories depending on the different portfolios. Housing has a significant number of responsibilities around persons with disabilities and they have been addressing those. As does MACA with communities, as does Health and Social Services, things that we've done around the Early Childhood Development Action Plan, work around respite. As the Minister responsible, one of my responsibilities is to share information across the different departments and ensure that they are working towards a common goal, but it doesn't change the individual department mandates.

I have indicated that I will certainly continue to work with MACA. I strongly encourage the Member to have the communities that are affected discuss the issue with MACA and see if they can find a new resolution. But community transportation is not a responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Services, so I strongly encourage him to continue to have that dialogue with the appropriate Minister.

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

QUESTION 928-17(5):
PROGRAMS TO COMBAT BOOTLEGGING
AND ILLEGAL DRUG SALES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have questions for the Minister of Justice in regard to some of the campaigns and the work they're doing around how we're kind of getting rid of the bootleggers and the drug dealers in the community. I guess my first question is the Not Us! campaign. I know it's been successful in some of the communities in the past. Hay River and Yellowknife have had successful programs. Inuvik did have a very successful program at one time.

I just want to ask the Minister, how much funding is allocated for this program and is it being utilized in the Northwest Territories and has there been an increase at all over the years?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The total allotted to the Not Us! campaign by the Department of Justice is \$100,000 per year.

Communities can be provided with up to \$10,000 to create and implement their own campaigns in their own communities, plus up to \$5,000 annually as well.

We've had some success in a number of communities across the Northwest Territories, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Fort Smith, Gameti, Hay River, Ndilo, Detah, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, and also here in Yellowknife.

MR. MOSES: As I mentioned in my Member's statement, we've got to create awareness and education on these programs and let our residents, especially the ones who have a certain interest in getting rid of our bootleggers and drug dealers, about such campaigns like this. I know I've also asked in the past in terms of prevention and promotion. I know we had one canine here, a canine unit in the Northwest Territories, and speaking to our Minister, that has been up to two.

I'm just wondering, I'm sure I asked questions about this before. I just want to get an update whether or not those canines on request would be able to get into the communities on a more regular basis and more or less kind of control and patrol our airports and our road systems.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That would be an operational decision of the RCMP, but what I can say is in the 12 years that I've been a Member of the Legislative Assembly, I don't recall a year where we've seen more drug seizures, illegal alcohol going into communities. We've had just today another three seizures in small communities across the NWT, and the number of drug busts is really something. It really gets back to the great police work that the RCMP are providing for us here in the NWT, and also campaigns like the Not Us! campaign and also Crime Stoppers. At the end of the day, community members have just had enough of the bootleggers and the drug dealers in their community and want to do something about it.

MR. MOSES: The Minister did allude to Crime Stoppers as being one type of avenue. Can I ask the Minister if there are any other types of phone lines or tips hotlines that the Minister can reference that would allow residents of the Northwest Territories to give an anonymous phone call to get some of these, I guess, perpetrators in the community who do the bootlegging and sell drugs, if there's any other type of hotline in the small communities that they can call to address such a situation? As we've mentioned, I think there are maybe 11 communities that don't have RCMP officers at the moment.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The only way we are going to rid our communities of bootleggers and drug dealers is to let the authorities know. In the communities, folks can contact the local detachments. If they want anonymity they can look to Crime Stoppers, and we've advanced the Crime

Stoppers board here. There's a renewed effort to get that board up and active here in the Northwest Territories. We're very encouraged by that. There are opportunities for folks to provide information to the RCMP whether it's anonymously or through the local detachments.

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

MR. MOSES: I know that in the Northwest Territories we do have communities that are accessible by road, by water, the Mackenzie River. I'm just wondering if the Minister would be working with the RCMP "G" Division to create higher awareness in those areas that are accessible by land. I know there have been concerns and issues brought forth, and as the Minister alluded to earlier, there have been a lot of seizures in the communities where a lot of booze and drugs have been taken, and we've seen that in the media. Would the Minister work with the RCMP "G" Division to create more public awareness around those communities that are accessible by land and water?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: It's very important that that message continue to get out. As the Minister of Justice, along with my counterparts from across the country, we're deeply concerned with the number of deaths that are caused by the illegal drug fentanyl, and I think that's something that we have to be acutely aware of as well. I know we've had some recent seizures of that drug here in Yellowknife. It's very alarming.

We do have RCMP patrols, and one of the seizures that I spoke of earlier was near the community of Tulita where a jet boat was intercepted with a number of bottles of liquor on board. Also, road checks and the winter roads. We really increase our efforts when the winter road season is in, and check stops and ensuring that there is not illegal alcohol going into our smaller communities.

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

QUESTION 929-17(5):

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF CANTUNG MINE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the last conversation, I have to say kudos to the RCMP for the job they're doing. They're doing a great job lately.

My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Lands. I want to follow up on some questions that I asked to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources last week. The Minister of ENR, in answering questions to me about the Cantung Mine, indicated that there is about \$11.6 million held in financial security for the Cantung Mine.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Lands what form that security is in. We have several different kinds of

security which we can hold. I'd like to know how this \$11.6 million is held.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; we are holding \$11.6 million, but as per the form, I would have to confirm that and share it with the Member.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I'll take that commitment. My information is that out of the \$11.6 million that about \$5 million is in promissory notes. I think promissory notes as an accepted form of security for the liability and reclamation of a mine are not worth very much. Next to worthless is my understanding.

I'd like to ask the Minister, if some of this security is promissory notes, would he consider asking the company to change them to an irrevocable letter of credit, which does have great value, as opposed to a promissory note which has very little value?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Part of our process now, plenty of security is set. Our division at Lands will negotiate with the proponent the form of security. There has been some concerns in the past, raised with promissory notes and other forms of security that is believed doesn't hold much weight. So, we will negotiate with them.

As for the actual figures on this one again, I will confirm those figures and share it with the Member and if there's an opportunity to renegotiate that, I mean, they're in a situation right now where I don't know how difficult it would be for us or make it difficult for us to negotiate with them, but I will get those figures and I will share them with the Members. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I guess I would say, considering the situation that North American Tungsten is in, it's imperative that we check what kind of security we have and probably ensure that we have security that is going to assist us in reclamation if they go under.

To the Minister: I'd like to know, we hold \$11.6 million in whatever form of security, but how much is the reclamation going to cost for this particular development, this particular mine? Can the Minister advise us what the estimate of the reclamation is and what kind of liability we would estimate we have for this particular property?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I wouldn't have those figures. It's too early right now. I think we'd have to do an assessment of the potential reclamation costs. So it is fairly early right now. We are holding \$11.6 million, but as for the rest of it, again, it is fairly early and we will have an opportunity to do an assessment to see what the actual reclamation costs may be. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister: I'm a little surprised that we haven't yet done an assessment. I would have thought that once we took over the ownership of a property, and apparently we now have responsibility for the Cantung Mine, that an assessment would be done so that we'd know what kind of liability we're looking at.

So, in terms of this assessment, if it has not been done, when will it be done, and if there is a variation in the amount of liability required by the assessment and the amount of liability we hold, will the Minister aggressively renegotiate the agreement that we have with North American Tungsten? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We will commit as a government, as a Department of Lands, that going forward we will aggressively negotiate all future land lease securities. I think because we have the authority now, it's more important that we do our due diligence. I do know in June of this year there was a water licence amendment for the mine and I think the revised security amount was set at \$30 million. So again, we will do our due diligence and I will confirm these figures and share them with the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 930-17(5):
HOUSING FIRST PROGRAMS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are also for Minister McLeod today. The recent reports from the YWCA in Yellowknife show that there are 64 families in emergency and transitional housing in the last fiscal year with more than 100 families on the waiting list, 50 women waiting to get into Lynn's Place here in Yellowknife, 152 families on the waiting list to get into Yellowknife Housing Authority's housing units. So these are obviously appalling numbers. Housing First programs are getting lots of kudos as a housing solution across North America.

I'm wondering: what is the Minister's understanding of Housing First programs, their successes and their applicability here in the NWT. Mahsi.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have done some research into Housing First and we are working with the Department of Justice to integrative case management and we're exploring the possibility of a Housing First model. I believe that the City of Yellowknife is one of the only communities in the Northwest Territories that's large enough to access

some of the funding that the federal government has made available. So I think they're also trying to pilot a Housing First project and we're working with them. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that response. The Minister anticipated my next question. The City of Yellowknife has indeed committed to the Housing First concept to try to alleviate the homeless situation here. A recent point in time count from the 150 Yellowknifers self-identified as homeless in May of 2015, that's the spring.

So how exactly is the Minister working with the City of Yellowknife? The Minister noted he was. I appreciate that. How exactly is he working with the City of Yellowknife to help implement the Housing First program? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We're a member of the Community Advisory Board and we have had some initial meetings with the mayor on the task force and the Housing First concept. They are leading the work and we'll continue to work with them.

The Housing Corporation, being an infrastructure department, we would be in a good position to provide technical advice on any infrastructure projects that they may need to work on going forward Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I am calling for a cross-departmental response here and headed up by the Housing Corporation, although they are primarily capital approach, they certainly have a lot of housing programs. Housing First recognizes that the first step to helping homeless people out of poverty is to put a roof over their heads. Only then can the identifying problems that lead to homelessness be addressed effectively, sort of a step number two. In some areas civil society contributes to the caring of a family with a Housing First client to help provide social supports.

I'd like to ask the Minister, how is he working with Health and Social Services, with ECE, other relevant departments and the public towards a comprehensive solution through Housing First for our hard-to-house residents? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We work closely with the Department of Health and ECE. We sit as members on the Community Advisory Board. We have a number of programs that we deliver to help try and alleviate the problem of homelessness. We make contributions to some local groups that try to combat that. So it is, as the Member I think said, getting to be a problem that is increasing and we have to be part of the solution with a number of different parties. Good on the City of Yellowknife for taking the lead on this one and we'll do what we can to support them. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The number of people without a warm, safe place to sleep in Yellowknife is indeed territory-wide and, two, growing daily. The housing crisis in the North is the number one social issue in the North.

Where are we at in implementing a Housing First program? So is the Minister willing to adopt the Housing First approach that addresses the need of our growing homeless population? What's our plan for moving forward? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The NWT Housing Corporation has a number of programs that are designed to keep people in houses. We've got, I believe, 2,400 public housing units across the Northwest Territories and we have a number of third-party units. We have a number of income support clients in some of our public housing. So, we are playing a small part in trying to alleviate the homelessness issue.

Again, it is something that the lead was taken by the City of Yellowknife. We will continue to work with them to provide any assistance we can, but still trying to maintain our social housing issues that we face and trying to improve those as well. Thank you.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 330-17(5):
MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF
RECONCILIATION: THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RESPONSE TO
THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION CALLS TO ACTION

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Meeting the Challenge of Reconciliation: The Government of the Northwest Territories Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action." Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 331-17(5):
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

TABLED DOCUMENT 332-17(5):
CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITIES SPECIES AT RISK
ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

TABLED DOCUMENT 333-17(5):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
SPECIES AT RISK COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following three documents, entitled "Environment and Natural Resources Strategic Plan 2015-2020," "Conference of Management Authorities 2014-2015 Annual Report" and "Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee Annual Report 2014-2015." Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 334-17(5):
NWT MEDICAL TRAVEL PROGRAM:
PATIENT-ESCORT SUPPORTS -
REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD, MAY 2015

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled "NWT Medical Travel Program: Patient-Escort Supports – Report on What We Heard, May 2015." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 335-17(5):
2014-2015 REPORT OF THE
LEGAL AID COMMISSION

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "2014-2015 Report of the Legal Aid Commission." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 336-17(5):
REFEREE CLAIM REVIEW,
INTERIM AND PHASE 2 REPORTS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table Referee Claim Review, Interim and Phase 2 Reports that relate to the Deh Cho Bridge contract between Rowe's Construction and ATCON Construction, initial general contractor for the project. The referee's reports review the issue of the non-payment of subcontractor funds on the Deh Cho Bridge contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 50-17(5): MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, October 7, 2015, I will move the following motion: now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services immediately introduce a policy change to ensure access to non-medical escorts for patients with impaired mobility or cognitive ability, life-threatening conditions, such as cancer, or language barriers;

And further, that the Department of Health and Social Services ensure that the Medical Travel Program is consistently applied across all regions of the Northwest Territories;

And further, that the Department of Health and Social Services ensure that a mechanism is in place for monitoring and evaluating the Medical Travel Program;

And further, that the government produce a response to these recommended actions for consideration by the House by February 2016.

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

Motions

MOTION 48-17(5): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DISABILITIES SERVICES, CARRIED

MR. BROMLEY: WHEREAS Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2010;

AND WHEREAS persons with disabilities have the right to be treated equally, with dignity and respect;

AND WHEREAS almost 15 percent of the population of the NWT lives with a disability, which translates to a conservative 6,000 people, with challenges in every community;

AND WHEREAS an additional one in nine people in the NWT are impacted by a disability as family members and caregivers;

AND WHEREAS people with disabilities are at higher risk for neglect, abuse, poverty, isolation, depression and mental health and wellness issues;

AND WHEREAS in 2001 the Premier of the Northwest Territories set up a steering partnership

tasked to develop a framework for effective programs and services for persons living with disabilities in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS a 2008 GNWT Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities was adopted to meet the needs and improve the lives of people living with disabilities in the North;

AND WHEREAS there continues to be considerable and long-standing barriers to full participation and citizenship in society for people with disabilities in the areas of what the NWT Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities identified as the five building blocks: housing, education, employment, income and disability supports;

AND WHEREAS transportation, mobility and community funding issues are of primary and common concern for persons with disabilities across the NWT;

AND WHEREAS when the NWT Disabilities Council met with various stakeholder departments, some of the departments were unaware of the action plan;

AND WHEREAS the NWT Disabilities Council has done an evaluation of the implementation of the action plan and concluded that the effort has been woefully inadequate;

AND WHEREAS between 2008 and 2015 there was little progress, few accomplishments and no formal evaluation of the status of the actions called for in the plan;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the government work with the Northwest Territories Disabilities Council and community councils to assess the reasons for the failure to implement the action plan formulated in 2008;

AND FURTHER, that the government work with the Disabilities Council to propose the best way to actively move forward with a Disabilities Action Plan;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the government produce a response for consideration by the House by June of 2016.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is something I learned about at the recent AGM, annual general meeting, of the Disabilities Council. It turns out that we did good work back in the 15th Assembly and even the 14th. Starting in 2004 there was interest in addressing the issues people with disabilities face. In 2008 there was an action plan that was produced and tabled in the House and there was some good work that went on in between times.

Between 2008 and 2015, however, there seemed to be a major shift and focus away from disabilities. This prompted the NWT council's interest and proposal to the Stabilization Fund for NGOs, a program under the Premier which was much appreciated, to evaluate the action plan and feedback on services in the North from multiple vested groups. They had substantial feedback, as it turned out, from people who both shared their personal stories, those who shared their experience in the work that they do with people with disabilities, and actually some departments, as well, who shared information and status on programs and services. From this work it was clear that there are gaps and a new strategic plan with measurable outcomes and ongoing evaluation is required.

The ultimate conclusion was that we need to restart the conversation and refocus the land back onto people with disabilities throughout the North and the people and families that support and care for those individuals.

The work that they did as a result of the Stabilization Fund was modest but significant, enabling them to get some work going. The survey responses came from 321 people throughout the territory, including 115 living with disability, 58 parents or caregivers and 148 service providers, and as we heard today in statements, these were from 32 communities.

The report of the council focused on the five building blocks, which I mentioned: education, employment, income, disability supports and housing. In each area there were five priorities that were selected. Within education, an example is a third of the respondents identified difficulties with physical barriers in education settings.

They concluded that needs for education, both at the institutional and personal levels, need training for educators and they need physical accessibility for educational institutions and access to accommodations.

Under the area of employment, again there were several priorities identified. They found under personal limitations, 15.7 percent stated that even after all barriers to employment had been addressed, some people will still be unable to work. Because of this, sufficient income supports must be available so that all people can live comfortably.

Under the employment block, some of the priorities were extending the duty to accommodate to the private sector; put in place a funding resource program for workplace accommodations; employer training for awareness of disability issues and accommodations; physical access to workplaces and public spaces; and reassessing income support, especially for those who are completely prevented from being able to work.

Again, under the block of income, poverty and security, high cost of living and benefits, cost of programs and services were all priorities and they found that 20 percent of 115 personal survey respondents stated that last year alone they had spent over \$1,000 out of pocket on health and support related specifically to their disability.

The priorities under that area of income were poverty and low income families and individuals needing to be prioritized, especially those who are at risk of poverty and living pay cheque to pay cheque, and I know some of these things may be addressed obliquely in on our action plan on poverty, but we're talking now about a subset of people who need extra attention.

Income exemption amounts and overall long-term ability structures for income assistance should be assessed. Emergency funds should be in place for those who may not qualify for income assistance, and we need to assess how many NWT applicants have had benefit applications denied due to doctor error or doctor turnover.

Another major area was disability supports, and included access to supports and information, relocation for services, transportation and community accessibility, and under there that 25 percent of personal survey respondents identified a lack of transportation to and from services as an obstacle. We heard today in a Member's statement from my colleague Mr. Nadli that that was a major issue. I talked to people in Hay River with a similar sort of thing.

Stigma and attitudinal barriers was a priority under this block of disability supports, and the need for trained professionals. Again, the priorities were addressing relocation concerns, so to keep people as close to home as possible; to address availability and affordability of aides and assistive devices; to address the lack of trained professionals through recruitment and retention; and an updated information guide to disability and supports and services is needed. It is now out of date. There is one as a result of the action plan, but it is in need of updating, and I think that's something that should be routine.

Housing. Housing priorities included affordability, accessibility, modifications and renovations, and under that, 36 percent of respondents anticipated needing major repairs, modifications or improvements to their homes in the next five to 10 years in order to assist them specifically, again, with their disabilities.

Safety, inclusion in the community was a priority area, and long-term care and supported living. Again, the priorities, actions: prioritize long-term care and supported living; prioritize and promote funding for housing modifications and renovations; address safety and inclusion concerns by building affordable and accessible housing, and consider a

rent cap or other strategy; and expand accessible design, promote and encourage high accessibility standards in their design.

I know my colleagues will speak and add depth and substance to many of these remarks. I want to express appreciation to the NWT Disabilities Council for doing this work. I think it points clearly to the need to get on top of these things, re-invigorate the process, renew the action plan and work with all to get this action done.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion, as you may have gathered from my statement earlier today. I want to thank both the mover and the seconder, Mr. Bromley and Mr. Nadli, for bringing the motion forward.

I spoke in my statement about inaction, and a fairly long period of inaction in regard to taking action on the issue of NWT residents who have disabilities and closing the gaps and providing services that close the gaps for NWT disabled residents.

I think it's important to note, as Mr. Bromley did, he gave you some statistics, but the impact of a disability in a family or in a community doesn't affect just the disabled person. It affects all those people around them who support them, who are required to support them in one way or another. Caregivers, family members, certainly schools are impacted. It's not just the disabled persons that we have to talk about here. We are not providing the services and the programs that we should to the disabled persons to the detriment of many other people as well.

The council's report, as Mr. Bromley has mentioned, highlights many gaps and many needs in the services that are required across the territory. I think it's an excellent document. I have to confess I haven't read the whole thing, but I've certainly read the summary and I've read part of the full document and it's a well done summary, it's a well done survey, and I don't think anyone can say that it didn't canvass the majority of the NWT, 32 out of 33 communities, and some 320-plus people who were canvassed and responded to the survey. I think it's a very excellent summary of what one could say is the state of the nation, the state of the NWT nation in regard to disabilities and where we sit.

My view at this point is that this summary document, this project document has provided the government with a way forward. It's done a great analysis of where we sit at the moment, and there are five recommendations at the end of the document, five major recommendations which suggest how we can go forward from here. I think this motion asks basically for the same thing. Maybe not specific to recommendations, but we're

asking for the government to find out, do an analysis, find out why there's been no action on the Disabilities Action Plan since, basically, 2007, 2008. Why is it not a priority for this government? Why nothing is happening. Why we still have NWT residents who are struggling to live, to work, to get educated, all because they happen to have a disability.

The Minister, earlier, was answering some questions, and he spoke as the Minister of Health and Social Services, but he's also the Minister responsible for Disabilities, and I think we have to recognize as a government that if we have a Minister responsible for Disabilities, then we have to give them the tools to work with. I suggested that this situation now is somewhat like the homelessness situation was previously. We now have a homelessness coordinator who is pulling all departments together and presumably working on programs across all government departments. We need the same thing here with the Disabilities Action Plan.

We have Education, we have Health, we have Housing, to name three major ones. MACA, I'm sure, is involved in there to a certain extent. We need somebody who has the funding but also who has the authority to reach across all departments and to pull them together.

I have to ask these questions, and I think the answers are no, but is there coordination across our government in what we're doing for disabled persons? Is it adequately funded? Are we following the advice of our NGOs, the advice of the people that are working the front-lines that are dealing with persons with disabilities on a day-to-day basis? There are lots of departments involved. Someone has to pull them together and someone has to work with the council, and that's an ask in this particular motion.

Lastly, I think I mentioned, and I hope it was well heard, but in my statement I said we can send a message to the 18th Assembly. If we speak strongly, if we speak loudly, if we support this motion we can tell the 18th Assembly this is a priority, and it's a priority not just for the Members of this Assembly but for the territory as a whole. This is something that we need to work on. We've waited some seven or eight years to get some real action going forward. We should start now in 2015 and not put it off until 2016 or 2017. It can be done. As I've said before, let's do it.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the mover, Mr. Bromley, for bringing this forward, and colleagues for speaking on it at this point.

I think the motion itself speaks to the most vulnerable in society who need help, people with disabilities. I can safely say that there are a few of my relatives who are disabled and it's disheartening to see them struggle, especially at the community level when the programs and services are very limited at the same time and when services like handivan services are basically stopped for one community because another community can't afford to maintain those services. It's rather sad that with this government we can't do that and then people have no recourse but to look at perhaps the federal government to step in and see if those services could be delivered to them.

Also, at the same time, we have to think carefully about our priorities. We lend resources to big infrastructure projects, but at the same time, social needs such as this are something that we didn't really intend perhaps to not consider, but it just so happens that's how government is run, is that there are limited fiscal resources. So there are challenges, but we need to think carefully about our priorities and ensure that we're pulling all the right cords in the right direction.

At the community level, a disability is a very big challenge. In larger centres like Yellowknife you have all the services here. In smaller communities people are basically left to fend for themselves if they're disabled and, unfortunately, families have to become caretakers, relatives, uncles, sisters, aunts. That's how it is at the community level, but what's most disappointing is the inaction of the period of time when this was sitting on someone's table or someone's desk and collected dust. We need to move on this initiative in terms of addressing the needs of disabled persons in the NWT.

So, today I speak in favour of this motion and I'm hoping all of my colleagues will stand in support of it too. Mahsi.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion that's here before us, over the length of this government, I think at the same time we can't be pulling in favours from the Minister responsible. We have 19 Members in this House and it's our responsibility to bring action items, bring concerns forward to the Legislative Assembly, and over the four years I believe this is one organization and one action plan that we didn't give its due respect and due action to. I know it's at the end of this Legislative Assembly now and we're trying to figure out how to address this issue.

Back in 2012-2013 I had asked questions of the Ministers responsible, made a couple of comments. I'd just like to be as responsible, as well, saying that I didn't follow up on these. I asked questions, where were they, and I could have followed it up in a more

timely manner, as well, to stay on top of the Minister.

Of course, this is a big concern and when they ask about why this action plan failed, I think it's the responsibility of the House to stay on top of this and keep the government accountable and transparent to the action plans that we help develop or previous governments developed. But in the motion itself, it does further recognize that the government worked with the Disabilities Council to find the best way to actively move forward with the action plan and we do have a 2008 action plan. I know the NWT Disabilities Council just developed an action plan that has numerous recommendations throughout the report, and as Ms. Bisaro mentioned earlier, there are five main recommendations at the end, but if you read it throughout the report, there are some really good actions and recommendations brought forward as well.

In one of my statements that I had made in 2012, I just want to share with Members that in 2010 Canada ratified the UN Convention's Right for Persons with Disabilities. This is the right of full inclusion for every person. Only through ensuring accessibility in all aspects of a person's life can there be full acceptance and inclusion. This includes the removal of all visible and invisible barriers that restrict access to activities and services. Until this is accomplished, individuals with disabilities will continue to experience a lesser accessibility to housing, education, employment, medical or health, recreational, community, social and required services. Pretty much all concerns that some Members have mentioned already in speaking to this motion.

Persons with disabilities have the right to be treated equally, with dignity and with respect and I think what this motion is calling for is the next step that as we leave this government we make a recommendation to the 18th Assembly and to the government moving into the 18th that they work with what the NWT's disabilities developed, an NWT's Disability Service Project in 2015, and also kind of correlate it with the action plan from 2008.

I'm really glad that Mr. Bromley and Mr. Nadli have brought the motion forward. As I said, it is the responsibility of all Members here to stay on top of the action plans. I know as a government there are a lot of reports and a lot of action plans that get brought before us and I just want to apologize to the NWT Disabilities Council that as Members we didn't stay on top of it, but I think this motion is going to bring forward the discussions that are needed moving forward. I also just want to thank them for developing that report and I do hope that it reflects some of the community concerns as well. I know we have a very active disabilities council in Inuvik and I hope that the report, as I didn't get to read the whole thing, I glimpsed over some of the

action items and the recommendations. They look great, but I do hope it reflects what we're seeing in the communities. But as I mentioned, there are a lot of areas where there are barriers that need to be addressed.

I support the motion and hopefully we can start seeing some action going to the 18th Assembly on persons with disabilities and updating that action plan as well as addressing some of the recommendations brought forward to this Assembly. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to thank the mover and seconder for bringing this motion forward. We've been working with our local disabilities council for a number of years and one of the things that stands out with us, we've talked about our mobility, the mobility of these individuals, and our chairperson has been working and she's indicated that if these individuals don't have mobility it's hard for them to get out, it's hard to go to school, hard to go to work, hard to be sociable.

With the lack of effectiveness that we've had with these plans and implementing any kind of strategy, it's put a situation of the NWT Disabilities Council and our Hay River local one for an example. Without any kind of funding, without any kind of programs out there, these organizations are left to fight, and literally fight over funding from other organizations throughout the Northwest Territories. You would think that the two organizations would be linked directly, but oftentimes they're competing over the same dollars. It's because of the lack of planning that we've done here, the lack of things we've done over the last 10 or 15 years on this issue.

We need to work with the GNWT, with the people for disabilities, with all the councils and all the people throughout the Northwest Territories to improve this situation. Mr. Nadli spoke today about a handivan for Enterprise. In the community of Hay River we had a handivan for a while. They continue to operate it, but now only for a select group of people that they can actually get funding for. We have seniors and we have people with disabilities who don't have access to any kind of handivan right now because the program is specific to our own group of people that are taking programming. It used to be open to seniors, it used to be open to the people of Enterprise and surrounding areas to help out, but because the funding is so tight they don't have the money to operate this handivan. This is one of the factors of us not having a plan in place.

I will vote in favour of this motion. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the mover and seconder of the motion and for them bringing forward these issues in such an articulate manner. I agree with everything that has been said up to this point without reservation and support all of the items that have been spoken to. Honestly, it's one of those things that there should have been more work done on this strategy and all the work that went into it and all the recommendations. It hasn't happened.

I'm glad that even though this is very late in this Assembly, it's being brought up and it will be front and centre of the radar when the new 18th Assembly returns to this House.

I would like to also say a big thank you to the people who do work in the NGOs. Honestly, if it wasn't for the creativity and resourcefulness of the folks who work in the NGOs in this area of disabilities, the situation for persons with disabilities would be even more challenged than what it is right now. So I'd like to thank particularly the Hay River Council for Persons with Disabilities. As Mr. Bouchard has already mentioned, we know them personally and we know how hard they work, we know how committed they are to this cause and we, as a government, have a long ways to go to back them up in what they need. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do rise in support of this motion and I would like to thank the mover, Mr. Bromley, and Mr. Nadli for bringing it forward today.

As I'm sitting here listening to my colleagues speak toward this motion, I am saddened for a number of reasons; we failed, plain and simple. I think Mr. Moses said it clearly, we're so bogged down with all the things that are our day-to-day lives, we forget certain things and this is one of the areas that I think that even from a Member of this House, from a Member of the Social Programs committee, we failed, and I apologize to those with disabilities out there. We're not perfect and, unfortunately, this is late in the game that we're bringing this forward. But we have a social contract with everyone in the Northwest Territories and we have a social contract especially with those with disabilities and hopefully this motion today makes some amends towards that action.

As you've heard today, Mr. Speaker, there continue to be gaps and there are too many to mention and a lot have been mentioned here today as well. It's amazing that in this day and age, 2015, we're talking about some of those basic areas that we take for granted. You know what? We came together as a Caucus four years ago and we had a

shared vision. I remember doing that vividly and we talked about a vision of strong individuals, families and communities and that includes those with disabilities. I think we forgot about that along the way.

As you heard in the motion, 15 percent of our population suffers disabilities, roughly around 6,000 people. That's almost the size of our public workforce. So that's like us ignoring everyone who works for the government and that's a large number of people.

I'm really concerned that we sometimes take accessibility for granted and that's not right. Those who have troubles in that area have a right to dignity and I think we haven't offered them that right here today and I'm hoping this motion, I guess, speaks a little bit to making some amends to where I think we've failed during the life of this 17th Assembly because they don't need to live with that stigma, and for that we did fail and I will definitely be supporting this motion and I'm looking for all my colleagues to support the mover and seconder. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion that was brought by Mr. Bromley and Mr. Nadli is a motion that we haven't talked very much about in our Assembly, as Mr. Dolynny has mentioned, and I certainly concur to let this Assembly know that I concur with all the comments by the Members on this side here and I will be supporting the motion on a going-forward basis to the election to the 18th Assembly.

When you look at a motion like this, giving thought to it does bring some personal experience with this as, growing up, I can recall working and helping my grandfather, who was in a wheelchair, and doing things for my grandfather because he was unable to use his legs so he had to be wheeled around in the house. One of the things that they did after he passed away was they built a ramp outside his house, which was way too late and just suddenly things had happened. I experienced all my brothers and sisters, you know, wanting my grandfather to be like the other grandfathers where they could walk around, but he had to be in a wheelchair. That brings a lot of emotional stuff and mental stuff, you know, and today we see that in our small communities.

Some of the houses that these wonderful people live in, there's lots of mud and dirt, and when it rains they can't go out and walk. They're stuck in the house, you know? A lot of people talk about this.

So, I do want to thank Mr. Bromley and Mr. Nadli for bringing this motion forward. It brings me sadness sometimes because I loved my

grandfather and at that time I didn't see it as a disability, I thought that was part of life. He did his best. Sometimes, even when we're healthy like this, we're even disabled ourselves.

So I just wanted to say that I hope the message is loud and clear today that we need to continue to look after these wonderful people and help them do the best they can, especially in the small communities where, you know, they don't have the services that the larger centres have. Yet there are a lot of good people out there, they're working with them and they're not recognized for the work they do. So, I just want to say, in closing, thank you, Mr. Bromley and Mr. Nadli, for bringing this motion forward.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, am happy to support this motion. The first time in my riding I have seen the difficulties people with disabilities face, you know, whether it's in the winter, we have a lot of deep snow in our communities and no vehicles for people with wheelchairs to travel around in. Many times their family members take them in their vehicles. They have to pack them in, put their wheelchair away; a lot of struggles. We do have some families that use their own money that they've saved up to buy a vehicle that's needed for their child or their family member. More has to be done.

Even in Inuvik, only this past year we finally have taxis that now can take people with wheelchairs. I mean, we're finally moving up with the times here. More needs to be done, whether it's elevators, you know, a lot of our buildings don't have elevator access. Simple little things like this are needed. That way people with wheelchairs or other mechanisms can move around in buildings, whether it's public buildings, community halls. You know a lot of the challenges that our constituents face here. Now is the time we need to put money forward to make sure we live up to what they need and their standards.

I would like to thank the mover and seconder once again. I'm happy to support this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. To the motion, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The detailed plan, the NWT Action Plan for Disabilities, has certainly come forward in 2008 and it's a shame that it wasn't received with better enthusiasm. During the day, of course, it probably was. It got its own nudge, but of course, like many great reports, they find themselves on the way quickly to that shelf or certainly holding that table up from wobbling.

Seniors and disabilities are my two favourite areas I'm working on and I certainly dedicate myself, any

time I'm ever asked, to these particular issues and I'm always looking for ways to see what I can do more. This NWT Action Plan for Disabilities certainly was a brilliant step forward, but as we can see, it didn't go any further than that. It wasn't necessarily a false start, but the reality is it just didn't go anywhere. The executive director of the Disabilities Council, in her research, was shocked to find many departments weren't even familiar with the plan, let alone understanding it. So, with those five actions that we've already heard, it sort of makes you wonder about, you know, one, education, what are we doing, be it in our schools, departments, et cetera; employment, how we're creating initiatives to get people with disabilities involved; income, which helps balance out in their troubling times and ensures they have the ability...(inaudible)...disability access, supports and certainly housing. I mean, these are certainly very important and critical facts when it comes to quality of life.

Any improvement to disabilities and the struggle they have goes a long way. But by chance, and certainly circumstances, this report, for a lot of reasons, didn't go past being a report.

The Disabilities Council, in the absence of any follow through on this, took the initiative on their own and they certainly need to be applauded for this. Even on page 3 of the NWT Action Plan it clearly states that the NWT Health Minister needs to play a lead role in this plan, that they are to lead the Disabilities Steering Committee. The problem here we're facing is what progress has been made, what action has been taken? Why hasn't the Minister leaned forward into this report and done more?

Through the NWT Disabilities Council, the survey work has estimated approximately 6,000 people here in the Northwest Territories have a disability, and as my colleague Mr. Dolynny has said, that's more than our public service. Mr. Speaker, could you imagine if everyone who had a disability was unionized and lobbied the government? My goodness, that would certainly be a force to be reckoned with.

I've come to the realization that the government seems to have what I sometimes call a sense of seven stages of procrastination. The McLeod government suffers from this. What do I mean by that? I've actually looked at this quite clearly and we see that we get reports and this is what happens.

Stage one in the procrastination: unfounded motivation and confidence. That is where the Health Minister of the day says, "We're excited, we have an action plan. We're going to do something. This is great. We are going to do wonderful things."

Stage two: productive distractions. That is where the Health Minister of the day says, "We should

really do something about the Disabilities Council and the action plan to help people with disabilities, but let's just take a step back, take a look at the issue. Maybe we'll get to it pretty soon, but we'll get right back to them."

Stage three of the procrastination of the government, they defined it as definitely not productive distractions. That is where the Health Minister of the day says, "We know what the problem is and our action plan tells us what the problem is and it tells us how to implement and do something about it." But that's where the Minister says, "Let's run the numbers again and we'll take a look at it again in a couple of months, but don't worry, we're totally in and we'll get back to you."

Stage four of the seven-stage procrastination problem of the government is where they do false starts. That's where the Minister of the day says, "I want to get to know my problem just a little better before I do something." That's where they stand back and the Minister will say, "Wow, this is a serious problem. We've really got to do something."

Stage five of the seven stages of procrastination is where the McLeod government and the Minister of the day whip around and say, "You know, nothing helps seeing the bigger picture than putting an action plan on the shelf, putting it back, taking a serious look at it later and then we'll see how big it is. But don't worry, the action plan will still be there when we need to get to it. By the way, does anyone want to go and get a pizza and do something else in the meantime?"

Stage six, this is where the seven stages gets to skewed perception on minimum progress. This is where the Minister of Health and certainly the McLeod government say, "Wow. Well, we've agreed to health and that was tough. We should congratulate ourselves. Besides, this is a pretty big step by saying we're going to help, by golly. We've really moved the problem forward." This is where they also say, "We should grab another snack."

The seventh stage of the seven stages of procrastination I see the government going through what is called the panic mode, when they really decide that they have to get the work done at the last minute. That's where they finally say, years later – in this case, eight years later – this is where the Minister of the day and certainly the Premier of the day and the government of the day says, "My golly, we haven't done much but we have an action plan and that sure looks nice. Let's dust it off and say we accomplished that at least. Wait a minute, we can blame this government... Nah, let's not. Let's blame the last government, or we can say it's not this government's problem, it's that government's problem."

Mr. Speaker, as I wrap this up, I'm just going to point out that this whole action plan is faced with

procrastination. People went into it with good intentions. The results, I think, show for themselves.

In closing, I want to point out that the quality of life and the determination is something we should be relentless with when helping people with disabilities. They want to be part of life and they want to contribute to life in the Northwest Territories. Many are active citizens and they deserve our full support.

Obviously, we aren't able to do everything on every problem, whether it's disabilities, seniors, housing or education, but what's so important is it's not lip service that's paid, it's about showing efforts of the results. A lot of people take it quite to heart when they see how much people try. The problem is they aren't seeing the results of those efforts in this action plan. It's easy to say you will do it, but it goes so much further when you show some results of those efforts.

In closing, I just want to say that I believe our government has greatly missed a window of opportunity here. I thank the NWT Council for Disabilities for all the work that they regularly do to improve the lives of many Northerners. I know that they care deeply, and each and every day they go through the struggle of either trying to get funding for programs or help the needs of individuals who are using those programs, providing education to those who have problems and need help and certainly helping every family who struggles, Mr. Speaker. They certainly give 100 percent each and every day. I've seen the work that they do and I know many Northerners have benefitted from the work that they have done, and to that, I thank you and the House. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the mover and seconder for bringing this motion to the floor as well as bringing the important discussion. I've listened carefully to all the Members and what I think is clear is that addressing the issues of individuals living with disabilities is a shared responsibility, and clearly we need to work together on solutions, whether that's government to government or governments working with NGOs or NGOs working together. We must all work together in meaningful partnerships to actually make change and bring about change for people with disabilities.

To that end, I'd also like to also applaud the NWT Disabilities Council for being such strong advocates for persons with disabilities and for doing the report that they recently did. The department works very closely with the NWT Disabilities Council. Recently, we collaborated on several products, including the Yellowknife Day Shelter Project and, more importantly, the Community-based Respite Project.

I recently met with the council on May 26, 2015, and at that time the preliminary results from the Disabilities Survey Project were actually shared with me. The survey is aligned with some of the work that is currently being done with the GNWT. Following up on the review, under the leadership of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, they are conducting a new baseline inventory of GNWT programs and resources that are available to persons with disabilities within the territory. That work is currently being done.

I wrote to the council on June 2nd and committed to having the findings of the final survey report considered in all future planning that is being done by the Department of Health and Social Services and other departments that have other responsibilities with respect to persons with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, I stand by that commitment today and I stand by that commitment in the future.

The final report of the survey project was shared with staff in each of the partner departments on June 9, 2015. It will be considered as we move forward with future planning, once that baseline evaluation of all the programs offered by the GNWT is done and complete.

The council has indicated that they tend to initiate dialogue with partner departments and bring those departments together to have a discussion about what they saw, what they heard and their thoughts on the plan. I checked with the department, and that meeting hasn't been organized at this point by the council, but I know that at the Department of Health and Social Services and staff in other departments are available and obviously would be pleased to discuss the work that is already underway as well as discuss any new or future opportunities that we have with respect to persons with disabilities.

There have been a lot of suggestions to say that nothing has been done. Although I hear the Members, I don't fully agree. I think more can be done, but there has been a number of things done as a result of that report. For example, the GNWT delivers a range of programs and services to support persons with disabilities. As the Minister, I continue to recognize the importance of supporting services and programs for persons with disabilities.

The Department of Health and Social Services provides funding to non-government organizations to provide disability-related services. NGOs remain valuable partners in the delivery of programs and services to persons with disabilities. I will give you a few examples here. This year we are providing the NWT Disabilities Council with \$184,164 and an additional \$226,553 for community-based respite outside of Yellowknife. The Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities receives \$37,000 annually. The Canadian National Institute for the

Blind receives \$100,000 annually. The Yellowknife Association for Community Living receives \$250,000 annually for community-based respite. The NWT Seniors' Society receives \$199,000 annually.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking a system-wide approach to best meet the needs of NWT residents with disabilities and a number of the actions that were included in the 2008 Disability Action Plan – and this is important – are now imbedded within the department's strategic plan, or aligned closely or directly articulated in the Early Childhood Development Right From The Start Framework. Right From The Start Framework for Early Childhood Development focuses on prevention as well as identifying and providing supports for children with disabilities. This includes screening for the development of disabilities; support for at-risk families to minimize the risk and impact of disabilities; and improve diagnostic and therapeutic supports for children with disabilities. It also includes case management support for families and children, and improves support for expectant mothers for prevention of disabilities such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

The department continues to work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment on disability initiatives such as Learning Supports for Persons with Disabilities Committee and Advocacy and Information Services.

The Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities was signed by the Government of Canada in February 2014 and will provide funding to better support education and training and to promote employment participation for persons with disabilities. This agreement was one of a series of recent labour market agreements successfully negotiated between the GNWT and the Government of Canada including the targeted initiative for older workers and Canada-NWT Job Fund agreements.

A four-year agreement will provide \$1.25 million in cost matched funding to new and existing programs.

The NWT Housing Corporation and the Department of Health and Social Services work closely in developing supported independent living housing for seniors in designated communities. Five facilities are built, they're replacing the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik, and four new facilities in Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Fort Good Hope and Whati.

The NWT Housing Corporation also offers the CARE Program. CARE assists existing homeowners in making necessary repairs to their home to ensure a safe and healthy residence and to increase the remaining economic life of their home. Additional assistance is available for improving the accessibility of dwellings for persons

with disabilities assistance. Up to \$100,000 is provided in the form of a forgivable loan to subsidize the cost of preventative maintenance, checks, repairs and renovations in their existing homes.

Low-income homeowners with disabilities may be eligible for up to \$100,000 to carry out modifications to their home to improve accessibility and support independent living. Modifications may include such things such as construction of wheelchair access ramps, installation of grab bars in bathrooms and creating better access to bathtubs, showers and the kitchen. There are also services such as home care assistance, respite services offered through our Home Care Program to provide temporary relief for families taking care of their loved ones who have disabilities. We fund the supportive living program, providing people with disabilities with residential services and day programs to help promote independence and personal choice.

The Department of Health and Social Services will continue to work with our partners to improve the quality of life of Northerners with disabilities by providing the appropriate access to sustainable programs. However, while I agree that we should strive constantly to improve upon what we do for residents with disabilities, Cabinet is unable to support this motion at this time and will be abstaining as it is direction to the government.

But I do commit to taking a copy of Hansard as well as all the information provided and the report from the NWT Disabilities Council and make it available to the future Minister and to the future Assembly so that they can be informed when they come to the 18th Legislative Assembly so that we can once again have some meaningful debate on this issue and move forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Closing remarks. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start by recognizing the Minister's call for all people to be working on this, all those of us in authority, and have some responsibility for doing work on this. I think, in this particular case, I know when I, along with my colleagues Bisaro and Hawkins, in this case, attended the latest AGM of NWT council, I was a little bit shocked. I think Mr. Moses expressed disappointment that I felt in myself for not being more on top of that.

I'm glad to hear the Minister has already been working with the council and community councils in addressing many of the issues that we're raising today, and this will be good support for him and the 18th Assembly.

I think, as mentioned, we're really talking about our constituents, thousands of whom and thousands of families, thousands of constituent families are persons with disabilities or struggling with those

things, so we're talking about our own people. We're talking about community well-being. We're asking this to be made a real and active priority with every department, and we've heard from the Minister of Health and Social Services. We're asking that this be given the profile in every department and that every department be given the tools to actively address the priorities that have been identified by the council. Again, as the Minister said, this is a message we are asking to be carried forward.

We heard from several people that this is very disheartening to see people with disabilities struggling in our communities when in fact we have the opportunity to provide the key supports they need. I am a little disappointed we didn't, including myself. I appreciate that we're starting to get after that, and I appreciate hearing from all my colleagues today.

The community council perspectives are important. They are active and critical for persons with disabilities in every community. We heard that mobility and the handivan issue is common.

Finally, I think full acceptance and inclusion of persons with disabilities within our society is our goal. We haven't done a good job. We can do better. The Minister has got to start, and the folks on this side of the House are indicating their willingness and their message to the 18th Assembly to support that work and address every priority out there. I'll leave it at that and ask for a recorded vote. Mahsi.

RECORDED VOTE

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

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Blake, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses.

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

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod - Yellowknife South, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod - Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, ten; opposed, zero; abstentions, six. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 70:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2016-2017

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 70, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2016-2017, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 70 has had first reading.

Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Bouchard.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 69:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACT, NO. 2

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 69 makes a number of amendments to the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. These include amendments to:

- allow for the duration of the Legislative Assembly to be extended in the event of a postponed polling day under the Elections and Plebiscites Act;
- align the sitting requirements of the Legislative Assembly with the Northwest Territories Act (Canada);
- clarify certain provisions in respect of processes for appointments and revocations; and
- extend the period before an election within which a vacancy may occur without requiring a by-election.

The bill also makes a related amendment to the Elections and Plebiscites Act with respect to a postponed polling day in the event of conflict with a federal election period. This bill comes into force on polling day for the General Election that follows the dissolution of the 17th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, has had second reading. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2, moved into Committee of the Whole for today.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 70:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2016-2017

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 70, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2016-2017, be read for the second time.

This bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make infrastructure expenditures for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 70, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2016-2017, has had second reading.

---Carried

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 45, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act; Bill 49, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act; Bill 54, An Act to Amend the Forest Management Act; Bill 56, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015; Bill 59, Estate Administration Law Amendment Act; Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, No. 2; Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Public Airports Act; Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Coroners Act; Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act; Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Co-operative Associations Act; Bill 65, An Act to Amend the Safety Act; Bill 68, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, No. 2; Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2; Minister's Statement 221-17(5), Sessional Statement; Tabled Document 324-17(5),

Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016; and Tabled Document 325-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 3, 2015-2016, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

**Consideration in Committee of the Whole
of Bills and Other Matters**

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of the committee, Ms. Bisaro?

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We'd like to continue with Tabled Document 325-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2015-2016. If we complete that, Tabled Document 324-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016. If we are really efficient, we will move on to Bill 56, Bill 59, Bill 62, Bill 63, Bill 64 and Bill 69.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. When we left off on Friday, we were on Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2015-2016. I will ask Minister Miltenberger if you would like to take the witnesses table and bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, I would, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

For the record today, joining Minister Miltenberger is Sandy Kalgutkar, deputy secretary to Cabinet; and Mr. Mike Aumond, deputy minister of Finance.

I would like to ask Members if they have any general comments, please.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, detail. Thank you, Members. Please turn to page 6 of the tabled document. Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$100,000. Total department, \$100,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, not previously authorized \$406,000. Total department, \$406,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 8, Finance, Office of the Chief Information Officer, not previously authorized, \$120,000. Office of the Comptroller General, not previously authorized, \$160,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$280,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Could I have an explanation of this last item of \$280,000? It sounds like there was a surplus in the child and family services budget for the information system that we've been trying to get in place for years now. In fact, I was told there was ongoing work that we'd approved for this fiscal year and that there was even more capital dollars planned for next year to finish off the Child and Family Services Information System. If I've got that right, I'm questioning how there can be this \$280,000 in surplus given we're barely halfway through the year, if I'm understanding this correctly. Thank you.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. There's no surplus in the child and family services project. It's just that the project has faced some delays in getting started. From a cash flow perspective, they were not going to use all the money that was allocated in their budget for the 2015-2016 year, so the discussion and decision was around a couple of projects in Finance that were approved and proceeding. The first one was on the cash management function. That was going to be spread over two years and the thinking or the decision was to try to use some of that surplus, not surplus but free up cash this year from Health and Social Services to do that project over one year. For the security tools, because of the money allocated in the IT budget for this year, we didn't have enough funding to cover all the assets we wanted to, to get all the security tools in place. This money will allow that to happen. Next year in the capital plan, that \$280,000 will go back to Health and Social Services and they will be able to spend the money and the project will pick up steam in the next fiscal year. So, it's not that there's a surplus, there's a cash flow issue from that project that we are re-profiling to this year, and that \$280,000, again, as I said, will be available for that project next fiscal year and we'll be in a position to spend that money. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The deputy minister has just said exactly what I said, albeit in more flowery terms. This is extremely disappointing. We have been trying to get this approved, the Child and Family Services Information System, as the Minister of Health knows, since the 16th Assembly. It was recognized that our child and family services workers are so flummoxed by this useless piece of software that they spend times driven to smoking, leaving the building and going out to smoke, because this is a useless piece of software that we have and it's affecting the delivery of child and family services. The Auditor General was on about exactly this stuff, and year after year after year we've transferred dollars. I guess I'm just so tired of it and I can't imagine what our workers are feeling when they're absolutely driven to extraction and doing unhealthy things from a useless piece of software that they simply can't even administer, follow, record the family's history over time, extended family's history over time, critical for being able to support our families as needed.

Can I ask what's going on here? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'll go to Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member asked roughly the same question when we were discussing the capital budget for '16-17. At that time I indicated that we have actually made some progress on this file, significant progress. We are moving forward with a brand new system; we're in the negotiations with a potential provider. It's not going to be a rebuild of the existing awful system that the Member has described, but given the time it's taken to land on an appropriate vendor, someone who can actually do the work and give us the tool that is going to meet the needs of the social workers that are involved in this file and we've been seeking their input and advice as we move along to make sure that people are informed.

We still anticipate the end date to be the same. We just need to move some money from this current fiscal year to the future fiscal year because we're not going to be able to spend all the money this fiscal year. But at the end of the day, we still are projecting the same go live date that we've been contemplating all along. It's more of a cash flow adjustment to make sure that we can actually get this project done and that we have the full funds in the appropriate fiscal year.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just hope the Minister is right. I'm hoping if I'm ever

driven to listening to our proceedings a year from now...

---Laughter

...that I am not seeing this same thing yet again. The sound system sure is a soaker for gobbling up cash. Just a comment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I thought you were going to say if I'm ever driven to smoking. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We as well hope that the Member is never driven to having to unwillingly watch the proceedings on TV to check up on this thing and we intend to honour the commitment that's laid out here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Finance, office of the chief information officer, not previously authorized, \$120,000. Office of the comptroller general, not previously authorized, \$160,000. Total department not previously authorized, \$280,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Health and Social Services, administrative and support services, not previously authorized, negative \$172,000. Total department, not previously authorized, negative \$172,000. Agreed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Turning to page 10, Public Works and Services, asset management, not previously authorized, \$1.5 million. Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.5 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to welcome the department here again today for the appropriations. Maybe if we can just start this off with a simple lead-in question here, if we can get some level of explanation what this \$1.5 million means with respect to tenant improvements. Thank you.

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Madam Chair. The department has \$2.5 million in incentive money to do some tenant improvements on the YK Centre and they got to receive that money in May 2014, so it's reported in our '14-15 Public Accounts. This appropriation is for the department to get the authority to start spending that money and undertake those renovations. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: So, what we've heard today from the assistant deputy minister is that \$2.5 million, not \$1.5 million, was deposited in our public accounts in May of 2014. Now we're looking for an appropriation to spend \$1.5 million. Where is the

remaining of this money and where was it spent? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: The remaining \$1 million is in the 2016-17 Capital Estimates.

MR. DOLYNNY: So it's safe to assume that that \$1 million that was in last year's main estimates were spent directly on the YK Centre tenant improvements? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: That \$1 million is in the 2016-17 Capital Estimates, so it won't be spent until the next fiscal year.

MR. DOLYNNY: So now we've got \$1 million that won't be spent until next year and we're looking at an appropriation for the remaining \$1.5 million to be spent in that same year. Is that the understanding? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you. The \$1.5 million will be spent this fiscal year.

MR. DOLYNNY: Now the story is starting to be a little bit clearer. So we've got \$1 million that's destined to be spent next year, we're trying to spend \$1.5 million this year for tenant improvements. This is money that we've had in our public coffers since May of 2014. Is this money accruing any type of interest? Where is it parked exactly? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: The money was deposited into our Consolidated Revenue Fund and depending on what the value of the fund was at the time the money was deposited, it's uncertain whether it was earning interest or not. Given that we are in a cash deficit position, I would assume that it's reducing our interest costs. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: So, with the \$1.5 million that we have before us right now, what is the intention of this money to be spent on during this fiscal year? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: I think the main intent is to proceed with the tenant agreements at the YK Centre. I believe it's the third floor for the financial shared services offices.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Kalgutkar said it's for the third. It's also for the fourth floors of the YK Centre where the Department of Transportation used to be. They moved from YK Centre to the new office building and that space is going to be refitted up for GNWT clients who will occupy that building. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. When is the anticipated date of completion for these renovations pursuant to the \$1.5 million we have before us today? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: The \$1.5 million in addition to the \$1 million is for the same project. It's just over the two fiscal years and should be completed sometime in the 2016-17 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Because I may not be here to see the completion of this project, by what proof or performance guaranteed where 18th Assembly Regular Members are able to follow this spending and making sure that indeed the government is compliant with all the terms and conditions to the overall \$2.5 million given to us? Thank you.

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Madam Chair. The first \$1.5 million will show up in our '15-16 Public Accounts. Funding that's carried over from that \$1.5 million, the Assembly of the day will see it in the capital carry-overs and the total project will be accounted for in the '16-17 Public Accounts. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the answer. It was more the accounting aspect of the question. I guess the real question is: By what mechanism do we have to guarantee that those monies that we have are given to us, \$2.5 million in total, will be spent at the YK Centre building itself and not be used for any other project or projects within our Public Works and Services? Again, by what way are we able to guarantee that this money is being spent where the money was given to?

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The inducement of the \$2.5 million is part of the lease that we have with the landlord, and so our accountability around that would be in the lease with the landlord, who will be undertaking the inducements, presumably, on behalf of the GNWT.

MR. DOLYNNY: Were there any caveats to that \$2.5 million in total in terms of performance, if we weren't able to perform our duties to use that money wisely or efficiently or effectively to the betterment of the YK Centre improvement? Were there any caveats that that money would go back to the landlord?

MR. AUMOND: The caveat, in the Member's terms, are with the provisions of the lease. It has to be spent on the landlord's properties. If not the YK Centre, it could be spent on another property that we would lease from the landlord. But the landlord will be undertaking and managing those inducements, so the landlord will be in a very good position to know if we're spending the money on his property or not.

MR. DOLYNNY: Does the landlord receive an accounting of the money being spent in terms of, again, back to the proof of performance? Do we supply receipts as to contractor payments or of that nature? By which way does the contractor provide that information either through us, who is possibly doing our work for us, back to the landlord to make sure that we actually are following through to the T and I that we have in relationship to this agreement.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): T and I. Interesting. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. There would be a scope of work agreed to with the landlord and particularly if there is a third party who is undertaking the tenant improvements, but in this case I think the landlord will be managing them themselves, and there would be a costing that would be associated with that that both the landlord and, in this case, Public Works and Services would have to sign off on for the value of the work, and that would be the proof and the verification that the money was being used for its intended purpose.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Public Works and Services, asset management, not previously authorized, \$1.5 million. Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.5 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does the committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Tabled Document 325-17(5)?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 141-17(5):
CONCURRENCE OF Tabled DOCUMENT
325-17(5): SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 3, 2015-2016,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 325-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2015-2016, be now concluded and that Tabled Document 325-17(5) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

I would like to thank the Minister and his officials. I'll turn the floor over, then, to Minister Miltenberger for his opening comments on our next bill, please.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016. This document proposes an increase of \$50.7 million in operations expenditures for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The more significant items are:

1. a total of \$24.5 million for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the increased costs incurred during the 2015-2016 fire season. Twenty point nine million dollars of this amount was approved by a special warrant in June 2015 and is now being included in the supplementary request.
2. \$22.1 million for the Department of Finance to contribute funding to the NWT Power Corporation to mitigate the impact of extreme low water conditions in the Snare Hydro system against NWT residents' power costs.

I think Members will agree that this level of investment is not sustainable over the long run and that government needs to start taking steps to reducing power costs for governments, businesses and residents.

The GNWT has already made significant efforts and investments to reduce internal power consumption. However, more needs to be done to encourage our residents and businesses to do the same.

The most immediate way of doing this is to provide additional funding to programs currently being delivered through the Arctic Energy Alliance, or AEA, and to accelerate NTPC's LED Streetlight Replacement Program.

If Members agree, 10 percent, or \$2.2 million, of this funding will be committed: \$1.8 million to AEA and \$400,000 to NTPC programming for 2015-2016 to enhance energy conservation in the NWT.

3. \$1 million in incremental costs associated with the current year operations of the new Hay River Regional Health Centre.

I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary estimates document.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. I'll ask the Members now for any general comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Detail? Okay. If I could get your attention, please, to page 4 of the document. Education, Culture and Employment, labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$1.250 million. Total

department, not previously authorized, \$1.250 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, special warrants, \$20.908 million, not previously authorized, \$3.635 million. Water resources, not previously authorized, \$255,000. Total department, special warrants, \$20.908 million, and not previously authorized, \$3.890 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I'd like to welcome the department here today. I guess, first and foremost, I want to extend my congratulations to the fire suppression teams that work with us, that work alongside us through our MARS agreements for doing an outstanding job this fire season. In the wake of what we're continuously hearing as some of the heaviest drought years that this territory has seen for many years, decades, I'm very pleased that there was no loss of life and that there was very little loss in terms of buildings and dwellings.

The reason why I'm leading into that is I want to make it perfectly clear that any comments we have with respect to any money spent in this area isn't a reflection of the people working for us or working under us. That is distant to the question at hand. The question before us is the amount of money spent in order to provide these services to protect the public and the Northwest Territories as a whole.

We know that special warrants fall under a certain category in terms of being spent, and with it should come the explanation in due course or to follow with respect to how those monies were spent. Point in question, last year when we spent well over \$55 million in fire suppression as a special warrant, and we waited, as a committee and as Members, very diligently to find out what exactly was the breakdown of that over \$55 million. We all waited very patiently for five or six months, only to see a fire suppression support that really talked at a very high level in terms of a bureaucratic level for policy change and performance change and the fact that we needed maybe better equipment and more sophistication to deal with the science of fire. But that report only broke down three significant numbers to literally entail the spending of an amount far greater than we would provide detail for other appropriations that this committee has reviewed.

So, many of us, including myself, were very disheartened that very little emphasis was given on writing backup as to what we actually spent our money on. It was taken by default. It was a "trust us, don't worry." It's a \$55 million trust us program. We can't continue to go along this same course of action as Members of this House. We have a responsibility and a due diligence to protect the

public purse and it provides a level of transparency and accountability that every one of us here has taken oath to four years ago.

That being said, I'm still a bit perplexed that we have a warrant in front of us for a number of dollars with respect to forest management and fire suppression yet very little information with respect to where that money was spent, not how it was spent or any type of breakdown.

I know there was some dialogue going on behind the scenes with the department and myself, as a Member. We had some discussions in the backroom P and P, Priorities and Planning, with respect to how can we better do this. The onus was put on the Members of that committee to come up with a list of areas of opportunity. I find that to be a bit problematic that I, as a Member, or even a committee is expected to come up with the parameters of how the money is spent. This is something that should be provided to us by the purveyors and stewards of the people's spending. So I will throw this back into the department here today in terms of how can they provide, and in what way can they provide, a better and more fulsome approach to breaking down these numbers and providing more of a public discourse in how the money was spent and have a certain standard we can use from year to year so we can completely understand how efficient or inefficient, as it may be, in terms of we are spending hard-earned tax dollars to fight the fires of the Northwest Territories.

Again, to the Minister and to the department: Is there a list of measurables, in terms of accounting measurable, that we can use to clearly articulate the volume of money that we spend? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We did provide some extra information on a go-forward basis. If the request is a comprehensive, very detailed package that will capture all our costs in terms of material, fire crews, aircraft, we can commit to provide that. We can work through the committee before the next fire season, the format, to make sure it captures the needs of committee in terms of accountability and such. We can build that in so it's not at the level where it is currently. Thank you.

MR. DOLYUNNY: I appreciate the offer of the Minister, but the Minister clearly is aware. The sands of the hour glass are dissipating quite quickly. What he's asking for in terms of number of days left is not feasible, it's not going to happen in time. This is going to fall on deaf ears once again. It will be picked up by the 18th Assembly, hopefully, and through some stewardship that we are going to become better people at doing this job.

This is not the responsibility of a Member. This is not the responsibility of a committee to ask the government to provide information. It should be provided willingly. This information should be provided in an accounting methodology framework which is subject to the right type of scrutiny for the amount that's being asked on behalf of us to approve.

Again I will turn it back to the Minister: Will he commit his department before the 18th Assembly to provide a complete listing of accounting breakdown for money spent, not only for this past calendar year but go back to last year's \$55 million, and provide some level of accounting other than three or four large numbers to make up that which is really, at this stage, close to \$80 million of taxpayers' money spent on fire suppression? Yet, I can tell you on one hand, Madam Chair, how many numbers I got to approve that spending.

Will the Minister commit to provide Members of this House and also commit that there is a transition piece for the 18th Legislative Assembly so this question does not need to be asked by future Members of the 18th Assembly?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As we speak, the folks will be pulling together a package that we will put on the table and provide to committee members. It will be part of the record on a go-forward basis. We will do what we can for last year, but we'll do this year for sure. I will commit to that. We'll make it part of the record that that will be the expectation for all further supplementary or special warrant appropriations. Thank you.

MR. DOLYUNNY: I appreciate the Minister's offering. I will take it with much enthusiasm. Unfortunately, it may not help us a lot today. It's important, as we said, on a go-forward basis that Members on this side of the House, if we're dealing with any type of appropriation, it doesn't matter the dollar figure and especially when it does matter with specific large numbers, such as we have before us, that Members are well informed to the point that we can make good decisions for the people that we serve. I take this information with respect and I look forward to the expedient performance of the department in following through with what they're offering. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question on this page, as well, with regard to the forest management item and the fire suppression. Before I get there, I do want to make a comment about the impact the total amount of these supplementary estimates, the operations expenditures, are having on our budgeting, so to speak, the impact on our finances.

Prior to this supplementary estimate, this request for \$29.8 million, we had a supplementary reserve. We set one up every year. We had about \$23 million in our supplementary reserve. So you take the cost of this particular supplementary expenditure and it puts us in the hole some \$26 million. You and I, Madam Chair, in our household budgeting wouldn't be able to put ourselves in the hole without getting ourselves into hot water and perhaps having to sell something off to pay for the deficit.

I appreciate that we have extraordinary circumstances, but either we need to increase our supplementary reserve in anticipation of extraordinary circumstances happening and the supplementary reserve is supposed to deal with the extraordinary circumstances that come up year to year. But we almost seem to be using the supplementary reserve for whatever it is we need it for and then when we come up against really extraordinary expenditures, such as fire suppression costs and/or low water surcharges for electricity, then we put ourselves deeply in the hole. It doesn't seem to really matter, and I know it has an impact on our financing because we have to borrow more money. It increases our costs on any number of things.

I would like to state that I think we are getting too free with being overdrawn in our supplementary reserve and I would caution Members and the Department of Finance to be really careful, more careful than they already are, about the impact all these expenditures have on our bottom line.

With regard to the special warrant and the \$3.6 million that is being asked for fire suppression, thankfully we had a better year this year than we did last year, so we're not being asked to approve as much as we were asked to approve last year in a supp. However, I looked at the total cost of fire suppression this year and it comes out to some \$57 million. Last year, I believe, it was quite a bit higher. It makes me wonder again, in terms of budgeting, we know we're liable to be stuck in a drought situation for another year or two, maybe three or four – hopefully not – but I again ask, why don't we budget the amount of money we are going to need more closely to the amount of money we actually end up spending?

When I first started, our fire suppression budget was a minimal amount. I think the amount in the budget was for an absolute perfect year and I think it's gradually been increased somewhat but I think we still under-budget what we require for fire suppression and I would like to ask why we don't put in a better number, a number that's closer to reality when we're budgeting for fire suppression. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are at work looking at expanding the base budget for fire suppression to make it more reflective of some of the costs. One of the challenges we face with every other jurisdiction is we are now quite routinely, at least the last few years and if you look around the world, like in North and South Carolina, for example, extreme weather events that are coming in. We've had some discussions, as a Finance department, about how do we best capture the pressures from extreme weather events that aren't tied to the routine business that supplementary appropriations are designed to capture, that are going to be more and more reflective of what's happening with global warming and climate change.

I appreciate the Member's concern and it's ours as well. We need to capture how we account for those major events that are a very big drain on the public purse. At the same time, we want to make sure that we still use the supplementary reserves appropriately, so part of the discussion is maybe there is a separate column and a separate way to account for those and it's not a discussion that we've finished having and it's a discussion that we'll be continuing to have with committee, as well, as we accept the reality. Most of us would accept the reality that extreme weather is now upon us. I think every jurisdiction in the country is facing that, it doesn't matter which province or territory. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister for his comments. I'm really pleased to hear that the department is starting the discussion and is looking at ways to avoid us overspending our supplementary reserve by half as much as what it was in the first place. So, I'm glad to hear that. I was going to say any guess is going to be better than what we've got, but I guess an educated guess, a better educated guess is going to be I think better for us in the budget in the long run. So, just a comment. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we had three separate hits before we finally got to our final number on fire suppression costs last fiscal year. I'm wondering: do we know if this is the last one or do we anticipate whether there could be more supps for fire suppression for this fiscal year. Obviously, it would be handled by the 18th Assembly. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We anticipate that this is the final supp that will be required. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: So, what would be the final amount for this year for fire suppression?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thirty-two million dollars. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I think last year, the largest year we had on record, obviously, it was a challenge. We were a little more prepared this year as a result of having that experience. But I know there was a comprehensive review done by the department on the performance during our '14-15 year that I'm sure we drew upon for the '15-16 year. I wonder if the Minister could tell us any areas that we improved our performance and perhaps our proficiency as a result of that previous year's experience. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: One of the big areas has been on the preparedness with emergency firefighters and extra crews that were trained and standing by and ready to roll that were there right from the start last year. The year before last we were gearing up just because of the unprecedented nature and trying to recruit emergency firefighters. We had an amazing response, but this year we've kept it in place. We've worked on the training, so we now have a cadre of trained emergency firefighters. We've worked a lot on our communications. We've had the benefit this year of the weather that worked in our favour. We've had some good work with Buffalo in terms of their large land-based air tanker ready to go, the Electra, after a long struggle to get it certified. We anticipate having that one, plus hopefully another one for fire season, which will give us two state-of-the-art land-based aircraft that will help us.

Every year there's a MARS meeting, as well, about all the work that goes on between provinces and territories to see if there are any improvements in terms of equipment as well as the movement of staff and equipment.

So, all in all, I think we've learned some valuable lessons, the big one for me being the communication and having emergency folks ready so we don't have to rely as much on outside resources. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. Will we be doing another one this year? Is there an intent to do that? Maybe the Minister commented on that and I missed it. I am just wondering if this is something we now do annually. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair. The intent is to do a similar territorial-wide debriefing on the performance and issues and things that need to be identified to follow up on. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: I did have some comments on the climate change related aspects of this, but I think since this is happening more and more often and coming up repeatedly in this supp, I'll just save it and talk about it later. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, thank you. Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, special warrants, \$20.908 million; not previously authorized, \$3.635 million. Water resources, not previously authorized, \$255,000. Total department, special warrant, \$20.908 million, not previously authorized, \$3.890 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Moving on to page 6, Department of Finance, deputy minister's office, not previously authorized, \$22.129 million. Total department, not previously authorized, \$22.129 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It gives me great pleasure to finally get to this part of the budget, which has been talked about here in the media for a number of weeks at the end of August and early part of September when residents were notified that the government took a lead action in trying to mitigate the low water expenditures or low water issue at Snare and Bluefish and took it upon themselves to give a bit of a bird's eye view of what was about to come here today. This has been big in the making and I'm glad we are finally having an ability to talk about this appropriation in its full consideration.

First and foremost, just to give a bit of a background, I'll allow the Minister to maybe give us information indicating... The Public Utilities Board had a hand in offering, from what we heard in conversations on the floor of the House here, extensions.

Can you give an idea of what exactly was going on between the department and the Public Utilities Board in terms of these so-called extensions during this last drought season and what did that mean in relationship to the appropriation we have here before us today? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the appropriation for the previous low water surcharge was spent, the Public Utilities Board wanted to know, given the fact that the low water issue was continuing, what was the intention of the government and what was the intention, then, of the Power Corporation to respond? Were we going to raise rates or was there going to be some

other accommodation made. We were monitoring the volumes of flows, the needs, the extent of the low water, and we wanted to be as clear as possible and see what was going to happen. So they wanted to know fairly early in June, if my memory serves me correctly, and we subsequently got three extensions. After the third one it became imperative that we give the PUB some indication by the end of I think it was August, that we were given the latitude of a final six extra days. So we finally had to make the decision to give them the information that they requested, which would become part of the public record in terms of the operations. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Everything that we do here is to provide facts for the public to understand the money that we're spending on their behalf, and as the Minister indicated, there was correspondence given to Members. I don't believe that information, in terms of public utility letters, is in the public domain. But I know that Members on this side of the House received some correspondence just in the last week or so, which puts Members in a bit of a handicap situation because we weren't made aware of the correspondence to and fro between the Public Utilities Board and the department. Can the department confirm if this is indeed true? Is there any proof that the department shared high-level information with any of the committees here, both EDI, Economic Development, or Priorities and Planning with respect to pertinent information leading up to the appropriation and the announcement in the early part of September? Was there anything given to committee members to believe that there was something imminent in the works? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There was ongoing discussion in just about every venue about the ongoing water and the need to make a decision. When we finally reached the point of having to make a decision, there was a letter written to committee and followed subsequently a couple of days later by the public announcement about that matter. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: So, again, things are coming down to some more clarity. That's an August 31st deadline that Members were made aware. Prior to that I can assure Members here and those listening in, Regular Members of the committee here weren't fully aware of the severity and the gravity happening behind the scenes. Of course, we all understood there were low water issues. I mean, we're quite observant in that regard, but Members were somewhat handicapped, as I said, in terms of having this type of information. Now that we have this information and now that we're discussing this here today, I guess my question is, as a Member of this committee, how did we deal with low water issues for the last year since the last time we put a \$20 million subsidy back in the hands of NTPC? In

the last 12 months, what has NTPC done in order to control its demand management of diesel and what were those savings and how was that quantified? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As we were dealing with the low water, we were also burdened with a major retrofit of one of the big turbines out at Snare, which is costing in the many millions of dollars. At the same time across the system, if that's the question, we've done things like push for the conclusion in the thermal small communities that the transfer or the completion, sorry, the replacement of existing high use, high cost of sodium vapor lights, streetlights with LED lights. We've, of course, worked with the government to put in alternate energy replacements with solar batteries; we've concluded the operation in Colville; we've entered into power purchase agreement with Lutselk'e and Bullfrog Power is another example. We've funded the final work to see what it would cost in Deline for mini hydro. We also are continuing our work in Inuvik with Storm Hills and another site to see the viability of wind. We've just taken part in helping sponsor a major North American Micro Grid Conference that's going to as well give us a great opportunity to see the technology and the financing support and the opportunities that exist across North America with businesses as everybody gets more and more involved in the opportunities presented by renewable resources, switching to alternative energy resources.

As well, we've also made efforts into areas where we do have some hydro surplus to offer up that hydro to communities like Fort Smith, Hay River and Res that are on the grid down there at a wholesale rate to help cover their costs as communities. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. I liked the Minister's reply. I know they're doing lots of work behind the scenes and I applaud their actions and I encourage them to continue.

We know that this appropriation before us, this ask is a part of that two-part process. The overall number I believe is \$2.9 million that will be projected in its fullness that we're dealing with a much smaller amount here, the \$22 million, over \$22 million. I guess, by what mechanism are we, as Members of this side of the House, able to follow and somehow account for where that money will be spent on exactly, and if that money is not needed, how do we know that money will not be returned? What are the mechanisms for how this money will be accrued, especially as I said, this is a two-part process, there's going to be more money in the next fiscal year. Again, I'm more inclined to find out how are we able to follow proof of performance in this money being spent on diesel costs? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We will get that information. NTPC tracks it to the litre and we've already indicated that we'd be prepared to compile that on an as required basis, monthly, quarterly, whatever is the wish of committee to provide that information so that we can see how it goes over the course of this fall and winter. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, would like to comment on this extraordinary expense and I have to say that in hearing that we were spending up to \$29 million for a low water surcharge, I wasn't surprised. I can't argue with this particular expenditure, I can't argue with the dollar amount, but I can argue the process. As was stated by Mr. Dolynny, Members really didn't have any opportunity to consider this expenditure before it was complete. Sure, there was a letter from the Premier dated August 31st. I think Cabinet was well aware and the Premier should have been well aware that Members were not meeting at that time. We weren't scheduled to meet in committee until about the middle of September. I think Cabinet is well aware that we don't see correspondence immediately, that it's sent out.

Also, in late July, early August, I think there was an article in the paper, an interview with NTPC suggesting that we had low water and suggesting that there was going to be a requirement to spend the money. So again, I wasn't surprised when I read that this was coming, but I really feel strongly that we needed to be better informed as Regular Members.

So this particular expenditure, and I have to say again, this is \$22 million, which is pretty much the full amount of what is putting us in the hole in terms of our reserve. Again I reiterate that we need to plan better, particularly in terms of our electricity, but in terms of expending money in general. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We are going to, I think, report progress here fairly shortly. I will let him answer you, but that clock is wrong. It's actually five minutes to six right now. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member articulately laid out her concern on a previous item similar to this one and we had a good discussion. We agree that we need to try to count better. It's very difficult to anticipate things like low water, the duration and such, but we are looking at how we can better account for the money and the increasing number of extreme weather expenses that we are being obliged to deal with. Thank you.

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

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

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister Miltenberger, Mr. Aumond, Mr. Kalgutkar. Sergeant-at-Arms, thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 325-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 3, 2015-2016; and Tabled Document 324-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016; and would like to report progress, and that consideration of Tabled Document 325-17(5) is concluded and that the House concur in those estimates and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced without delay. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Do I have a seconder? Ms. Bisaro.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister Miltenberger.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 70: APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), 2016-2017

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 70, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2016-2017, be read for the third time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 70, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2016-2017, has had third reading. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, October 6, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 49-17(5), Dissolution of the 17th Legislative Assembly
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 45, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
 - Bill 49, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act
 - Bill 54, An Act to Amend the Forest Management Act
 - Bill 56, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015
 - Bill 59, Estate Administration Law Amendment Act
 - Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, No. 2
 - Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Public Airports Act
 - Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Coroners Act
 - Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act
 - Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Co-operative Associations Act

- Bill 65, An Act to Amend the Safety Act
- Bill 68, An Act to Amend the Child and Family Services Act, No. 2
- Bill 69, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 2
- Minister's Statement 221-17(5), Sessional Statement
- Tabled Document 324-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 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 Tuesday, October 6th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:55 p.m.