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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	5653
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	5653
150-17(5) – Enhancements to the NWT Nominee Program (Lafferty)	5653
151-17(5) – Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway (Beaulieu)	5654
152-17(5) – NWT Oil and Gas Strategy (Ramsay)	5655
153-17(5) – Training and Development Program for Level One Resource Management Officers (R. McLeod)	5655
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	5656
Tribute to Cecil Hansen (Blake)	5656
Kole Crook Fiddle Association (Menicoche)	5656
Addictions Treatment for Residential School Survivors (Yakeleya)	5657
Recreational Land Leasing Policy (Bromley)	5657
Inuvik Sunrise Festival Activities (Moses)	5658
Land Management of East Arm Area (Bisaro)	5658
Addictions Support Services (Hawkins)	5659
First Nations Forestry Management Agreements (Nadli)	5659
Self-Reporting of Petroleum Products Taxes (Dolynny)	5660
Cardboard Box Recycling Practices (Groenewegen)	5660
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	5661, 5677
ORAL QUESTIONS	5661
NOTICES OF MOTION	5671
Motion 36-17(5) – Workplace Safety at Stanton Territorial Hospital (Bromley)	5671
MOTIONS	5671
Motion 35-17(5) – Lobbyist Registry (Dolynny)	5671
SECOND READING OF BILLS	5677
Bill 45 – An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act	5677
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	5677
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	5693
ORDERS OF THE DAY	5693

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 19, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 150-17(5):
ENHANCEMENTS TO THE
NWT NOMINEE PROGRAM**

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House that the Territorial Nominee Program has been greatly enhanced to better meet the needs of employers and to advance the population and economic growth objectives set by this government.

Economic growth in the territory is creating opportunities for employment and investment in many sectors, particularly in the non-renewable resource sector. To continue to build a strong and competitive economy, this government has committed to increasing immigration as a component of the broader economic and population growth work while maintaining our priority to continue to prepare Northerners for future economic and employment opportunities.

This is why we are taking a coordinated and unified approach to enhancing immigration programs and services to attract and retain more skilled newcomers to the territory. Enhancing immigration will help grow and diversify the labour force and support economic growth and prosperity over the long term.

The Nominee Program is a government-wide initiative delivered by two departments. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment delivers two employer-driven streams and the new Express Entry stream. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment delivers two business streams.

The Nominee Program has been identified as one of the pillars of the GNWT's efforts to support the territory's population growth objectives. ITI has set

a target of eight nominees formally enrolled in the business related stream. ECE committed to increasing the number of employer-driven applications under the Nominee Program by 25 percent each year over five years beginning in 2014.

To this point, I am very pleased to announce that ECE has already surpassed this target. In 2014 the number of approved nominee applications increased by more than 50 percent. This translates into 48 approved applicants including their 62 dependents, a total of 110 people approved under the employer-driven Nominee Program in 2014. We are also on track to surpass our target this year. This is great news for the territory, and over five years we project more than 800 new residents living in and contributing to the NWT economy. This initiative is a key component of our growth strategy, aimed at attracting 2000 new residents to the NWT over the next five years.

We have made several key enhancements to the Nominee Program. First we have provided a one-stop and seamless program administered by knowledgeable and dedicated staff. We have also engaged with employers and other stakeholders to hear from them firsthand how best to improve the program. With their input, we have revised program procedures and materials to ensure information is accurate, clear and understandable. We have introduced program service standards and launched a toll-free information line for employers across the NWT. All of these enhancements will better facilitate the application and nomination process.

We moved our northern employment services website from Jobs North to Canada's Job Bank in January to provide employers and job seekers with enhanced online employment services.

The department has expanded the Nominee Program with the introduction of the new Express Entry system. Citizenship and Immigration Canada launched the new Express Entry system for skilled immigrants in January 2015. This new system allows the Government of Canada to select and manage applications for permanent residence more efficiently and faster. Through the Nominee Program, ECE has implemented a new Northwest Territories Express Entry system for skilled workers. The addition of the NWT Express Entry

system provides another 100 available positions for potential candidates in addition to the 150 currently available through the Nominee Program, bringing the total to 250 spots for candidates.

Mr. Speaker, we are also leading the development of an immigration framework. This framework will focus the GNWT's efforts and strategies to help employers get the talent they need, increase growth and diversification of the economy, and promote the NWT as a destination of choice for talented newcomers.

In the months ahead, the department will be engaging employers and stakeholders to inform the immigration framework and will continue this important work to enhance our immigration programs and services to help keep our economy strong and ensure our residents prosper.

At the same time, ECE is leading a Skills for Success Initiative, to take a hard look at our skills training and post-secondary education programs and supports. We want to improve employment success for northern residents, close skill gaps for in-demand jobs and more effectively respond to employer and community needs. We all recognize that the number one resource in the NWT is its own people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize the importance of these initiatives to the territory. A growing, vibrant economy needs workers and, with our abundant natural resources, there are jobs emerging all the time without people to fill them. A coordinated approach to immigration, our workforce and labour market will help improve economic and population growth, and increase opportunities for our residents. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 151-17(5):
INUVIK-TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] We're going to talk... [Translation ends]

Mr. Speaker, the second winter of construction on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway Project is in full swing with our contractor working 24 hours a day, seven days a week from both Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. Our contract partner, EGT Northwind, is focused on constructing new embankment and installing needed structures during the 20-week construction season, while continuing to train and employ Inuvik and northern residents on the largest new highway construction project underway in northern Canada.

Engineers with the Department of Transportation estimate that since the project started last February, crews have moved over 1.5 million cubic

metres of embankment material. To put that figure into perspective, it is approximately 62,500 loads of material moved by the 34 rock trucks currently hauling 24 hours a day.

Moving a massive quantity of material requires a small army of well-coordinated, trained and enthusiastic employees. EGT Northwind has almost 600 people currently employed to operate and maintain the heavy equipment and support vehicles, supply and operate the work camps, and manage all aspects of the project from engineering and design to monitoring the construction area for signs of wildlife. I invite Members to join me in thanking the many individuals who are working to build the 120-kilometre segment of highway during the harshest season of the year.

Approximately 70 percent of the workforce is comprised of residents of the Beaufort-Delta region and other NWT communities who have had more than 29,000 person days of employment. That is a substantial contribution to meeting this Assembly's priority of creating employment opportunities where they are most needed.

Mr. Speaker, delivering meaningful training opportunities contributes to a sustainable future for northern residents who wish to enter the construction industry. The contractor has successfully trained more than 70 individuals as heavy equipment operators and 30 individuals as Class 1 and 3 drivers with airbrakes. These valuable and transferable skills will outlast the highway's construction and allow residents to take advantage of job opportunities associated with other developments ongoing across the NWT.

The department also collaborated with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to produce a workshop for front-line project personnel on protecting water resources and fish habitat.

Mr. Speaker, environmental stewardship remains a priority for the department in the delivery of its programs and services, including the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway Project. The department employs construction and operational procedures that use the best environmental practices to ensure wildlife, land, fishery and water resources are protected. It also continues to track progress on 286 commitments made to regulatory agencies to ensure the project is delivered in a manner that addresses the concerns, expectations and requirements of all parties involved.

Mr. Speaker, constructing the northern-most segment of Mackenzie Valley Highway to the Arctic Coast was made possible in part by Canada's strategic investment of \$200 million. The Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway Project continues to be managed within the \$299 million budget and remains on schedule, with an estimated 40 kilometres left to be completed at the end of this winter construction season.

An Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway Project display is set up in the Great Hall of our Legislative Assembly Building and I invite residents to come learn more about the project.

The construction on the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway is moving Northerners that much closer to completing a vision of a Canada that's connected by road from coast to coast to coast. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 152-17(5):
NWT OIL AND GAS STRATEGY

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories has the potential to be an energy giant. We are home to world-class oil and gas reserves in the Deh Cho, central Mackenzie, Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Sea. This territory sits atop an estimated 80 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and seven billion barrels of oil. Estimates indicate the Arctic contains one-fifth of the world's untapped oil and gas reserves.

In order to develop the Northwest Territories' tremendous petroleum resources in an environmentally responsible and economically efficient manner, we need to develop a comprehensive plan. Today I would like to talk to you about this government's work to create an Oil and Gas Strategy.

Similar to the approach taken to develop the Economic Opportunities Strategy and the Mineral Development Strategy, which were released by this government in 2013, we are drawing upon the expertise and knowledge of regional and territorial stakeholders, Aboriginal governments and industry to develop a strategy that truly reflects northern values and priorities.

Historically, the NWT economy has been reliant on mining. While there has been oil and gas activity in the territory for decades and this sector has made significant contributions to the economy over the years, particularly in the central Mackenzie Valley around Norman Wells, the sector is far from reaching its full potential.

Mr. Speaker, the oil and gas sector currently faces the challenge of low global oil prices. As such, it is an opportune time for the NWT to focus on actions that will make us a more competitive and attractive destination for oil and gas investment and responsible development in the days to come.

The NWT Oil and Gas Strategy will outline how we intend to control the pace of the NWT's oil and gas development. It will focus on building upon the existing foundation of oil and gas exploration in the NWT and establish a clear path to responsible production of oil and gas across the territory's

petroleum-rich regions. The strategy will outline opportunities to help people gain appropriate trades and skills for future employment in the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Speaker, the next step towards realizing this strategy is to gather additional public input through an online survey that will soon be released. We have already completed interviews with subject matter experts and held focus groups with key stakeholder organizations and businesses, and Aboriginal and community government representatives in regional centres across the territory.

We will also seek input from the Members of the Legislative Assembly. The consultation process will provide us with an opportunity to increase awareness about the importance of responsible oil and gas development in the NWT, the associated benefits for all NWT residents and the support and infrastructure required to develop this industry. The NWT Oil and Gas Strategy is expected to be released in June 2015.

Mr. Speaker, managing the NWT's natural resources responsibly will help provide a solid basis to our economy and support the creation of jobs and economic opportunities for NWT residents and businesses. This strategy, informed by the input of the public, Aboriginal governments, MLAs and stakeholders, will help guide our decisions over the next 20 years and ensure that our residents enjoy sustainable benefits from the development of NWT petroleum resources.

I look forward to providing Members with further updates on the Oil and Gas Strategy as it develops. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Honourable Premier...Sorry. Minister R.C. McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 153-17(5):
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
FOR LEVEL ONE RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT OFFICERS

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Lands' inspection services are essential for responsible and sustainable development in the NWT. Their success hinges on building the capacity of the inspections program through training and professional development planning. Inspections services help companies comply with relevant legislation and meet the specific terms and conditions set out in authorizations issued by the department and NWT land and water boards.

In establishing the Department of Lands, a key consideration was a made-in-the-NWT approach to the inspections process, one that would respond to the 17th Legislative Assembly's decentralization

priorities: building capacity in regional centres and communities.

With resources approved by this government, a training and development program for entry-level resource management officers, or inspectors, is now complete and ready for implementation. I expect that the recruitment process will be concluded this spring.

This program will establish five new resource management officer positions, one to serve each region. These entry-level positions are targeted to provide opportunities at the community level.

This means that individuals with land-based skills can continue to use those skills in the resource management field as inspectors. The length of training may vary with each candidate, depending on the education and experience of the candidate.

A fully trained candidate will have the minimum qualifications for an RMO II position and will have future opportunities for career advancement within the GNWT. These resource management officer positions, along with other resource management and superintendent positions, open career paths and succession planning opportunities for this department.

This is a new structure, one that builds capacity, and one that enables Lands to further support the Aboriginal employment and regional recruitment strategies and priorities of this government. Thank You, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRIBUTE TO CECIL HANSEN

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge a long-time Northerner who recently retired from flying 747s and 737s. Mr. Speaker, Cecil Hansen hails from Aklavik, and this Saturday a huge retirement celebration will be held in his honour in Aklavik.

The celebration will be in recognition of his service to his home community and for his service to Reindeer Air Services of Aklavik and also to recognize him for his years of service with Canadian North providing air transportation to the whole Northwest Territories.

Cecil Hansen was born and raised in Aklavik. He was one of 12 children born to the late Hans and Kathleen Hansen. Cecil attended local day school in Aklavik and then went off to high school in Inuvik and further south for more education in the field of flying.

Cecil studied and became the first Inuvialuit to gain his commercial pilot's licence. Reindeer Services was one of his first jobs as pilot. He worked alongside Fred Carmichael, his long-time friend and mentor.

Not surprisingly, Cecil would become captain of the 747s flying in Australia. Upon his return to Canada, he started flying Canadian North's 737s. I can only imagine how proud Cecil was upon his retirement. He retired his captain's seat to his daughter Dawn, who continues to fly today for Canadian North, honouring her father's air miles. Cecil has become a role model to his home community as well as the entire Beaufort-Delta region. Well done, Cecil. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON KOLE CROOK FIDDLE ASSOCIATION

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. The Kole Crook Fiddle Association turns 12 years old this year. It was registered as a society in 2003 and has chapters in six communities and provides a wonderful music program to 12 communities in the Northwest Territories. This fills a void in our education system that doesn't offer music in all our schools.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge the late fiddler, Kole Crook, whom the association is named for. He shared his gift throughout the North and was known for his gentle ways and selfless generosity. He passed away far too young at 27 years.

He provided inspiration by exposure. The Kole Crook Fiddle Association believes, as I do, that students who study music and arts are more successful and achieve higher grades in school. Children who study musical instruments are more likely to excel in all of their studies, work better in teams, have enhanced critical thinking skills, stay in school and pursue further education. Schools with music programs have an estimated 90 percent graduation rate and 93 percent attendance rate compared to schools without music education.

In the NWT we have many remote communities and the Fiddle Association's philosophy is to get out there and teach this music skill to our youth, a skill that they simply cannot get in their home community. These repeated visits and continuous teaching is beneficial to the students as they grow and learn. They have a four point strategy: an annual fiddle camp, an annual teachers workshop, travelling Fiddle Teacher Program as well as to the students most interested, they are sponsored to attend fiddle camps throughout Canada.

Music provides children with a means of self-expression. Self-esteem is a by-product of self-expression. We spoke yesterday about mental

health and wellness. This effort and dedication by the Kole Crook Fiddle Association has and will continue to foster positive attitudes in our children. Success like this comes when people work together, teachers in our schools, volunteers helping with the events, parents encouraging their children, the fiddle teachers themselves and the hardworking board of the Kole Crook Fiddle Association.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Gratitude for financial supports also has to be extended to the departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and Education, Culture and Employment, the NWT Arts Society and the Dehcho Divisional Board of Education and the many other boards whom I did not mention. I am proud that the government is funding this worthwhile program and should certainly continue at the same level or even increase the contributions. The benefits to our youth, our education and our future far outweigh passive restraint. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTIONS TREATMENT FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Someone once said to me, "Hey, Norm, how come you keep bringing up the need for residential school survivors to get treatment and the need for the Sahtu to become an independent region?" Well, Mr. Speaker, I was thinking, what's the connection?

Well, in both incidents we want freedom, or to be free from the shackles of being dependent on others. For the residential school survivors, it is the freedom of not being hurt, feeling the pain and knowing there is a better life, knowing that God didn't create a person to live this kind of life and how can I break free and be a positive contributor in my family and in my community.

Now, for a region, we want to be a contributor to the North. Learn to make decisions for ourselves, learn to stand on our own, learn to walk and, even more importantly, learn to make mistakes and to learn to accept these temporary failures and move on in life.

That's the connection between the two. At the same level, we want freedom, nothing more, nothing less, to lay the foundation for our families and our region. We want to know that our children will have a region of wealth, success and tradition, no less than a residential school survivor who comes from a rich culture, a rich family, a rich tradition of their way of life, and to break free and to go back to that way of life. Only then they will truly know who they are and

why God chose them to live here in this land. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECREATIONAL LAND LEASING POLICY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Developing a fair recreational land leasing policy is challenging and of considerable interest to our public. The Minister of Lands is holding public meetings to gather public input, and I have heard that from constituents who attended the meetings in Yellowknife last week. They report their experience was positive, with 35 to 50 people attending each. The World Café format seemed constructive, with facilitators at five different tables guiding participants through five different questions. Thanks to the Minister for holding these meetings. I look forward to hearing the results from these and the gatherings held in other communities.

Topics of apparent concern overlapped with ones I have raised in the House before. Constituents felt the rules and regulations focus needs to be on enforcement, that rules mean nothing unless they are rigorously enforced. This concern is reflected in the proliferation of illegal squatters on public lands. No surprise given the department's ongoing refusal to fully enforce the law.

Another concern was the selective focus for the current moratorium on recreational leasing restricted as it is to the highways leading into Yellowknife. This left Yellowknife Bay, which is being colonized at yet further loss to the Commons. With no restriction in this area, no recreational land use plan and no opportunity for public input on applications, leases are still being granted and the Commons eroded.

Many constituents felt that it was important to extend the moratorium on recreational leases to this area and to even consider a blanket moratorium on all NWT lands with respect to recreational leases until a proper publicly vetted recreational leasing management plan is in place.

Constituents felt there was consensus at the meetings that any recreational land management plan needs to be transparent and fair. Squatters everywhere must be dealt with justly, with zero tolerance moving forward. A ballot draw system was the preferred method for lease allocation, with special rules for First Nations and a need to protect ecologically sensitive areas. The Commons must be protected for use by many. People do not want popular sites developed into recreational leases at the expense of public access. They want a real opportunity for public input into what areas should be left undeveloped.

Many of these points have been raised in the past with no acceptance from the Minister, but I'm pleased that the Minister is doing his consultation. Will he hear the voices raised and ensure the policy reflects their concerns? The answer to this question will indicate whether we have a sustainable, fair and transparent recreational lands policy or not. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INUVIK SUNRISE FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 9th to 11th, the community of Inuvik welcomed about 25 out-of-town visitors for the annual Sunrise Festival. I don't know of any other place in the world that puts that type of events and activities into an event like this where the community is welcoming back the sun after about a month of darkness.

There was about three days of activities and events that were planned in Inuvik. The Town of Inuvik and its partners, organizations and businesses in the community came together and developed a really great three days of events and showcases. I just wanted to highlight a couple of them.

One was A Taste of Inuvik and an old-time dance that showcased local and traditional northern foods. About 450 people attended, and performances were also put on by the Inuvik Drummers and Dancers and the Inuvik youth jiggling group, who always do an excellent job and are actually great ambassadors for the Inuvik and Beaufort-Delta region and even for the Northwest Territories.

There was also a community pancake breakfast with about 400 people who got served. All donations were given to the Inuvik Food Bank, which was great.

They also had a snow park, an Arctic market and, this was a big one, the Inuvik ice road village, which was something new. I would like to take the time and recognize all the people who put that together, but there are so many names, so many volunteers and people who did such a great job that gave the real, true northern experience to people who came up from down south.

The Town of Inuvik and their tourism department did a great job in developing packages that could be delivered from Yellowknife, Edmonton, Vancouver, Kelowna, Whitehorse and Dawson. What I also wanted to talk about was the funding that they got from NWT Tourism where they were able to get some marketing and promotion on things like Destination Think!, which put on a contest and had over 1,900 contest entries and two winners from Vancouver and Whistler attended. Rogers Media radio and television also held

contests and there was a family and others that were able to go into this contest with, again, about 3,000 entries in there as well. So it really got Inuvik on the map and the Northwest Territories as well.

I will ask the Minister of ITI some questions later about how we can support this event. Thank you, M. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LAND MANAGEMENT OF EAST ARM AREA

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far back as 1969, through a federal Order-in-Council, land has been withdrawn and plans in the works for a national park at the eastern end of Great Slave Lake. After that initial land withdrawal, there were long periods of inactivity until 2001, and then from 2004 to 2013 talks were held in earnest to try to develop the park concept.

In reviewing the budget last week, Premier McLeod advised the House that we "expect to have some results by the end of March or early April" so that we would know "whether we were moving forward or not." He also stated that the feds have paused and there are active discussions as we speak.

I support the establishment of a park. I support Thaidene Nene and there is considerable support in my riding and throughout my community. To quote one of my constituents, "Polling data from 2013 shows that 80 percent of Yellowknife and Hay River residents support establishing Thaidene Nene."

There is support to preserve the area and support for the economic development and stability it will bring to the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation.

Another of my constituents has said, "There are strong ecological, cultural and economic reasons for protecting the entire area, which have been documented by Parks Canada and the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation."

Mr. Speaker, residents in and around Yellowknife and Hay River have been using the East Arm area of Great Slave Lake for recreational purposes since the communities were established. It is also home to the Denesoline people of Lutselk'e and has provided for them and the surrounding communities for thousands of years. It is a great idea to mandate the Lutselk'e Dene First Nation be the keepers of Thaidene Nene. It is their traditional land, after all, and a park can provide much needed employment in the areas of conservation and tourism.

There is good reason to preserve the land, but any agreement for a park must ensure that it will still be accessible to all of the current users of the area. This project has been proceeding at a snail's pace for far too long and this is where I see the GNWT

can affect progress in working out an agreement for a park.

With devolution, the NWT presumably gained power over our own lands and resources, so we should take on this task.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: We should take on this task, and one of my constituents said it best, "The time has come for the GNWT to exercise its new authority under devolution in favour of this park and the people of Lutselk'e and the entire NWT, establishing this park and making the appropriate arrangements with the community."

I will have questions for the Minister at a later time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTIONS SUPPORT SERVICES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've often heard that addictions can be best described as the insatiable thirst that can never be satisfied. Some folks struggling with addictions tell me it's a lifetime struggle.

It is a long struggle. Certainly one that must always be fought, but never be fought alone, even when one's friends and family may be frustrated watching this. Addictions isn't an individual problem; it's a community problem that we all need to help and we must remind ourselves that addictions is a fight worth fighting.

Let me remind this House that everyone who is affected, be it friends, be it family, are lost and they just need help finding their journey home. Whatever process, whatever the addiction is, we must fight with them. Everyone needs assistance to help carry this burden and finally someday, hopefully, to set this burden down.

It affects families and friends, old and young. No culture, no gender or even economic background is exempt from this cruel experience. Who gets labeled with it? It's difficult to say. But when a person picks it up, it's a terrible one to put down. Many words have been said to warm our souls about actions on addictions, but the real actions come when we are measured and judged by what we do. I've often heard about how much we're going to do. I'd like to see us start doing it.

I certainly support on-the-land programs, and that won't change. I believe that there are many journeys to the healing paths that many souls need to take. There is the formal side, which we all talk

about from time to time, where we talk about addictions treatment centres, detox and even hospitals. There's also the spiritual side, equally important, which includes community-based programs such as on-the-land, support through community groups by the community, in the community. But sometimes when we see people sent away to those southern treatment centres, they come back with mixed results. Sometimes with only just a small respite while they're away, but to be tossed back right into the same circumstances they had left from. But they should not be left alone when they return. We cannot leave them in what some can be described as up the creek without a paddle. We must make sure we arm them with friendship, support, programs, all the tools they need. Sometimes that means through community-based programming.

Let me remind this House about a great initiative that's happening right now in Tulita. It's found its way without help from the government. This Tulita program, Helping People Heal Themselves, is getting support from the federal government and even a Movember foundation without the help of this government. That is really sad.

I'll continue this subject during question period with my questions to Minister Abernethy about where is our government standing up to help people fight their addictions. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FIRST NATIONS FORESTRY MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recent years the forest industry has been in decline across the country, but this does not mean the industry is inactive. In fact, right here in the NWT things are looking up.

In the past few months here in the House and in our communities we've seen a lot of excitement. I'm excited about the two new forest management agreements signed last year with Aboriginal development corporations in Fort Resolution and in Fort Providence. I hope to see more of these in the future. I'm also excited about the potential for new economic opportunities encouraged by these agreements.

Business initiatives like the wood pellet mill planned to be located near Enterprise can provide job opportunities for residents as well as business opportunities for these corporations.

Forest management agreements have the potential to spur on all kinds of new opportunities, not to mention encourage new business and social partnership between First Nation organizations.

In this we are building on a rich history in the NWT. For instance, firewood for everyday woodstoves collected around the NWT communities already produces about 65,000 megawatt hours of heat every year. We also have a history of community-rooted forestry work, like at the Jean Marie River and the Fort Resolution sawmills and, of course, a diverse history of First Nations engagement and interaction with our forests.

Aboriginal forestry and integrated forest management – managing resources to achieve the best results for varied kinds of users – have flourished across Canada. While forestry in the NWT is at an early stage in new development, we can learn from First Nations and success stories across the other regions, regions that have been at work in this industry since the early 1980s, like the Tl'azt'en Nation and Lax Kw'alaams Band in British Columbia. The Government of New Brunswick has held forest management agreements with each of its 15 First Nations communities since 1998.

I look forward to NWT communities joining the ranks of these success stories both for managing forest land and for branching out into biomass industries like wood pellet production, continuing to incorporate our Aboriginal heritage into our business practices. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SELF-REPORTING OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TAXES

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Energy is now a new activity within the Public Works and Services department which combines fuel service functions of the former petroleum products division. Fuel services manages the purchases, transportation and storage of petroleum products in NWT communities not serviced by the private sector. As such, these fuel services also established the credit, invoicing, collection and financial planning for these communities.

In essence, the consolidation of the energy functions within the GNWT Public Works and Services department was to have the goal of effective and efficient government, or so they say.

Recently, to reduce the administrative cost and increase petroleum products accuracy and control, improvements to the point of sale in communities were established to enhance security of GNWT assets and improve loss prevention measures. Again, I repeat, these GNWT fuel services only operate in NWT communities not serviced by the private sector.

The private sector, it appears, is on a program of self-reporting, much like how we deal with our control of tobacco products in the NWT. Be that as

it may, I find on one hand the GNWT appears to have proper inventory control and taxation of their own petroleum products and, dangerously, on the other hand, leave the policing of inventory control and taxation at the mercy of a loophole to all other sectors. This loophole is a self-reporting of taxes on petroleum products.

For years now I've brought before the House the concerns of self-reporting tobacco tax credit memos. While the GNWT, recognizing there may be now a problem, and in attempting to reach over to pick up these nickels, has inadvertently stepped over the dimes of opportunity in the proper collection of self-reporting of petroleum tax revenues.

How big of an issue do we have? Unfortunately, we may never know. Of course, the GNWT has the opportunity to close this door of all self-reporting taxation, but unfortunately, they prefer to roll the dice year after year with our money. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CARDBOARD BOX RECYCLING PRACTICES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I read someplace recently that governments need a department of common sense, and occasionally I have reason to believe that may be a good idea.

Mr. Speaker, have you ever gone looking for a cardboard box at a store? You know, our government has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to implement a policy so that we don't end up with plastic bags on our landscape and in our landfills because they do not break down. But at the same time they want retailers to charge 25 cents for a plastic bag to discourage the use of plastic bags and to encourage the use of a reusable bag or reusable container of some kind. But a lot of those same stores crush perfectly good cardboard boxes practically faster than they can unpack them.

You know, cardboard boxes are a great thing. I know this might sound kind of light-hearted, but they are great things. Think of all the things you can use cardboard boxes for. You can move things, you can store things, you can write on them with a magic marker, you can cut it up and use it for a winter front in your vehicle, you can store...

---Interjection

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Yes, that's what they say. Give kids a playroom full of toys and give them a pile of cardboard boxes and which are they going to go for?

You can use it to confine your new litter of puppies or kittens in a cardboard box. You can use it as kindling. You can start your fireplace in your house. You can start your fire at the beach or out on the

land with cardboard. You can fold in the flaps and keep things cold or keep things warm in them. But our government has never said anything to retailers who crush, bundle the energy and the material that it takes to make a cardboard box. Yet, I tell you, a lot of times you couldn't find a cardboard box to save your soul.

But I want to take my hat off today to those retailers, and I was at a grocery store in Yellowknife this morning, and I know in Hay River the grocery stores are the same way, they have a big bin at their checkout full of all various sizes of cardboard boxes. What a great thing. There is a recyclable, reusable thing. I know that when they get bundled up and hauled away they get recycled, as well, but not without a tremendous amount of energy being consumed to do that.

So I would just like to send a shout out to all those retailers who have the common sense to let customers use those cardboard boxes as containers to haul product away from their stores and don't so quickly rush to crush them up so that we have to spend 25 cents on a plastic bag. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Lafferty.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Richard Letourneau, who is here with us as the president of the Federation Franco-Tenoise, FFT. Welcome. Mahsi for being with us.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Pages from one of my smaller communities, the community of Wrigley, and I'd like to thank the Page Program for allowing the smaller communities to come to Yellowknife and be our Pages. I'd like to recognize Mr. Christian Moses and Kayden Antoine. I do want to say that the Nahendeh Pages are getting taller and taller. I'd also like to recognize their chaperone, Ms. Lisa Moses, and her husband, David Moses, who are in the gallery today. Thank you very much.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to welcome Mr. Richard Letourneau. He's a constituent of Inuvik Boot Lake and I just want to thank him for all the work he does in Inuvik at the school. He's also with the French society. I hope you enjoy the proceedings today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 654-17(5):

KOLE CROOK FIDDLE ASSOCIATION

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I was speaking about funding supports from our government for the Kole Crook Fiddle Association. I think some of it's done through the NWT Arts Council, so I would like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about continuing the same level or even increased funding.

What type of funding guidelines are there with the NWT Arts Councils? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Kole Crook Fiddle Association has been very successful to date, since its inception in 2002. Since 2004, Education, Culture and Employment supported with funding through the NWT Arts Council, a Support to Northern Performers cultural contribution with a total of close to \$250,000 since 2004. This averages \$20,000 a year. We will continue to provide that valuable contribution to that organization. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm very pleased to hear this and, of course, the association is very pleased with the annual contributions. With the words of "passive restraint" going around, of course I'm up here advocating on their behalf that their annual funding doesn't get cut back.

I'd like to ask the Minister, hopefully the NWT Arts Council isn't impacted by our Passive Restraint Policy this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the NWT Arts Council and the Support to Northern Performers contribution is based on the applications they receive. More specifically, the Kole Crook Fiddle Association has submitted one on an annual basis and they'll continue to do so.

This is an area where we feel we should continue to support the youth, especially the youth who we sponsor over the years. As far as the 2,100 participants that benefitted from the workshop, even within a three-year timespan there have been 300 participants on an annual basis. This is a very successful project and we'll continue to deliver that

message to the organizations that are funding it as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm very pleased that the Minister recognizes the fact that certainly the music component that they're delivering enhances and increases the ability of our students to learn and, therefore, is making our education system that much better. I'd just like to ask the Minister if he can evaluate that.

Is there another way that we can continue to support them as well?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This is a contribution through the organization that I spoke of earlier, and we can certainly look at those options as well. My Department of Education, Culture and Employment works closely with the NWT Arts Council and we will continue to support those organizations that submit their applications for these particular activities.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to see the Minister support the efforts of the Kule Crook Fiddle Association.

I just want to ask the Minister, are there any other funding areas within the department that continue to support the association, as well, besides the NWT Arts Council?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We contribute to the NWT Arts Council to effectively contribute towards these highly successful projects or activities within the Northwest Territories, and there has been an increase in that funding over the years as well. We also evaluate on the funding, the criteria, the contribution we contribute on an annual basis. Like I said, it's been increased over the years, so we can certainly look at those as well.

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

QUESTION 655-17(5):

SAHTU REGION

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've talked about the Sahtu region and I want to follow up, and it's in regard to the hopes and aspirations and visions of the Sahtu people. I want to ask questions to the Minister of Transportation in regard to doing the small steps for our region to look at, hopefully, one day becoming a stand-alone, breakaway region.

I want to ask the Minister of Transportation, given that we have a winter road and the airport is operating out of Inuvik and the winter road is operating out of Simpson, can the Minister look within his department to see if there is any way of

creating some programs and positions within the department to move some of these authorities into the region out of the other regions?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The department has reviewed the possibility of placing a regional office in the Sahtu. However, at this time, at the point of the last review it was determined that considering that there were not a lot of positions at airports that it was most feasible economically to keep that under the regional office in Inuvik and that there was no all-season road/highway activity in Norman Wells. The winter road season was only, well, as long as winter is, a couple of months, three months in some seasons, so we thought that it would be better to continue out of Simpson at this time.

However, as I indicated, we are starting to do reviews and we were very hopeful when we were finally moving to a point where there was a federal pot put aside where we could apply to build the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Because we're sure that once that highway is built that we will have a regional presence in the Sahtu.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister is well aware of the Sahtu's aspirations, and with the Mackenzie Valley Highway we're hoping that we have some good news out of the federal government's office. Also, the Sahtu, specifically the Tulita leadership, district leadership put a proposal in front of this Minister to look at a small proposal.

Would this small proposal be sort of an indication to say we need to get ready for the Mackenzie Valley Highway? Can you move towards creating the positions in the Sahtu with Transportation with the support of the proposal that's in front of the Minister's desk now?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We had received one proposal for sure going from Norman Wells south and also we have to discuss another proposal in Tulita going south again. Then there's also another proposal for Fort Good Hope also heading south, so sort of on the Good Hope... With the exception of the Good Hope line, everything else would be on the Mackenzie Valley alignment. If we do fund those, it would be a substantial amount of summer work for sure, but right now we're not in a position to fund any of those proposals. We're looking at them and we're talking with the federal government about the possibility of maybe funding those proposals as well. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The department has a proposal that's written with substantial numbers on there. It's in front of the Minister. The two other ones the Minister talked about are from Tulita and Fort Good Hope. It's a concept idea and they are hoping that their proposals will be on their way.

I'm asking the Minister, given that we have one substantial proposal from Norman Wells south on the Mackenzie Valley Highway to start preparing for the Mackenzie Valley Highway – it is coming – given this, hoping we get favourable responses to create a position in the Sahtu, that would be a start of having a regional office come into the Sahtu. That's what we're asking for.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: If the proposal that the Member speaks of, the Canyon Creek proposal, that is to bring the very first access to gravel for the beginning of the Mackenzie Valley Highway coming from the north south, so if that does get funded – it is a substantive proposal – that would certainly be work enough in the Sahtu for a position to be in the Sahtu. However, at this time there is a little bit of planning money that's been approved to start looking at that, and that's a positive sign, but at this time we don't have approval for the whole proposal. It would be kind of hypothetical for me to commit to putting a position in Norman Wells at this time. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's discouraging to hear that from the government. It's no different than me fighting for the residential school survivors to get some decent treatment in the North or for them.

We are penalized because we don't have an all-weather road. When we did have heavy equipment going with the oil and gas, there was lots of activity, yet we're still not having any type of support from this department or this government. I am asking if the department could think outside the box; create a position, even if it's temporary. Don't shut the door in our face and say no, not until you get an all-weather road. This is not fair. It's against our region and we are looking at something that would look at having some authority in the Sahtu region with transportation. That's what we're asking this government for and right now we're hearing no. That's discouraging.

I will ask the Minister again if he would consider it, look at it to see if there's a possibility of taking advantage of this position and create a superintendent position in the Sahtu region. We want to have the decency and authority to look after things in our own region. Why do we have to call outside the region to do things inside the Sahtu region? It's ludicrous. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The positions that are in Norman Wells are positions at the airport and airport operations. We could go back to the department, look at the airport operations. Right now, as the Member indicated, the individuals in Norman Wells report to the Inuvik office. So, if we looked at the reporting relationship from the airport in Norman Wells reporting to the airport division

here in Yellowknife, if that's the simple change that could be made without losing any efficiencies, we'll look at that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 656-17(5):
DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATIONAL
LAND LEASING POLICY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with questions from my Member's statement to the Minister of Lands, and I appreciate the Minister's consultation with our public as part of the process to craft a recreational land management plan. I'm sure that plan will be much better because of this discussion.

Can I ask the Minister, can he say when the consultations will be complete and how long will it take to put together the draft plan for public review after that? Mahsi.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a few more communities that we need to visit, to do our consultations. Once we do that we'll work on putting together a bit of a draft consultation and the overall policy is expected to be fully completed in mid-2016. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. Many constituents are concerned that recreational leases are now being let without this vital planning tool to guide the process. The current leasing process is not seen as clear, consistent or sustainable, and they would like to see a hold on all leases until the rules are in place.

Will the Minister commit to extending the moratorium currently in place to all new recreational land use requests in the NWT, or at least to the islands in Yellowknife Bay, so valuable for public use and desirable for cabin leases, until the new policy is in place?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. The focus area in and around the capital here is our highest usage and the most demanded for the recreational areas in and around the focus area that we have around the capital.

So we've heard some concerns, such as the Member raised there. As far as all of the NWT, the demand out there is not as great as it is here within the focus area. But I'll have a discussion with the officials and we'll see if there's any movement that we can make because we have heard the concerns from not only the Member but a few of the constituents from Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: The Minister's response is much appreciated. Absent extension of the moratorium to the valuable lands mentioned that are under ever-

increasing pressure, both by the seekers and legitimate leases and squatters, what mechanism does the Minister propose to give the public some say in identifying those lands that should be preserved for the use of all versus those to be leased for private use in the areas where there are not moratorium? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The consultation process that we're going through right now will give a lot of people the opportunity to raise their concerns. I think the Member raised in his Member's statement, there was a lot of good feedback from the people that had taken part in the consultations here, and I think he even mentioned some of the areas outside of the focus areas. So we use this consultation, and it's been a great opportunity for folks out there to let us know their feelings as we continue to develop our policy. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. Once the lands are identified to be offered for lease to people wishing to build cabins, they must be allocated in a transparent and fair fashion. One method proposed is through ballot draws. Another is to auction them off to the highest bidder.

Once these lands have been identified for offer to the public for leasing, what equitable and clear process does the Minister propose to allocate them? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. Again, that would be part of the feedback from the consultation, but our initial plan is if we're going forward in letting any leases out there, a ballot draw we've heard is the fairest way to do that. We respect that and we would take that into consideration, but our plan now is if any lands were to be disposed of I think the ballot draw would be the fairest process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 657-17(5):

TOURISM SUPPORTS FOR INUVIK REGION

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions today for the Minister of ITI in regards to some of our tourist investments and some of our tourism supports. I mentioned in my Member's statement the Inuvik Sunrise Festival and the support and interest it got from media campaigns and Facebook. I was just looking at the numbers here, but this very creative group in Inuvik used an organization on Facebook and they garnered over 1,800 contest entries and then on the Rogers Media on the radio show they had over 2,600

entries. So, over 4,500 contest entries to get up to Inuvik to welcome back the sun.

I'd like to ask the Minister of ITI, is this in the planning or marketing planning strategy that we can start utilizing social media, but also utilizing some of these radio stations down south such as Rogers and teaming up with them to develop some type of marketing strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Sunrise Festival is an important event in Inuvik and certainly efforts to market it is something that the Department and NWT Tourism is interested in and will continue to be interested in. Last year ITI supported the festival with a \$10,000 contribution and also NWT Tourism provided a \$20,000 contribution for a total of \$30,000. If the Member wants to have a look, I know that number hasn't been increased, the contribution from ITI, in some time. That's a discussion that can take place between the Town of Inuvik and our regional office in Inuvik.

As far as marketing the Northwest Territories, festivals are a big part of that, opportunities for people to come here to the Northwest Territories and go to a festival. We just tabled our marketing plan for '15-16 in the House, I believe it was last week, and I'd encourage the Member to have a look at that. There are ways to plug those festivals into our marketing efforts both domestically and internationally. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: In regards to the Sunrise Festival, I know the department really does a great job in promoting our northern lights, and we do see that. It's pretty evident here in Yellowknife when we see all the tourists here. But like I mentioned in my Member's statement, there's no other place that I know of in the world that has a celebration of welcoming back the sun. This is huge and I think that it's something that we can market as well. Also, the Minister had mentioned in his Minister's statement before about the Oil and Gas Strategy. We know the economy is slow and that oil and gas activity is not very active at all in the Beaufort-Delta region, so investing in a different type of industry such as tourism.

I'd like to ask the Minister, when he's going out to promote our northern lights and Destination NWT, would he also promote the welcome back Sunrise Festival equally as the northern lights? Like I said, no other place in the world does something like this.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: NWT Tourism obviously is an industry-driven organization that does our marketing. They have representatives from all regions of the Northwest Territories. We do our best, and I've mentioned before in the House, on promotional videos having images from across the

Northwest Territories. I understand what the Member is saying and we will try to incorporate festivals and, in this case, the Inuvik Sunrise Festival. I know the commercial that they had with orange juice company, I won't mention the name but they were very successful in showcasing that festival through a commercial. So other efforts like that through social media and things of that nature certainly should be encouraged, and I'd be happy to promote opportunities in Inuvik for the Sunrise Festival on any promotional trip that I have. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: I think the concept of having a contest to get Southerners up to our regions in the NWT shows that people are interested in coming up to the North. They had over 4,500 entries just from the Facebook site as well as the radio contest. I didn't get any statistics on how the TV program showed up.

The active group in Inuvik, the Tourism Stakeholder Committee, is also looking at doing something similar for the Aboriginal Day, Summer Solstice, as well as the Great Northern Arts Festival and our annual reindeer crossing. Would the department look at funding or look at supporting contests of a similar nature for other events like that not only in Inuvik but right across the Northwest Territories? All regions are doing really great things. Is this something that he would look at, a contest type of marketing strategy for the Northwest Territories?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Contests are a good way for us to promote what we have here in the Northwest Territories in terms of tourism product. I know when we launched the Aurora Capital of the World in Vancouver there was a trip giveaway. Just recently at NWT Days in Ottawa we had a grand prize for a trip for two to the Northwest Territories. People like to enter contests. They like to have a chance to come to a place they normally wouldn't get a chance to come to, and certainly the Northwest Territories is a place people want to try to get to.

Incorporating contests is important and we are continuing to work with Inuvik, with the Town of Inuvik, through Destination Inuvik, new promotional materials to better target potential visitors to the Beaufort-Delta, and we will continue to do that, because really, and the Member mentioned, this is a good opportunity for the Town of Inuvik, for the region, and with the highway going to be completing construction here in two years, there is tremendous opportunity in the Beaufort-Delta to get more tourists in there, not only in the winter but in the summer, and we could be looking at campgrounds, service stations and maybe even more restaurants in the region as well.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Minister, how do we promote one of our other big attractions, the Mackenzie River? We can look at possibly providing some kind of package for the Mackenzie River. I'd like to ask the Minister, are we promoting our Mackenzie River expedition?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The quick answer to that is yes. The Mackenzie River is one of the great rivers of the world. It's in our backyard. It's really the backbone of the territory, historically, culturally, and we do certainly promote the Mackenzie River.

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

QUESTION 658-17(5):

LAND MANAGEMENT OF EAST ARM AREA

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I want to follow up on my Member's statement about Thaidene Nene. I'd like to start off by saying the Premier advised on Tuesday... No, the Minister advised on Tuesday in response to Mr. Dolynny, that we hoped to have a northern position in the next few months. I appreciate the info from both the Minister and the Premier, and I also am really glad to hear about the work that we've been doing. I think the Minister said we've compressed 18 months of work into about six, and that's awesome. It is time we started moving on this particular project. But there are lots of questions out there. There are lots of gaps in information and there are a lot of people who are interested in this particular development.

I'd like to ask the Minister first of all, how can any interested people, whether they be in Yellowknife, whether they be in Hay River, whether they be down in the East Arm, how can they find out what is going on?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A forum such as this will aid in that process. We are at work right now, as I indicated to Mr. Dolynny earlier this week in the House, that the government see Thaidene Nene as a priority. We see a combination of a small federal footprint supplemented and complemented by various northern tools as a way to maximize the benefit and keep the maximum amount of land in northern control. We also recognize this area as one of immense riches and wealth, both in ecological values as well as the various and many blessings in terms of mineral resources. It's an area that's very concentrated. There are lots of issues to deal with, and we see this as a priority, as I indicated already.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. As I mentioned, there are a lot of rumours, I guess, currently going around about what kind of

developments, what kind of agreements, what kind of negotiations are taking place. I'd like to know from the Minister whether or not he would put in place some kind of consultation or education process with the public so that the work that is happening is being learned about and it would be not necessarily the details of the negotiation but that people can find out what it is that we're doing.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The idea and the issue of a communication plan is an important one and one we're looking at. We are going to be having a full briefing to Cabinet here in the next couple weeks and then we want to have a chat with committee. Then, once our thinking is clearer, at that point we will be looking at a more formal process of communicating with the public, but first we have to do our own work internally to get to that point.

MS. BISARO: I want to thank the Minister for the information. At some point there will be public consultation. I appreciate the Minister's commitment on that. But in the meantime, while Cabinet is considering what's going on, while committee is considering what's going on, there are a lot of people who still want to provide their input. To the Minister: Is there any way that the public can right now provide input into this process and get their views known?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Once again, forums such as this, talking to your MLA. I know, for example, some groups like CPAWS have already mounted a campaign getting their members to start calling their Members of the Legislative Assembly and such. I've had meetings, as well, with concerned citizens. I know there is lots of interest in this and we will be coming forward with a clear plan of what we intend to do as a government and Legislature in the next few weeks. Until then, people will have to be patient, but they do have to know that we see this as a priority. We see fundamentally this is a very important area. A small federal footprint complemented by various northern tools to maximize and protect the various interests and to make sure that we don't cut off or limit any potential economic development related to resource development, and keeping the maximum control with the people of the Northwest Territories.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I'm really glad to hear his description in that answer is very close to my own consideration of what the park should be, that it is able to accommodate all the interests of the people that are wanting to use that land.

I asked if there's a way for people to get any information. The Minister didn't really advise. I know there is a website for Thaidene Nene. Is there any other place that people can go to, any information

on the GNWT website or any other website where people can get information on this project?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There will be as soon as we get the key information together and our thinking clearer. We've been doing some preliminary work. As I've said, we've compressed a significant amount of negotiating, about 18 months into six, and we will be coming forward here in the next few weeks with an update and an ongoing portal for folks to stay tuned as to what's transpiring.

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

QUESTION 659-17(5):

TULITA ON-THE-LAND HEALING PROGRAM

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to be able to ask some questions today, and I want to focus in on my Member's statement. The Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness Healing Voices report was tabled almost two full years ago, and it had 67 recommendations in it. Some of them I thought were good. Some of them I thought were fantastic. But the point was about doing business differently. That's what the key to me certainly was.

Recommendations one to four I will not read, but certainly the first four recommendations were based on community-based community goal setting, on-the-land programming, engaging traditional knowledge. It speaks and screams volumes about engaging the community.

Recently a program called Tulita On-the-Land Healing Program had asked for money and there was no money given to them by our territorial government. They got financing and funding from the federal government and Movember Foundation.

Why has our government not stepped up to support our organization that is doing healing that is necessary in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Member has indicated that that particular organization asked us for money and I have checked with the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority and they indicated that they never had a request and I've never had a request to my office asking for money for this particular program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: They told me even today they had applied, and I looked towards my good colleague, Mr. Yakeleya, Member for Sahtu, who has even signed support letters for this organization to get help. Maybe the Minister can answer how many organizations have applied for community-based funding such as on-the-land programming that engages traditional knowledge and experience. Are we ignoring elders who can bring great things? How many have asked for money and how many have we supported? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Earlier in the Member's statement, he talked about communities and working together and that everybody needs to work together to solve this problem. We have the Aboriginal health and community wellness division of the Department of Health and Social Services who's worked with every community in the Northwest Territories to develop a comprehensive community wellness plan. These community wellness plans do have some common themes. Housing is often one, mental health and addictions is often another. We have given money to every community in the Northwest Territories to pursue these initiatives, including activities such as this particular program where they wish to have community-based, community-designed or community-driven opportunities.

Also, we have provided significant money to the Sahtu for development of on-the-land programs and the Sahtu Dene Council will be offering two 10-day camps near Deline for families from across the region, including Tulita.

I don't recall seeing the request the Member is talking about. I understand that the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority also has not seen the application or the proposal the Member is talking about. I will, once again, ask the department to confirm. I will ask the department to get in touch with Tulita to see where this application is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: I consider it a shame that the government isn't playing a role in this and is not a partner. We have the Tulita On-the-Land Healing Program, headed by Bessa Blondin, Lawrence Neyelle, Dean Green and Margaret McDonald doing things, connecting with the youth, connecting with the elders and making programs on the land and connecting with the people who need help.

What is this Minister willing to do today, knowing that we have had the federal government and the Movember Foundation come forward to help? Where is our own government in our own backyard helping on this one? Is the Minister willing to roll out the red carpet and show them that they matter? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I have had a conversation with a couple of the individuals that the Member just indicated and I do remember some conversations around some interest in getting a program they would like to propose. We are looking at applications from a number of those individuals. I don't recall the title or the name, the Tulita On-the-Land Healing Program, but as I've indicated, we will look at our files and look for this application and give it due consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Final, short supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The name is irrelevant. The fact is people need to be helped. That's what matters most, Mr. Speaker. How we get there, what vehicle we use, it doesn't matter. How many on-the-land programs have been applied for and how many have been funded? The Minister was very articulate explaining how many divisions have been set up and how many people have probably been hired and how many organizations such as regions have been set out money, but I want to hear how many applications have been received and how many have been funded. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I don't have that information at my fingertips, but I will commit to getting that information to the Member. I will remind the Member that there is community wellness money available to all the communities and Tulita, by way of example, did receive \$156,880 to run programs that are designed for the people of Tulita by the people of Tulita. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 660-17(5):
FORT PROVIDENCE FIRST NATIONS
FOREST MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I talked about the Forest Management Agreement. Recently, in October in Fort Providence, there was a very historic and momentous occasion and the Forest Management Agreement was signed between the GNWT and the community. I want to ask the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources if he could update this House in terms of dealing with Fort Providence and the next few steps we can expect. Mahsi.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was, indeed, a good news day. There have been resources provided to the community, both in Res and Providence, by the government to the tune of about \$200,000 for each community to help give them the SEED money to hire a manager, and the big other critical piece is negotiations that have to take place between the community and the proponent for the business, Aurora Wood Pellets, to negotiate their economic arrangements, which is well underway, I understand, in both communities. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: The forest industry in Canada and the NWT is something that has a lot of potential based on the idea that the forest industry, if one would take the task and lead the initiative in creating a business opportunity that's sustainable and renewable. Can the Department of ENR, Environment and Natural Resources, speak to

whether other communities have expressed interest in establishing a forest management agreement? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Jean Marie River, as well, has indicated an interest as well as Kakisa, I understand.

MR. NADLI: What is this government doing to facilitate future resource management agreements with local Aboriginal corporations? I understand there's been movement to work with Kakisa and Jean Marie River. Are there other communities down the valley that have stated an interest, and what's this department doing to help those communities? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We are breaking trail here and we've done a significant amount of work over the years to get the first two major signings between Fort Resolution and Fort Providence. We've had some additional expressions of interest which we are following up on with Kakisa and Jean Marie River, which are tied into the current project of Aurora Wood Pellets with Mr. Mapes. So we're going to pay attention to those and make sure the ones we have signed are going to have done what they need to have done and be as supportive as possible in the areas we need to be as this business interest takes off as well as start those preliminary discussions with Kakisa and Jean Marie. If there are other interests of expression over time, we will get to those as we work our way through the next focus in line, which will be Kakisa and Jean Marie. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: I have no questions.

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

QUESTION 661-17(5):

SAHTU OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ITI. I want to ask the Minister of ITI questions for the people in the Sahtu region. What is this government doing to encourage the oil and gas activity in the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories is advancing work on the highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells, the next piece in the transportation corridor in the Mackenzie Valley. We have also broken ground on the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link and we will continue to try to find ways to inject

some life into the economy in the Sahtu. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The people also want to know what the government is doing to mitigate the operational cost of oil and gas activity. One of the people I did speak to said that if you had an all-weather road going into the Sahtu, you would cut down 30 percent of their operational expenses. That's just one oil company. That is what some of the people in the Sahtu want to know. What are some of the things that this government is doing to lower the cost of business? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: One of the knocks against the NWT in developing our resources and attracting investment is our lack of infrastructure. We understand that, that's why we are, again, advancing work on the Wrigley to Norman Wells highway. Again, a key piece of transportation infrastructure in this territory.

I mentioned earlier the Fibre Optic Link. We also have to...with the Premier's announcement in Ottawa during NWT Days that we're going to move forward with the corridor concept in the Mackenzie Valley for communications, transportation and energy. I think these things need to be thoroughly analyzed. Again, we've always had hope for the Mackenzie Gas Project, but maybe we need to shift our focus in other areas as well. So we haven't given up hope that one day Mackenzie gas will get to market, and we're watching quite closely what's happening in British Columbia with LNG opportunities for that province. Our hope is that Mackenzie gas will find its way to market sooner rather than later.

MR. YAKELEYA: Some of the people that have written to me asked what is the government doing in regard to the anti-fracking movement that seems to be gaining some, rallying around support for a moratorium or banning fracking in the North. So they're asking what's going on here, what is the government doing to deal with this, because it could be the death of our economic development in the Sahtu region.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We've developed an Oil and Gas 101 program in our visiting Sahtu communities. During the month of February we're going to engage with communities on this program. In fact, staff were in Norman Wells and Tulita two weeks ago and it's my understanding that those sessions went extremely well. They're also planning on going into the communities of Fort Good Hope and Colville Lake later this month and we're working collaboratively with the Sahtu partnership on this effort, this initiative in the Sahtu.

We are also in the process of developing hydraulic fracturing regulations to ensure that activity in the territory is regulated in an appropriate fashion. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time also, people want to know that since activity is not up to where we want it to be, is there opportunity, from the Minister's point of view, to work with other departments in regard to a planning session to train our young workers to be ready when the activity happens so that they have qualified, skilled labour ready for the oil rigs and other spinoffs due to oil and gas exploration. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Now is certainly the time. There is a pause in the activity in the central Mackenzie Valley. The time is now to train people, get them ready for when the jobs and the work come back and we will continue to work with ECE and Transportation to ensure that people do have opportunities to get trained for the oil jobs when they return. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 662-17(5):

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMMING

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions today for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I'd like to ask the Minister some questions about junior kindergarten.

Last fall the government, in its wisdom, chose to put a stop to the implementation of junior kindergarten in the NWT.

Schools that were offering junior kindergarten in the 2014-15 school year were advised that they could cease offering that program if they advised the Department of Education prior to a December 14, 2014, deadline. There was a piece in our local paper a number of weeks ago, which talked about those schools that had chosen to withdraw.

I would like to know from the Minister if he could advise the House what was the result of his offer to the schools and to the district education authorities to continue or withdraw from junior kindergarten programming. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When the decision came down by the government in this House on October 30th not to proceed with the second and third phase, the 23 communities that were in the process of delivering junior kindergarten, we reached out to them and they provided a written response by the end of last year in December. There were some communities that decided to opt out. Out of 23, there are 19 communities that decided to continue with junior

kindergarten, a majority of JK deliverance in the community for this year and also next year. Next year will be around 18 junior kindergartens being delivered in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. The Minister, the House knows, Members know, and I think the public knows that there's now a review underway for junior kindergarten. The results are not likely to be known, I don't imagine, before the election occurs.

I'd like to know what plans does Education, Culture and Employment have with regard to junior kindergarten for the 2015-16 year. Will it go beyond the 18 communities that the Minister just mentioned? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. We are currently, as the Member indicated, reviewing the overall JK, junior kindergarten deliverance for next year. The communities that provided written to opt out of junior kindergarten have been verified and next year the plan is to have 18 junior kindergartens to be delivered as part of the process. That's where it stands. We go by what's been written to our department by the DEAs and the DEC's. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: So, he said there are 18 that are going to continue next year. So that means there will be no additional junior kindergarten programs started in the school year for '15-16. So given that, and given, as well, that the education authority budgets were reduced in the 2014-15 fiscal year, my belief is that the department has all the money that is needed to run junior kindergarten in school year '15-16. If it's 18, they actually have more because we've gone from 23 or 22 down to 18.

So, can education authorities expect any further contribution reductions for junior kindergarten implementation in their school year '15-16? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. When the decision was made October 30th, the decision was that we'll continue to deliver junior kindergarten this year and next year on the phase one approach with the existing funding that was allocated in working with the school boards. So that will continue, the decision that was made by this government. So that's the process that we'll continue to follow for next year. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to ask the question again. The education authorities were scheduled to be reduced, some of them were scheduled to be reduced three years running. The first year's reductions have already taken place.

Will there be reductions to education authorities in the second year when there is no increase in the program offerings for junior kindergarten?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. It is approximately \$1.8 million to deliver junior kindergarten, and with the downsize to 19 and 18 there's a small reduction that's going back to the school boards. I must reiterate that the October 30th decision that was made by this House uses an existing fund that we've allocated. So, we'll continue to go with that process, as well, for next year. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 663-17(5):
LEASE ARRANGEMENTS FOR
AIRPORT PROPERTIES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to ask yet another question. I'll have a question for one of the Ministers of this particular government. With that, I'll decide. In all honesty, I have questions for the Minister of Transportation. I happen to be looking at the statement of claim made in the Ontario Superior Court about the plaintiff against Deepak International.

We don't talk particularly about affairs before the courts due to the *sub judice* matter, but what's particularly interesting of the situation is when I asked the Minister of ITI the other day about the cutting of diamonds and when these things are happening, nothing has happened for the last two years since this company struck a deal in the Northwest Territories. Now, that's a business decision to do business or not, but it's got me thinking, has this company been making lease payments to the Department of Transportation regarding their lease on the airport property? Because if they owe over \$615,000 to some finance company, have they been making payments to the Northwest Territories, and if they have not, how long have they been in arrears and for how much? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Business between the government and the proprietors out at Airport Road is a relationship that probably shouldn't be brought to the floor of the Legislative Assembly. I will check on that information and can advise the Member as to what the results of that are. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I can somewhat appreciate the last answer, but if this company is in arrears to the Government of the Northwest Territories, answers are owed to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Can the Minister speak to what arrears are outstanding? If there are any, can he explain for how long and how much? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I cannot confirm here whether or not the company that the Member refers

to has lease arrears with the Department of Transportation. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Setting that aside, if a company owes money, if they owe arrears to the Government of the Northwest Territories, I need to appreciate how long we sit on this lack of payments. If there are any, we don't know. I should be fair about that, we just don't seem to know. There was no answer on that one way or another, so it's not clear. But how long do we sit in a process of arrears before the Government of the Northwest Territories takes action? So I'd like to know what the policy is on that, because if somebody isn't making lease payments, then we should be asking ourselves, when do we take action to ensure we protect the people's interest? I'm referring to the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Usually it's not an issue; people pay their leases. If a company was to fall into arrears, then as soon as the department identifies that as an arrears problem, then we would contact the company immediately and start taking action to recover our lease payments. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Presently in Ontario Superior Court a \$615,000 claim is being made against this particular company. I'm worried about the Northwest Territories' particular interest, recognizing that this is approximately one-third of the value of the two buildings which were purchased and I'd hate to see the Northwest Territories lose its position on these growing bills.

So, my question again to the Minister, if he can clarify this, or certainly help me out and help everybody out on this, what is the policy that we allow arrears? For how long and how large can we allow arrears to build up before the Government of the Northwest Territories takes action for the people of the Northwest Territories to protect our interest? That's what should really matter. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: If it was viewed by the government that lease payments were not being made, then it becomes a problem lease. Then any of the departments would then go to the Finance department and have the Finance department's collection division deal with it. So as soon as it's identified as a problem lease, we would then move the file to Finance for collections.

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

QUESTION 664-17(5):
POLICY FOR COLLECTION
OF LEASE ARREARS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to speak to a personal circumstance. I had a

summer student one year that was overpaid by accident by the machinery of government. The fact is, it was just a small accident and it wasn't even a lot of money, but what was interesting is the collection agency was sent immediately. They sent the leg breakers there to pursue this over what was really a very small amount of money.

I'm trying to get to the understanding of what the policy is. Is this Minister able to speak to the size and volume of the policy that could be at risk here? I'm asking the Minister of Transportation how large and how long can someone be in arrears before the Government of the Northwest Territories takes any action on someone who hasn't been making their payments.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As I indicated, as soon as it's identified that this is a problem lease, having issues with collecting lease payments, then any department, Transportation in this case, would then have the Department of Finance start collection procedures. As immediately as it's identified as a problem we would then go for collections.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening addressing. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Bromley.

Notices of Motion

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, February 23, 2015, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that the Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Department of Health and Social Services clarify procedures for Stanton Territorial Hospital employees to follow when violent incidents occur, including procedures expressly for the use of physical restraint in these cases;

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

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

And furthermore, that the Department of Health and Social Services review its policies and procedures

pertaining to security at territorial health care facilities and report back to the House within 120 days.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a motion to present to the House.

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

Motions

MOTION 35-17(5): LOBBYIST REGISTRY, CARRIED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion reads: WHEREAS lobbying government is a common activity;

AND WHEREAS it is a common public perception that powerful interests and individuals exert strong influence on governments at all levels;

AND WHEREAS most lobbying is legitimate and constructive, it is a common public perception that some lobbying may be inappropriate or contrary to the broad public interest;

AND WHEREAS it is very difficult for the public to find out anything about lobbying that takes place in the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the additional responsibilities resulting from devolution are likely to lead to more lobbying pressure on the GNWT and even greater need for proactive transparency;

AND WHEREAS a publicly accessible lobbyist registry is an effective way to improve the transparency and openness of governments by reporting who lobbies government, when and on what subject;

AND WHEREAS lobbyist registries are increasingly common at the provincial and even municipal levels of government, following Canada's lead in 1989;

AND WHEREAS the experience of these governments provides efficient examples for others to emulate and adapt to their own circumstances;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that the Government of the Northwest Territories investigate the best way to implement a lobbyist registry that is publicly accessible via the Internet;

AND FURTHER, that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleagues for allowing me to bring this motion before the House today. I'd like to thank Mr. Nadli for seconding this motion to allow its debate.

Personally, I don't believe one could make a motion any clearer or to the point when it comes to the transparency and accountability of a government. As I have come to say numerous times in the House, sunlight is the best disinfectant, and a lobbyist registry is about as open and bright as it comes to cleansing the question of legitimacy of the House business. However, before we begin to look at the rationale for such need, we need to first put in the definition of what we mean when we say "lobbyist" or what is a lobbyist and why a registry.

There are many ways to define this, but in simple terms, we are talking about a list of people and interest groups trying to influence politicians and government. Many jurisdictions in Canada have more formal definitions of lobbying and lobbyists, but in almost all cases those who are paid or compensated to represent the concerns of others to influence legislative or spending of governments are referred to as lobbyists. These individuals must usually abide by a lobbyist code of conduct and register themselves accordingly. Consequently, those who lobby on a voluntary basis are not required to register nationally.

On top of that, some jurisdictions also base this activity to the following key principles of conduct. Some principles, for example, as found in the Lobbying Act of Canada, refer to such guidelines as that free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest; that lobbying public office holders is a legitimate activity; that it is desirable for public office holders and the general public to be able to know who is engaged in lobbying activities; and finally, that a system of registration of paid lobbyists should not impede free and open access to government.

In essence, lobbying the government is in itself not a bad thing. Government can learn a lot from outside experts such as businesses, non-profits, environmental groups, religious organizations. You name it. As I said, it is legitimate and legal activity. It's to the greater transparency of lobbying and the greater accountability of public officials where one needs to consider a tool that helps curb inappropriate influence to provide the public scrutiny for its elected decision-makers. Hence, the need and motion before us today.

Some may ask, what does government do now in the absence of a lobbyist registry? Any inquiries from the public or even MLAs have to be made to the official or agency in question. Certain records, in some cases, may be subject to access to information and privacy legislation which does not have a very strong mechanism to enforce compliance, but more importantly, this mechanism

does not apply to the office of the Ministers, its Members, or the Legislative Assembly in general. Instead, the public and even Members of this House have no idea who is doing the lobbying, or who they represent, when they meet with specific officials in government and what topics are being discussed.

To the question of how a lobbyist registry would work in our unique consensus style of government, I turn your attention to cities such as Toronto whose municipal dealings are similar to consensus and have had a lobbyist registry in place since 2007. I see no issue that the scope of legislation with proper consultation and review could not produce a bill of high integrity dealing with our unique consensus style of government.

As well, to the question would lobbying to Regular MLAs and non-elected officials have to be reported, in my view, a GNWT registry should be covering lobbying of elected and non-elected officials with decision-making powers or significant influence. The new Financial Administration Act makes greater provision of power for deputy ministers; therefore, so should the transparency of their action.

As for MLAs, there is no dispute that we have significant powers over legislation and appropriations, so we would, in theory, not be immune to such a tool. Of course, all these issues would need to be considered carefully and with proper debate.

Finally, some may be wondering how much would such a lobbyist registry cost the GNWT. This is a great question, especially as we are tethering on the cliff of fiscal restraint. My goal, colleagues, is to keep this simple and efficient for the NWT and its residents. It must be kept in line with the size and activity of our jurisdiction with very modest resources. To put this modest dollar figure to the test, Mr. Speaker, one only needs to look at the budget for the Government of Canada Registry of \$825,000 where more than 5,000 lobbyists are registered. By all accounts, a GNWT registry would be much more humble by design.

It all boils down to this: it's about catching up with the rest of Canada and becoming part of that distinguished list of enlightened jurisdictions that keep track of lobbyist activities. As our responsibilities grow in the aftermath of devolution, all the more reason to get the job done now and show the people of the NWT we are truly an open and honest government.

I'd like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank Mr. Nadli for seconding and to my colleagues here today for their comments. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. I'll allow the seconder to the motion, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion. I'd like to thank my colleague Mr. Dolynny for the work that he's done and the passion that he's brought to this motion on the floor of the House today.

As my colleagues would understand, I'm the chair of the Government Operations committee and the work of the committee is to ensure that there is a level of transparency and accountability on the part of government, and in that same spirit that this motion purports, is that there has to be a system of fairness that things be done in a fair, transparent and also, at the same time, an accountable manner. Such is the mission that we carry in terms of my colleagues that are part of the Government Operations committee.

In some instances, lobbying, what it's all about is who is the loudest. In the Northwest Territories we try to be respectful, we try to work within the context of culture, cultural differences. At the same time, there's a lot of western thought in terms of how the economy should work, the values that you bring with it, and sometimes it's a mixture. At the same time, we stand proudly and we need to be very proud in terms of how we operate uniquely, which is northern and which is respectful. At the same time, we recognize the differences that we have and to try to work with each other. So that's what we bring forth that's a fairly common feature within the NWT.

Lobbying, of course, is an effort to try to bring influence to a cause. Of course, within governments there's a lot of that that happens in terms of lobbying for positions, lobbying for contracts, lobbying for major initiatives and so forth. So that's what happens. At the same time, there has been, at the federal level, an attempt to try to bring some discipline in terms of what our lobbyists do. At the federal level there has been precedence in terms of ensuring that there's a system of order in terms of how it can be managed. I think, for the most part, devolution has changed the landscape within the NWT, how we do business, and this motion setting forth a lobbyist registry is timely in that we need to ensure that we do things in a fair, transparent, accountable manner. For those reasons, I stand in support of this motion. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also am in support of this motion. I think it is a motion for a territory whose time has come. It has been mentioned already and it will be mentioned again, but devolution is part of our growing up as a territory and we are growing up. As we grow up, there are things that we need to do to accept the fact that we are growing up, to accept the fact that we are becoming a little more adult. There have been concerns in the past about people who have been making entreaties to Cabinet, to Ministers, to

MLAs. There have been concerns that they may not have been doing them in a truly moral and ethical manner. Whether that's valid or not I don't know, but there certainly have been questions that have been raised in the general public about the number of people and/or the type of people and what the representation is of people who are making entreaties to the government.

So I think a lobbyist registry would certainly allow for a clarity of who is lobbying and why they are lobbying, because a registry would lay that out. I think it's something that we ought to be moving towards.

One of the things that I would hope would be looked at, and that would be defined in the investigation of whether or not a registry would work, is a definition of what a lobbyist is, and Mr. Dolynny referenced some of those. There are certainly enough acts out there already with definitions that we don't have to do a heck of a lot of work in order to get ourselves to the same point.

I think that it's going to be a minimal cost. There probably is going to be a little bit of a cost, but I think it's going to be minimal cost. Mr. Dolynny referenced 800-and-some thousand dollars for the federal government, who is going to have a heck of a lot more people on their registry than we will. So I see that it would be a very minimal cost, and looking at the cost should be part of the investigation that this motion calls for.

One of the things that I do want to state is that the investigation needs to look beyond just establishing a registry. Accountability and transparency are words that we hear quite often these days. In order for us to have transparency in what's going on in the government, for us to have accountability of Ministers and Members and deputy ministers, I think that point is well taken, there needs to be a reporting mechanism. It's one thing to have a list of people who are lobbying, it's another thing to know how often they are lobbying and who they are lobbying, and basically the registry will show what they are lobbying for.

So I certainly hope that that's going to be part of any investigation and this motion only looks or asks us to look at investigating whether or not a lobbyist registry should go forward because there's no money involved in this at this point and I think it's an investigation that could be done relatively easily, relatively quickly and I would hope that certainly the government would act on this and that we would get a report on it long before the end of the 17th Assembly.

So, with that, I am in support of the motion and I encourage my colleagues to support it as well. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I'd just like to thank Mr. Dolynny and Mr. Nadli, as well as any other Members who have brought a lobbyist registry before government. I'm happy to speak on it today.

When we discussed this in committee, the first thing that came to mind was transparency and accountability on our government and our departments and how we do business throughout the Northwest Territories. The public and public offices have the right to know who is lobbying our government and who is going into contracts with our government. We need to know which groups, businesses and organizations meet with government, what was discussed and those need to be documented in terms of some of our local contractors not having that opportunity to get in those front doors.

With that said, I know we do have some people who get paid as lobbyists and I think the paid lobbyists should not impede the free and open access to government as well. So when we have organizations out there that would like to meet with our government that sometimes they might not get those appointments because there are other groups that are paying lobbyists to come and meet with government.

I know Members on this side of the House and even in the public, in the media, we have organizations that are concerned about the negotiated contracts that our government does make a common practice of. In some cases it's great because we negotiate with local businesses and Aboriginal businesses. However, there's not that fairness that Mr. Nadli has spoken about earlier in terms of moving forward on this. So I do have concerns with negotiated contracts and how those come out and I think a lobbyist registry will give me some answers and the public some answers on why contracts are negotiated, but also how this government makes their decisions and how dollars are spent and how taxpayer dollars are spent in some projects and programs and services throughout the Northwest Territories.

So with those all said, I did have a concern, though, just in the cost of creating this registry or if there's going to be an office that's going to be associated with it. I strongly support that it does need to be accessible 24/7 via the Internet and having some kind of a resource in that way, but I will support the motion, which asks to investigate the best way to implement a lobbyist registry that is publicly accessible via the Internet.

So I'd like to thank the Members again for bringing this motion forward and for being able to speak on it. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have much more to add than the mover, the seconder and other speakers on this motion. I am rising in support of the motion. We do have more responsibility here in the Northwest Territories as a result of devolution. As a result, we have more at stake with our lands, waters and resources and, therefore, should have more accountability and transparency, and that's why I will be voting in favour of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: I too will be supporting this motion, but I do have some questions going forward. I would like to see some of the framework and some of the assessment of this registry. There are some concerns for me. I think a lot of these registries are applying to a party politics situation. I think consensus government is quite a bit different. The Member has talked about Regular Members maybe having to be involved in this registry, as well, when we have meetings, because in order for a lot of things to get approved here, we have to have consensus. We have to have consensus, so we have to have Members on this side represented there, so we have to be involved as well.

I guess defining what a lobbyist is, is individuals who are getting paid. We have band members, companies, NGOs, different constituents in the territory that come talk to us about different issues, Mr. Speaker. Defining that going forward would be a big question mark for me.

I understand Members' comments that now that devolution is here, some of the Ministers have a parallel responsibility, so we need to implement some sort of registry here.

I am voting in support of it. It will be critical in looking at how it goes forward, how this framework will be structured and how it will fit our consensus government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to my colleagues, again, from Range Lake and Deh Cho for bringing this forward. It's an important mechanism for transparency and accountability. I really appreciate their doing so.

I would like to offer, first of all, strong support for the assumption behind this motion that a lobbyist registry is clearly needed. I think that's a given. I would also offer strong support for the motion itself, which calls for exactly how this can be done.

To reflect most comments of my colleagues, devolution has added responsibility and a need for transparency that we didn't have before, so I see this as being a timely and appropriate mechanism. Much has been discussed in this House about the

need for Ministers who have been assigned new authorities, to be more objective, accountable and transparently, so again this is in line with that.

When assessing how to establish a lobbyist registry, it's important to include how the public can easily and clearly see who is meeting with our Cabinet Ministers, how frequently and about what, as has been said by my colleagues. This is an important component in the public's ask before bringing forward accountability.

I will leave it at that. I don't know that this needs to extend to Regular Members, although certainly for myself I would be happy to report any meetings I have. The day we really have a consensus government, that might be appropriate. I don't think we are anywhere close to that. Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I will be supporting this motion. Mahsi.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank Mr. Dolynny and Mr. Nadli for bringing this motion to the floor. I think this motion should be looked at sometime in the future, not today. I have thoughts on it and I don't think that at this time a motion like this is needed in the Northwest Territories, especially in our small communities. I can see it in the larger centres like Yellowknife. You have a lot of people coming in here and meeting all the time and we don't have that opportunity. In our small communities, we know who is actually coming to meet with even ourselves as MLAs. We can almost be the lobbyist ourselves because we want issues and things dealt with in our communities.

Right now this, for me, raises too many questions. I feel this is a consensus-style government, and with a lobbyist registry, I'm not really comfortable with it. You are going to have to be very, very careful. I don't see a need for it right now, so I'm going to be abstaining from this motion.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. New legislation would be required to establish a lobbyist registry. In other jurisdictions where lobbyist legislation exists, the responsibility for managing a lobbyist registry is usually assigned in that legislation to an officer of the Legislature. For example, in Alberta, the lobbyist registry falls under the purview of the Ethics Councillor; the Government of Canada has a Commissioner of Lobbying.

We certainly agree that transparency is important and there's no reason why the public should not know with whom Ministers are meeting and why. That information is available now upon request. There is nothing to hide. To date, we have not received any such requests. Ministers meet

regularly with representatives of all sectors. I can state with certainty that we met with representatives of Aboriginal governments and non-government organizations far more frequently than we do with paid lobbyists. In fact, the number of paid lobbyists active in the Northwest Territories that would meet the definition of lobbyist in federal and most provincial legislation can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The old adage of making a mountain out of a molehill comes to mind.

Nevertheless, this government is not opposed to exploring the question of whether or not a lobbyist registry should be established. However, given the small number of paid lobbyists in the Northwest Territories, the infrequency of their meetings with Ministers and the lack of time remaining in the term to develop new legislation and identify resources to establish the registry, we suggest that this matter be referred to the next Assembly for their consideration.

The government will be abstaining from voting on the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, it's often tradition that we thank the mover and the seconder. I think it certainly deserves that in these circumstances. How they came up with the idea of a lobbyist registry I don't know, but I think it's a good one and certainly one that deserves exploring.

Just because we wouldn't use it often doesn't mean it wouldn't be important, and just because you wouldn't use it often doesn't mean it couldn't have a large impact. We've often heard about how the influences of lobbyists play on big contracts getting opportunities that most folks don't know. We don't know if that's the case here. I'm not implying that's the case in any way. I'm just saying we have always heard about these things. You see the mess in the United States, Canada and across the world about what lobbyists can and cannot do and you wonder: Will the Northwest Territories ever come to a time where these are the types of problems we will have to face?

I do strongly believe there is a role for lobbyists in the world. Some organizations, both big and small, just don't have the skills, abilities, time and knowledge of where to take your particular matter. Sometimes matters are so important they know that they're not the right person to sell it. It's an idea of importance, great importance, but it's important that the idea gets out there and gets to the right doorsteps to be heard.

We've seen this building and we have to be honest with ourselves that we've seen people leave this building and have had unprecedented access with respect to bringing forward ideas and issues, Mr. Speaker. What influence have they had on the

results? We just don't know and it would be difficult to characterize it other than a question.

Some people still play a role on the future of this government and the future, future governments. Where does that role start? Where does it end? It has been already said, and I fully agree, that transparency and fairness is really what this is all about. In my opinion, honestly, it doesn't go far enough. I think every Member should be accountable to this particular principle, so I would say even MLAs. No one should be exempt from this. Would it be used often? That shouldn't be the question. It should be about how it's used.

I may never be lobbied by a paid lobbyist group but I would be more than willing to come clean if anyone ever asked me. To date, I have not been lobbied by a lobby group that I am aware of at least.

I would rightly put this on the shoulders of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Who better to understand these types of issues and conflicts than the present Conflict of Interest Commissioner?

For the facts, honesty, and let's get this out there, Members cannot receive a gift more than \$400 and we must report that. That's the type of scrutiny that we're presently under, but that doesn't preclude how many times we have been invited to particular events to participate. That doesn't include how many dinners have been bought. There are many gaps in the process of accountability. I believe one further step should be considered when I say things don't go far enough.

While I welcome what the Premier said and like what he said about if anyone requests a copy of the Ministers' calendars, it would be provided. I think he said no one, to date, has said that. That's testament to people's trust in the government, but at the same time I think sometimes people don't know about their rights as well. We must find a balanced approach. When I say I don't think it goes far enough, we should find a way to balance that with Ministers' schedules and who they meet with to be publicized in a reasonable way; protecting those who are bringing forward proper issues, but recognizing what types of issues there are, how many times they are being brought forward by people and for what reason.

At the end of the day, I don't know how many lobbyists there are in the Northwest Territories. The Premier has characterized it by saying the number could fit on one hand. I don't know any of them personally, Mr. Speaker, and if I do they've never told me they are paid lobbyists.

I don't know how many southern lobbyists come to the North to express their opinion and I'd be surprised, if not shocked, to find out if we had any at all.

At the end of the day, I support this initiative and I think it's a great idea. Just because you don't use it

often doesn't mean it shouldn't be a pillar of the way we do business. We must be responsible in all accounts. This adds transparency and accountability. It's not asking too much. In this world today, the public demands a higher level of scrutiny than they have ever before and that scrutiny and expectation of accountability will only grow every day going forward. So asking for this type of accountability I don't think is asking too much. It's being honest with our constituents on why we are doing particular business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I will allow the mover of the motion to have closing remarks. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank Mr. Nadli for seconding and allowing debate on this motion before the House. I would also like to thank my colleagues for their support and point of view, although I disagree. I don't think we are making a mountain out of a molehill.

It has been some time since we have had a debate of this nature, so it's refreshing to get back on the saddle. I would like to thank my colleagues.

There were some excellent points being brought forward during this debate. I hope these points provide the framework of investigation being asked. Again, this motion does not compel the legislation for a lobbyist registry but merely suggests the feasibility on the best way to implement this publicly, nothing more.

So, colleagues, when voting today I ask Members to show the people of the NWT we are truly an open and honest government. I know we can do that. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I seek a recorded vote. Thank you.

RECORDED VOTE

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

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

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

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: All those in favour, 10; all those opposed, zero; abstentions, eight. The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 6 on the Order Paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. BROMLEY: It has come to my attention that Weledah resident Mr. Kevin Hynes is in the gallery today, president of the Yellowknife Association of Firefighters. I'd like to welcome him here.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Lafferty.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 45: AN ACT TO AMEND THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 45, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act, be read for the second time.

This bill amends the Workers' Compensation Act to replace the definition of listed disease in Section 14. (1) in order to add five additional forms of cancer and to clarify the French version.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 45 has had second reading and is referred to standing committee.

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act; Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act; Committee Report 10-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; and Tabled Document 188-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order again today.

I'd like to ask, what is the wish of the committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We wish to continue with TD 188-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016. We will continue with the Department of Health and Social Services and, time permitting, the Department of Transportation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We'll commence with that after a brief break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Minister Abernethy, if you'd be kind enough to introduce your witnesses back into the House.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Jeannie Mathison who is the director of finance and on my right is Debbie DeLancey who is the deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy, Ms. DeLancey, Ms. Mathison. Again, welcome back to the House.

Committee, we last left this activity on page 203, community social programs, operations expenditure summary, \$28.199 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's my understanding that we are approaching the conclusion of the department. Have we reached that point yet?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Hawkins, we are currently on page 203 under community social programs. We do have a couple of activities left to do before we do a conclusion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: No, Mr. Chairman, I was just double checking that we haven't reached the point of conclusion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): No, Mr. Hawkins, we're continuing on with activities. Do you have any questions on this activity page?

MR. HAWKINS: No, I'm good. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Committee, again, page 203, community social programs, operations expenditure summary, \$28.199 million. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make a couple comments here. The first one is with the day shelters here in Yellowknife and Inuvik. I just want to talk about the importance of having these in place, especially during the winter months, and that funding. I know funding in Inuvik was

supposed to go to the Day Shelter. That money was resituated so that it could go into an emergency shelter in the evenings. I know, speaking with some of the board members, they talked about the importance of doing a day shelter now, so we're looking at both emergency shelters and day shelters.

With the day shelters I think the funding would be fully utilized in terms of getting counsellors, people that can go and speak to clients that would access the day shelters and not just have a place where you go and warm up. There's got to be something that goes along with it. Counselling services, resume writing, you know, just basic life skills could be taught at these day shelters and I think that's something that needs to be looked at when we're funding some of these organizations to run it. It's got to be put into a contract saying that the day shelters, when they have them open, they can also be providing services to the clientele.

The other one is just in terms of, you know, my pitch for death review committees again. We looked here under the family violence programs offer protection, assistance and shelter services, just more support in that area and looking at possibly the department working with the Department of Justice to look into the feasibility of having a death review committee and the importance of having that kind of committee in place when we're dealing with family violence.

I know we're going through the Child and Family Services Act as well as the action plan that's coming out. I did some research into some work that's also been done. The Saskatchewan Welfare Review of 2010 had some really good recommendations in it and it actually focussed on mental health, substance abuse and family violence in the home and how to provide services and having access to efficient counselling and programs for people that are in those three areas. They all intertwine and one kind of feeds off the other and they're all related. I feel that we have the same situations up here in the North and, I think, looking at that model and those recommendations, we've got to look at how we can do that here in the Northwest Territories as well.

Those are just three areas of more just general comments, that I wanted to put out there, just give some ideas, get the department thinking about how we can utilize our day shelters effectively with programs and services for our clientele and not just giving them a place to warm up. I know some of them won't take it on, but there's some out there that might need to learn how to write a resume or, you know, might want to take in some counselling and have someone to talk to. So, when we're funding these day shelters I think that's got to be taken into account.

Like I said, it would be nice if the department can work with the Department of Justice about this family violence and possibly looking at death review committees and the feasibility of that. So, just comments, and as I said, I just wanted to get the Minister and his staff thinking about, you know, when we fund these organizations, what can we do more and support them more or ask them to do work that would benefit residents and also benefit us as we're giving them dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Member for the comments. I agree with the Member on the need for programs to at least be available to the day shelters, maybe not permanently located in there, but with the Day Shelter in Yellowknife there is space for staff from different departments to actually go in on a regular basis, or as requested, to meet with individuals in the Day Shelter. I agree; I think that's important. I also know that the proponent is intending to deliver some of their own programs out of there as well. So it is good and I agree fully with the Member.

I will ask the department to work with the Department of Justice to explore the concept of the death review committee. I'm not as familiar with it as maybe the Member is, but I will ask the department to work with the Department of Justice.

I would like to say that when it comes to the Day Shelter in Yellowknife, by way of example, we've had a lot of really wonderful partnerships. The city has stepped up quite impressively. They recognize that this is a Yellowknife issue as well as a territorial issue and they've been an active partner since day one and we really appreciate them coming to the table. But I should also say that the Department of Justice has actually come to the table for '14-15 and has provided some financial support for the Day Shelter, as well, as well as ECE. So we do have a number of departments who have recognized the importance of this institution, this shelter, and have come to the table. So, thank you.

MR. MOSES: I'm kind of intrigued in how the Department of Justice and Department of ECE both contributed to the Day Shelter here in Yellowknife. I believe there's only one other Day Shelter in the Northwest Territories and that's in Inuvik, and whether or not the department would work with the other departments in looking at accessing those funds, as well, because the cost of doing business further up north is a lot higher. So, I'm intrigued and wouldn't mind getting more information on that, and I'll ask the Ministers when it does become time to review this. Thank you, Mr. Chair. More of a comment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses, but I know the Minister would like to reply. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Recognizing the increased cost of providing the Day Shelter here in Yellowknife, I did send letters to a number of different organizations, including government departments, and the Department of Justice and the Department of Education responded positively for '14-15, one-time funding of \$20,000 each to help cover the costs in the '14-15 fiscal year. There's no ongoing funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Continuing on, questions on community social programs, I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, thank you. I'd like to ask the Minister how many children, if he can possibly be able to provide me with a breakdown of the Aboriginal children in foster care in the Northwest Territories. There might be different levels of care for the children, if he could somehow get that information to me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department does have that data but we don't have it at our fingertips, so I will commit to getting that information to the Member and committee.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'll look forward to that information. Thank you. That's all for my questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Committee, again we're on page 203, community social programs, operations expenditure summary, \$28.199 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 204, community social programs, grants, contributions and transfers, total contributions, \$26.249 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 205, community social programs, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 207, diagnostic and therapeutic services, operations expenditure summary, \$23.820 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I want to ask the Minister on this page in regards to the therapeutic services to the regions, and I'll speak for the Sahtu in regards to the speech-language specialist pathologist coming in. Is that program being utilized in the Sahtu? I understand that when a speech-

language person comes into our region they're well received by our people in that area. It seems like we need to have more of her or him come in to do some work with our students. Is there an evaluation as to being in our region that this is what they are finding, either to request more support or say we need a permanent type of specialist in our region?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It still exists; it's still ongoing. We have speech-language pathologists come into all the communities in the Sahtu on a regular basis, but they're also providing follow-up services through telehealth and they're partnering with the schools. So, it's a great relationship that we have with Education, Culture and Employment and the individual district education authorities to actually help facilitate that. We're very excited by that partnership and that relationship that we have there and we're happy that we're able to get it in.

The department is doing an evaluation of rehab services that we provide across the Northwest Territories which does actually include speech-language pathologists, so we will have more detail on that. It takes a bit of time to do these analyses, but when the report or the review is done, the information will certainly be shared with committee if they're interested.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Committee, on page 207, diagnostic and therapeutic services, operations expenditure summary, \$23.820 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 208, diagnostic and therapeutic services, grants, contributions and transfers, contributions, \$22.820 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Committee, page 211, nursing, in-patient services. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure if this is where I can ask about midwifery but I couldn't find where else it might be. This talks about pregnant people, so I'm hoping midwives fit in here. I understand that the Minister had some questions, I think, about this earlier and we are making some changes to the plans for this year, some changes in the Beau-Del. The Minister has advised that, I think, in '15-16 we're going to be looking at a territorial program. I think he also advised that it's simply going to be planning in the 2015-16 year, and in the next breath he says, yes, but they're going to be looking at providing some midwifery in Yellowknife. So I'm quite concerned that if we spend a year

doing planning... I can understand doing planning for a territorial program. I'm having difficulty understanding why we can't start recruiting for midwives in Yellowknife in the '15-16 year. I haven't heard anything that leads me to believe that that will be occurring in this next budget year. So I'd like to get a bit more of an explanation of why we need to plan for a year, why we can't start instituting a Yellowknife Midwifery Program as we plan for the territorial program. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. In this budget it actually shows Midwifery Program, an increase of \$964,000 which is intended to implement the Midwifery Program in the Beaufort-Delta. But as I've indicated previously, there have been some changes in the Beaufort-Delta and there is a desire by the Beaufort-Delta to move to a different model. They've put in a new MORE OB program for birthing babies, which is a revolutionary award-winning program. What the Beaufort-Delta is talking about now is putting in a nurse practitioner who will have midwifery responsibility and will be providing a regional program and working with the community health nurses.

So this money will still be used, assuming we get committee support, to create an NP midwife position in the Beaufort-Delta who will take on that role and become part of the maternal care team. So, that's actually pretty exciting, but it is quite different than what was proposed before.

Originally the Midwifery Program in Yellowknife was going to begin planning in '16-17. What we're suggesting is, given the changes in the Beaufort-Delta, we begin that work in '15-16. It is a different program. The Member had indicated previously that we had a midwifery program in Yellowknife, and I would just like to remind everybody that it was never funded and it was one person. We have learned through experience that one person does not make a midwifery program. We had a great person, a very committed person, but one person can't be a midwifery program, given that it's literally 24/7 care and response. The only thing one person will do is get burned out and be unable to perform the duties. It's not healthy for them and it's not healthy for their client. So there wasn't a really effective program, although it was effective of the quality of the person we had. But it was also not sustainable; it was never funded.

What we're talking about now is having a territorial program based out of Yellowknife, and that is a different model than having just a localized Yellowknife-based midwifery program. This program will also be able to facilitate midwifery or midwife-supported births here in Yellowknife and support clients in Yellowknife, but there will also be a territorial focus for those regions and communities

in the Northwest Territories that do not have midwifery support now to provide the pre- and postnatal support, and support the community health nurses that are out there.

It is a little bit different. It will take a bit of time. I'm anticipating, if we get support, what we'd like to do is move forward with that planning and we could theoretically, and I think it's quite conceivable, be in a position, after the design is done, to begin recruitment in the '15-16 year. But recognizing that we do have some work to do and we are expediting this significantly and bringing it into Yellowknife and a territorial model, it will take some time to do that work. It's different than any model that we've employed elsewhere. It's not the Fort Smith model. It's not the Hay River model. It's not the Inuvik model. It's going to be a new model that's going to be supporting Yellowknife as well as those communities that do not have it. So we do need a bit of planning time and lead-up time, which is the discussion that I'm hoping to have with committee. But right now in this budget, you'll notice that it's \$964,000 in Inuvik. That's what was originally discussed in business plans. Since then, these changes have come about and we would like to move forward, with committee's support, to expedite a territorial program based out of Yellowknife.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that explanation. I don't disagree. I think what we're ending up with is a different model in every sort of region and one that's going to work for each region, and that's a good thing because we certainly are quite different and require different services in our regions. So I can agree with the premise, but knowing how difficult it is to hire midwives and how long it has taken us to get midwives in both Fort Smith and Hay River and knowing that we're going to have midwives here in Yellowknife, I would think at the same time that we're doing planning we will be able to consider, the Minister says maybe this year, but I think as you're doing the planning you should be going out and recruiting for midwives because it has taken, I'm sure the Minister knows, many months to get midwives in our other communities.

Maybe I should ask the question to the Minister. What's the average time it has taken us to recruit a midwife? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, it has taken a while to recruit, while we're still proving to be unsuccessful in Fort Smith and we continue to move there.

We can't recruit midwives in Yellowknife without job descriptions. Given that it's going to be a territorial model and the midwives are going to have some responsibility not just in Yellowknife but on a territorial level, it is going to require different job descriptions because the scope of work is going to

be different. We need to have job descriptions. We need to outline and clarify what that scope of work is going to be and how it's going to work so we can draft effective job descriptions so that they can be properly evaluated. All of this does take a little bit of time. To go out and do recruitment with no job descriptions, no position numbers and no description of work is not possible. Also, we won't be able to tell the individuals we're recruiting what their scope of work is.

What we can do and what we're constantly doing is we're out there promoting the role of midwives in the Northwest Territories and we'll continue to do that. We'll be out at recruitment fairs, encouraging midwives to look at the Northwest Territories. The information about where we're going with the territorial program will be shared with as many midwives as we can find, so that when we are ready to recruit, hopefully there will already be some interest established to come to Yellowknife to provide midwifery support and services on a territorial level.

The Member is right; there are multiple models out there. As we move to a single authority there is going to be an opportunity to start having these different programs meld together, work together to provide a comprehensive service throughout the Northwest Territories recognizing that there are going to be some differences from community to community and region to region.

MS. BISARO: Thanks again to the Minister. I guess the next question I have to ask, then, is it sounds as though there won't be a midwife who is assigned full time to the city of Yellowknife, so am I correct in that? If that's the case, it sounds as though the service to Yellowknife residents in terms of midwifery is going to be somewhat reduced. Will there be, within this territorial program, a midwife who is basically assigned or a PY that is assigned to Yellowknife full time?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: These are some of the questions that we still need to work out, but at the end of the day there will be a midwifery program in Yellowknife, there will be midwifery services provided in Yellowknife. Will there be one midwife who is designated 100 percent of their time to Yellowknife? It's a little too early to say. It might be that they provide services to X number of clients in Yellowknife but they're still supporting community health nurses in two or three communities. It's difficult to say. That's some of the work that we need to do, but the intent is to have a midwifery program in Yellowknife. How it works with the staff is yet to be determined.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Continuing on with nursing inpatient services, I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciated that exchange. Just a couple more

questions on that. Obviously, the Minister knows the Yellowknife program was pulled because there were insufficient midwives. One person could not do it. Ms. Bisaro was asking about one position. Obviously, we would need a team of midwives dedicated to Yellowknife, so I hope that will be a focus of the discussion when that's appropriate. It sounds like it's coming up soon.

I know the Minister is aware that there is a very committed bunch of midwifery, I'm not sure I would say activists as active in the promotion, and recognition of midwifery is an important role in this area. Will they be a part of the consultation that the Minister is contemplating here and what's the timing on that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just to go back in time, there was never any money budgeted for midwifery services. Yellowknife Health and Social Services chose to re-profile some of their internal funding and they created a Midwifery Program that was only funded for one position. I don't believe one position makes a midwifery program. In fact, I would suggest it would be dangerous for the incumbent to have a one-incumbent-based midwifery program because they would get burnt out.

In the proposed design in the midwifery report it suggests that for a territorial program based out of Yellowknife there would probably have to be about eight midwives to ensure that Yellowknife has adequate coverage and that those midwives can also support community health nurses and other individuals in an education role and a support role as the community health nurses are dealing with pre- and postnatal support. It's about working together, but it would have to be more than one, obviously, and the program in Yellowknife would be focused on providing a program and have the midwives work together to ensure that the women in Yellowknife who wish to use midwifery services are getting the support they need. It would have to be balanced with ensuring that we're also providing that education and expertise through our midwives to other practitioners throughout.

We need to do some design and, absolutely, we will be discussing it with the individuals who have an interest here in Yellowknife, and there is a real strong advocacy group here in Yellowknife with a real passion for midwifery services. I've met with them. I feel the same way. We want to get this right.

This money that is for the budget now includes money for five positions in the Beaufort-Delta, and we're looking at putting one position in the Beaufort-Delta and then using these dollars to help do the design and whatnot and getting ready to, hopefully, if we get that far, begin some staffing this

year, but the program is going to have to be more than those positions.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. The other aspect of that was when. Just an alert to these people on when you might be approaching them so that they can do the prep necessary.

I guess related to that, I know there's a midwifery program in Calgary. I know of a student there that's from the NWT, although she moved south. Are we all over that campus, whatever it is, with the opportunities in the North to capture the opportunities to hire those graduates?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This is a '15-16 budget so we would probably begin the outreach early in '15-16, but it also depends whether or not we actually get support from committee to go in that direction. That outreach will begin, assuming the dots are there and the t's are... I don't even know what I'm talking about now. The i's are dotted and the t's are crossed. I knew I'd get there eventually. But we've got to do that and we need to get support from committee to change the direction we're taking here.

If the Member remembers, we're moving forward with a new Human Resource Strategic Plan and there's an outreach component in that Human Resource Strategic Plan where we're going to attempt to get out to colleges and schools where our northern students are pursuing medical or health-related careers and make sure that we keep in touch with them. Can I say that we're in touch with that midwife student right now? I can't say that at this time.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the Minister's response there. I'll look forward to when he can give me a positive response to that question. When I say Yellowknife, I include Ndilo and Detah, obviously, and I'm happy to see that we're moving towards a territorial approach.

My other questions were with respect to the psychiatric nursing unit at Stanton and the training that staff there have for physical restraint when it's needed to deal with the potential for violence and injury. Are staff trained for physical restraint and how frequent are the incidents of violence in the psychiatric nursing unit at Stanton? I know some of us have spent a lot of time at the hospital recently and the code whites are a little more frequent. I was surprised. Maybe I'll start with that.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The nurses that are located in the psych unit as well as in the emergency unit are trained in non-violent crisis intervention. There are a couple different parts to non-violent crisis intervention, but all the nurses that are in those units, from what I understand from Stanton, they have actually received the training. There are also refreshers on a regular basis.

There's a second level of training, and we're actually working with the security providers in Stanton right now as well as the others to get some of our people, including some of the security staff into the second level of the NVCI certified instructor program. Unfortunately, it's delivered in Toronto and it's only delivered every couple of months. The next delivery is April 15th and we have staff going down as well as some of the security providers in the building going down for that second level, which is a little bit more intensive and requires some new and some additional restraint procedures, in April. We've got a number of people going down for that.

I think there was a second part of the question that I've blanked on there.

MR. BROMLEY: I was wondering about the frequency of incidents in the unit.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are number of code whites that occur in Stanton on a fairly regular basis, and as a result of the most recent incidents of violence, I've requested that Stanton provide us with a copy of every code white incident report so that we can track them and get a bit of an idea of how often these code whites are occurring. Since we've done that, I think it was three weeks ago, I've seen three. But the three that I've seen have been fairly minor in nature with no injury or damage done. That does not minimize the importance of the issue. It's starting to give us a good, clear picture of how many of these code whites are taking place. I'm happy to share that information with committee as we move forward trying to make fundamental improvements to the safety and security of our staff and patients within that facility.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister again. I appreciate the Minister taking the initiative to put those monitoring actions in place. I know the Minister is aware that there have been some very serious events in there and the emergency department with a few injuries that are both physical and mental and some longer lasting than others. Many believe that there is insufficient support from non-nursing staff, particularly security that people at the hospital, simply because they don't have the training and the direction. What does the Minister have planned in the order of responding to those needs? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, as I have already indicated, some of the training that is ongoing around non-violent crisis intervention, security staff is involved. They are also involved in the second level of the non-violent crisis intervention training which actually has a larger component around some of the restraint protocols and how to do it safely and effectively.

Stanton has been working closely with the security agency. Effective Monday morning, there's going to be different security officers in the facility with additional training from their current employers –

one additional with a higher level of training in the emergency room. This is temporary. These are intended to be in there until we've actually concluded many of the different reviews that we're doing around security, safety, space, environment, different things that can be done. We've had a specialty consultant come in and do a review of the facility both from a functional layout point of view but also reviewing our policies and procedures around safety and security. They're going to be providing us with recommendations on that, but in the interim, we will have this staff member in there on Monday with a higher level of training.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Bromley, your time has expired, but if you need to get back on, please let me know. Continuing on with nursing inpatient services, I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to ask the Minister on the status of the requests by the Deline leadership community support on a sort of respite care or palliative care bed units in their community. There was some discussion with the previous Minister. I'm not too sure if this Minister is up to... We had some meetings with the Minister on that request from Deline. They're asking for a bed or so for that community. I haven't heard. It's pretty quiet from the department as to what's being communicated. This is an ongoing issue with the community and the Minister. Can I get a very brief update? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point our priority is actually to provide training to our community health nurses so they have the knowledge, skills and ability they need to provide palliative care in the homes, so supporting individuals in their homes as opposed to moving them to a different facility or building. Once we've completed that training, we are able to provide palliative support in people's homes. We'll be able to assess the effectiveness of that and that will help inform any future direction which could include supporting some palliative beds in some communities throughout the Northwest Territories.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, that's very strange. We were going in one direction and the Minister is talking about going in the other direction, training nurses for palliative care. I thought we were moving along there. Was this supported by the community of Deline to say, okay, we're going to go through some training, and training the nurses to provide palliative care to the community nurses? Something has gone a little wacko here. Can I get the department to respond to this?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, our challenge in this fiscally tight environment that we are all currently in is the cost of putting

infrastructure in place, which will spend a vast majority of its time empty, is difficult, but we hear the communities loud and clear, all communities in the Northwest Territories who wish to have their residents as they're going through the dying process who wish to be in home. We want to be able to support them to stay in their homes, including communities such as Deline. We want to make sure that our staff have the knowledge, skills and ability that they require in order to put support for palliative care in communities. From there, we'll be able to make a better assessment as to whether or not it's time to move forward with palliative care beds, which there is a significant cost to.

We're still interested in having conversations with Deline in trying to find solutions, but in both scenarios, we do have to start by ensuring our staff have the knowledge, skills and ability to provide palliative support. Then, without the knowledge, skills and ability to provide that support, it doesn't provide any level of care for our residents. We need to make sure that training is there as a starting point.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I'm certainly disappointed in the response from the department and the staff here on raising their hopes through discussion with the people of Deline and the palliative care beds. The Minister certainly gave reasons why this request shouldn't be honoured and is making a left when he should be going down the right lane. I'm very disappointed by the department's response and justifying why they're not going to take Deline requests seriously as it was duly noted in my notes and the Minister's meetings with the leadership and people of Deline in regards to this request. It's been an ongoing, long, substantive request by the people in Deline. Certainly the Health department pulled the plug on this one here. I don't even want to have a response to my comments here. I'll leave it at that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister is flagging me for a response. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry the Member is disappointed. We are still interested in discussions with the community. We'll continue to move forward with the community. We also see an opportunity here, a possible opportunity with the Deline self-government to move forward on this initiative, but at the same time, we still need to make sure that people have the training they need to provide the programs that are required in palliative care.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Continuing on with nursing inpatient services, I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think there's some good discussion. I'm going to focus mine around the psychiatric nursing unit at Stanton and

also just for the whole territory, what kind of psychiatric services we have. It's also mentioned, there's a little paragraph that talks about the unit includes beds for withdrawal management. How many beds exactly are in that psychiatric unit and how many are allocated for withdrawal management? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't have beds dedicated to withdrawal management anywhere in the Northwest Territories, but we have beds that can be used for withdrawal management. The beds at Stanton aren't in the psych unit for withdrawal management. They're actually in the medicine unit. I believe the unit is 12 to 18 beds, but I will confirm the number of beds in the medicine unit. When individuals need medical withdrawal in the Northwest Territories, we have beds in Inuvik and we have beds in Stanton that can be used for those purposes.

MR. MOSES: What are we doing for the small communities that just have health centres and specifically with the eight communities that don't have nurses that can provide any kind of medical treatment for anybody that might be going through some withdrawals? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In the communities where there are health facilities, individuals can go to those health facilities and get referral and be brought in, through medical travel, to utilize the detox beds in either Inuvik or Yellowknife, whichever happens to be closer. For the smaller communities that don't have nurses, we do have other types of professionals in those communities like CHRs, CHWs that we can have conversations with and they can get a doctor involved to make a referral so that an individual could come out and receive withdrawal management services in either Stanton or Inuvik, whichever happens to be closer.

MR. MOSES: Just in terms of putting this type of responsibility on the workers in the small communities to now assess what a person is going through, what kind of training are they getting in terms of knowing when to call a medevac or when to admit somebody into a health centre until they get the proper treatment that they do have?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Their responsibility is often they're required to get in touch with Stanton emerg or Med-Response. Med-Response is actually the organization now that they'd call in to and would help do an assessment and diagnosis to determine the urgency of the situation. Med-Response, as you know, involves having physicians on the line, nurses on the line and other professionals on the line who could actually do that assessment, and they would determine whether or not a medevac is required for medical detox or whether it was something that could be facilitated

through medical travel. But the Med-Response team has the expertise to make that diagnosis, and the CHRs and CHWs that are out there in the communities have training on basic information and how to share that information with our professionals.

MR. MOSES: I know we're unique in the North in terms of barriers and challenges, especially when it comes to the remote communities. I just want to make reference to a news article on CBC, I don't know how many years ago, but they were talking to a psychologist or psychiatric physician that talked about not being able to do a correct assessment because he couldn't see the individual and talk to him, so I think there are some flaws in there. I just want to put that out there.

In terms of withdrawal management, do we have a policy right now in terms of how long do we keep an individual who's going through withdrawals so they can get the medical observations to see if there's anything further needed such as psychiatric assessment, or whether they need to go to a psychiatric ward after they've gone through the withdrawals, and any cases in where somebody is self-harming and goes to the emergency ward? What are the steps taken by the Stanton or even Inuvik Hospital to ensure the safety of the individual? I've seen odd cases where as soon as the person sobers up they're allowed to leave and it's contravening our current Mental Health Act that we are currently using right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Just going back to the first part where, you know, individuals who can't see individuals. The Med-Response team has highly competent professionals and the CHRs and the CHWs in the communities will articulate what they see. I believe they'll err on the side of caution, which is the expectation. We don't want to put people at risk. So if individuals are in need of medical detox and the doctor on the line determines it's necessary, they'll come in.

With respect to how long medical detox would be required for, it's going to depend on medical direction. When they're in either Inuvik or Yellowknife, a physician will be involved in the file, likely one of the hospitalists in the building, and they will assess when a person is officially medically detoxed. Where they go from there is somewhat dependent on the individuals but also on the doctors. If the doctors believe that somebody might need a psych consult, they would bring in psychologists and other professionals to have those conversations with the patient. If the patient has completed the medical detox and they decide that they're ready for treatment, we have an expedited referral process to get them into a treatment facility in the Northwest Territories.

But treatment facilities won't work for everybody. It isn't what everybody wants, which is why we have continuum of care options or support options for persons with addictions. They can go back to the community and engage with counsellors, they can use a Matrix program, they can use one of the on-the-land programs that are being offered by a number of the Aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories. There are lots of different options.

As far as the specifics around the psych situations in emerg, I'm not a doctor so I don't know the exact steps that would be followed, but I'll see if I can get some additional information for the Member on those steps.

MR. MOSES: I agree, not everybody wants to go to treatment, but in some cases not everybody wants the help. But as caring community members, caring families, friends, they see it.

With that, I'll just lead up into what our current Mental Health Act talks about in terms of, I guess, the substitute consent giver part in here and it's under the Personal Directives Act. I know that some Members were concerned about the wait times that some community members have to go to treatment, and in some cases the person doesn't want to go. But under this one act, the Personal Directives Act, it talks about who can consent on behalf of the person. It's a child of the patient, a parent of the patient, a brother or sister of the patient, or any other relative of the patient, even a friend of the patient. So, anybody can actually give the consent through the process to do it. I think something on the news was talking this morning about four months or two months of waiting time to get counselling and when the treatment is really needed.

Are the Minister and his department informing people throughout the Northwest Territories whose family members or even people in the community are suffering that they have the right under our current Mental Health Act to proceed and get them the treatment that they want? It's involuntary psychiatric assessment and also involuntary admission. Is the Minister making residents of the Northwest Territories aware of that provision in our Mental Health Act we're using for residents of the Northwest Territories right now? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The information that the Member has provided still is dependent on the ability of the individual to provide consent themselves. The person has the right to provide. If they're capable, they're the ones you go to for consent. If they're not capable or they're under the age of majority, then you can go to others. But you can't walk in and say, I'm their brother, I will override this person's human rights and consent for them to go to treatment or into a psych unit. There

still has to be a decision from a practitioner whether or not that person is actually capable of providing consent themselves. Maybe I'll go to the deputy for a little bit more clarification.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Deputy DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to add to what the Minister has said, many medical professionals will exercise extreme rigour and what they consider to be due diligence before they would be prepared to make the call that a patient was not able to make his or her own decisions. So, it's not simply a matter of saying I think so and so person should be referred. There are a lot more steps and a lot more legal barriers than that to it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Last question. Just in terms of that, to make that assessment from a medical practitioner, I think that's why that time after withdrawal, that time for observation to look at the patient, keep them in the hospital for 24, 48, 72 hours, which also can be done within this act, to see what other psychiatric assessments might need to be done on this patient, and then in terms of medical practitioners, you know, communities that don't have nurses, how many psychiatrists or medical practitioners do we have in the Northwest right now that can actually do that kind of diagnosis?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Medical physicians, family practitioners are actually trained to provide this assessment, as well, so if they're working with somebody who's in a medical detox and it's determined that the person is now fit and they have concluded their medical detox, they can choose to discharge them or offer them other options that might be appropriate for them given their current situation. If they think the person has some psychiatric problems, they can refer them to a psychiatrist.

There are two positions at Stanton by way of example, but we've also got distant psychiatry and a number of other programs, locum psychiatrists in the Beaufort-Delta. At the end of the day, I mean, the doctor, as the deputy minister said, will make a ruling based on their knowledge, skills and ability and their knowledge of the programs and services that exist. If anything, one of the things that we do need to do better as a government is make sure that people, including MLAs, including doctors, including nurses, including private citizens are more aware of the programs that we offer and understand we have an expedited referral process, and understand the Matrix programs that are out there, and understand that community counsellors

have a role and have many skills. We all need to get together and promote the message as best we can.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Moses, your time is up.

Committee, we are on page 211, nursing inpatient services, operations expenditure summary, \$35.470 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 212, nursing inpatient services, grants, contributions and transfers, contributions, \$35.470 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 215, supplementary health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$32.361 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions here. I raised it in my opening comments but I want to ask the Minister, and it goes to supplementary health benefits for what we, unfortunately, call the working poor. Those people who are working who do not have their own supplementary health coverage either through their work or they can't afford to buy it. They're not indigent. They are working and they wish to continue to work. I'd like to know from the Minister if there are any plans anywhere in this next fiscal year to look at providing supplementary health benefits for this small group of residents. Although they may be small, it's a gap within our system that has existed for a very long time and needs to be fixed.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This wasn't actually an area that was identified as a priority during the Caucus discussions for the 17th Legislative Assembly. We do have a number of priorities we're working on and, unfortunately, the department doesn't have the surge capacity, and there are no positions without assigned duties. Everybody within the department has got a number of assigned duties. The department has some allocation for unanticipated contract work but this, obviously, is minimal. Delivering on the department's ambitious strategic plan with proposed timelines requires full use of the department's resources, including our staff, who are our most valuable resource.

Inevitably, new projects arise, and I understand the Members recently have indicated that they would like us to move on supplementary health benefits for the working poor. This is additional work in the department. I think this is something that does need to be done. There was a lot of discussion in the 16th Legislative Assembly, and I still think there's room

for some significant improvements. We know, based on some estimates that were done, that the projected cost for coverage for the working poor through supplementary health benefits is going to be estimated to be about \$4.3 million. That doesn't mean it doesn't need to be done and work doesn't need to be done around this area, but my recommendation is that we include this in our transition planning and make it a priority for the 18th Legislative Assembly.

MS. BISARO: It's unfortunate. I've heard a lot since we started this session, an awful lot about, well, it wasn't a priority at the beginning of the 17th so we can't do anything about it, and that's starting to wear on me a lot. I appreciate that the department has a lot of work to do and that they are doing a lot of work, and I know that they have staff who are working very hard, and I appreciate that staff are doing good work, and I wish that to be known. But there are an awful lot of things which suddenly seem to be not a priority and there are an awful lot of things which suddenly seem to want to be pushed off to the 18th Assembly, and there are still a lot of months left in this 17th Assembly. I'm struggling with the attitude which seems to be getting more and more prevalent that we can't do it because we're in the last year and we've got to put things off to the 18th.

The figure that the Minister mentioned of some \$4 million-plus, that's not the number that I remember from the working group that went through a very extensive review of supplementary health benefits. I don't remember that it was that huge a number. It was actually reasonably minimal if I recall. We may be talking apples and oranges when we talk about costs, so I'll just leave that one at that, but I would hope that, I guess to the Minister but also to all Ministers, that just because it wasn't identified as a priority doesn't mean that it shouldn't be done. I appreciate that the Minister wants to get it done. I appreciate that he's willing to put a priority on it for transition, but I still think we have residents who are not being treated fairly.

I will ask a question. I will ask a different question. Thank you for indulging me.

I asked this earlier and I'm now on the right page so I am going to ask it again. The air ambulance contract that was recently signed was a very large increase in cost from the previous contract that we had for the air ambulance contract. I guess what I would like to know is at the outset what is it in this new contract, what benefits are we gaining that are worth the \$4.5 million or \$5 million increase that we are having to bear?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Just going back to the first part of the comment before the question, the \$4.3 million estimate was based on the numbers obtained from the NWT Bureau of Statistics by the Supplementary Health Benefits Working Group in

2010, and it's been updated for new information. But \$4.3 million is the estimate, which, as a note, is a significant amount of money in these fiscally challenging times. I do believe, and I think many Members believe, that this is an area that needs some work, and I would like to see that work done, which is why I'd like to make it a priority for the transition document.

With respect to the air ambulance, the providers actually have higher end aircraft that can get into the short runways throughout the Northwest Territories. We have expedited the turnaround time or, rather, the contractors have expedited the turnaround time to some of the smaller communities to two hours from four hours. The current 23-year-old aircrafts will be replaced with four newer ones, more advanced aircraft, all enhanced with dual stretchers so that they can carry more people for increased system efficiencies, improved avionics and systems such as enhanced vision systems that allow pilots to see more clearly in adverse weather conditions such as fog, which is hopefully going to help us reduce those times, and there's new medical equipment on these airplanes from the old medical equipment that was on them that was getting dated. Significant enhancements in the aircraft as well as the technology on those planes to ensure quicker turnaround for our residents in some of our smaller communities.

I will say also through the Med-Response program, we have actually started to see some sharing of services. The Med-Response, the airplanes are actually able to pick up other people on return flights and actually maximize some of their flight times and get some efficiencies by recognizing that there are other things happening in the territory at the same time. I have some details that I'll be able to share with committee when we go live with the Med-Response program.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I'm pleased to hear that we're getting a little more efficient. Maybe that means we're going to save money, ha ha. I guess I have to ask, the Minister mentioned new planes and new equipment and so on, and it may be a little crass in this question, but are we paying the contractor to upgrade their equipment? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: These were all requirements in the RFP to meet modern safety requirements, but also medically responsible requirements in order to provide safe transportation of our residents.

MS. BISARO: Thanks. One last question in this section and it has to do with the extended health benefits figure. It hasn't increased, I see, but there was an increase... Actually, it went down from '13-14 actuals to '14-15 estimates. It stayed the same in the '15-16 estimates. It's my understanding that

that area includes costs for seniors' health benefits, our seniors are increasing and as our seniors increase we know that there's going to be a bigger drain on our health system. So I'm surprised to see that there is no change in the estimate from this current budget year to next year. So can I ask why? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thanks. The Member is exactly right. There are increasing numbers of seniors in the Northwest Territories and we are actually projecting increased costs to our already existing budget but we're in the process of trying to monitor that and figure out what those costs are so that we can project them effectively given that we have a growing population. I imagine at some point, once we get a better grasp of what those future costs are going to be, we will be coming back to the FMB as well as to committee.

MS. BISARO: Thank you. So the Minister is coming back. I presume he means coming back for a supp, coming back for more money. If we know this now why is it not in the budget? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. At this point I don't anticipate a supp. I anticipate the department will be coming back through the business planning process for '16-17. We'll have a better idea of what those increased costs or future increased costs may be.

MS. BISARO: That's okay. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a follow-up. We know that seniors are increasing. I know that the Minister has the stats, 6 percent or something. We know that the costs are going to be there. I think that's typically how the departments adjust their budgets when we know that those costs are going to be there. Why wouldn't you do that in this case?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is actually the first year that we've actually started to see some impact in this particular area. The budgets have always been sufficient. We are starting to see some real pressure, but in order to make a forced growth submission we actually have to have some statistics showing the actual increase of costs over a little bit of time, but until this year we haven't had those challenges. We're starting to see it now, so we're going to make a forced growth case for it.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I guess we'll watch the supps. Just on the medical travel, what's the explanation for the \$3 million decrease previous year and this year and the \$5 million increase

between this year and the one year under discussion here?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm going to go to the director of finance, Jeannie, on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In '13-14 we received supplementary funding for the Medical Travel Program and that is the explanation for the change there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. I believe the second part of that question was, again, the explanation of the increase in the '14-15 to '16-15. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The explanation for the increase between '14-15 and '15-16 is \$3.5 million for the air ambulance and an additional \$1.5 million increase to reflect increased costs of air flights and boarding home costs.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this is part of the budgeting process I don't always understand. We got the supplement in '13-14. I don't think we told people no in '14-15 this year. So, I assume that if it's going to be \$19 million, it will be coming out of some other budget. So any comments on that would be appreciated.

Just for efficiency I'll throw in one more here. The Minister knows we've been working since the first day of the 16th Assembly on increasing the efficiency of medical travel costs. The stat was 50 percent of medical travel patients were on the streets an hour after they arrived at Stanton and got released. All those sorts of things. We've been dealing with this call forwarding, or whatever it's called, on-call business. What efficiencies have we realized, and if we haven't, maybe it's just improved service, which I realize is part of the equation. When are we going to see those efficiencies as we're now in our eighth year of discussing? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yesterday I actually talked in some detail about the medical travel modernization, and the Medical Travel Policy has gone to the Standing Committee on Social Programs who has given it back to us with a number of comments and whatnot. We've started to make those changes and we're going to be submitting that to Cabinet for consideration. Once it's approved, we will have the foundation document, which is the base Medical Travel Policy. Of that, based on discussions I've had with committee earlier, there's going to be a number of pillars that connect on to that Medical Travel Policy.

Currently, we've actually begun some of that work and we have a public engagement process underway on patient supports or escorts. This began in December 2014 and the group that's doing that work have been around the Northwest Territories. What we wanted to do is we wanted to get them into large communities, small communities, on road, off road, air only, those types of things. So far they've gone to Hay River, Tuk, Inuvik, Behchoko, and they've also visited staff as well as residents or patients of ours that are visiting the Larga House. We anticipate the stakeholder engagement around this component will be done at the end of April. Just as a note, as of January 16th they had actually had some one-on-one engagements with over 123 people. They're also reviewing all the information that we have collected over the years. Yellowknife, Fort Good Hope and Trout Lake will be engaged before the current engagement process is over.

It's anticipated that the next one we'll be working on is benefits eligibility. That engagement is going to begin in July and we wanted to do the medical travel appeal engagement in 2015-2016. We're hoping to have this work done, like I said, the engagement done towards the end of April. These will help inform those other areas to make specific policy around those particular components of the Medical Travel Policy.

For the money I'll go to the director of finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The preference, really, I guess, because there's been some fluctuation in the expenditures in this program area for a number of years, the preference from Finance has been for us to come forward for a supp request once we can show justification within the year. So that is how we continue to move forward. Even the funding that's in the '15-16 budget is actually a one-time increase and we do have to come back and re-substantiate that again next year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess that means that will be happening the year following. I appreciated the Minister's response, although I couldn't hear an answer to whether we're ever going to realize some efficiencies from the massive amounts of work and investment that we put into approving our medical travel.

I saw lots of activity, I heard about lots of activity, but I didn't hear a response to when are we going to realize some efficiency. We've invested hugely in putting teleconferencing into every community and training. We've been sure they're being used and so on. We've got doctors on call 24/7 and we've got

the diagnostic imaging and electronic communications of those. Huge, huge things, I would think, to increase our efficiencies there. I'm not seeing it translated here. I did hear a lot of activity from the Minister but I didn't hear the sorts of things I'm mentioning that we've been investing in big time, electronic data records and so on, is being realized through improved efficiencies and, hopefully, some reduced costs. I'll just throw that out there, and if the Minister has additional, I'd welcome. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. I know the Member and all Members have expressed frustrations around medical travel in the past. I too have expressed significant frustration around medical travel. I think you'd be hard pressed to find somebody who hasn't.

Part of the problem that we've had around medical travel is the clarity around it. It doesn't seem to meet some of the people's needs. With these changes that are coming forward, it will be more clear. We'll clearly articulate it so it's understood and applied consistently across the Territories. That in and of itself will reduce some of the complications that we have, but it doesn't mean that less people are necessarily going to use it. But the points you made of the telehealth and whatnot, those types of things, we are seeing some results but we also continue to have many other reasons that people are coming out on medical travel.

I would like to point out that we did a soft launch of Med-Response and this is one of the initiatives we said we believe we are going to see some real positive results. We did a soft launch in November and we're looking at going live next week with a full hard launch on Med-Response. Since their soft launch, and this was up to January 15th, they coordinated 312 clinical consults from all authorities, 152 which were NWT air ambulance flights. They tracked nine calls that were initially requested in air ambulance dispatch, but after the conversation the work through Med-Response and the coordinator response didn't actually result in a medical travel or an air ambulance call.

We've actually been able to already coordinate at least one aircraft to pick up two patients from different communities both going to Edmonton and return them on the same aircraft, getting some economies of scale by utilizing the same plane for more than one person. These are the types of things we know we will start to see more of as we go for a full hard launch on Med-Response. This is just one of the areas that we're making progress and we're starting to see some results. I'm looking forward to seeing how this plays out over time and whether or not there are even more opportunities to get some economies of scale and opportunities to

control some of our future expenditures in areas like this. So, there are good things happening.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. We are on page 215, supplementary health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$32.361 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 216, supplementary health programs, grants, contributions and transfers, total contributions, \$21.890 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 217, funding allocated to health and social service authorities, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 218, lease commitments, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 219, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 220, work performed on behalf of others, and 221, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Committee, if I can get you to return back to page 183. Health and Social Services, total department, \$406.886 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services is completed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. I'd like to thank the Minister. Ms. Mathison, Ms. DeLancey, thanks for joining us this evening. Sergeant-at-Arms, if I can please have you escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

Continuing on with the committee's wishes, we are going to continue with main estimates. Department of Transportation is next. With that, we'll go to the Minister responsible for opening comments. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2015-2016 Main Estimates for the Department of Transportation. These estimates propose an operating budget of \$119.5 million for 2015-2016, a decrease of \$6.7 million, or 5.3 percent, from the 2014-2015 Main Estimates. Although, this includes budget reductions of almost \$1.2 million, the reductions proposed have been selected to minimize the impact on the transportation system while maintaining safety and service levels that communities and industry rely on.

The department operates the NWT public transportation system to provide for the safe, secure, accessible and reliable movement of people and goods. The proposed operations and maintenance activities will continue to protect the infrastructure investments already made in our transportation system while meeting the increasing demands on our network of roads, winter roads, ferries and airports.

The proposed main estimates also include a reduction in annual amortization of \$5.7 million. This is a result of accounting treatment changes related to the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway and a number of transportation assets becoming fully depreciated.

Sunsets include \$200,000 for the work currently underway to investigate improved access into the Slave Geologic Province in support of the Mineral Development Strategy. In addition, \$2.35 million for interim emergency repairs to address the depression that formed on the Inuvik runway also sunsetted. Additional investigations to assist with long-term solutions are ongoing through partnerships established to advance climate change adaptation research and development.

The department is working to increase the level of services and information it provides in French. This budget includes \$163,000 to achieve this goal. The Department is currently working to develop and install highway signs in French, to provide improved French language services on the web and to provide active offers for services in French.

The budget also includes forced growth requirements of \$2.8 million to primarily address operations and maintenance contract cost increases across the highway, winter road and airport system.

Transportation infrastructure is essential to the economic health and prosperity of this territory and its residents. It connects our communities, supports exploration and responsible development of our natural resources, and lets business and industry move their products to market. Continued investment in the NWT transportation system is essential to creating a strong economy that will provide jobs and economic opportunities for our residents. We continue with the construction of the

Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway and to promote additional partnership opportunities in the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the seasonal overland road into the Slave Geologic Province, and the Tlicho road to Whati.

The new Building Canada Plan and renewed partnerships with the federal government will provide the opportunity to continue investing across the existing transportation infrastructure. This ongoing investment will improve system conditions, better connect our communities, enhance safety for our residents and help ensure that the entire network in the NWT is ready to do business.

I am pleased to present the main estimates for the Department of Transportation that will help support the priorities of the 17th Assembly and a sustainable fiscal future.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Minister Beaulieu, do you have witnesses you'd like to bring into the House?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses into the House. Minister Beaulieu, if you'd be kind enough to introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today with me to my immediate right is Russell Neudorf, deputy minister, Department of Transportation; to my far right, Jim Martin, director of corporate services; to my left, Daniel Auger, assistant deputy minister, Department of Transportation. Daniel will be retiring in May so this will be his last appearance for the main estimates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Mr. Neudorf, Mr. Martin, Mr. Auger, welcome, gentlemen, to the House. It's always a pleasure to have you back here.

Committee, with that, we'll turn it to general comments. Starting off I have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister, and thanks to the representatives for being here. Obviously, we're probably ...(inaudible)...for all the years of service now that you're leaving.

I'd like to start about transportation and maybe the overall strategy of highways in the Northwest Territories. I guess some of the frustrating part has been the fact that over the years the department has been starting a project and stopping a project. The road to Fort Res, the road to Fort Smith, even

the road to Fort Simpson have been worked on sporadically by doing a couple hundred kilometres here, a couple kilometres there, but there's no consistency. I think for a few years there was consistency and they were getting the roadway done. I know we're doing a multi-model strategy on transportation and I'm hoping that from there we're going to have a plan going forward of how we implement this, how do we get all these... Some of these roads are really good. I was just on the road to Res last weekend. I've been to Smith recently. Those are good roads, but it would be nice if they were chipsealed and we completed that and upgraded it for the residents as well as tourism.

The road to Simpson, obviously, Highway No. 7, like Mr. Menicoche, as he indicated to us, I think it's key. I think they're key to our highway system as far as for tourism. I've always been a supporter of upgrading that road. I know there are hundreds of thousands of people that travel from BC, from Alberta, BC up to the Yukon and up to Alaska, and if we only captured a small percentage of them we'd probably double our tourism road numbers easily in one year. I think we need to figure out a plan going forward on how we're implementing that two or three kilometres in each section each year to get to the point where we actually have them completed. I think we're in the process of maybe doing the last section towards Res, which is going to be exciting as far as being able to drive there and not have to deal with gravel roads.

That overall structure, we talk about Mackenzie Valley Highway and now it's almost been a slant. It seems like, from our perspective, that there's been a slant to talk about the Slave Geological area. Obviously, a very economical area for us, the diamond mines and a lot of that support there, a lot of that GDP there. But I think we've got to set our priorities of where our people are too. It's not that I don't support that concept of getting that road more permanent so the winters last longer, but I think it's going to have to be a partnership with some of the people that are invested in that area. I don't know where we are numbers-wise of that partnership but I think that's something we have to work on.

One of the areas that I've heard complaints about, and I've talked to NTCL, one of our shipping companies, they've seen some of our infrastructure requirements and plans and a lot of them don't involve marine. We're focused on roads. Obviously, I think that's an important area, too, but we need to take in those type of industries, as well and the need for them. Obviously, I'm going to mention my, it's not two words, it's only one word. It's dredging, dredging of the Hay River. We've heard from other Members the need of dredging in different communities. We know it was a situation with low water last year to service the communities throughout the Northwest Territories. I think there was probably an additional cost to Fort Good Hope,

to Inuvik and some of those places that didn't get their product this year. I think we need to look at that. I know it's a federal responsibility, but we as the territorial government have to work out a plan of how... We're the ones that are affected. The federal government sits in Ottawa still and they could give two cents about what's happening up here. We are the ones that are being affected. It's our residents that are being affected by the low water, by the amount of sediment that's in the river systems. We need to work on dredging. We need to figure out the number, then we need to go to the federal government and lobby them to get funds to do the dredging required in the Hay River area as well as in the other parts of the Northwest Territories. I think that's very important.

I'll bring up another issue that I know I've brought to the attention of several people before. It's the trucking regulations. There's just an inconsistency there. I don't know how to get the department to move forward on evaluating the trucking regulations. We've got an experimental tri-drive program right now. It seems to be working and I've heard some good things from industry about it, but there are too many inconsistencies about our weights, about our dimensions, about what a pickup does, and if a pickup is a commercial pickup but it's pulling a trailer, now that's completely different. Whereas, in Alberta if a pickup is pulling anything, a pickup is a pickup. We've deemed it to be a different type of unit. I know some of that has come about from the bridge but the point is that we want to be supportive of industry and business and that type of activity is not supportive to business. We've got a lot of small businesses that run pickups and keep it under a small weight because that's what they can afford to run. We've got guys that are running bobcats, running trailers to do work, to bring materials to the job sites in different parts of the communities and some of them have to go across the bridge, and that's an extra toll and they're just adding it to the cost. We need to look at this regulation stuff.

This licence plate on the front versus the back and as soon as you cross the border you're supposed to switch it over. We've got to find a solution to that. That's not conducive to our territory, Alberta and the Northwest Territories who are linked together. That's where 95 percent of our products come from is Alberta. We've got to straighten these regulations out. It continues to be a problem and I hear it from all the industry guys. We have people that have company trucks and if they're a small enough operation they're switching over to a private plate just to be able to avoid it. We should know that we have a problem with this system if people are having to circumvent the system, charge their company their personal times and reverse this just to avoid the government's regulations and lack of changing their regulations.

The last point I have is just a concern that I'm hearing in Hay River as far as the Hay River maintenance garage. I could be corrected. I thought it was a territorial maintenance garage in Hay River, and it seems like there's more and more maintenance happening in different regions, and I want to point out that I think that maintenance garage in Yellowknife has been growing, the maintenance staff in Yellowknife have been growing, and I think less and less products have been moving back to Hay River to be repaired and some is being done here. I guess it's kind of slippage. Sometimes we let some of this stuff happen and it does slip away, the fact that some of these things happen, but we need to refocus where our maintenance crew is.

I'll have some detailed questions later on, but those are my general comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. We'll allow the Minister to reply. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The inconsistency, as the Member referred to it, of the work that's been done on Highway No. 6, Highway No. 5, Highway No. 7, Highway No. 1, is we are following the flow of the money. We had some BCP money that expired. We had some and those highways didn't have some money. But Highway No. 6, we think we have the money now to complete it to chipseal state. Highway No. 5, we have to deal with the federal government, Parks Canada, because Highway No. 5 runs through Wood Buffalo National Park. So we've been having discussions with the federal people about their infrastructure and we recognize that federal parks did get some infrastructure money for their infrastructure. They consider that highway to be a part of the infrastructure. It was ineligible for the Building Canada Plan. So we're dealing with that issue.

Highway No. 7 is a highway that was built essentially by students in the early to mid-'70s and it was mostly designed to train heavy equipment operators and truck drivers and it doesn't have a real solid base, so we recognize that we have to upgrade sections of that road. We've done a considerable amount of work on that highway from Liard to the border and then we're planning on doing some more work from Liard this way. I don't know the exact distance, or to kilometre 130, which again, I guess, would be about 90 kilometres from Liard.

So we're going to concentrate on that 90 kilometres. Out of Liard seems to be the worst of that highway. Meanwhile we're also continuing to maintain that highway; we have a maintenance contract on it. We're doing road right-of-way work on that highway.

Highway No. 1, we are chipsealing portions of Highway No. 1. We've had a discussion with Jean Marie River, as an example, when we were in there and they were looking to get about... I believe they'd indicated to us 30 kilometres and it will take them all the way to Simpson. So I believe that that's in the plan this summer. So then from Jean Marie all the way into Simpson will now have chipseal. Then parts of the other part of Highway No. 1 from the junction that goes to Highway No. 3 junction near Fort Providence, 24 kilometres from Fort Providence, we're starting to do chipseal between there and the Jean Marie River turnoff. So we're continuing to work on that.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway versus the Slave Geological Province overland road to support industry, they're two completely separate proposals. We're moving forward. We have not slowed down the Mackenzie Valley Highway proposal at all. We've submitted the proposal to the federal government. The federal government still knows that that's the only proposal we have in and that we are developing a business case. We're close to completing that business case. It's taking some work to put everything together. There's a lot of information that the federal government wants in as far as the economic impacts and so on of the highway, so we're looking at that.

Slave Geological, we have some money to put into that to do some studies. That is something that has been in the works for a long time. At the time Transportation was devolved, in 1989, that was already in the works that they wished to evolve some extension of the highway beyond Tibbitt.

Marine, I guess we could say it's a federal responsibility. However, we've been saying it's a federal responsibility for a long time, because it is, but we want to try to encourage the federal government to put some funds into dredging. We know there are about five areas that need dredging in order to have the whole waterway from Hay River all the way to Inuvik hauling at full capacity. We would have to dredge more than just the port of Hay River, but that seems to be the key spot. A lot of the federal government boats are not leaving the ferry without getting into some trouble. So I wrote a letter to the federal Minister last week to talk about the dredging.

Trucking regulations, our regulations are in place for safety of the residents of the Northwest Territories. Alberta has different regulations. They regulate their trucking industry, so they are doing the best they can for their citizens. We do the same. It has worked fairly well. There are a few glitches, as the Member indicates, but one of the recommendations was to identify which vehicles were commercial and which were not commercial, depending on what they're hauling and so on. We don't have the manpower to be able to determine

that. We'd have to stop everyone and check everyone to make sure they are not hauling for commercial reasons. So it is something we are looking at and saying that what we have in place is the best solution. That's why we've developed those regulations. We didn't develop regulations thinking they would have an adverse effect on our citizens, but rather for safety issues and also for our own infrastructure.

Central repair in Hay River is still central repair in Hay River. We do have an aging fleet, so a lot of the fleet that's up here – and we do have a lot of equipment up here, so we do have repairs here – but for the most part the larger machinery still goes to Hay River. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Committee, noting the clock, I will now rise and report progress. I would like to thank our witnesses this evening. We'll see you tomorrow. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out of the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Good evening. Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolynny?

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

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

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, February 20, 2015, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 20th, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:01 p.m.