



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

3rd Session

Day 8

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Monday, June 4, 2012

Pages 801 - 858

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Minister of Justice

Minister of Human Resources

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister responsible for the

Public Utilities Board

Hon. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister responsible for

Persons with Disabilities

Minister responsible for Seniors

Ms. Wendy Bisaro

(Frame Lake)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Robert Bouchard

(Hay River North)

Mr. Bob Bromley

(Weledeh)

Mr. Daryl Dolynny

(Range Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Minister responsible for the Workers'

Safety and Compensation

Commission

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of Executive

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and

Intergovernmental Relations

Minister responsible for the

Status of Women

Hon. Robert C. McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Municipal and

Community Affairs

Minister responsible for the

NWT Housing Corporation

Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Kevin Menicoche

(Nahendeh)

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Government House Leader

Minister of Finance

Minister of Environment and Natural

Resources

Minister responsible for the

NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Hon. David Ramsay

(Kam Lake)

Minister of Industry, Tourism

and Investment

Minister of Transportation

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

**Principal Clerk
of Committees**

Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

**Principal Clerk,
Operations**

Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Ms. Malinda Kellett

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	801
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	801
18-17(3) – Devolution Update (B. McLeod)	801
19-17(3) – Aboriginal Tourism Forum (Ramsay).....	803
20-17(3) – Disability Awareness Week, June 4-8, 2012 (Beaulieu)	803
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	804
Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Awareness (Menicoche).....	804
Decentralization of Government Positions (Bouchard)	804
St. Patrick High School Graduation Ceremonies (Dolynny)	805
Disability Awareness Week, June 4-8, 2012 (Moses).....	805
Need for a Sahtu Long-Term Care Facility (Yakeleya)	806
Homeowner Repair and Maintenance Assistance (Blake)	806
Minimizing Impacts of Federal Crime Legislation (Bromley)	807
Kakisa Community Profile (Nadli)	807
Passing of Tu Nedhe Constituents (Beaulieu)	808
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	808, 818
ORAL QUESTIONS	809
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	817
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	818
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	856
ORDERS OF THE DAY	856

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, June 4, 2012****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Dolynny, 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 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Members, it is my duty to inform you of the unavoidable absence today of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. Pursuant to Section 48(2) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Assembly must elect a Member to take the chair and act as your Speaker today. I will entertain a motion to elect an Acting Speaker. Mr. Menicoche.

**MOTION TO ELECT ACTING SPEAKER,
CARRIED**

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the honourable Wendy Bisaro of the electoral district of Frame Lake do take the chair of this House as Acting Speaker for today. Mahsi.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

---Carried

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The motion is carried. I would ask Ms. Bisaro to come forward and take the chair as Acting Speaker for today.

ACTING SPEAKER (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you very much, colleagues. This is an unexpected privilege and pleasure. I'm looking forward to today's proceedings. It's a different experience for me. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Premier McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 18-17(3):
DEVOLUTION UPDATE**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that we continue to make progress on devolution, one of this Assembly's major priorities.

Recently we saw the leaders of the Sahtu step forward to re-engage directly in devolution negotiations with the Government of the Northwest Territories, Canada, the Inuvialuit and Northwest Territory Métis Nation by signing the Agreement-in-Principle.

As the MLA for Sahtu has noted, the best way to influence negotiations is to be at the table. The devolution process is only made stronger with the Sahtu back at the table.

We hope to welcome other Aboriginal governments back to the negotiating table. There is a place for each of them there and they also will have the option of signing on to the Final Agreement, if they wish to do so.

This government has been working hard to engage with Aboriginal leadership and build respectful relationships with Aboriginal governments. I know that we may not always agree on every issue, but I want to extend my appreciation to the Aboriginal governments that we have been meeting with, for their willingness to engage in respectful dialogue, build understanding of our respective priorities and concerns and to find common ground.

It has now been 16 months since we signed the Devolution AIP. We continue to make progress and hope to conclude negotiations by this fall.

Madam Speaker, devolution is about bringing decision-making over public lands and resources, and rights in respect of water home to the Government of the Northwest Territories. It is about having a more accessible, accountable and responsive government making important decisions around land and resource management. It is about bringing those decisions closer to the people most affected by them. This is something that is long overdue.

Through devolution, greater direct benefits from land and resource development will flow to the people of the Northwest Territories. We will also have access to resource revenues we do not currently receive. If the net fiscal benefit provisions outlined in the Devolution AIP were already in place, an additional \$62 million would be available to us this year alone. That is money that we could use to directly benefit the people of the Northwest Territories. That is money that could fund education, health care, environment stewardship

and infrastructure in our communities and many other priorities of this House. Without devolution, these resource royalties will continue to flow to Ottawa.

Working cooperatively with Aboriginal governments who also own and administer their settlement lands is a key feature of our devolution discussions. Chapter 6 of the AIP provides for an intergovernmental forum that would let our governments work together on managing lands and resources in the territory. With participating Aboriginal governments, we are finalizing an agreement that will fulfill this vision. We are also working on a resource revenue sharing agreement that will give Aboriginal governments 25 percent of the net fiscal benefit the Government of the Northwest Territories will receive each year. This will be over and above any resource royalties they collect directly from their own settlement lands. And of course, all citizens – including Aboriginal residents – will benefit from the remaining 75 percent of the net fiscal benefit.

Madam Speaker, it is important to say again that devolution will not interfere with settled claim agreements or those that are under negotiation. In unsettled areas, Aboriginal governments will continue to identify public lands for selection in their land claims, just as they do now. Devolution is not about Aboriginal rights; it is not about treaty rights; it is not about self-government rights; it is about transferring authority over public lands and resources, and rights in respect of water, from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Aboriginal and treaty rights will continue to be recognized and applied after devolution just as they are now.

As we work on concluding negotiations and preparing for implementation of devolution, we know that there will be challenges. Resources and effort must be invested in implementation planning in order to meet our objective of seeing as smooth a transition as possible under devolution. With the support of this House, we are laying the ground for a successful transition. Early implementation planning work is well underway and will provide a solid foundation for us to build upon.

As Members know, implementation will require legislative changes. Federal legislation that is currently in place governing land and resource management in the Northwest Territories will need to be amended or repealed by Parliament in order to make room for this Assembly to pass laws governing land and resource management.

In order to implement devolution as smoothly as possible, the AIP makes reference to the Government of the Northwest Territories “substantially mirroring” existing federal legislation. This will allow for certainty and a smooth transition for stakeholders, as well as for staff who will be

joining the Government of the Northwest Territories public service, who are familiar with the existing legislative framework.

Special consideration needs to be given to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. This is unique legislation. It embodies commitments made in the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement, the Sahtu Dene Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement and the Tlicho Agreement. Those agreements set the model for environmental review and assessment in the Mackenzie Valley and the key features of that legislation must remain consistent with the commitments made in the claims. Devolution will not and cannot undo the commitment to have an integrated system of land and water regulation as set out in these modern, constitutionally protected treaties.

In Yukon, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act remains federal legislation, with the Yukon government assuming virtually all operational responsibility for that act under a delegation. This type of approach, referred to as delegated authority, preserves the option of drawing down legislation at a later date, but allows for immediate operational authority for the regulatory system. This option is under consideration, and certainly appears to be working well for Yukon, but we will have to weigh the pros and cons carefully. We also need to consider the time that would be required to mirror the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and whether doing so could run the risk of delaying devolution, particularly since amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act are under consideration by Canada at this time, as part of the national regulatory improvement initiative. Ultimately, we will need to find an approach that works best for the people of the Northwest Territories.

As I just mentioned, Canada's regulatory improvement initiative is underway. The Government of the Northwest Territories shares Canada's objective of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the Northwest Territories regulatory system. We need only look at our sister territories in Yukon and Nunavut to see the difference that a clear, efficient and stable regulatory system can make in stimulating and attracting the mining sector, and the resulting economic benefits. Although regulatory improvement is a nation-wide initiative driven by the federal government, we are working to ensure that northern views are heard and understood in that process. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that Canada has been receptive to receiving our suggestions, and we will continue to work with the federal government and Aboriginal governments to improve regulatory processes in the Northwest Territories.

Achieving devolution will be the culmination of decades of work by this government. It will bring tremendous benefit to all residents of the Northwest Territories and this government will achieve it.

Devolution is, of course, a subject that I frequently raise in my conversations with the Prime Minister and Minister Duncan, and the federal government continues to support devolution as a pillar of the Conservative government's Northern Strategy.

With the continued support of Members of this House, devolution may soon be a reality. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 19-17(3):
ABORIGINAL TOURISM FORUM

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our spectacular landscape, vibrant Aboriginal cultures, and beautiful arts and crafts are proving to be marketable attractions for visitors from around the world. With increased visitors, there are increased opportunities for our small and community-based business sector, which diversifies and strengthens our economy. Today I would like to speak about the progress we have made towards developing authentic Aboriginal tourism products in the Northwest Territories.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has provided significant investment over the last year to support efforts to grow the Aboriginal tourism sector. The Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council was established last July to provide strategic advice on the responsible development of Aboriginal tourism in the NWT. Its main mission is to oversee the planning, development and implementation of an Aboriginal tourism framework strategy.

Just last month the council hosted a two-day Aboriginal tourism forum in Detah, sponsored by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. The forum's theme was "Sharing Our Culture" and provided an ideal opportunity for representatives from Aboriginal tourism operators and government to share ideas and set priorities for developing Aboriginal tourism.

Participants also heard from Aboriginal tourism operators from across Canada. These successful business owners shared best practices, experiences and information about Aboriginal tourism products in their areas. I am happy to report that the forum was a success.

I would like to thank MLA Robert Hawkins, chair of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, for attending on my behalf.

Forum participants said they appreciated the opportunity to meet and hear concerns and ideas from other attendees, and to consult directly with those involved in the industry on how to advance Aboriginal tourism development in the NWT. Participants also said they looked forward to sharing their cultures with visitors to the NWT.

With information gathered at the forum, the council will now dedicate the next year to developing and shaping the actual strategy. The council is aiming to complete the strategy by spring 2013, and specific tactics in the strategy will be put in place soon after that.

Madam Speaker, we have great potential, capacity and enthusiasm in the NWT to develop and establish Aboriginal tourism, and share our diverse cultures with the world.

A strong tourism industry is a key element in achieving our Assembly's goal of a diversified and healthy economy that provides all regions and communities with opportunities and choices. We must continue to do all we can to drive growth of the Aboriginal tourism sector in our territory. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Beaulieu.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 20-17(3):
DISABILITY AWARENESS WEEK,
JUNE 4-8, 2012

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Madam Speaker, this Assembly has a vision of strong individuals, families and communities sharing in the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. Our vision includes persons with disabilities.

June 4th to 8th is Disability Awareness Week in the Northwest Territories. Each year Disability Awareness Week gives us an opportunity to celebrate and recognize the contributions persons with disabilities make to our communities in spite of the many challenges they may face every day. This year's theme is Broadening our Acceptance, Through Accessibility.

Most of us take accessibility for granted. Access to a service, building or business is not something we think about unless we don't have access.

Accessibility means access to educational opportunities, employment or recreation.

It also means access to medical facilities and services, churches and grocery stores.

Accessibility means people with disabilities can participate in the aspects of daily life that most of us take for granted.

It means the world to the person who needs it.

Madam Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services will continue to work with the health authorities and stakeholders to improve the quality of life of Northerners with disabilities by providing the appropriate access to sustainable programs and services.

Everybody has the right to live with dignity. Providing funding that gives opportunities for people with disabilities so that they can live more independently and contribute to their communities is important. The services that we offer through the health and social services authorities include home care, where home support workers provide assistance with personal care, light housework and meal preparation. Respite services that are offered through the Home Care Program provide temporary relief for families taking care of their loved ones who have disabilities. We also provide funding for supportive living. Supportive living helps adults 19 and over with assistance to promote their independence, dignity, personal choices and being involved in the community through the provision of residential services and a day program.

The Department of Health and Social Services supports the work of the NWT Disabilities Council, the NWT Autism Society, the Yellowknife Association for Community Living, the YWCA, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association.

These organizations all provide invaluable support to persons with disabilities, promote inclusion and independence, and help to meet the needs and rights of persons with disabilities. I want to acknowledge the staff of these organizations for their excellent work and their commitment to persons with disabilities.

Madam Speaker, we also recognize the family members and volunteers who play a significant role in the care of NWT residents with disabilities.

To highlight NWT Disability Awareness Week, I am pleased to host the annual tea in the Great Hall. This is an opportunity to acknowledge the staff, volunteers and businesses that work to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities in the NWT. Their efforts make a real difference. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DROWNING PREVENTION AND WATER SAFETY AWARENESS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very pleased to rise today to talk about an issue

that is important to each of us in this Assembly. That issue is drowning prevention.

We all know people in our communities whose lives are lost needlessly due to drowning. It is a needless waste of human life and potential. It is a devastating loss for our communities, people and families.

Between 1998 and 2008, an average of seven people annually drowned in the Northwest Territories. Eighty-four percent of the drownings were male and alcohol played a factor one-third of the time. Failure to wear a lifejacket was the major reason people drown. I am pleased to say that since 2008 the numbers have greatly improved, and last year there were no drownings at all. I believe it's primarily due to an increase in the number of people who are wearing lifejackets instead of leaving them at home or on the floor of the boats.

The effort to persuade people to wear lifejackets takes many forms. This afternoon I had the privilege of having lunch with one of my constituents, a young lady from Trout Lake named Katrina Deneron, who entered and won a poster contest to promote the use of lifejackets. I will have the opportunity to introduce this young lady at the appropriate time and we will have a ceremony at the break to honour her.

In the meantime, I want to say that when the young people take the lead on this important issue, we need to pay attention, Madam Speaker. Mahsi cho.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you to the Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECENTRALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the last few months, we've been able to review business plans and now we're reviewing the current operating budget. Throughout the process, one of my main concerns has been that there's been a large amount of positions in headquarters and in Yellowknife.

At the beginning of this Assembly we set out as a priority that getting jobs in the communities was one of our priorities. Little of that priority has been seen or placed in the past business plans and the current budget reflects very little of that.

I have heard all the excuses, such as: it will come with devolution; we cannot move those positions; it costs more in the communities; employees need to meet more regularly. Excuses. Excuses why not. This decentralization of positions needs to start now. Devolution may take time and it may come with a bunch of excuses as well.

The excuse that people need to meet on a regular basis or communicate, with today's technology, that communication should be done easily through technology, through Face Time, through Skype, through e-mail, by phone. I believe that moving positions into the regions and communities will benefit all. Stronger communities will be less dependent on government programs and help the economy in those communities. People will come back to love Yellowknife and spend more money here.

I believe that these positions in the communities are an important future for the NWT. Quit coming up with reasons why not. Tell us on this side of the House how we are going to get the jobs in the communities to benefit the North.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ST. PATRICK HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION CEREMONIES

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I'd like to dedicate my Member's statement to recent high school graduates. In fact, I'd like to thank all graduates throughout the Northwest Territories for accomplishing their goals, including Aurora College.

I'd be remiss if I didn't spend a bit of time today to congratulate the special class of 2012 graduates of St. Pat's High School, who recently celebrated their march, prom dance, church service, and cap and gown ceremony this past weekend.

As a Member of this Assembly and as a proud father in attendance, it made me both happy and proud to see the fruits of much of our hard work and dedication on display. As Members, we sometimes tend to focus on large-picture education issues and trying to foster better education systems for our people. Sometimes we forget that our system is doing a pretty good job in delivering a solid performance.

With many witnesses, this past weekend was a high school of 94 St. Pat's graduates with poise, faith and community spirit. As you listened to their graduation speeches, their toasts and their intentions after high school, you immediately received a sense of pride knowing that this new crop of community leaders had the right tools and attitude to attain their goals and dreams.

I would like to point out some thank yous, Madam Speaker.

To the administration of the Yellowknife catholic school system and to the teachers of St. Pat's High School for all their hard work and determination in guiding our children for tomorrow's challenges, thank you.

To the parents who helped the dry grad ceremonies and family entertainment, who put on a safe and memorable event for our students, thank you.

To all the family that came great distances to celebrate this event, safe journeys on the return home and thank you for sharing that special day.

To you graduates of St. Pat's High School – and to all graduates, as I mentioned, throughout the territory – as you celebrate your accomplishments, I wish to leave you my sincere congratulations in attaining your goals. We hope that many of you will continue your pursuit in either the trades or post-secondary studies and it is the hope of this Assembly that you will return one day with your newly minted tools and talents and make the Northwest Territories your future.

Until that day, Madam Speaker, we await with open arms upon your return. Thank you very much.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DISABILITY AWARENESS WEEK,
JUNE 4-8, 2012

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I also wanted to recognize that today is the kickoff for NWT Disabilities Week. I just wanted to add on to what the Minister of Health and Social Services had said and bring a couple more little items to attention for everybody across the Northwest Territories on how important and significant this week actually is.

According to studies, the approximate number of individuals that self-identify with disabilities in the NWT is one in nine. That is 11 percent of our population that self-identifies. The numbers could be higher and more significant. That's why we need to take action. I'm really happy to hear that the Minister did make a commitment to working with all organizations throughout this government.

In 2010 Canada ratified the UN Convention Rights for Persons with Disabilities. This is the right of full inclusion for every person. Only through ensuring accessibility in all aspects of a person's life can there be full acceptance and inclusion. This includes the removal of all visible and invisible barriers that restrict access to activities and services. Until this is accomplished, individuals with disabilities will continue to experience a lesser accessibility to housing, education, employment, medical or health, recreational, community, social and required services. Pretty well the whole gamut of services that are provided in the Northwest Territories. We need to act on that today and bring it to the attention as we move forward through this week.

I've said this many times over in this Assembly and made some good comments about it. The NWT has a lot of great resources that we can build upon and invest in, but our number one resource is our people. Regardless of whether they're disabled or there are other language barriers or anything, we have to invest in our people so that we can have a strong economic future.

I'd like to also commend all the hard work of all people working with people with disabilities. Specifically, the NWT Disability Council, who's putting on some great events this week, and also the Inuvik Disability Council, who I volunteer for on numerous occasions and invest in the hard work that they do for people of the Northwest Territories and my community back home. Thank you.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR A SAHTU
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY**

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the last nine years since I've been the MLA for Sahtu, I've been working with several governments and this government here, the last government and this government here, I really want to, I guess, express mine and my people's appreciation to the 16th and to this government here. We keep our eye on the prize of a long-term care facility.

In the Sahtu, many of our people, the elders, people that need 24-hour care, often have to go outside the region to get the long-term care facilities that they need. For example, in the Dementia Centre here in Yellowknife there are five people from the Sahtu at that centre. There is one at the Aven Manor. There is another at the Stanton Territorial Hospital, one in Fort Simpson and one in Inuvik.

When the Minister of Health and Social Services and I went over to the Sahtu to do the community tour, we stopped in Deline, and the Deline people really expressed the need for a long-term care facility or a place where their elders can at least be placed at a home in their community. We talked about Norman Wells being a place where it was approved a long-term care facility would be put there.

My people want to come home. Too many of my people have gone out of the region and have died in those facilities, only to be brought back in caskets so that they can have their funeral. It really bothers my people that they have to go out and that's possibly the last time their grandchildren, or their children, or their relatives see them alive. They are asking that the government keeps their eye on the prize to have a long-term care facility in the Sahtu and work with the people in Deline at looking

at a temporary place where they can at least have their elders come back and they can live their last days on this land with their own people.

I'm going to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services about the status of this long-term care facility in the Sahtu. Thank you.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HOMEOWNER REPAIR AND
MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE**

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have many problems of housing within our communities. In my region, in 2009 the NWT Housing Corporation considered 40 percent of the homes to be in core need. We are always talking about public housing, but we have lots of homeowners in the Mackenzie Delta. In Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic, almost half of the homes are privately owned. In Aklavik it is about one-third, but that is still about 80 houses.

Many homeowners have a hard time keeping their houses in good shape. Upkeep in Fort McPherson or Aklavik is a far cry from a situation in Yellowknife. If you want to replace a window, a door, insulation, or some siding, you will probably have to order it and then wait quite awhile before it arrives. When it does, the freight will add a lot of costs.

You can't just call your contractor to do the work. In many small communities there are very few contractors. If you do find qualified people to repair or maintain your house, it is very expensive. Some homeowners just can't afford it. This is especially true for elders who can no longer do the basic maintenance themselves. That is how good houses slide into core need. If it goes on too long, these houses become unfit to live in.

You know that the NWT Housing Corporation plans to improve its care of home maintenance programs. The goal is to make it easier to access and increase the assistance limit to \$3,000. But these changes are not due until August. We will miss the summer season in the Delta and Nunakput.

You know very well that \$3,000 does not go very far in most of the communities. I don't see much home maintenance and training being done. I would like to see local teams making rounds of homes in need of repair and doing the work at an affordable cost. We could use the jobs too. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MINIMIZING IMPACTS OF
FEDERAL CRIME LEGISLATION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have read the Justice department's analysis of impacts resulting from the federal crime bill, the so-called Safe Streets and Communities Act. The law's requirement for mandatory minimum sentences and limitations on additional sentences place huge new burdens upon our policing, courts and correction services, and possibly resulting in tens of millions of dollars more in expenditures, not to mention human costs.

According to the department's estimate, the need to expand the North Slave Correctional Centre could cost \$32 million and perhaps another \$35 million for a new women's facility in the South Slave. Impacts include increases in court days and legal aid, increases in appeals, increased police service at courts, more youth held in pre-trial detention and receiving longer sentences. The list goes on and on. The federal government is downloading its vengeance view of crime prevention and we foot the bill.

The report concludes that without major new expenditures, "this situation is not sustainable for the longer term." This in a jurisdiction suffering some of the nation's highest level of family violence, poor educational achievement, substance abuse, homelessness, poverty and unemployment; all factors that fuel crime.

What this situation emphasizes to me is the desperate need to reduce the number of persons destined for courts and jails. Only prevention can break the chain of causes leading to crime and reduce the negative costs swamping the justice system. That is early childhood development to produce citizens capable of prosperous and law-abiding lives. It is an Anti-Poverty Strategy for coordinated action on the conditions that germinate crime. It is about humane, effective treatment of the high proportion of offenders suffering from mental illness, through the introduction of mental health diversion or wellness courts.

We are stuck with the federal law and its consequences, but progressive thought and action demonstrate that preventing criminality is the best way to fight crime. We must continue to protest this regressive federal action, but in the long term and the ultimate good of our society regardless of the justice system, we must emphasize prevention of poor choices and the fostering of healthy citizens capable of productive lives.

The Ministers of Justice and Health have made commitments in this respect. I will be asking questions of them in that regard later today. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
KAKISA COMMUNITY PROFILE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the people in my region, I want to say welcome to Kakisa. Kakisa was founded in 1962 when the Slavey people living near Tathlina Lake moved closer to the Mackenzie Highway. It is now home to 54 NWT residents. Close to 80 percent of the residents can speak in their own Aboriginal language.

Kakisa is a progressive, independent mining community we can be proud of. People recognize that the community can become more self-sustaining much more easily than a city. Leaders have expressed an interest in alternative energy in the central heating system and are willing to work with the GNWT to make that possible.

Traditional activities are very important for the residents of Kakisa. Many people take part in traditional harvesting activities and almost all residents regularly eat foods harvested from the land. They are advancing the protected area from the community to where the Kakisa River empties into the Beaver Lake. The GNWT should be prepared to do all they can to support this initiative.

Most people in Kakisa own their own homes. According to the most recent survey, core need has dropped to 6 percent. However, that is no reason to have brand new houses sitting unoccupied in the community.

Leaders have also expressed the need for a larger gathering centre. As we all know, communities' ties will strengthen the important decisions that can be made when people can meet in a comfortable, central location.

Kakisa is only a short distance from a beautiful campground and the spectacular Alexandra and Louise Falls. These attractions are a great opportunity for tourism and economic development. Leaders want to ensure management of tourism within their traditional land use area. There's an ongoing need for meaningful, open dialogue between the community and the GNWT. Real progress must be made toward finalizing land use plans and solid government agreements.

Madam Speaker, Kakisa and other small communities in the NWT should be highly valued for the strong people who live there and care about what happens to the place they live. Kakisa is an example of a small community that can do great things when we offer the support they need to reach their goals. Kakisa is just not a stop on the highway, but a real place in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PASSING OF TU NEDHE CONSTITUENTS

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Madam Speaker. Today I would like to acknowledge the passing of three Tu Nedhe constituents.

Marina Catholique-Norton was born January 21, 1954, and passed away February 22, 2012. Marina was only 48 years old and passed away in her sleep. Marina is survived by her husband, Robert Norton; her son, Lorenz Frank; sister, Mary Jane Michel; and brothers Herman, Joseph and Henry. Ray was considered to be her brother by her late parents, Pierre and Judith Catholique. Marina is also survived by numerous nieces, great-nieces, nephews, great-nephews, cousins, aunts, uncles and friends. Marina will be remembered for her kindness, generosity, laughter and a great sense of humour.

Henry Yelle was born February 13, 1934, and passed away April 24, 2012. He was 78 years old. He also passed away in his sleep. Henry is survived by his daughter, Beverly Buggins; sister, Margaret Sayine; nieces Marie McKay, Irene Sayine, Marie Sayine; nephews Marcel McKay, Jerry Yelle, Gary Yelle, along with numerous great-nieces and nephews. Henry will be remembered for his hunting and fishing skills along with his participation in the Canadian Rangers where he was a valued volunteer and had familiarity with the land in the Tu Nedhe area. Henry was kind and also had a great sense of humour.

Lawrence Fred Fabien was born June 25, 1944, and passed away May 12, 2012. He was 68 years old. He passed away unexpectedly from heart failure. Lawrence is survived by his brothers Eddie, Henry, Don, Robert; and his sisters Rita, Angie, Kaye, Helen and Lorraine, along with a total of 25 nieces and nephews. All of them had a real connection with Lawrence. Lawrence's family describe him as a real kind gentleman with a great sense of humour. Lawrence retired from the GNWT Environment and Natural Resources after working 33 years of seasonal employment as a crew coordinator, fire technician, and fire base manager for the South Slave regional office.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Lawrence was highly respected in his position at ENR. The DM and many ENR employees from across the North attended his funeral. ENR presented Lawrence's family with a pulaski – an axe with a blade and a hook on the back – a hardhat, and a plaque to honour and remember him. Another fire expert described him as the best fire behaviour specialist she knew. All of Lawrence's pallbearers were from

his fire crew and they were fully equipped with their firefighter's uniforms.

Lawrence is also a part of the team that wrote the Chipewyan language dictionary, which was launched on March 26, 2012.

My sincerest condolences go out to the family and friends of Marina, Henry and Lawrence.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I'd like to recognize Colinda Blondin, who is here with us. She is originally from Behchoko. Welcome and enjoy the session.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to see constituents from Fort Simpson in the Gallery. I'll start off with Mr. Steven Thompson, who is a recent graduate of whom I attended his ceremonies on Saturday. The whole grad did an excellent ceremony; it was very unique. Also with him is his father, Mr. Shane Thompson. I'll recognize Shane's friend as well, Ms. Colinda Blondin. Welcome to the Gallery.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to recognize Shane Thompson, as well; a good friend, and his family. He's also a constituent in Fort Simpson but he originates from Hay River.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to welcome and recognize Shane Thompson. He's been a very strong mentor and role model to a lot of youth in the Northwest Territories, including myself. Along with Shane I'd like to recognize his son Steven, who is a recent graduate, and congratulate him on that. I'd also like to recognize Colinda Blondin, who is a graduate of the Recreation Leaders Program and is doing a lot of great work with the youth, from what I hear.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. I would like to welcome all people visiting us in the gallery today. It's always nice to have an audience in here, and thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 72-17(3):
NEED FOR A SAHTU
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I want to know when the Sahtu long-term care facility will begin to see its construction.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Madam Speaker. The plan is for some of the preliminary work to be done now and we're hoping that the long-term construction... I think the target date for the long-term construction is to begin construction in the summer of 2013 and conclude it in the summer of 2015.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minister and I had a tour in the Sahtu and we stopped in Deline. We talked to the people in Deline. The people in Deline know that the old long-term care facility was shut down in 1994 and that it hasn't been opened since. The people want to know, there are some units there that some of the older people wanted to see if the Minister could consider, with asking his colleagues, if some of those units could be opened so that they can bring some of the people back from outside the region so they can come back and stay there for the last days of their life on Earth. Has the Minister made any progress in seeing where this request that has been asked by the people of Deline to see if it's being taken seriously, to ask if the Department of Health could open possibly maybe six units in Deline's old long-term care facility?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The building itself, both buildings and the outbuildings that the long-term care or what was referred to as the senior citizens home in Deline does belong to the NWT Housing Corporation. Right now it's being leased out to Health and Social Services and we are using the main part of the building. The community wishes that part of the building would be opened up and the administration of health and social services, I think their home care programs and counselling and so on that were in there, would be moved to one of the out buildings. At this time there needs to be an evaluation done by ourselves and NWT Housing Corporation to determine how we could feasibly move the individuals that are working in that building to the outbuildings, or another location, in order to turn that back into a senior citizens home.

MR. YAKELEYA: The issue of the long-term care facility in the Sahtu has been long-standing. Like I said earlier my Member's statement, I'm grateful for

the 16th and I'd certainly appreciate the 17th Assembly and this government here to keep their eye on the ball or the prize to build a long-term care facility in the Sahtu region. This is the only region without a long-term care facility. I want to ask the Minister, since this is the first one we built and I think it's the only one that's going to be built in the Sahtu, what is the Minister doing to work with the people in the Sahtu to prepare for the long-term care facility in terms of construction, training, programming, staffing. What is the Minister doing with the Sahtu people?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: This new 18-bed long-term care facility is intended to be a regional long-term care facility for the entire Sahtu. There is a plan to fill all the positions in the building with people from the Sahtu. I believe that there will be as many as 27 people in the building. It's going to be a long-term facility with a new, modern health care attached to it. The plan is to have all the people right from the registered nurse to the aides that work in there to the cook to the cleaning staff, everything, that they would be trained. We're going to be scheduling some training in there so that place is run by the people from the Sahtu.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Minister briefly tell me if there are some plans in place with this government and the Sahtu through the Sahtu Health and Social Services, or some other government agency that the department is overseeing, that they from time to time could monitor the progression of the building of the long-term care facility, where they would be able to monitor and keep checks and balances as to the progression of this entire long-term care facility?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we can do that. We can work with the Sahtu Health and Social Services to ensure that they keep tabs on the project and that we communicate the progress to the people in the Sahtu. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 73-17(3):
HOME OWNERSHIP REPAIR
AND MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In follow up to my Member's statement, I have questions for the Minister of Housing.

Will the Minister make changes to the CARE program right away so that the northern communities can take advantage of this this summer? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The CARE program has been in existence for awhile. There are opportunities for those that are in need of repairs to access the program. The CARE program, as it sits right now, is fairly sufficient and people are given a lot of opportunity to apply for the program. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: It doesn't seem fair that the maximum amount of assistance available through the CARE program is the same everywhere. You will get a lot more done for \$3,000 in Yellowknife than in Aklavik. Will the Minister take local costs into account and adjust the CARE program? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member makes a good point and it's one that we've had discussions about as a corporation, the fact that it does cost more to do business in some of the higher arctic communities than it does in some of the South Slave communities.

We are looking at it. The Member referencing the \$3,000, that would be the Preventative Maintenance Program. The CARE program actually has a maximum of \$92,000 that folks can access to do repairs on their home. But the Preventative Maintenance Program is one that is designed and a lot of seniors take us up on that, for some maintenance on their homes. We are looking at the option of funding communities where the costs are a lot greater than some of the South Slave communities. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: When the Housing Corporation does repairs for public housing in small communities, could arrangements be made for its crew to assist private homeowners? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We're quite proud of the fact that in some of our small communities a lot of the work that is done on public housing units is from people within the community. As far as assisting, I mean, there are opportunities there to assist people that need to repair their own homes. Obviously, there is going to be a cost to it, because it's not part of our mandate. It is home ownership and homeowners are responsible for all maintenance of their unit. However, we do have a lot of programs that are designed to assist homeowners wanting to do some repairs on their units. The option is there but it's not one that we would consider because we need those folks to be doing the work on the public housing units and then home ownership can make other arrangements. Or they may use them, but again, it's the cost to the homeowner. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have no further questions at this time. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

QUESTION 74-17(3):
TOURISM INDUSTRY INVESTMENT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today my questions will be for the Minister of ITI.

To set the tune, I guess, for today's questions, tourism, promotional monies, our territory versus the Yukon. Very similar in nature and I think it's a great comparison tool. Our territory spends just under \$4 million a year and we turn over about \$110 million to the economy at about 70,000 guests and people that visit us every year. In retrospect, the Yukon spends twice as much – about \$9 million – and they get about \$200 million to the economy and over probably four times more visitors.

With that, I want to ask the Minister, obviously under the terms of the 2012-2013 marketing plan, under that plan there is an approved Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee. This is under the watchful eye of the Minister. Can the Minister indicate to me that all monies and all provisions of monies for marketing – because again, monies are important – translates to dollars here for the economy? Have all monies been given and all opportunity given to this marketing arm so that they can play their strategies? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment, Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That question is similar to one that I had responded to from MLA Menicoche earlier during this session. He was saying that we are cutting back the marketing initiative to NWT Tourism. But, in fact, that is not the case. There is, through Tourism 2015, marketing money, and I believe that this isn't the case. I would be more than happy to discuss this situation with NWT Tourism. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: The Minister is indicating a 2015 initiative. I'm referring to the 2012-2013 marketing plan initiative. Again, can we get clarification whether or not there have been any holdbacks of monies for initiatives or marketing initiatives for this fiscal year? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I am not aware of any. I've got that question into the department, again, in relation to some of the comments made earlier during the sitting of the House. I will try to get a response back to the Members. There may be some confusion over some of the marketing money and how it rolls out to the organization. If that is the case, we'll try to iron things out so that folks know

that there is no holdback. That money is going to be available. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Again, I do appreciate the Minister for coming forward with that. Can the Minister indicate, if he is indeed looking into that, when would we be able to expect that to the House? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As soon as I get some clarification on where the confusion is, I will get that information to the Members of this House. I believe it is in relation to \$400,000 for marketing under the Tourism 2015 plan, and we'll get that ironed out for the Members.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ramsay. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 75-17(3):

MENTAL HEALTH DIVERSION COURTS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice.

In December I asked the question to the Minister of Justice regarding the establishment of mental health diversion courts. This mechanism is commonly used to more effectively deal with the high numbers of offenders suffering from mental illnesses and addictions. It also avoids the administrative cost burdens that will result from the new Bill C-10 provisions that we discussed earlier.

I've since met with the Ministers of Justice and Health and Social Services to discuss mental health diversion courts and wellness courts, and the Minister promised actions and confirmed them in a written reply to my oral question. I'm asking: Could the Minister update us on the status of this work since December, including the research he mentioned is underway on the Yukon wellness court? Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister of Justice, Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Work continues to be ongoing. As a matter of fact, our director of court services has just got back from the Yukon, where she was meeting with counterparts in the Yukon to review the actual wellness court that exists in that jurisdiction. We aren't looking at just that model. We are looking at a number of models and pulling information together.

Currently, a terms of reference to support the work of the interdepartmental committee, which will examine the feasibility of a specialized court as well as consider ways to improve service delivery for mental health services, has just been completed. Those terms of reference are now up and running. From there we're going to develop a work plan. We hope to have the work plan done by the end of August, and then work on the analysis done by the

end of this fiscal year, so we can share it with committee and Members to figure out the next step and which model we want to pursue, how we want to move forward. We have to have those three steps done by the end of this fiscal year.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that update from the Minister. In the December statement, the Minister said he would be working with the Health Minister on prevention and treatment options, and I think that's what the Minister was talking about. I'm wondering, given that this work is ongoing, and hopefully we're going to come up with a good solution, is the Minister aiming at avoiding the costs of Bill C-10 through his prevention program or is his strategy to come up with the dollars for new facilities and services and so on. What is the goal? What is the strategic direction of this Minister in consultation with his other colleagues taking?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Madam Speaker, if and when we get this court in place, this will obviously be a particular tool that is available to us to help offset the cost by keeping some of the low-risk offenders out of our facility. It is something we need to do. It is something that we are pursuing. As I indicated, we hope to have something available to share with Members so we can actually set a direction on which model we want to use.

In the meantime, we are managing within to make sure that we can handle the number of inmates coming into our facilities. We do know that we do need to upgrade the facility in Fort Smith, the female facility. That needs to be done regardless of Bill C-10 and that is something we need to do. We know that when we build it, we need to build it thinking about the future, not just the present. It will have to be larger than it is. We are focused on right now trying to manage the load, not have to pursue additional space and finding ways to get the lower risk inmates out of the facilities appropriately.

MR. BROMLEY: Madam Speaker, I would like to mention that, of course, this all started with motions in the 16th Assembly. There has been a lot of time for the government to react to those requests. We started discussions, I would say, within two weeks of being elected, so this has been going on since October. Every time that I meet, there are promises made of when they are going to... Now we are talking the end of August for plan at the end of this fiscal year.

Does the Minister find this satisfactory? How does he see it in terms of the timing of the consequences of this crime bill and the implementation of these ephemeral programs that keep receding in time? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Madam Speaker, this is actually the first time that I have indicated any deadlines that we are going to be moving forward, in particular with the work plan for August 12th and

then having a decision point for the end of the fiscal year.

Right now we don't have a significant demand on our system. A lot of the acts on Bill C-10 haven't actually come into effect yet, so we still have time. We are still in the planning phase, trying to make sure we can accommodate these changes when they come forward. We know this court is a valuable tool. We want to continue to pursue it, but honestly, we would rather get it right, than right now. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for those comments from the Minister. I think we are at least in total agreement on the last statement he made. We do want to get it right.

One of the administrative mechanisms the Minister has mentioned is a move to an integrated case management, meaning that GNWT treatment and client service that work cooperatively to bring the various available programs to bear in helping individual clients. This would break down the cycles and improve the effectiveness of the individual programs. What progress has the Minister made on that front? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This is one of the items that is actually falling under the work plan and the terms of reference that I mentioned earlier. The departments, including MACA, Housing Corporation, Justice, Education and Health, have been working together on these types of initiatives, trying to find ways to break down some of these barriers. We will continue to do so. We will find some solutions hopefully that will improve service delivery in this area in particular. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

QUESTION 76-17(3):

PROTECTED AREAS STRATEGY INITIATIVE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. As you all know, the Protected Areas Strategy initiative is a collaborative effort from two levels of government, including the federal government and the GNWT, also along with NGOs, First Nations, and it has been an initiative that has been fairly successful throughout the Northwest Territories. It makes the effort to identify special ecological cultural futures of community initiatives and to try and set aside those lands for protection. Can the Minister give an update of the various PAS initiatives across the NWT? Mahsi.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have a list of protected area strategies at different stages. In the Deh Cho we have the Edehzhie, we have Samba K'e, Ka'a'gee Tu, the Buffalo Lake, river and trails at K'atlodeechee, the Jean Marie River cabin cultural conservation area which is step five. They are all in step five. Then we then move on to the Sahtu and the Tlicho.

I am aware of the restrictions in the House of reading excessive detail. I would point out that we have had discussions with the Minister of Environment for the federal government, who is committed to trying to continue to include the candidate sites that have been identified throughout the Northwest Territories and the long history of the Protected Areas Strategy. I would be happy to share this detailed information with the Member. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Madam Speaker, what is the position of the GNWT in terms of selecting areas for candidate areas for PAS initiatives at the local level? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This process is supposed to be community driven, which is what we focus and try to maintain as well as trying to find other supporting agencies to assist with that process, but initially there has to be some drive at the community level. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Madam Speaker, is there a position at the GNWT in terms of ensuring that there is a balance between conservation and also economic initiatives? Does the GNWT have a policy on that? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We do have a Sustainable Development Policy. Work is underway for the Land Use Sustainability Framework which will incorporate that sustainability policy into a broader land use framework. We do try to strike the balance across the North in terms of land that is open for development and land that has been put aside for conservation and protection purposes. That figure ranges anywhere from 45 to 50 percent. It has to be unencumbered, 50 to 60 percent. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What steps would the department entertain to ensure that the success of the PAS initiative for the Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation is concluded? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Speaker, there is work underway. Recent meetings were just held. The GNWT, in order to assist this program, has to get its thinking clear both on the boundary, which they haven't finally resolved, as well as the issue of surface and subsurface protection. Other than that, this process I think has

moved forward. I understand the meetings were very productive. We intend to get back to the rest of the parties through this process in the near future. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 77-17(3):
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
2012 ELDERS PARLIAMENT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Seniors. Over a couple of weeks ago, we had an Elders Parliament here. They went through a lot of work. My experience working with these elders is they are very experienced. One of our values growing up in the North is to respect our elders. I wanted to ask the Minister responsible for Seniors what is his commitment to the motions that were brought forth during the Elders Parliament. How serious is he going to take these motions that put them into action or see something come out of them in this Assembly? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Madam Speaker. To date, I have had the staff – that is my own staff here in the Legislative Assembly – review the Members' statements to see, firstly, which of those statements and maybe some work that we are actually already working on in Health and Social Services, seniors or the disability files. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Madam Speaker, I asked for a commitment to see these recommendations, motions put through in this government, if not sooner. We get a lot of discussions here and I don't want to have to ask another question and get whether a commitment of yes or no and not discussions. It seems like I'll have to use a second question to get a yes commitment or a no discussion commitment. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. I wasn't thinking that the Elders Parliament was specifically a seniors' issue, I thought it was an Elders Parliament that was more of a parliamentary thing. So I looked at that from not as a Minister responsible for Seniors, but looked at the Member's statement for Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities and said I would ask the staff. I had asked the staff to look at the statements to see which one of those statements pertained to the three areas that I'm responsible for, to see if there wasn't work already being done in those areas. If there wasn't, we're going to review it to see if we

can incorporate that, too, if we felt it was within government's mandate. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: That was a good answer. As the Minister responsible for Seniors and ensuring that seniors have an accurate and fulfilling life in their early years and be able to continue on our traditions, culture and language, would the Minister be willing to look at these motions and be willing to address them as the Minister responsible for Seniors and not the Minister responsible for what was discussed? It was the seniors who brought this forward, after all. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, I'm willing to look at those statements and review them to see if they're relevant to the work that we could be doing. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That's kind of what I wanted to get right off the start. That leads me to my second question. I have a couple here.

As the Minister responsible for Seniors, is he willing to look at the one motion that is relevant to the clientele and people that he represents, and work within his Cabinet to look at the motion in regard to the public housing rental scales in which there were recommendations made from the seniors brought forth by the Seniors' Society, as well as made from this side of the House? Is he willing to do that and look at addressing that issue?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I know that initially when this issue was being contemplated through the media and so on with elders, I've had initial discussion with the Minister of the Housing Corporation. After the motion was made by the elders, we've had another discussion. I am prepared to work with the Minister of Housing to look at that decision. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 78-17(3):
DENTAL SERVICES IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have some e-mails here based on the dental services that we have in the Sahtu, and usually when these issues come to us as MLAs, it comes to us in the form of emergency services either by the dentists' service there in Inuvik or in Yellowknife and that we ask our Health department to either reimburse for hotels or travel. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, I know this is a federal non-insured health benefit and for First Nations people. We also have residents who are not First Nations. Our dental services in the Sahtu are not very good. Over the weekend in Tulita and Norman Wells, the first thing I got was: What's

happening with our dental services? We don't have dental services. People are travelling out of Norman Wells to get dental services in Inuvik or in Yellowknife. I want to ask the Minister what's the situation with our dental services in the Sahtu. Are we going to have a permanent dentist there?

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Currently we're having difficulties filling dental therapist positions right across the territory where they're needed. In the Sahtu there are two dental therapist positions, both of which are vacant. It's causing some problems, and also the fact that dental services are a federal responsibility for First Nations people. So, again, we recognize the issues, and what I've asked the department to do now is to work with the federal government to develop an oral health strategy, and we're going to look at that to see if there are areas that we can work together with the government and with the regional health authorities to develop something that will work. It's a very difficult area. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister has sort of outlined a strategy for the Sahtu in terms of dental services. I want to ask the Minister what, between now and that strategy being implemented, is his department doing to look at the emergency services that people are seeing in Good Hope, Norman Wells, Deline, Tulita and Colville Lake. People are flying out of the communities using their own money and then coming to the department and coming to me and saying can we get this reimbursed, because they need to get the services done right away. What is the Minister doing in this time frame so that people then could not be so concerned when all the services are deemed emergency? This is ridiculous in this day and age. What can the Minister do to help the people in the Sahtu get away from this situation?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We have encountered that situation numerous times. We have recently received some situations such as that from the Sahtu with the requests for reimbursement. At this time I don't know what the response is on that specific item. I don't have the information with me, but I had contact with the client, and had the discussion with that particular client, and sent the information to the system and have not heard back from the client whether or not there was a refusal to pay his dental bills or anything. I was assuming that it was taken care of, but I will follow up on those issues and we will handle all of the issues the same way as we'd handled that issue. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Is it possible that this Minister and this Cabinet could look at some situations in the Sahtu where he could get a dentist, Adam Dental or out of Inuvik, they could go into the

Sahtu, spend a good quality three months, four months in there to look after the people's teeth? Because right now it's on an emergency basis. Right now there are no dentists in the Sahtu, not even in Norman Wells. There are people who are not First Nations who are buying airline tickets to go to Inuvik or to Yellowknife to get their teeth looked at. The nurses are handing out antibiotics. People are going into the hospital with a sore tooth. They're not able to see a dentist until the antibiotic kicks in and starts working. So what can this government do? What can we do to help the people in the Sahtu? Can we do something to get a dentist in there right away to start looking after the teeth of the people in the Sahtu?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I'm not familiar with the specific contract with the dentists in the Sahtu. I don't have that information. What I am familiar with, or what the department is trying to do over a longer term to address this issue, we clearly recognize that good oral health leads to good health, period, and we see this as a preventive item. The department contracts an actual dentist to work with a dental therapist. Unfortunately, those two positions in the Sahtu are vacant at this time. Under normal circumstances where the therapists are filled, then that dentist works with the therapist to promote oral health with the Well Baby Program, in the Healthy Family Program and also in the schools in order to promote good oral health. That's what we're doing.

For emergency services right now, I could have the department check on who the dentist is that we have contracted in the Sahtu, from which organization, and get back to the Member to determine what our next course of action should be.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I look forward to the Minister's discussion to see how we can work out this situation. The fact of the matter is our contract is not working with this government. Something is wrong. The contract isn't working. Either the dentist or ourselves or the federal government, something is not working. That should tell you enough that we do not have a dentist in the Sahtu.

We have some oil companies in there. Surely this government can talk to the oil company, can talk to the town, can talk to the native organizations, talk to somebody and say let's get a dentist in here. Let's clear the barriers and get a dentist in here.

Right now people are having toothaches. Kids have toothaches and are going to the health centre where the nurse is giving them antibiotics and telling them to stay home unless their parents really can gather the money to fly them. It costs about \$1,100 just to fly a person out to get their teeth checked. It's a health concern. This can kill a lot of people.

I want to ask this government, are you willing to save some people's lives? Get a dentist in the Sahtu. What can the Minister do to help us get a dentist here? Can he open some of the creativity in this government to get a dentist in the Sahtu? Can he do that for us?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Dental services are not an insured service by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Along with our government, Nunavut and Yukon, we have engaged in discussions with Health Canada. It's not a simple process where I can make a commitment to send a dentist in. It's not an insured service. This takes time for us to develop something. We need to work with Health Canada. They're the ones that are responsible for the dental services in these communities. It's something that I could continue to work on. I could maybe keep the Member informed as to how our discussions are going. I recognize that it's a big issue in the Sahtu and I will keep him informed as we continue our discussions with Health Canada.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 79-17(3):
NURSING SERVICES IN WRIGLEY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services questions about nursing services in the community of Wrigley. I know my colleague from the Mackenzie Delta raised it last week in the House about nursing in our small communities. I know that last term we almost had a deal where nursing services would be provided in the Mackenzie Delta and Wrigley. I just want to know what initiatives has the Health Minister been working on lately in returning these health services to these small communities.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The way we are approaching all communities to provide what services are needed, we're trying to use a primary care team, which refers to trying to provide a service in the communities where the services are needed. Right now we are reviewing right from the smallest communities in the North to Yellowknife exactly what services are needed. Right now the standard is that communities that have more than 250 people are eligible for at least two registered nurses. We don't have a formula to cover communities that have under 250 people. What we're trying to do is provide a service in those communities on a fly-in basis, bringing nurses into the community and so on.

Through the Primary Care Program what we're trying to do is provide a service. Perhaps one possibility that we're trying to examine was to have licenced practical nurses. Perhaps licenced practical nurses could cover off the majority of the nursing that's needed in communities that have a population under 250.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: That's not the original excuse government gave last term. They said it was a safety issue in Wrigley that they won't return nurses there. I fought very hard to get an assurance that there's RCMP dedicated to Wrigley. Then that happened and still government won't move on nursing for Wrigley. I want to ask the Minister once again, what has his department been doing to work towards returning nursing services to Wrigley.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: My assumption of what the last government may have said would be that they have RCMP and nurses in the community for safety reasons, so at the times in which the nurses could potentially be called out in the evening for emergency situations and so on. I don't know if that was an excuse, but I don't know if there are RCMP in Wrigley at this time as well.

What I'm saying is that as a department we are looking at each community and what their needs are. We have situations and have reviewed situations. For the amount of work that would be required by a nurse in the communities where there are under 250, with the call-outs and the requirement for nursing in those communities, it was less than what would be needed to have two nurses in the community, two registered nurses. Two registered nurses is the minimum of nurses that would be in a community in order for them to cover off for each other.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: We've said it on this side of the House many, many times, the time for reviewing is over. You've already done those reviews. You know the needs of my communities. When is the Minister going to work towards returning nursing services to Wrigley?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Like I said, we're going to be working with the communities to look at what is needed. I could stand up and say now that no, we're not going to put two nurses back in Wrigley because there isn't enough work for them in that community. However, we don't want to give that kind of answer. What we want to do is we want to work to see what is needed and provide what is needed, not just put two nurses in a community because that's what people say is needed in the community. What we're saying is if there's a need for less than one nurse, requirement for a job of less than one nurse in a community, maybe we need to have a variety of care workers in a community in order to compensate or cover what is needed in that particular community.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The last government was willing to do it. What has changed? Why is the Minister giving us a different story?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The last government didn't do it, though. That's why it's still here. We are trying to deal with it now. We are trying to provide a service that's needed.

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

QUESTION 80-17(3):
MENTAL HEALTH DIVERSION COURTS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to follow up on my earlier questions with the Minister of Justice, if I may. I just want to start by noting that six months ago in this House, when we had our first conversation in the House about the topic of mental health courts and so on, I did in fact ask the Minister at that time when we could see recommendations coming forward that we could actually get going on the ground. The Minister at that time did respond that: "I hope to have that to the Members shortly after Christmas" – this was December 14th – "as far as when the actual recommendations come out. We might need a bit more time." So again, that's the December 14th Hansard. I wonder if the Minister agrees that he did make some commitments on the timing that were a little more progressive than what we heard earlier today.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's in Hansard; it must be true. I am committed to getting this done. I do see it's taken a little longer than anticipated. It has taken a bit longer to get a work plan done. We are still doing the research and analysis. I have committed to getting the work plan to the Members by the end of August. From there we plan to complete the feasibility study so that we can have an options paper in front of Members before the end of this fiscal year, so that we can actually make a decision on what type of model we're going to use. There are a number out there. We need to make sure we do an in-depth analysis on each of them to make sure that whatever we're proposing, whatever we're talking about, whatever we're deciding on in the Legislature is in the best interest of all the people of the Northwest Territories.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, the Minister is proposing August. He knows we don't get together until September and that's business plans, which means this won't be in the 2013-2014 budget. Now we're

talking 2014-2015. I guess my response to that is a request to the Minister that he commit right now to having a program in place, proposed, in the draft budgets, the business plan that we review in September.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I don't believe we'll be ready to make that kind of decision. We need to pull the information together, we need to work with Members to do an analysis of the different types of options that are out there, and we together have to get together to select one. We have to pick one that is going to work in the best interest of the people of the Northwest Territories. From there we are going to have to go into a whole design model and design a model that actually works. There are so many things that have to fall into place.

With respect to the type of supports individuals may be given through the courts, we need to make sure that any alcohol and drug training, wellness training, will meet the standards of the court. There's a lot of work that still needs to be done, and like I said, we need to get it right as opposed to right now. I am committed to bringing back an item for decision to all of the Members by the end of this fiscal year, hopefully early in the winter, and from there we'll make some decisions on what it's going to look like in the future.

MR. BROMLEY: The Minister is not hearing this side of the House. We are about prevention. I think three years is unreasonable. We have passed the motion in the 16th Assembly. This government has already spoken repeatedly from this side of the House. That is a totally unacceptable time frame and does not match with the crime bill either, which is already, according to the Minister, partly being implemented here. We are suffering those consequences. Jurisdictions across the country, indeed across North America, have put in mental health courts. There's nothing new about this. This is proven. This has often been put in place with little to no extra dollars. We have the biggest social problems in the country and we want action on this now. Does the Minister agree that in fact mental health courts fit the needs of the jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories to a T?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I believe that I've been fairly consistent, in my time as a Minister and before I was a Minister, that prevention is important. My colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, spoke in favour of prevention significantly and I have as well. To that end, we are working on an Anti-Poverty Strategy that's going to help us deal with the root causes of crime. These are all prevention. When it comes to the courts, I acknowledge full well that the courts are an important tool. Whether it's an addictions court, a mental health court or whether it's a wellness court. What I'm telling you right now is we don't know which model is the most appropriate for the

Northwest Territories. We're doing that analysis. We'll get that analysis done. Once we pull that information together, we'll share it with our colleagues on both sides of the House so that everybody can see it and we can make an informed decision on which model works best for the people of the Northwest Territories.

I understand it's taking long, but there are a lot of things happening in this government that we have to get done. This is just one of them. We will get it done. We will have it in place for the people of the Northwest Territories.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I seem to detect a shifting of responsibility onto communities and a possible shrinking from responsibilities at the territorial level. I hope that's not true. Does the Minister agree that this is indeed partly a community problem, but that the territorial government has a real responsibility to be in place providing programs on this issue? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not sure how I suggested we're downloading this responsibility. When it comes to things like anti-poverty, we're all working together to find a solution that's in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories.

The same is true with the courts. We know that we have a role to provide courts in the Northwest Territories. This is an option that we're excited by, but we want to make sure we get it right. We are going to work with our colleagues on both sides of the House and experts who exist out there. The judges certainly want to have some say into what this looks like with respect to where they're going to divert people to, so that it meets the standards that they expect. There's a lot of work that needs to get done. We want to get it done, we want to get it right, and we want to get it done as quickly as we can, that is reasonable given the budgets and timelines that we have available to us. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 81-17(3):

RAT PASS MICROWAVE RADIO FACILITY

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Transportation.

As I mentioned earlier in the session here, many people in the Mackenzie Delta depend on the Rat Pass channel. We have many elders in the Mackenzie Delta who live in their bush camps year round. Some of them are in their 70s and 80s and they depend on the Rat Pass receiver to communicate with their loved ones in the communities. I'd like to ask the Minister of

Transportation, will the Department of Transportation continue paying the \$10,000 for maintaining the receiver on the Rat Pass channel. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Minister of Transportation, Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are currently exploring options to keep that service available to residents in the Mackenzie Delta, and as soon as we come up with a solution for that, I'll be happy to share that with the Member. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: We're running out of time here. NorthwTel needs to have an answer right away. Also, we have many people, contractors who maintain the highways who depend on the Rat Pass channel as well. My next question is: What is the alternative the department is planning to replace the Rat Pass channel with? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The department is currently exploring options. With the advance in technology there may be other solutions there. But certainly, we understand the importance of the Rat Pass receiver to the residents and operators using that road up in the Mackenzie Delta, and again, we are going to explore every available option to keep that service up and running. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, \$10,000 is a small price to pay for emergency services in the Mackenzie Delta. Will the department confirm today that they will continue paying that \$10,000 for the safety of our residents? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As I mentioned to the Member in response to his previous questions, we are exploring options. Whether it's \$10,000 or not, I won't be able to comment on that right now. We haven't worked out a solution. But our objective, Madam Speaker and to the Member, is to keep that service up and running and we'll endeavour to do that. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Your final, short supplementary. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. No further questions at this time. Thank you.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Item 8, written questions. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 4-17(3):

WSSC HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

1. How many and which departments are not in compliance with the mandatory requirement for the establishment of health and safety committees?
2. What are the claims costs and the claims experience penalties paid by the GNWT in the last three fiscal years under the Safe Advantage Program, and to which departments are they attributable?
3. What scores has the GNWT been given in the last three fiscal years on its management practices questionnaires?

Mahsi.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the agenda, please. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

ACTING SPEAKER: You may proceed, Mr. Bromley.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. BROMLEY: At this time I would like to recognize constituents in the gallery. I've got Ms. Katrina Deneron out of Trout Lake, who won the safety poster contest, as well as Ms. Bertha Deneron with her, her sister Faith Deneron, and Bernice Hardisty, who was the organizer from Health and Social Services, Fort Simpson. Mahsi cho.

ACTING SPEAKER: Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills, Item 15, tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success; Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act; Committee Report 1-17(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; Committee Report 2-17(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2010- 2011 Northwest Territories Human Rights

Commission Annual Report, with Mr. Dolynny in the chair.

Colleagues, before I place you into Committee of the Whole, by the authority given the Speaker pursuant to Rule 11 in the Rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, I hereby appoint Mr. Bromley to act as deputy chair of Committee of the Whole for today.

And further, by the authority given the Speaker pursuant to Motion 2-17(3), Committee of the Whole may sit beyond the hour of adjournment until it is prepared to report. Mr. Dolynny.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We've got five items on today's agenda: Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success; Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013; Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act; Committee Report 1-17(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; and Committee Report 2-17(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2010- 2011 Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, and continue with Environment and Natural Resources, Industry, Tourism and Investment, as well as the NWT Housing Corporation.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you very much, committee. We will take a short recess and return.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Welcome back, committee. We are currently on Environment and Natural Resources. Does the Minister have witnesses he wishes to bring into the Chamber?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please bring the witnesses in? Thank you.

Mr. Miltenberger, could you introduce the witnesses to the committee, please?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, I have with me Mr. Ernie Campbell, deputy minister of Environment and Natural Resources; and Nancy Magrum, director of financial administrative services for shared services between ITI and ENR. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Magrum. I will come back to the committee in the House. Committee, we are on page 13-17 of the main estimates, activity summary, environment, operations expenditure, \$5.936 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had noted previously that there is quite a substantial reduction in the commitment for energy expenditures and that this is costing us, especially I think in the production of both heat and power from renewable energy. We have fallen down and it is now costing us considerable many tens of millions of dollars in subsidies. This sort of thing will continue if we do education. We don't quit while we reorganize our education; we continue to deliver education. I think that is what we are about here.

If we allow this trend to continue, of course, more and more will have to go into subsidies and we will be losing the options as we already are now for the next three years in terms of other infrastructure and services, important services for our people throughout the Northwest Territories.

COMMITTEE MOTION 3-17(3):
DEFERRAL OF CONSIDERATION OF
ESTIMATES FOR ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITY,
CARRIED

I think we need to talk more about this and on that basis, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the activity, environment, under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources main estimates 2012-13 on page 13-17 at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We will just wait until that motion is circulated.

Committee, the motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. The motion is not debatable.

---Carried

I'd like to thank committee for consideration of activity summary, environment, operations expenditures on the Department of ENR on page 13-17. It has now been deferred. We will continue.

Page 13-18, activity summary, environment, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$2.549 million. Does committee agree? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that this page also falls under the offices of the summary on page 13-17. I am looking for your guidance here. If necessary, since this deals with the same thing, if it is simply details of the energy management I would introduce the same motion if the Chair felt it was necessary. Otherwise, I am happy to roll forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. By virtue these are just extensions of the motion in question. By virtue these will be deferred as well. Thank you.

On page 13-18, activity summary, environment, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$2.549 million. It would be considered deferred as well.

Information item, environment, active positions. Are there any questions? There are none. Page 13-21, activity summary, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$28.634 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do note that there has been a substantial reduction in the overall budget for forest management, \$33.6 million down to \$28.6 million. I suspect that is related to not starting out with the same degree of capability or capacity, I guess, for fighting forest fires, but I would like to get that confirmed.

As well, in the contract services, getting into the detail, there is a reduction in the order of \$3 million.

Finally, I am concerned about the reduction of \$300,000 from forest resources. As we've discussed in the House before, as we move toward important biomass programs to help our communities and our industry that is now proposing a pellet manufacturing plant, of course they're relying on good information on sustainable yield of our forests throughout the NWT, as well as good forest inventories and so on. I'm wondering, again that's a real hit to the forest resources just at a time when we're proposing to move more and more to local use of our forest resources. Those three points, if I could get some explanation and justification on the forest resources side and what we're dropping there.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first two items are tied to the supps that have come through for firefighting. The biomass one is one of the sunsets resulting out of the lapsed strategic initiatives money that was there previously.

MR. BROMLEY: I guess I've just heard that it is indeed related to the slash to our Biomass Program. I think we've already committed to further discussions on that. I will look forward to those discussions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. More of a comment. We'll go back again. Page 13-21, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$28.634 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 13-22, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, forest management, grants and contributions, grants, \$100,000, contributions, \$25,000, total grants and contributions, \$125,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 13-23, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, information item, forest management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 13-25, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, wildlife, operations expenditure summary, \$15.125 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question here is on the contract services end of things. Considerable jump up there. I know we have a lot of capacity in the department. Just in terms of getting some information on that, what is that extra \$600,000 or so going to be directed to? I suspect it might be directed to some of the caribou herd estimates but I'd like to find out that detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that we'll go to Ms. Magrum.

MS. MAGRUM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The increase in contract services is due to an increase in the requirement under the biophysical study. That will be related to survey work in the regions.

MR. BROMLEY: Can I get a little more information than that? What are our commitments under the biophysical whatever it was? What specifically would the extra \$600,000 do?

MS. MAGRUM: We'll have to get back to you with more detail on that.

MR. BROMLEY: The reason I raise this is because we do have a lot of capable public servants in our workforce and there has been a trend in the past to contract out more and more. We hire the experts in the field and then they sit there and do administration when they were hired to actually do the work because they are experts in that field. That is an ongoing concern.

The second question I have on this page is the department is committed to surveying all the major herds, as we learned from the Minister, this fiscal year. Yet I see really a reduction, if anything, to the wildlife management budget. Again I'm perplexed here. Are these costs being borne by other dollars not represented here?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that response we'll go to Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the reductions that are in that area, I know that we do get some funding through our co-management partners, but the \$200,000 reduction here, I'm not aware specifically on exactly where that is coming from.

MR. BROMLEY: I know the caribou population surveys are very expensive and we're surveying all the major herds, so we're talking about millions of dollars. I'm wondering are we giving up programs. We must be giving up programs if our budget is actually shrinking slightly – perhaps not significantly, but shrinking – when in fact we are taking on major additional tasks, and cumulatively because we're surveying all these herds at one point in time. I'm wondering how that can be, what we're giving up, or if those dollars are coming from elsewhere, where are they coming from?

MR. CAMPBELL: The dollars that we have for the caribou studies again are working with our co-management partners and base funding that we have from the Churchill program and the reduction there is reflective of a PY that's sunsetted under our wildlife management information system.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that explanation of the reduction, that clears up that mystery. I'm still concerned about where we're getting the millions of dollars required for the caribou surveys. These are core activities that this government is responsible for and we do bring in partners and so on. In terms of funding, unless things have changed mightily since the last time we looked at this, the GNWT is sort of the major agency responsible for funding those surveys. Perhaps I can start with is there an estimate for the cost of surveying all of our major herds this fiscal year?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that we'll go to Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've had some money added to our base to do this on an ongoing basis so that we're not always in a position of reacting or trying to come back for funding periodically that we recognize there needs to be work done on an ongoing basis. My recollection is that to do all the herds this year, harkening back to my Minister's statement, is in the neighbourhood of a million dollars plus.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that information. It sounds like we're both operating a little bit on recollections here. It would be good to have some solid information on this. Do we spend about a million dollars on caribou surveys each year and this year? I know we don't survey... People have been calling for caribou herd population surveys – frantically calling for that – and it was held off and held off until finally this year. I'm having a hard time understanding the situation. If you can help me out, maybe the Minister can find more detail for us. I guess I'd like to know if it's about a million dollars. That seems like it would be a heck of a deal to me, based on what I know as a biologist in my past life, for surveying all the major herds. Do we do a million dollars' worth of caribou herd surveys every year?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: It is in the million dollar-plus range. We're going to survey the herds. We do some of the work on an ongoing basis and then we do a major amount of work every X number of years, as we're doing this year, just to bring all that information together and to double check the decisions that we made in terms of, in this case, a lot of the hunting restrictions and herd health. The number is in the million dollar-plus range. I will commit to get the Member the number to the dollar; to the nickel if you'd like. I would be happy to share. I think he already has the notes we have from the 2011-2015 Barren Ground Caribou Management Strategy.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, I have no problem accepting the Minister's estimate that it's about a million dollars. We are dealing with budgets so it doesn't hurt to have exact amounts, although those will vary according to the reality of conditions during the survey. I'm sure the Minister is aware of that. I'm just wondering, obviously we must give up some things to do that degree of work in this program. Like I say, I'd be happy to learn more detail on what that is when that information is available to the Minister. I will leave it at that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. More of a comment. I know the Minister has already responded on that question a couple of times here, so I'm sure they'll get us the numbers. Any other questions on page 13-25? I'll just read it again for the committee here. Page 13-25, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, wildlife, operations expenditure summary, \$15.125 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 13-26, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, wildlife, grants and contributions, contributions, \$1.093 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 13-27, Environment and Natural Resources, activity

summary, information item, wildlife, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 13-29, Environment and Natural Resources, activity summary, land and water, operations expenditure summary, \$4.827 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question on this page, the land and water program, we're at about pushing \$4 million and I'm wondering how much of this is land and how much of this is water expenditures.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this juncture the majority, over \$3 million, is water.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm wondering what is the land component of this figure.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I have to ask the Member for clarification. Is he asking in terms of what's left of the money or in terms of what type of work we do in relation to the land?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley, if you could provide a bit more clarity in your next question.

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, sorry, Mr. Chairman. I was referring to the programs. What land programs are in this division and receiving some of the funding, albeit a small proportion? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that we'll go to Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The dollars in relation to lands in this division is basically in three primary areas. It's under the protected area work that we do, also working with our partners on land use plans, and the third one is the environmental assessment side of things where we do work on the regulatory and environmental assessment for the GNWT as the lead department.

MR. BROMLEY: That's fine, Mr. Chair. Thank you for that information.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Activity summary, land and water, operations expenditure summary, \$4.827 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 13-30, activity summary, land and water, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$40,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 13-31, information item, land and water, active positions. Any questions? Being none, page 13-32, information item, lease commitments, infrastructure.

Any questions? Being none, page 13-33, information item, Environment Fund. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Committee was concerned at one point and, in fact, passed a motion in the House during the 16th Assembly, on the Milk Container Program. It seemed a little bit against our general goals. We want people to be healthy and our children to grow up healthy, and probably the single most important factor nutritionally is milk or an equivalent, so that we didn't want the extra payment for a deposit to be additional to the cost of milk and we had proposed in the motion, which was passed in the House, that that down payment be returned, but we agreed with the idea to have a deposit so that we would get those containers recycled.

I think that there is still an interest in that and I'm wondering if the department has given more thought to how we can return that deposit to people somehow or implement the mechanism, I guess, might be more accurate, that was recommended in that motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, we haven't done a lot more work on returning that particular amount of money. What we have done is put our minds to trying to expand this whole fund and recycling effort to now include electronic or e-waste. That was where we've been trying to focus our attention with the resources we have available. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's response there. Again, I hope that at some point in time there will be somebody who could turn their attention to that a little bit and see if we can't be a little better to our people in terms of getting them to drink milk and not expect higher costs. I still think that's an interest of the House.

On the other hand, I really do support the moving into the e-waste side. I'll just note we now have an accumulated surplus, apparently, of \$1.2 million in this area, so it's not a question of affordability, which I think was one of the aspects that the Minister had raised originally. With that sort of accumulation, I think there is room and resources to entertain that motion.

On the e-waste side, I'm very pleased to see that moving forward. It's something we've asked for years. I know the Minister has aimed to do that for years, so it would be great to see that actually happening this year on the ground. I'm very supportive of that and I know the public is too. I did participate in the survey on what electronics we have accumulated in our household and I hope other people in the public did participate in that survey too. Can we expect that there would be

some income at all resulting from a wholesale recycling of electronic waste? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We've been looking at this and it's always been my opinion, unsubstantiated by necessarily an expensive study, but that in dealing with e-waste that we would be much better off to work out an arrangement with a large jurisdiction like Alberta, in particular, or in our case Edmonton, where they have the facilities set up and we would make arrangements to process our e-waste through their infrastructure as opposed to us trying to set up a similar kind of service. We're trying to sort out what's the best way. I don't necessarily see it at this point, once again not having seen the final report, as a revenue generator. It will be something that will generate us savings if you do full cost accounting and the amount of waste that won't go into our landfills and the savings that that would entail for starters. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's remarks on that. Just to confirm, I do indeed try and do full cost accounting, so I appreciate the Minister's remarks there. Generally, I think it's been a very successful program, the Waste Reduction and Recovery Act, and I support its further implementation. I am very happy to see this going ahead. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. More of a question; a valid one. Again, Members, we're on page 13-33, information item, Environment Fund. Any questions? Being none, a combination of pages here, Members, 13-34, 13-35, 13-36, 13-37, 13-38 and 13-39, information item, work performed on behalf of others, \$6.203 million. Any questions? Being none, this concludes the Department of ENR. Unfortunately, we have a deferral on 13-17, so the committee will be returning back.

I'd like to thank the Minister and his delegation, Mr. Campbell and Ms. Magrum. We'll be returning to the House. At this time, I'd like the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out of the House.

Committee members, we'll just take a very brief recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Welcome back, committee. Again, we are now on Industry, Tourism and Investment. I will ask if Minister Ramsay has any opening comments.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Go ahead, Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 2012-13 Main Estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. The department's mandate is to promote economic self-sufficiency through the promotion of tourism, traditional economy, trade, investment, business and manufacturing and the responsible development of the Northwest Territories natural resources to create a prosperous, diverse and sustainable economy for the benefit of all residents. Through this mandate we continue to support the commitment of our government to have a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices.

The department's main estimates compose total operational expenses of approximately \$49.6 million for the coming fiscal year, which is a decrease of 7 percent over 2011-12. This includes sunsets and reductions of \$6.6 million, an increase in initiatives of \$2.4 million and forced growth of \$444,000.

I will now provide an overview of ITI's proposed areas of investment contained in the 2012-13 Main Estimates as they relate to the priorities of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

Building a Strong and Sustainable Future for Our Territory

In the coming year ITI will partner with community and Aboriginal governments to improve program and service delivery where possible. This includes supporting GNWT devolution efforts, building collaborative working relationships and developing the Aboriginal tourism sector in the NWT.

Increase Employment Opportunities Where They Are Most Needed

In 2012-13, ITI will continue to monitor commitments made by the mining industry set out in the socio-economic agreements. As well, ITI will also respond to employment initiatives brought about due to robust oil and gas exploration in the Sahtu and other regions.

Strengthen and Diversify Our Economy

For ITI, this priority includes strategic investments in hydro and energy initiatives, developing an Economic Development Strategy and a Mineral Development Strategy, supporting the traditional economy and growing the agricultural sector. ITI will also work to support GNWT devolution efforts.

I will now provide highlights of new initiatives and investments for the 2012-13 Main Estimates.

In 2012-13, ITI will invest over \$1 million to develop a Mineral Development Strategy and an Economic Development Strategy. A Mineral Development Strategy is key to addressing industry investment and regulatory regime concerns and to help us sustainably realize our mineral potential.

An Economic Development Strategy will help us achieve our goals to diversify the economy and ensure benefits accrue to all NWT residents. Although mines are a major contributor to the economic health of the territory, a truly healthy economy is one that is diversified.

The NWT is facing a critical labour shortage in the next decade. NWT businesses have repeatedly cited lack of skilled workers as a major concern in operating and growing their businesses. ITI is proposing to invest \$300,000 to continue with the success of the Come Make Your Mark national marketing campaign to promote the NWT as a place to live and work, to help grow our population and workforce.

The Ministerial Energy Coordinating and Climate Change Committee of Cabinet leads GNWT efforts to support the 17th Legislative Assembly's commitment towards strategic infrastructure investments in hydro initiatives. ITI supports this committee and leads coordination of government-wide investment in energy initiatives. For 2012-13, the GNWT is currently proposing to invest \$3.45 million in various energy initiatives and the ITI portion of this total is \$1.15 million. This includes \$700,000 in core funding for the NWT Energy Corporation and \$200,000 for hydrological monitoring and regional hydro and renewable energy solutions. For example, some work is underway to examine options to develop small-scale hydro in the Sahtu.

ITI is also coordinating a government-wide initiative to consider options for a long-term energy solution in Inuvik. ITI is proposing \$100,000 to look at medium to long-term energy options for Inuvik liquefied natural gas. This funding will be combined with \$100,000 in funding from the Department of ENR to analyze a range of options including solar, wind and biomass. This work will form analysis on community energy solutions. ITI is also proposing a \$150,000 investment toward the development of an Energy Action Plan which will lay out the GNWT future approach to proposed actions and investments.

The department is also proposing some key areas of forced growth funding for the upcoming fiscal year. ITI is proposing to establish a new position of permafrost scientist at a cost of \$155,000 annually, to be located within the NWT geoscience office. Especially in the North, we are experiencing the negative effects of climate change. A permafrost scientist will work with communities to provide expertise on exploring the best ways to deal with climate change and minimize negative impacts.

Tourism is a major contributor to the NWT economy, and research on visitors, tourism activities, facilities and more is critical to industry growth. ITI is proposing to establish a new position of tourism research analyst. The analyst will help to

ensure the large volume of research required for tourism growth is comprehensive, timely and accurate.

In addition to new investments, ITI will continue to strengthen and diversify our economy and build a strong and sustainable future for our territory by maintaining our current level of investment in various community programs and projects. I will mention a few of them now.

Funding of nearly \$4 million for the Support to Entrepreneurs and Economic Development Policy will continue, with dedicated funding for arts and fine crafts, the film industry and the Prospectors Grubstake Program.

Tourism development in the NWT will also continue to be a major priority toward diversifying the NWT's economy. As ITI's tourism marketing arm, ITI will maintain funding of \$2.5 million to NWT Tourism to support marketing efforts to promote the NWT as a top tourist destination. ITI is also proposing to continue funding of the Sport Hunt Outfitter Marketing Support Program to support outfitters in the Inuvik and North Slave regions, with a contribution of \$300,000 for 2012-13. In addition, funding of \$900,000 will continue for the oversubscribed Tourism Product Diversification and Marketing Program. ITI is also proposing to continue our investment of over \$1 million to the Community Harvesters Assistance Program, \$610,000 under the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program and \$550,000 in promotion and support of commercial harvesting, processing and marketing of fish and meat. This program supports the packaging, distribution and promotion of fish and meat products to consumers in the NWT, providing a stable supply of food for local needs and for sale at local markets. We are also looking to continue investments in Take a Kid Trapping and Take a Kid Harvesting programs which, with our partners, invested almost \$420,000 in 52 projects throughout the NWT.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the department's 2012-13 Main Estimates. I look forward to discussing them with you in more detail. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do you have visitors you would like to bring into the House?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Can I get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses into the House, please?

Mr. Ramsay, would you care to introduce your witnesses to the committee, please?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Nancy Magrum, the director of finance and administration, shared services, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. To my left is Peter Vician, deputy minister of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Ms. Magrum, Mr. Vician, welcome back to the Chamber. Thank you for your time today. We're going to move the floor to general comments. As we've used in the past, we'll give Members the opportunity to say general comments and we'll collectively get the Minister to respond as an aggregate at the end. So, general comments, Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Department of ITI, when you look at the situation in the Northwest Territories, it's at a place and time where the department and staff and its resources are most important or critical at this time. You have some big projects going on with ITI. You have tourism with world-class spots in the Northwest Territories that people want to see and visit. We have opportunities with tourism right down the Mackenzie Valley. In some places it's pretty advantageous to put in some tourism projects and some it's not too good because of the infrastructure. We don't have quite the infrastructure there to bring people in. You can only go certain places on the all-weather roads and then they stop. Even that we have to fix up the facilities as we're attracting tourists from the South, European tourists flying in.

Mr. Chair, if we continue to see development at the pace that we're seeing in Alberta and the amount of impacts that are happening in our water and stuff that's happening down in Alberta and down south, people are starting to realize that the Northwest Territories is probably going to be one of the last places in the world that has fresh, clean water, fresh air, and that's what they want to see.

So ITI is in a very delicate balance to promote tourism and at the same time promote industry. Mining, oil and gas, exploration, even the outfitters and now we're starting to see that there's a push to look at how we support industry, especially in my area. The Minister is well aware of preliminary discussions and meetings he's been having with his officials and various oil and gas companies on what the Sahtu could eventually become if all the stars lined up, and that's what they say is there with the hydraulic fracking that they want to propose to do. We had several briefings last week; we had some meetings and we're just at the tip of the iceberg on the Tulita district, shale oil in our area.

The question of the Mackenzie Gas Project I could say, for all intents and purposes, is up in the air unless the oil companies or the builders want to take a cut in their profits and build that pipeline at a

loss. Then we could see the Mackenzie Gas possibly being built. We don't know, but we know the price of natural gas and we know what it costs the oil companies. They're not there to lose money; stakeholders are there to make a profit. They're legally obligated to make a profit. So we haven't heard much from the federal government.

At the same time, the Minister is supporting and promoting Take a Kid Trapping. That's a very good program. I fully support this and subscribe to this program, because the Minister is supporting and subscribing to our way of life. That's something that this government needs to be applauded for. This program is to support our way of life, which is living on the land and we use the trapping for economic reasons. That I like.

We've got some proposed parks in my region called the Doi T'oh territorial proposed park. If it ever gets the light of day where we could take over once the federal government does all of its assessments and tells you what's there and if we're going to sign over, that will be the largest territorial park in the Northwest Territories and it's a world-class park.

So the Minister has some very big projects in front of him. I just talked about a few and I'm sure hoping that the Minister looks at an oil and gas strategy. I know he talks about it sometimes as the Economic Development Strategy, but I think if the Minister would look at a specific oil and gas strategy other than the Economic Development Strategy, more specialized. Right now it's almost like a mineral strategy he's talking about. If this play as we're seeing and hearing in the Tulita district, it's big, it's huge, bigger than the diamond mines. We should be looking at an oil and gas strategy. He's talking about a Mining Strategy. I guess that's something that bothers me a little bit, that we need to look at putting together a strategy, unless he explains really well this Economic Development Strategy. I don't know enough about it. So I look forward to the Minister talking about that.

I want to ask the Minister when we go through the details on the budget about what efforts his department will be putting forward to Cabinet and to us to look at how they will support the Norman Wells oil and gas exploration work, what type of support he'll be giving to the community in Tulita and Norman Wells. I want to ask the Minister about the Norman Wells natural gas situation. He mentioned somewhere in Inuvik. I'm not too sure what it will take to have this government write it down. I notice when you write things down it has more potential interaction. For me here a couple weeks and once in awhile I hear the Ministers over there talk about the Norman Wells natural gas situation. People in Norman Wells appreciate that when they're left out, know it's a burning issue, it's facing them right now today. When you mention another community without even mentioning their

community, then they wonder if the government has their pulse on the situation happening in Norman Wells. I certainly know you have it on Inuvik, because you mentioned Inuvik, Inuvik, Inuvik. You haven't mentioned Norman Wells. I'm not too sure of the reason behind that, but I'd certainly like to know that your government is there for them.

Those are my comments. I would wait until the Minister goes through the item page. I do want to say that the people in Deline are looking forward to a hydro initiative project. It's been a long time in waiting and I want to thank the Minister for mentioning that small-scale hydro project. I want to see where we look at where some construction can happen.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya, for general comments. Moving on again for general comments for ITI. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. When it comes to tourism, I think, especially in my riding, I always couple it with Highway No. 7, surprisingly. First of all I would like to thank the Minister for our recent trip to Fort Liard and actually driving Highway No. 7 and into Fort Simpson and meeting the leadership. I really appreciate that and I have a Member's statement for later on in the week. Constituents are very, very happy that he took the time and effort to come and see and feel Highway No. 7, as well as listen to the different tourism related concerns that are tied directly to Highway No. 7. I'm really pleased about that.

Years ago we used to have an initiative by ITI where I think there was a diamond given for driving the loop including the Deh Cho Trail. I didn't see any reference to that in the opening remarks. It's initiatives and supporting initiatives like that that pays attention to people doing the loop.

I think Mr. Ted Grant's discussions, as well, where he indicated that years ago we used to have up to 20 bus tours per year going into Fort Simpson and now we're down to zero. It's all related to Highway No. 7.

I've been trying to make the case that Highway No. 7 is not a maintenance issue. It's about cost of living as well. Providers that run the stores there, the trucking companies refuse to go down Highway No. 7. Suppliers from Hay River are actually driving through Grande Prairie to get to Fort Liard to deliver their freight. Whether or not the road is good or not, they just refuse to travel down only because of the horror stories that are real on that. As well, people that make a living, the trucking companies, the medical escort transportation companies, the mail companies really, really have an impact on driving Highway No. 7.

I have to reference Mr. Ted Grant again because he's such a well-known advocate of tourism

territorially and nationally. He does travel far and wide to trade shows in Europe and people actually phone him in Fort Simpson from Europe, the tourism and travel agencies, to see the conditions of Highway No. 7. He has to be frank and open with them that it's in very poor shape. People are just refusing to come down it. As well as the people that drive it with their motorhomes, the daring one or two that actually do it. What happens there is they let their friends know. They get asked how their trip was.

All in all I've raised it enough times there, but having a loop to travel around would go a long ways in stimulating the whole of the Northwest Territories and supporting all our arts and crafts industries along the way. As it is now, tour bus operators don't want to drive five hours down towards Fort Simpson and then turn around and do the same drive back to the same highway system for another four hours that they've already been on. It's always best to have a loop and hopefully we'll certainly work towards that.

Those are just my opening comments. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. General comments. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Obviously, first and foremost on my list in a few of these departments is the Inuvik gas situation. When I look at the opening address and the money allocated to helping out the residents of Inuvik. I always said it time and time again, that it's a bigger issue than just the community of Inuvik. This is something that's going to affect the economy as a whole for the NWT, the rippling effects should Inuvik run out of gas and the high cost of living.

As mentioned again, we were just there this past weekend for the graduation ceremonies and there's a lot of discussion of people that are going to leave Inuvik. Get their houses up for sale. It's very sad. It's very unfortunate. I feel some help from this government in this dire need for the residents of Inuvik just so the community can continue to sustain itself. It's something that we need to look at as a government, and take that as an approach to the situation that's going to be upon us in two years in Norman Wells. I've always got to make that as a comment first and foremost. I can get into it more in detail but it's something that we've been hammering out over and over as Members' statements and questions during business plans that it needs to be taken as a reality to come to the community.

Like driving down Highway No. 7, maybe come down and live in Inuvik when the costs double for people who are going to be on gas and have to deal with the high cost of living even more when the businesses have to get their costs back by putting the prices up for their goods and services and see what the residents and long-term residents of Inuvik

who have made Inuvik their home and called Inuvik their home throughout their whole lives are going to have to live with it.

Inuvik is a transient community, we do get professionals that come and go. For the real people that live up in Inuvik and the ones that stay there and call it a home, the people that have come to Inuvik and called it home, it's something that they're all going to have to live with, and it's, like I said, sad and it's very unfortunate. With the economy and the lack of jobs up there, it just adds to the situation. I could continue on this but I'll just make some other general comments within this department here.

Obviously, the socio-economic agreements and the MOUs for the northern mining workforce. We've had some mines come up to Inuvik to do some recruitment, but not very many people get hired out of there. It's a nice gesture but it's something that we need to push, not only for Inuvik but for all our communities in the North that have some of these skilled workers and don't have the jobs in their regions or communities to go to work. It's great to see the work that's going on in the Sahtu and there's people from our region that are working there, but if that wasn't happening, the chances of our regional workers getting into the mines is probably pretty low.

Other comments with the permafrost position, I do believe it's going to be something that was mentioned in the geoscience building. However, we talk about decentralization with all the technology we have today and being able to work with the groups up in the Beaufort-Delta region where we're seeing climate change making the most impacts and how it's impacting the lives of people who live off the land and in our coastal communities.

I was glad to see the money put in there for SEED. I just hope to see that the SEED money when it's allocated to the communities is distributed fairly throughout the regions. I know that Yellowknife does have a big business sector. Some of our regional communities, as well, do have a big business sector. I do hope that a lot, not a lot, but I just hope for fairness that some of our businesses get the same amount of money that hopefully it won't all get allocated to our capital.

Once again, speaking on behalf of the community that I represent in Inuvik, our numbers are down in tourism. It varies throughout the NWT but we do have a lot of really good things up there that should be highlighted and addressed and made mention of. We have some good parks up in the region as well. The tourist numbers were down this last year and hopefully we won't see that trend continue. Maybe we can develop a strategic plan on addressing those issues for Inuvik, for Tuk, for all the communities that are up in that region there.

Another concern was just in our last couple of years we have seen some increases in campground fees.

We do get a lot of locals who do like to go out to the campgrounds on the weekends or during time off in the summer. They have to pay all these high extra costs while they're already living in a high cost of living community. If there was some way we could address the locals kind of getting a little break when they want to utilize some of our nice campgrounds up in Inuvik and down the Dempster.

As we move forward year to year, we do get a growing disparity in cost of living and the money that people make and the jobs that we have throughout the communities. From community to community but you see it biggest from communities to regions and then regions to the capital. We just want fair, equal opportunities that should be met and addressed throughout the Northwest Territories. There are a lot of concerns and this department can address some of them. As we get into detail here, we'll have some questions and look at ways we can do this.

Just in respect to the community of Inuvik and in respect to the community of Norman Wells, if it's not a long-term source of fuel. We have to look at some energy initiatives and look at how we can create a long-term solution using other sources of energy.

Anyhow, just a few comments and as we get into detail we'll get some more questions and hopefully find some solutions and those kind of things.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Moving on with general comments. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the exercise on this budget is, the intention in the end of this process is to create a very conducive climate to ensure that we have a very invigorating economy, so that we create opportunities for that, at the pan-territorial level, at the same time right down to the community level. We're trying to create a very good climate so economic development and investment could happen and so people at the local level have opportunities and take advantage of them.

One of the things that I've always emphasized is that in order for us to reach that point, this government needs to at least be in a position to be supportive of the various land claims and self-government negotiations that are happening. I think it's a given that there are three parties to the negotiations and fundamentally there has been a long-standing bilateral relationship between First Nations, plus with the federal government. At this point, as you kind of move towards a trilateral process, governments need to do all they can to ensure that at the end of the day there are very amicable and equitable arrangements in terms of lands and resources and self-government arrangements. In that sense I think governments have to be supportive in trying to encourage a level

of certainty here in the Northwest Territories in order for economic development to happen. I emphasize that.

The other matter is, again I've been consistently trying to profile communities in terms of the dynamics at the local level. I think we all come from small communities at one point or another, but I think that the dilemma that communities face here in the North is rather different because, I mean, for one, we're trying to make it our home, and two, we're trying to raise our families, and three, we're trying to ensure that it's a place we can live and continue to live and ensure that the children that come after us enjoy at least the investments that we make today. Community economies, I think sometimes we neglect to perhaps highlight it and in terms of how local businesses play an integral role in the economy of the Northwest Territories. They provide a service to consumers at the same time that they create jobs and opportunities for the local economy. At the same time, we're still going through almost like a passage of a very land-based culture to at the point where most people are living in the communities. We're at kind of a crossroads where we've come from very deep traditional roots and beliefs and now the younger generation seems to be embracing the wage economy of trying to take advantage of the very material things that they see on TV. In that respect, I think there's a higher expectation of a better living condition for people at the community level and I think we need to try to at least be in a supportive position so that communities become have communities, not just to persist in the outskirts of larger centres. There has to be an equal share between have communities and have-not communities.

For those reasons, which kind of leads me to tourism, I think what we're doing is good, but what's concerning me is that we seem to be really always pitching that yes, the potential is there, the potential is there, it's great. We've got the northern lights. We've got TV and documentaries profiling the North. Yes, I think we need to do more. You know, \$4 million is good but you compare ourselves to the Yukon and yes, yes, they're right next door to a larger American state, but the fact of the matter is that we're trying to create local economies and local opportunities, and the best logical thing, of course, is tourism. We need to really try and develop that sector of the economy.

Economic strategy, as I've pointed out consistently, yes, the diamond industry or the mineral industry has been very integral in laying the foundation of the economy that we enjoy at this point. I think we need to make efforts to try and diversify our economy so that each sector, whether it be tourism, manufacturing, fisheries, you know, we develop it to the fullest and we try to take advantage of it so that we bring equal opportunities to all levels of people who live and make the North their home. If we

could do that then, of course, we have done our homework and we're delivering a very good service and doing what is right for the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Moving on, we have the Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my concerns with ITI and some of the issues that are involved there are mostly issues that I have brought up in the House in the past while. We have been working through the business plan process and now I'm going to question that through the budget process of some of the activities that this department does for us trying to create and make sure that the economic development that is happening in the Northwest Territories is going to northern business. I have indicated concerns with the Business Incentive Policy, and that's the implementation and how some of the contracts throughout the department, and I know it's through the Business Incentive Policy that some of this is implemented, how some of the contacts are divided and implemented and some of them are bundled so large that we're putting together packages for southern companies, basically. Most northern companies don't have the capacity to handle most of the projects we're putting together. I'd like to see the department work with all the... That they implement some of that Business Incentive Policy.

As well as some of the projects that are being worked on as far as economic development, such as the Tuk to Inuvik highway. We're looking at a fibre optic line and we're looking at the Mackenzie Valley Highway as well. I think we need to work on the Business Incentive Policy to ensure that all those contracts and jobs are kept in the North, maximizing the North, and making sure that those jobs go to Northerners and all the money multiplies in the North, and the department knows all the multipliers. They know what the ramifications are making those jobs in the North stay in the North.

The other areas of concerns are, obviously, looking at the department, and these would be some detailed questions about positions. There are a couple of additional positions and, of course, the two additional positions are both in Yellowknife. I've had concerns throughout departments, every department, about this. One of our priorities in this Assembly is to get jobs out into the regions, get it out to the communities, and I'm not seeing that in most of the departments, and this department is one fine example of that. We have questioned some of the positions and gotten some answers that I'm not exactly comfortable with, but we'll discuss that in the details.

Along with that is the discussion on devolution and preparing for devolution. The Department of ITI is one of the departments that's involved in devolution

and I just feel that if we don't look at the decentralization and the positions that are continually growing in Yellowknife, devolution will pass us by and those jobs that are available will end up in Yellowknife and we'll be back where we are, if not even worse, because more of the centralization, more migration of the people will come to Yellowknife because that's where the jobs are.

I would like to see the department work with the mines and the socio-economic agreements. I'd like to try to reduce as much as we can. I know we have a limited workforce, but I'd like to see some of those numbers go up as far as the amount of Northerners. There's still a great deal of people that are flying out of the North with the mines' money in their pockets, with our money in their pockets, and not spending their money here. I'd like to cut down the jet traffic out of those mines. I think it's important for us to somehow promote the North and make sure that people know that the North is where we want people that are working in the North to spend their money.

Another area of concern that I have is through the BDIC. They've indicated that the department is in the process of reviewing it. I'd like them to review some of their limits and some of their approval processes. Currently, the department has limited approval within the regions, and I believe that the superintendents in the regions have probably one of the better indicators of who would be one of the best people to approve larger loans. I'd like to see some of those limits increased, as well as some of the capacity for large borrowing for existing clients.

Obviously, the department's involvement in the pipeline and investigating the pipeline and where it's currently situated, as far as the economics of doing the pipeline, is it a venture that's going to ever materialize. We have large questions of that. Those are some of the questions and concerns I have for the Department of ITI, and I'll have more in the details. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate this opportunity. The first general comment refers to the decrease in this department, about 7 percent, and most of that was on the back of the energy initiatives side of the equation. I don't think that's in line with the priorities of this Assembly. More on that when we get to that page, but I did want to raise that for the Minister's attention.

The increasing employment opportunities where they are most needed. I'm not sure that there's a good match between the mining industry and many of our small and relatively remote communities. I think there are different kinds of work that needs to be done there. Also, it's a bit of a scale issue. I

think there is a role for the GNWT, for example, to help communities meet their basic needs with local resources, so much of the support we provide to the communities in terms of cash could actually be supplied to the system in meeting their own needs with local resources. This builds skills. It builds connections with the land which are starting to be severed. It builds a self-reliance that will result in entrepreneurship, a willingness and a capacity to get into other issues. I think the benefits would ricochet or ripple through the economy.

I see a tremendous amount of planning happening, planning dollars without the on-the-ground programs that I think we need. I think we will get into that with the detail. I do agree with the Minister that a truly healthy economy is one that is diversified. I will be looking forward to working with the department on that goal, economic diversification, in a good, sound Economic Development Strategy that is socially and environmentally beneficial as well.

The proposal for another \$300,000 to invest in the Come Make Your Mark national marketing campaign, I have supported that. It is just that we are in a dilemma here when at the same time we are raising our electricity rates by 30 percent with no end in sight or instituting mechanisms so they will just annually be adjusted upwards according to various factors and so on.

We are fighting ourselves a bit here. I think one of the major things – and I talked to the Minister of Human Resources about this – is people these days want to see environmental sustainability. If we show that in a very progressive way, people will be attracted. They will want to be part of this society. I saw that today at the Greenstone Building with the showing of the public showing up to have a voice in how we govern our affairs in Canada and in the Northwest Territories. Those are real values that I think we need to incorporate and be sure we are addressing.

Again, the reduction, ITI proportion of energy initiatives, \$1.15 million is a ghost of what was in there for the previous number of years. I am concerned about that. I see the discussion here is really dabbling in energy when what we need is really clear initiatives that address the cost-drivers that we clearly have. On that front, the \$100,000 for Inuvik, again I see that is dabbling. This is a very serious situation. We need to put some significant resources into the Inuvik situation and some assistance for the Norman Wells situation. I don't think this budget really does that.

I do appreciate the Minister's continuing to fund the Sport Hunt Outfitter Marketing Support Program with the \$300,000. This is so important to our outfitters to keep them alive while we wait for the recovery of our caribou herds which, to some degree, I hold government accountable for, in terms

of the degree to which those herds declined and the failure of this department to work in a straightforward manner with the outfitting industry and allow them to go ahead and make commitments that they were not able to fulfill once the hammer came down on the availability of tags and so on. I do appreciate that. I support that. We may need it another year or so. I will be looking forward to the results of our caribou surveys and the actions based on those results.

I think I will leave it at that and just get on to detail here. I appreciate this opportunity again. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I believe everyone has spoken in general comments. I will turn over to the Minister for a reply to these comments.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Members for the opening comments on ITI's budget.

I will start with some of the comments Mr. Yakeleya made. I agree with him; I think it is a tough balancing act in looking at sustainable development and protecting the environment. There is a lot going on in the Sahtu these days with the development of the Canol Trail. It is very exciting. There have obviously been a number of opportunities there for residents to look at job opportunities. There have been opportunities for businesses there. That will continue into this summer and into next winter. Again, it is very exciting.

I had the opportunity to meet some of the businesses and companies that are involved in that work. Just last week I had another meeting with one of the companies doing business in the Sahtu. They are very optimistic about the resource that is there. They have spent sizeable dollars already and are looking at future investments there, not just on their own property but also some infrastructure on the ground. I think there are lots of good work that can come out of working together in the Sahtu on maximizing the opportunities, not only to residents with opportunities in jobs and business but also for government to work with other levels of government and industry to ensure that we can maximize the impact that that development is going to have on our territory and in the Sahtu. It is very exciting.

We also are excited about the traditional economy and the programs that we have at ITI. We were over in the Yukon for PNWAR at the Arctic Caucus and talking to the Ministers from the Yukon. They are very envious of the programs that we have here in the Northwest Territories related to the fur industry. In fact, we were going to send them some information on how they could develop programs similar to what we have here in the Northwest Territories in developing the fur industry over there. We have seen a great success in the support the Community Harvesters Assistance Program, Take

a Kid Trapping, and the price of fur has gone up tremendously. Pelts are raising great numbers at auction. Recently in Seattle, there were over \$800,000 in furs sold. That is money that goes directly back to the local economy. We continue to support that. I am very excited about it.

Mr. Yakeleya also talked about the mining or Mineral Development Strategy and also the Economic Development Strategy. I think it is very important that these two initiatives go forward. On the Mineral Development Strategy, we have had industry asking the government for a number of years to advance this type of work. We have seen after 2009, when the bottom fell out of investment here in our territory, there was a renewed focus on trying to develop a mineral strategy here in the Northwest Territories that would answer a number of questions and, I guess, put out the welcome sign that we are interested in getting that investment back. We are interested in some new mines. In the next seven to 10 years, we could look at getting seven to nine projects across the goal line and opened here in the Northwest Territories. That is exciting. If you look at a project like Prairie Creek, nothing says you are interested in development and opportunities for people more than opening a new mine. We have rested a lot of our laurels on diamonds, obviously, over the past decade and a half. It is important for us to see us diversify the mining portfolio here in the Northwest Territories. We are looking to do just that. I think the Mineral Development Strategy is going to allow us to do that.

On the Norman Wells gas situation, if I could just for a second answer something that Member Yakeleya had asked. That is, what does the future hold for Norman Wells? I think Norman Wells, with the development of the shale oil across the river from Norman Wells and in close proximity to the community, I think there is opportunity as we go forward. There is gas over there. It is definitely a by-product of the oil that would be taken from that resource place. The infrastructure is all there, and I think if the timing is right on the development of that resource across the river from Norman Wells, there will be opportunities for the community of Norman Wells and it's just bridging that time frame. Hopefully the gas does last.

We had Member Menicoche talk about tourism and how important the Deh Cho Trail and Highway No. 7 are to his riding and to the southern southwestern part of the territory; and it is very, very important. I heard firsthand, when I was down there late last week, from a gentleman who runs tour buses and companies with buses and water contracts. It makes things very difficult when the road is in the condition that it is in, to transport things over it. It has an impact on the cost of living, as the Member said. It has an impact on tourism numbers, and the numbers don't lie. Those numbers are down in the

Deh Cho parks and that's something I guess I'll have to talk to the Minister of Transportation about. We'll see what we can do there and I've made the commitment to the Member about trying to identify capital dollars for Highway No. 7 as we go forward to address the pressing needs on that highway, and I think that will, if we can get a sizeable investment back into Highway No. 7, we'll see the numbers come back, the visitation numbers come back, the RVs come back and people come back to the Deh Cho and to the Nahendeh riding, which is important for us. I think we need to realize the potential there.

Also in the community of Fort Liard there's a tremendous opportunity there with gas and petroleum development that shouldn't go unrecognized as well. I know they're moving forward. I had a good meeting with the chief and some councillors down there last week as well. So they're moving forward and they rely heavily on transportation and the infrastructure that's there. The two definitely, when you look at economic development and the advancement of that, transportation infrastructure is crucial to that happening.

With Mr. Moses, if I could respond to some of the concerns the MLA had. We are still working with the Inuvik Joint Venture. We're going to be having a meeting I believe this week with the folks from Inuvik and the IJV. It's important that we find a solution and move forward. I think we've got to address the situation head on. I believe the government has been doing a great job in doing that through the Premier and Minister Miltenberger, as well, in trying to meet the challenge, and it is a huge challenge. It has cost us millions of dollars and we need to find a way forward, something that's going to satisfy the residents in Inuvik, and also for us the peace of mind as we go forward as a government.

The Member also brought up the permafrost scientist that we are looking at hiring and being housed in the geoscience office here in Yellowknife. That's a position that we feel very strongly about. It will be a tough to staff position, but we're anxious to get a specialist here in the Northwest Territories working with other scientists here to look at the impact of climate change and permafrost as it relates to government infrastructure and it's important that we get that position. On the location of that position, yes, in Inuvik that may be something we need to look at, but certainly I think we should be looking at the position itself first. I think with all the other work that's going on government-wide in looking at decentralization and in advance of devolution, as well, I think we shouldn't really be looking at positions one off. I think it needs to be a broader focus and a broader look at how all the positions fit in and work with one another. Then we can make some decisions about where they are the best fit and how we can move

forward with those. But I appreciate the Member's concerns with that.

On the park fees, the park fees have gone up, but the cost of operating the parks have gone up, too, and all that money goes back to the operator. So if there are increased costs in operation of the park, that's why we've seen an increase in the fees there. It's all to help maintain and operate our parks so that visitors and residents alike can enjoy them, and I think that's fundamental to all of that.

MLA Nadli talked about increasing opportunities and we need to support the various land claims that are out there. I agree with that. Tourism, the potential is there and I agree with MLA Nadli wholeheartedly. I think we've got ample opportunity here in the Northwest Territories to grow tourism, and it's possible that tourism can impact economically all 33 communities across the Northwest Territories in a positive way and we need to keep that in mind. We need to fund it to a level that is going to allow that to happen. I know the Member said \$4 million isn't good enough, and as we move forward I think that's going to be a challenge of this government to try to find and identify more funding for tourism. I think a highway down the Mackenzie Valley at some point in time would certainly increase the tourism potential, as well as the Tuk-Inuvik highway as well. Certainly, we'll continue to push on with those objectives as well.

MLA Bouchard talked about the Business Incentive Policy, and we've had some discussions here in this House during this session with Members in regard to the Business Incentive Policy and we've done a number of revisions to that policy over the years. The last was in 2010 and we've made some changes to it that we thought would address the larger contracts and where the work went, and there was the Inuvik Billy Moore situation. Those types of situations we have to ensure aren't happening and we've got to try to keep the money in the Northwest Territories wherever possible and I agree with what the Members were saying. I know MLA Bouchard is a big champion of keeping as much money North as we can and I agree with him on that. I think through the Business Incentive Policy we're going to try to maintain that. It's a GNWT policy and each department is responsible for the implementation of it, administers it through its contracts. But we can always look and continue to see how it can be improved. It is a government policy and that's something we can always look at.

Again, MLA Bouchard talked about decentralization as well. That is something that is going to move forward and maybe I'll just mention this again, but if we're looking at just one position here or one position there – I had mentioned this to MLA Moses earlier – we should take more of a comprehensive look at it – and I think that is going to happen, and it

is happening – before we get just picking off one position here, one position there. I think a comprehensive look at the whole picture will be better suited for us.

BDIC, yes, MLA Bouchard talked about the BDIC and reviewing limits and approval of larger loans, and that's something currently that's in the works. There's a review going on conducted by the program review office and we also have had a request recently. So that's going to initiate how that can happen, and how the BDIC may be able to look at approving larger loans as we go forward and as the economy grows here in the Northwest Territories I think it's important that we take a look at how capital can get into the hands of the companies that are employing people and growing the economy in the NWT.

On the Mackenzie Gas Project, nobody is ready to throw the towel in on the MGP. We continue to be optimistic that it will go ahead at some point in time. We're currently working with committee on a review of the office in Hay River and certainly we look forward to continuing to do that and moving things along.

Just to address Mr. Bromley's concerns, obviously there has been a decrease on energy initiatives and that's where the big decrease comes at ITI. I think looking forward we need to refocus and regroup. Obviously, our financial situation isn't at a point where we can make large, substantial investments in areas like that, but we are trying to refocus as a government and come up with a better, more coordinated effort pertaining to energy and coordinating those efforts government wide. It's important that we can get there. I believe working with the other Ministers in the MECC we can achieve some things here moving forward.

I agree with the Member on the increasing employment opportunities where they're needed and they're needed mostly in small communities, obviously, some with some very high unemployment levels and we need to address that head on. We also need to continue to support the traditional economy again. I think that has a great opportunity for employment in small communities.

In renewable energy and biomass, as we go forward, I think there's a lot of opportunity there as well. Agriculture as well. I think we've seen an advancement especially in the area of eggs and farming south of the lake. Very exciting and encouraging. Also the money that we've put into the local fish and meat processing I think is important as well because it helps get that product into the homes of people here in the Northwest Territories.

I think I've covered everything, but I'd be more than happy to get into more detail as we go through the budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Seeing that we're concluded with general comments, does the committee agree to proceed into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-7 we'll be deferring until after consideration of detail. Page 12-8, Industry, Tourism and Investment, department summary, information item, infrastructure investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-9, Industry, Tourism and Investment, department summary, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-10, Industry, Tourism and Investment, department summary, information item, active position summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-11, Industry, Tourism and Investment, department summary, information item, active positions, Business Development Investment Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-13, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$7.745 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-14, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, information item, corporate management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-17, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$6.802 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I had a couple questions on this page. First of all, there's quite an increase on the contract services budget and I'm wondering if I can get an explanation of what the intention is for those extra dollars in contract services.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The increase there would be because of the advancement of the Mineral Development Strategy.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that confirmation. I guess on the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline office, I see we've had quite an increase over the last

couple of years. Obviously, this project is clearly shelved for the predictable future. I'm all for the Minister, let's hope that something happens, but for the meantime we have a lot of competing demands on our resources. This would be, to me, a completely appropriate place to get the dollars for a minerals strategy. I'm wondering, I think we can use the human resources within this office in much better ways, given the Mackenzie Gas Project situation. The sign of pursuing things that are dead, or beating on a dead horse, as the expression is, are not appreciated by a public that sees a lot of competing demands for resources. We need to recognize that objectively, be prepared, and I think we've done an extraordinary amount of work and are prepared should the proposals get serious again, and redirect those resources in productive ways. Refusing to recognize that again is not appreciated. I welcome a response from the Minister on that.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Through business plans we heard the concerns from the Members and we have taken steps to review the office in Hay River. We've come back to committee. We're in the process of working through that and we hope to continue to move forward. I appreciate the Member's comments, but I've given a commitment to do that and I will continue to pursue that.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm glad that process is underway. I hope we will see some reallocation of those dollars. My last question on this page, the minerals, oil and gas up considerably again. Is that related to the contract services and the mineral strategy again?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes.

MR. BROMLEY: No further questions. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I had one question on the mineral, oil and gas section. Is this where the new position would be for, I think we talked about a permafrost specialist in some of the preliminary discussions?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the permafrost scientists would be located and working out of the geoscience office located here in Yellowknife.

MR. BOUCHARD: I guess I continue to have some concerns in that area. I know we have requested that the department look at relocating that to a more northern location, a northern community where I personally feel that permafrost is a larger issue. I think it stems back to some of my comments earlier today about decentralization and positions. I understand that the department wants to look at a

group issue, grouping some of these positions together, but as individual MLAs we have to fight some of these battles on a one-on-one position at a time. I just know the department has justifications as to why they think the position should be allocated in Yellowknife and most of them are, in my personal opinion, excuses.

My question is: Has the department... I know the department has given us some information on the costs related to maybe positioning it into the higher north, but have they looked at all the locations where they could position this office, this position? Because I just am fighting with the point that these positions are going to headquarters or going into, I know it's going through the geoscience office, which is in the North Slave office, which is still part of Yellowknife. The point that I'm trying to make is, the priority is to get the jobs out in the regions, and an area where we're doing the Tuk to Inuvik highway is a major project and maybe an area where we definitely need that type of specialist in permafrost to look at some of the potential operating costs of that new road we're looking at building. It makes sense to me that that position would be located closer to that type of project or somewhere up the Mackenzie Valley where we're looking at developing a highway. I guess I'd just like to hear what the Minister has to say about that.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I appreciate the Member's questions. We did look at that through the business plan review and it was still our belief that the position was better suited to work with other scientists at the geoscience office. It's a permafrost geologist position. There would be increased costs if we were to locate that position, say, in Inuvik.

Again, I want to go back to something I mentioned earlier, and I think in the bigger context when we look at decentralization and with devolution coming, I think we need to look at this more as a comprehensive overall look at government and where positions are, instead of one position here, one position there, and maybe better suited here, maybe better suited there. That would be our belief, is it would be best to situate the position at the NTGO in Yellowknife to work with the other geologists. It's a science centre.

MR. BOUCHARD: That's it. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to make a quick general comment about the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline office and with the downturn and, I don't want to say lack of activity, but how other groups are addressing it and reacting to it and yet we're still continuing to put money into the office. I just want to make a general comment. I know we did a comment back to Mr. Bromley earlier.

I have a question in terms of the line item of industrial initiatives there. There is a decrease and the mandate of the industrial initiatives outlined in the activity description do a lot of work in terms of the socio-economic agreements and trying to make sure that this government gets the best bang for its dollar, I guess, and with the reporting and making sure that this government is accountable and transparent with the reports and that everything is brought forth so that we know what government is doing on behalf of the Northerners.

In my earlier general comments I talked about how we'd like to get more northern jobs in some of these mining industries. If I can ask the Minister why there is a decrease and how is that going to affect the mandate of this area under industrial initiatives.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The mandate hasn't changed. The reduction that the Member sees there is a result of the sunset of the mining MOU that happened. We continue to work with the three mines to move forward and try to identify a new approach. That work is going to continue.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. No further questions. Moving on to questions. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The office of the Mackenzie Gas Project, the Minister indicated that his department and the government have not yet given up or thrown in the towel on this project. The Mackenzie Gas Project has gone through some pretty rough rides. It's on and it's off. I'm not too sure, but we know the project is there. We all know that. But when you start to read and hear that oil companies are pulling out of the project, Esso is pulling back its staff on this project, the APG has cut back on staff. There are meetings in Ottawa and I'm not too sure what's happening. The price of natural gas is down. We know there has to be better times where the project is up again to some form of construction.

The Mackenzie Gas Project is a valuable project for Canada and the North, and we just don't know when. There are lots of what if's in the future. Now, the Mackenzie Gas Project staff has done some good work right across the North. They have done some good work in the communities. There's a lot of work yet. We've got to get the union on side for the North and our training. How long it takes to train an apprentice welder or people you're going to need on the pipeline. Has this office talked to the union and said we want you guys to start training the people down the Mackenzie Valley? There's going to be a union on that pipeline. The union will have the insurance and the liability to cover any leaky pipeline.

I want to ask this Minister, are we ramping up our people in our communities for the training. You know, there's money there from the federal government for the communities for socio-economic impacts, \$500 million, and if the pipeline is still coming, are we preparing our trainers, our workers to say tomorrow you're going to work with this union? This union is going to hire you or they're going to bring up their own people from the South. Too late.

I want to know that kind of work we're going to be doing with the Mackenzie Gas Project, then I'll go into the Sahtu and oil and gas play. I want to know what kinds of things that the pipeline office is going to do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for his questions. Over the past seven months, related to the MGP, I've been speaking directly with industry. I've been meeting with the APG, and we continue to support the APG. I believe, as a government, we have to remain optimistic. We have to remain positive. It's a matter of when that project does go ahead. The key mandate of the office is to work with communities, to explain opportunities to communities, to explain the regulatory process and help build capacity.

When the Member was talking about the \$500 million socio-economic funds that the feds had said they would provide to communities impacted by the pipeline, that money, obviously, is not set to flow to communities until such a time as the decision to construct that project goes ahead. When that does happen, that's when that money would flow. But obviously, with a project of this size and magnitude there's lot of opportunities that would avail themselves for people up and down the Mackenzie Valley. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister's Mackenzie Valley Pipeline office mandate to work with the communities, I like to see them come into the Sahtu and say, okay, community of Tulita and Norman Wells, we need X amount of welders, pipefitters and et cetera, et cetera, when we know for sure the pipeline is coming down. Are we ready? Have we done the assessment? Because right now, like I said, we don't know, and maybe that's our strategy, is to continue saying we support the Mackenzie Gas Project. I don't know. Someone's got to tell the emperor he has no clothes. We can't keep saying that.

For me, the big push right now is in the Sahtu where the oil and gas phase is happening. There's interest there. Eleven parcels. That's a record in the Northwest Territories for going up. That's a record for the amount of money that's going into... That should say something to this government. Hey, something's going on here when Husky's going to

spend over \$370 million within five years, and Shell and all those other companies. That certainly should have said something to the government. We've got some big players coming in, big players.

I'm really looking forward for this department here to put some serious dollars, serious thought to the Norman Wells oil play...(inaudible)...Tulita, however that gets done. You got the smarts there with your staff there. We need the help or we can work it together. The permafrost position, I think, needs to be out of Yellowknife. I hope the Minister looks at these issues.

I want to ask the Minister if we would see something to support the Tulita district in the Sahtu. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Certainly, I support what's happening in the Sahtu. We're not just sitting back and watching it happen. I've been working with the Member. The Member knows I'm a big supporter of the Sahtu and the activity that's happening there, as is the government. We want to see us maximize those opportunities, and I think we have been doing that. I look forward to getting in front of committee here during this, I'm not sure exactly which day it is, but I know we're planning on coming and updating committee, and I'll be updating Cabinet, as well, on the developments in the Sahtu and what's happening there. I look forward to doing that because, the Member's right, it's exciting. There's a lot of money that's going to be spent there and a lot of jobs created and business opportunities as well.

We've answered the bell, too, when it comes to trying to help Members understand what's going on there. I've offered to help coordinate an industry day in Calgary later this summer where the EDI committee and, I believe, Mr. Yakeleya will be joining them as well. We'll go down, we'll have a tour of a hydraulic fracturing operation, we'll meet with industry, we'll meet with the NEB and some academia, as well as environmental reps while we're in Calgary for a few days. I believe it will be held in August. We're looking forward to doing that. I think educating folks on the possibilities and what's there is paramount. I mean, that foundation has to be laid about what the opportunities are in the Sahtu.

As we go forward, I mentioned this earlier, I believe, in questions, but there is so much opportunity there. I think, as a government, not just our department but, I believe, it's going to have a big impact on government's various departments when you look at projected population spur in communities like Norman Wells and Tulita, if there are the two to three billion barrels of oil that experts predict is in the shale formations across the river from Norman Wells. It's exciting opportunities for our government. There are going to be pressures put upon us, but I believe the government can answer that call if we work in a coordinated way. There's going to be

more pressure put on health, there's going to be pressure put on the education system. So it's not just in our department. I think a lot of people are watching what's happening there and it's not out of the realm of possibilities, Mr. Chairman, that 10 years from now Norman Wells could be the second largest community in the Northwest Territories, so we really need to watch what's happening there and are excited about all the prospects that exist in the Sahtu. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. I just noted that your time has expired so, Mr. Yakeleya, if you have more questions I can put you back on the roster. Would you like to continue, Mr. Yakeleya? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I didn't mean to interrupt my colleague's flow there, but I just have a few quick ones. First of all, the department seems to be focusing on large projects quite a bit. That's great when they happen. You know, there's potential for a lot of benefits, but we don't have a lot of influence on whether or not they happen. That's primarily an economic analysis. We do have a lot of influence on whether or not and to the degree to which and how we make sure we tie down benefits from those big projects when they happen.

An example was mentioned by the Minister of Finance in his opening address when he talked about our diamond mines. In 2011 we exported \$2.1 billion worth of diamonds. I'm not convinced that we are getting the benefits, especially in the way of lasting benefits and legacy benefits that we should be from the extraction from these non-renewable resources. Once they're gone, they're gone.

I get the sense that that approach is continuing here. We are interested in big projects at any cost. We do have some socio-economic agreements and I think we have some good ones. But letting the world know that we support the Mackenzie Gas Project, my gosh, I assure you the world knows the NWT supports the Mackenzie Gas Project at any cost. That includes socio-economic costs.

So I don't think that's the correct road to go down. I think we want to be taking a critical approach and so that's why my emphasis is on the opportunities right now until these projects happen, and working with the communities on things that are appropriate for those communities and obviously where the needs are the greatest. So I guess I'd appreciate any perspectives on that from the Minister.

In terms of the Mackenzie Gas Project, again, we are continuing to fund that as if it's going to happen soon. It's clearly not. The Minister knows that. I don't think he debates that. So I'm mystified by this, you know, believing that it will happen eventually, which he does and he's said I agree with this. It likely will at some point in time. But why keep

spending? I will have other questions later, but I'm just a bit mystified there.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's perspective. When you look at the department, it's varied what responsibilities we have. As Minister, it's my job to try not to pay too much attention to one area and try to balance myself out and support all the efforts that the department has, whether it be in small business, tourism, the traditional economy, manufacturing and services or projects like the Mackenzie Gas Project, offshore developments.

These are going to be important to the Northwest Territories and the residents here in the Northwest Territories. Yes, market conditions will dictate somewhat, but at some point in time when those resources are developed, when we have a Devolution Agreement complete here in the Northwest Territories, we will be getting resource royalties here into our coffers here in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Within 60 days of that Devolution Agreement, we can go back to the federal government and look at negotiating a deal on offshore royalties much like the provinces of Newfoundland/Labrador and Nova Scotia have. To me, that's where the future lies when you look at resourcing government objectives, providing programs and services for people in this territory for decades to come. We need to balance all of that and it's a tough one to do, but my objective, as Minister, is to try to balance all of that. I have to be many things to many people. I've sat down with the agricultural folks in Hay River. I've been to mining conferences, oil, it runs the full gamut. It's just taking a balanced approach to everything.

I mentioned earlier a diversified economy is a strong economy and that's what my focus as Minister is going to be, is that diversification and providing opportunities in all of our communities. That's why I'm so excited about the advancement of this Economic Development Strategy and what it means to the Northwest Territories as we move our economy forward. I think we have just scratched the surface when it comes to providing jobs to people in the small communities. I think if we put a real effort into this strategy, it will pay huge dividends for us down the road. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for those comments, many of which I agree with. I, too, look for the time when we will have access to royalties that will fund some of our other priorities and so on. Being a bit longer in the tooth perhaps, or maybe for some other reason I found that generally one thing is not the answer to everything and I don't think devolution or MGP is the answer to everything. I agree with balance. I think we are out

of balance now in terms of our ongoing commitment, both apparent and real, in terms of participating in international meetings and travel and advertising, as well as actual dollars.

I am a bit mystified, again, with that aspect of it. I agree with my colleague, things are obviously happening in the Sahtu. We need some resources focused in that area. I know the Minister is thinking about that and I'll be looking forward to hearing about progress in that area, as I said earlier. I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Just a follow-up. Moving on to your questions, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to ask this department on the oil and gas information that we've been receiving the last couple of days on the resources and how the oil companies are looking at ways to extract the oil out of the Tulita district and the Sahtu through Norman Wells.

They talked about the hydraulic fracking. I know this is old and new information. It's been used in Canada for awhile. It's fairly new to us here. They did a little bit up in the Fort Liard area in the gas fields there, but with us in the Sahtu, they are talking about this as a potential method that they want to extract shale oil. It's quite new for us and I know the National Energy Board and federal government and our departments, government departments, have been putting together some informational sessions and they've been going to Good Hope, Norman Wells and Tulita. It's a method that is new to us. It's scaring some people, especially with the amount of oil, the water and air. There's a whole process. It also has potential to create some long-term economic sustainability and jobs and employment, but it's got to be done in a strict, disciplined manner. We always have to keep on top of this method here and not let it run amuck, so to speak.

So I want to ask the Minister within his department, keeping the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline office staff busier and busier, is that something that they are looking at with us, with the government in saying we're going to do our best to get this information into the community and get them talking and not at the last moment? So is this something that the ITI department is looking at to continue advancing more education to our people and also into our government? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Member for that question. In regard to what we have been doing, we've been working with AANDC as well as NEB and the Member is aware that they've delivered community information sessions in the Sahtu region on the issue of

fracking. We, as I mentioned earlier, are planning a trip with the Economic Development and Infrastructure committee and we're looking forward to that. I think in that we will get a chance to discuss the issue with academia, with environmental groups and also with industry. So I think we'll get a good balance on that tour and certainly look forward to that.

Also, we will be getting in front of committee sometime here in the next little while and I look forward to that briefing that we have EDI, and perhaps the Member will come to that briefing where we'll update Members on activity in the Sahtu. We can have a good discussion there as well.

What I wanted to mention was that between the Department of ITI and the Department of ENR and also Health and Social Services, we're working together to outline the economic opportunities, environmental concerns and human health issues related to the use of nonconventional hydraulic fracturing techniques on the Northwest Territories, and we expect that the work would culminate in a discussion document and we'll have that document able to review in advance of the drilling season next year. So we're working on that and it's important that we continue to work to get all the facts on the table, so we can make that balanced approach.

Just in relation to the Member's comments about the MVPO and, again, I was before committee and I listened to committee during the business planning process. We are reviewing that and we will be moving forward with decisions on that and a communications strategy related to that in the near future. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I look forward to the Minister continuing his work on this initiative. I think I just have to work my schedule and look at when to do a presentation to the EDI so that I can come in then. So I look forward to the Minister's continued work on this whole issue here. I'd like to see how far, when you clear the dust off and you see how big this thing is and say okay, this is what we're dealing with and this is real. This is not one year, this is 10 years, 15 years and this could possibly be significant for the North.

So in saying that, I want to just get to an issue here that Mr. Bouchard talked about with resources in our region and moving some of these positions out of the larger centres such as Hay River or Yellowknife. We talked about, somewhat, the permafrost position or specialist in the Yellowknife area. Mr. Minister indicated, through his letter to us, the reasons why it was going to be difficult for fiscal, saying that it's better to have it in Yellowknife, plus he's got all his buddies here or all the people here that they can associate together. We as committee want to move this position out where we see it more valuable. Either in Inuvik or

the southern portion, but we gave our reasoning. I wanted to ask the Minister is he firm on that position being situated in Yellowknife and having no chance of moving outside. We talked about Inuvik being possible for many reasons and there are many reasons that you can communicate with your colleagues. So why is he so firm on having this position here in Yellowknife other than it's going to cost us an extra few thousands of dollars? I'm a little bit lost here.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Again, I just wanted to mention something I mentioned earlier, and that is the government has made a commitment to look at decentralization and the possibility of moving some positions. I think before we begin looking at one position here or one position there, it would be in our best interest to look at it collectively and in a comprehensive fashion before we make decisions just to one-off moving a position here or moving a position there.

In our review of the position of the permafrost geologist, it was best situated here at the NTGO, and that's the geoscience office. It's a permafrost geologist position, and with the other scientists and geologists that are located at that NTGO office there would be some synergy there and opportunity for them to get together. We have to remember this position, even if it is located in Yellowknife, would be hard to hire a person of that calibre. We're hoping for the best. We're hoping we can go out and find somebody to fill this position, but in Yellowknife even we'll be challenged to find a person to fit that position here in Yellowknife. So we're going to be challenged at the best of times in recruiting for this position. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. I'm just noting the clock and I believe we'll be taking just a short recess and returning to page 12-17.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Welcome back, committee. Welcome back to Mr. Ramsay, Ms. Magrum and Mr. Vician. We are on page 12-17, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$6.802 million. Mr. Bouchard.

COMMITTEE MOTION 4-17(3):
DEFERRAL OF CONSIDERATION OF
MINERALS AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES
ACTIVITY UNDER ITI,
CARRIED

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee defer further consideration for the activity summary of minerals and petroleum resources under the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment main estimates 2012-2013 on page 12-17 at this time.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. We'll just give a second for the motion to be circulated.

A motion is on the floor.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Question has been called. Motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Consideration of activity summary under the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment on page 12-17 has been deferred. Page 12-18, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, grants and contributions, contributions. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering about the Mackenzie Valley development contributions, \$715,000. I wonder what is our contribution to the Aboriginal Pipeline Group given that all the other proponents are closing their offices and shutting down on a temporary basis, at least. What is our contribution to the APG?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That remains at \$300,000.

MR. BROMLEY: This is a group of very capable people and we want to see them be successful, but obviously, in terms of the MGP, that won't be for some time now. What analysis did the department do to continue with that support in lieu of what we know is the current situation and the responsibility to our taxpayers to put our money in the most appropriate places where demands are greatest for success?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Perhaps I'll go to Deputy Minister Vician to explain that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have made a multi-year statement to the Aboriginal Pipeline Group for continued support at the increased level of \$300,000 a year pending an annual appropriation from this Legislature in review of the amount of funding that they need on an annual basis. They have seen some reduction from some of the proponent parties; however, we've signaled to them pending approval of this budget that we would advance \$300,000 this year.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Is it the understanding of this department that the MGP will not be going ahead for several years, likely late 20-teens, 2020?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would be unknown at this juncture.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that interpretation of everybody pulling out. I'm sure that's getting some chuckles across the territory on a very serious subject. Given that the MGP will not be pulling forward, is this just blind support that we freely give away taxpayers' money on an impossible venture to which there will be absolutely no progress possible for the next few years? Or are we requiring some response for those dollars such as they become experts in biomass and start doing some biomass projects or something like that? Obviously, they're based, I believe, in Inuvik and there are serious energy issues there and we're talking about renewable energy as one option. What are we doing? Is this blind support, no questions asked? Here's \$300,000 of taxpayers' money despite so many demands?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Government of the Northwest Territories has supported the Aboriginal Pipeline Group in the past and we're continuing to support the APG. It's important that we do that. I don't believe it's going blindly. I believe it's supporting the potential advancement of the Aboriginal Pipeline Group. When the Mackenzie Gas Project does go ahead, they will own one-third of that pipeline and it will be the big piece of the capacity building for Aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories. Our support of the APG is integral to that advancing. With the MGP, we're optimistic that it will see the light of day, and it's a matter of when, not if.

MR. BROMLEY: The issue is that we know the when does not include the next number of years. So this I view as close to insanity and certainly irresponsible use of taxpayers' dollars. I wonder if the Minister would commit to giving us a full accounting for the dollars that we've given the Aboriginal Pipeline Group this current year or last year and if we can expect that to occur for this fiscal year for this \$300,000.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We'd be pleased to provide that to the Member. Last year we gave APG \$300,000 and we can certainly get an accounting of that \$300,000 for the Member.

MR. BROMLEY: Just on the Resource Predevelopment Program and the Aboriginal capacity building and community consultations, could I get a breakdown of what those are for as well?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, we can supply that to the Member.

MR. BROMLEY: That's all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Page 12-18, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$925,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-19, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, information item, minerals and petroleum resources, activity positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-21, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, energy, operations expenditure summary, \$1.619 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister mentioned about the small hydro initiatives and I want to ask the Minister, what do the community of Deline specifically and the people from the Sahtu and the Northwest Territories look forward to in this budget to see if the Deline or Great Bear hydro project would actually see some design, some steps towards construction of a possible mini-hydro in that area. They've been at it for about nearly 16 or 17 years. I guess when is this talking going to start and when are we going to see some action putting that hydro in the Bear River?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We continue to support the development of hydro and renewable energy solutions across the territory, and of particular interest to the Member is the ongoing effort in the Sahtu region looking at the development of the resources that are available for hydro development on the Bear particularly. We continue to work with the regional community groups out of Deline and part of the funding proposed in this year's budget with regard to renewable energy initiatives is \$100,000 to look at areas including the Sahtu-Deline hydro development.

MR. YAKELEYA: We certainly look forward to it. I again ask, we continue looking, studying, studying and studying, and fly to different locations, and look at this plant, but other than contributing dollars to further studies and further studies I ask the question when will this hydro project see construction phases. When? The community's been waiting for 16 or 17 years. Now he's telling me there's going to be another \$100,000 study and next year there's going to be another one.

I'm getting a little bit frustrated on this side here. I'd like to see some construction. The high cost of living in the Sahtu, people in Deline have been waiting for this. I know the goodness in the Minister's heart and staff is there, but we need to

see something other than putting another \$100,000 to a study. I believe probably this is the most studied hydro initiative other than Lutselk'e or Whati or any other. You put \$37 million in the Blue Fish hydro plant here. Why don't you put some money in the Bear River? You put money elsewhere. You were going to throw a whole bunch of money to the Taltson and the mines. That didn't follow through. Yet, we're still waiting in Bear Lake.

The Bear Lake hydro power can power Tulita and Norman Wells. It can cut the costs down in Deline. If we don't smarten up, the people in Deline just might go without us and we'd have nobody to blame but ourselves. I know they're being patient and they've been working and you guys have been working hard.

Again, I want to ask the Minister, I appreciate the \$100,000 plan for it but it does nothing but put papers there and studies. That doesn't bring the power down in Deline or anywhere. All it tells you is what possibly could happen. I'd like to ask the Minister again, and I might not get an answer here, and that's okay. I accept that. I accept it of this government here that they're not going to do anything in terms of constructing the hydro in Bear River for the people. But I can see a lot of the projects going on in the Northwest Territories that had less than 16 years to wait.

I guess I'm venting a little bit and I appreciate them listening to my venting, but I would appreciate if the Minister can give me some time frames. I don't know if I'm putting him on the spot or on this government, but I'd certainly like to see a hydro project up in Bear Lake or something to reduce their energy. If I look at that list I had last week and I can see that \$16 million went right around the Sahtu. How many other communities had projects going in there to reduce their cost of living? We didn't get very much in the Sahtu. That's what I want to tell the Minister, and this is one project that they've been asking for.

Again, I ask the Minister. I'm frustrated. I'm venting, but I certainly want to see a project in the Bear River sometime. I hope it's a little bit sooner than later. I want to ask the Minister again: When can we start seeing some construction other than more studies? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's concerns, and I also appreciate his passion about hydro and the development of hydro not only in the Sahtu but in the territory. That's important.

With respect to the situation on the Bear, we have had money in the past to look at various hydro solutions for that river with the community of Deline and we've yet to establish a feasible solution on

that river. I recently had the opportunity to meet with the president of the land corp, new Chief Kenny, and we had a very good meeting and they explained to us a new approach to hydro development on the Bear which would include a channel being run parallel to the river itself and wouldn't involve damming the river at all. That's something we want to explore with the community of Deline.

We believe this is an indication that we're still very supportive of the advancement of hydro in the Sahtu. We do look forward to the day when we can find a viable solution to the Bear. When we do find that, we're going to have to identify the capital dollars associated with developing that potential, and that could be substantial. I thank the Member again for his concern.

MR. YAKELEYA: I've been a Member as long as the Minister's been a Member and this has been a passion of mine for a long, long time. The Minister knows where I'm coming from. He would sit with us one day on this side and now he's a Minister. He's actually the Minister of this project here. So I'm hopeful that Minister keeps an eye on this and works with the people in Deline and myself to get and keep this issue going here.

I want to ask the Minister in regard to the energy plans in the Northwest Territories. I know the communities have been busy working on their energy plans. I think there's some correlation to the federal government's funding. I'm not too sure how that works quite in detail. I may be wrong on the energy plans, putting together the community energy plans. I know the development of these energy plans is something that's very important to our people, and I want to ask the Minister, in brief, their plans for the upcoming year to see these energy plans be renewed or fully developed in the Northwest Territories and how we're going to connect with the GNWT's energy priorities through the communities' energy plans. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I thank the Member for that. The subject of community energy plans doesn't fall necessarily under ITI's mandate, but to my recollection most communities are completed through the Building Canada Plan their community energy plans. That question may be better suited maybe when MACA is before committee. But that's my understanding. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Page 12-21, activity summary, energy, operations. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have concerns here, again, back to my opening comments about the decrease in the amount of dollars committed to energy. We do have two communities here that are going to be in dire need. Inuvik is one of them, and it's going to be sooner than later. Who knows when that's going to

happen? Then we've got Norman Wells coming up in a couple years. To have the amount of money that's contributed to it, there's already been discussions of due to the budget address that we had earlier in the year where it was mentioned that it was \$100,000 for the wood pellets and the boilers, and people are already talking about using that funding to convert back and getting off natural gas just because of the situation that's on there. We're looking at long-term solutions, obviously. For the town of Inuvik, that's something that we don't want to see, but with the high cost of living, is this something that the Minister is willing to take a look at and maybe adding more dollars to the medium- and long-term solution planning, other than just the \$100,000 that's allocated there? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the funds that we do have, we will continue to put those to the best use possible and continue to pursue solutions. I think that's the most important thing. Through MECC we are continuing to pursue a solution. Again, I believe we will be meeting with the IJV and the town again later this week. We have been front and centre when it comes to the situation in Inuvik and we will continue to be so. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: With the announcement of the Minister's address, I've been getting a lot of phone calls from my constituents back in Inuvik in regard to how to use this \$100,000, and as the other \$100,000 that's been allocated to do a strategic plan, as the planning process continues to move forward and all the leaders are at the table discussing how we can best deal with this situation, while discussions are going on there are a lot of worried people in the community of Inuvik with the residents and constituents. I do know that there is a meeting going on tomorrow and I hope we get some really positive outcomes of that.

As my colleague has stated earlier in regard to energy, this government is spending millions of dollars on subsidizing the fuel costs throughout the Northwest Territories. Those are monies that we can be looking at saving in the future by investing today, investing in our future today so that we don't have to pay the costs further down the road.

Those are just some general comments. I do know there is a meeting tomorrow. I just hope that we get the best solutions out of that. It would be unfortunate if this was the only money allocated and then we have to find solutions elsewhere, but I look forward to hearing the outcomes of those. I look forward to seeing what can be addressed. That is the Inuvik situation, but as I mentioned, Inuvik and Norman Wells are the two main ones, but it is communities right across the Northwest Territories,

the high cost of living. That is it, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. There was kind of a question there. Mr. Ramsay, would you like to address it?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's observations on this. The most important thing is we continue to move forward, we find solutions, and the situation in Inuvik is not cut and dried. It is very complex. It is going to be difficult to find a solution, but I believe by working together we will find that solution and move forward.

We can't take our eye off the opportunities like in hydro, biomass or solar. I think we continue to pursue those initiatives and eventually that reinvestment will have to happen in the area of alternative energy. We will have to identify money as government goes forward into these areas. I can see that happening when our financial situation improves. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay and Mr. Moses. Page 12-21, activity summary, energy, operations expenditure summary, \$1.619 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think my colleague has expressed concerns about this area, as we did in our motion in the House on Thursday. This is a walloping 78 percent cut to energy planning. I know there has been concern about the lack of progress on this front during the 16th Assembly despite spending a lot of dollars, so we perhaps do indeed need to go back to the drawing board and do some better planning there.

On the other hand, we have done a lot of feasibility work and feasibility studies. We have, in my mind, procrastinated to the point where some of those opportunities are now slipping by the wayside as fossil fuel prices have gone beyond what the original estimates were. We need to be lighter on our feet and take advantage of opportunities when they are here.

ITI is actually now down to \$1.1 million. It is not the \$1.6 million here. According to the Minister's opening remarks, in terms of energy initiatives, \$1.15 million in energy initiatives, \$700,000 of which is providing money to the NTEC – that is the Northwest Territories Energy Corporation – for core funding for staff. Does that mean we are hiring seven staff here? Maybe I can get an explanation of what the \$700,000 is for. Thank you.

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

MR. VICIAN: Mr. Chair, the funding that is proposed for funding NT Energy is similar to what has been done in previous years to provide a core team of experts that are able to deal with the

solutions particularly regarding electricity development, hydroelectricity development across the territory. The funding is targeted to supporting three permanent positions and an additional staff, and consulting, and travel, and energy work associated with the hydro projects that are being looked across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, thanks to the deputy minister for that explanation. I am just trying to get my finger on the pulse here. Were these dollars not available for work last year and in the past several years? Is this a new level of work being planned? I am just wondering. It seems like if we had staff, we should have been funding them. I am wondering where this is in the context of the last few years. Thank you.

MR. VICIAN: Mr. Chair, I know we are not on the page, but 12-22 does reflect the contributions made to NTEC in a similar pattern over the past few years. That funding is approved on an annual basis. Through a contribution agreement with the Energy Corporation, we provide the funding. The Energy Corporation makes its own determination on the staff level and has hired experts on a multi-year basis, on that basis that there would be funding on an ongoing program level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, of course the reason I am looking at this is because it is sort of part of the dollars indicated under energy planning, I believe. Am I correct that we actually did have that in past years? For some reason it is not on the page.

MR. VICIAN: Mr. Chair, yes, the funding was identified in past years and you will note the levels that are identified in the main estimates reports under 12-22 at \$1.250 million and previous years it was higher than that at \$1.5 million and actuals reflect almost that expenditure in 2010-11. This would be reflected upon approval of the budget at a \$700,000 level for the 2012-13 purpose. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, thanks again for that explanation. I didn't realize we were talking about different categories there. We have a new category here which is now NT Energy core funding for staff. I think I understand now. Again, a substantial drop from \$1.25 million and, plus, \$4.75 million in the past. This year \$700,000 is the replacement figure.

Just quickly in my head, we are going from \$6 million down to \$700,000. Again, it is quite a drop and at a time – at the risk of repeating myself over departments – when energy issues and cost of living are indeed the issue of the day as well as economic development, which this is the biggest factor in supporting.

I know we have mines that are being considered under environmental review for hydroelectricity. We have grids in the NWT that we would like to see tied

together. We have communities that are not – they are currently on diesel energy – that have had substantive feasibility work done, who are hollering for stabilized and reduced power prices, especially in the face of the 30 percent increase, that is, plus it is proposed now over the next few years. Some decisions have been made and choices have been made. I think I am not very comfortable with those choices, given that this has been repeatedly identified as a major issue for us.

I look forward to further discussion on this page. I think we did a deferral in ENR; we could do another one here. I think the issues are closely tied together, and should there be a proposal to defer this page, I certainly would support that proposal. I look forward to further discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. More of a comment, unless the Minister would like to reply to that one.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand what the Member is getting at and I appreciate his point of view. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): On the floor I have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the point is that in terms of energy and in terms of what's been proposed in terms of the public consultation in terms of looking at the Power Corporation, I can't help but sense the plight of consumers and their concern because of the increased costs of energy that we provide to our communities. I think as a responsible government we need to ensure that we create options for our consumers. I think the initiatives in terms of some of the alternative energy programs that this government has undertaken is good and I think it's a good step. There's nothing really stopping us from trying to go all the way to create at least some initiatives that are very friendly. Like today, I think one of the key initiatives that have been clearly supported is the biomass initiative, and the news indicated that it's doable at the community level. Communities can have plans of processing pellets so that they have an alternative to provide heat to their houses and businesses.

On one hand we tried to create business opportunities and make it a very conducive climate for business to operate, and to try and invigorate the economy we need to be mindful that we don't constrain at least the business sector and the people that create jobs and opportunities. We need to ensure that they have a liaison, some alternatives in terms of energy sources.

So, clearly, energy is something that I would think we'd place priority on and ensure that we create some alternatives. I think the public would expect us to do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's comments. There is a correlation there with the cost of energy and developing the economy and whether or not businesses have that atmosphere or the environment to succeed in. Utility costs are something that we need to pay attention to certainly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Mr. Nadli. Thanks. Moving on to questions I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question for the Minister. I know the Minister sits with the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee. Is that true?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, it's the Ministerial Energy and Coordinating Committee and Climate Change. Yes, climate change is included in there.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Did they release an NWT energy report in the 16th that's going to be looked at in the 17th?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, in the 16th Assembly that was released by the 16th Assembly by the Government of the Northwest Territories, facilitated through the former MECC. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. This Assembly, this MECC plus the climate change added onto the name now, are they going to look at renewing this Energy Plan?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, that includes \$150,000 for the renewal of the NWT Energy Plan coming for the 17th Assembly. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: We've been talking on this side about the different initiatives or projects. These will then look at the GNWT's priorities and beyond, I guess, forever. So this new report will then undertake this major initiative to explain to us what the priorities are in light of what we've been hearing today and the last couple of months.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Energy Plan will be developed in conjunction with Regular Members and with an effort to look at projects around the Northwest Territories, and where we can move the development of energy in our territory over the next three and a half years. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I want to switch gears now a little bit here with the NWT Hydro Strategy. The Minister is overseeing this Hydro Strategy also?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, again through MECC and through NT Energy. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Can the Minister tell me, when they're involved in the NWT Hydro Strategy, are they going to be doing various types of baseline data gathering, assessments and doing this for the whole Northwest Territories to indicate where the hydro potential areas are? Like had been mentioned earlier, they've done some work in Whati and Lutselk'e and Bear River, and I want to show where the other areas are. Will this information that they're collecting all be wrapped up into a Hydro Strategy? I make the assumption on the presumption that the dollars will be on target to say well, this is the area that people need to develop further, hence my question on when are they going to start construction on the Bear River dam.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The work continues toward the Hydro Strategy through the NT Energy Group and the staff that are there, and that work will continue. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: This Hydro Strategy. What's the end result, what's the objective? What is the objective of this whole Hydro Strategy? We have a natural gas shortage in Inuvik; Norman Wells is turning the taps off. At the same time, they're also going for new energy there. We also want hydro in our area. So we're talking about south of here, Fort Smith area, they've got some good power in the Taltson, Whati. So there are lots of areas that you can use. So where are we going with this Hydro Strategy? What is the end result so in a year or two years we can say, well, this is what we have for the Northwest Territories. We know we've got a lot of power, but where is our power being harnessed here?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The end result or the end goal of a Hydro Strategy would be to, first of all, lessen our reliance on fossil fuel in the territory. It would also provide some economic activity across the territory, reduce greenhouse gas emissions tremendously and it's a much more environmentally sound energy source. That would be the end goal of a Hydro Strategy, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. The question I had earlier with the Minister on the NWT Hydro Strategy was on gathering the baseline data required to look at future hydro potential in areas and sites. I wanted to ask the Minister one specific question. For example, the baseline data for fish on the Bear River, have they figured out the types of impact if you put a dam on the Bear River what will the impact be on fish there? I certainly like my fish on the other end of the river here and a lot of people have their fish nets there. I want to know what they have figured out on the impacts of fish.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Obviously, protecting the environment is first and foremost, but the work that the Member talks about would be included in the work that the group at NT Energy Corporation will

be carrying out. That's where that type of work will be taking place.

MR. YAKELEYA: I want to ask the Minister, when they look at the hydro, especially in our area, in our land claim we have a clause in there that states the alteration of the quality and quantity of our water system is not to be severely impacted by that. I guess that's a tricky question. If we are proposing and we want to have it on the Bear River, how do we work with that clause in our agreement that we will not see a change in the quality or the quantity of the water levels and source of the water? I guess that's where the Minister talked about working with the Aboriginal governments to see how we can work this issue through so that we can get good power, cheap power, and reliable, clean energy power in our communities.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I thank the Member for that question. It just reinforces what we're trying to do here is very complex. In the situation in the Sahtu we need to find a suitable fix for the Bear River. Yes, we have to respect the language in the land claim, certainly a solution there. Again, I mentioned earlier meeting with the new chief and the president of the land corporation. There are solutions out there; we just haven't found the right one. Perhaps this new one they've brought to our attention is something, I know they're excited about it, maybe that's going to be the remedy there and the way forward. We will continue to work, and work with the community and the people in the Sahtu to develop that resource.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Yakeleya. I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up on a question. This department is the lead on energy planning and policy development. I know with respect to the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee, the old one, the Minister of ITI was the chair of that committee. That was a good fit. I understand now that the Premier has retained the ministerial mandate for new energy initiatives and yet this department is doing all the planning. I'm wondering how the mechanics of that works and how do those coordinate. Who is the chair of the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee on Climate Change? Is it the ITI Minister or our lead Minister on new energy initiatives? Where do the divisions of authority fall?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, in the last government the Minister of ITI did serve as the chair. In this government the Premier will serve as the chair of the MECC in his role as Minister responsible for new energy initiatives. The Minister of Transportation will also sit on the committee as infrastructure is affected by climate change. The Department of ITI energy planning

division will continue to provide support to the committee and coordinate government-wide energy initiatives. That's the way that we have it set up. All Ministers that are involved in MECC are working to help coordinate our efforts government wide and I believe we will be doing just that.

MR. BROMLEY: Just again for clarity, does the Minister propose new energy initiatives to committee or to the Ministerial Energy and Climate Change Coordinating Committee?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The MECC is a committee of Cabinet so those would first be proposed there, as is the way business is conducted here, would filter through the committee system that we have set up here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bromley. Page 12-21, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, energy, operations expenditure summary, \$1.619 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Page 12-22 and page 12-23, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, energy, grants and contributions, contributions, \$1 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just for clarification, Mr. Chairman, the regional hydro renewable energy solutions funding related to ongoing work, is funding ongoing work with the Aboriginal organizations? He has \$100,000 here. Is that going to be divvied up between the Tlicho, Sahtu and Akaitcho? Is that correct?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That funding will be going to projects in those three areas. It hasn't been resourced yet. We're not sure how that will be broken down yet, but it will go to the three that are cited there.

MR. YAKELEYA: When I heard earlier your deputy minister say that \$100,000 going for, that was making reference to the Bear River, now I see a little further Tlicho and Akaitcho. I guess I'm just wondering here how it's going to be divvied up or how they're going to administer it. I hope all three regions will have an opportunity to use this money for that year. Is it scheduled for that year? Not two regions are left out or one region is left out for whatever reason. I just want to make my comments and concerns known to the Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mostly a note to the Minister. Page 12-22 and page 12-23, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, energy, grants and contributions, contributions, \$1 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-24, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, energy, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-27, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, tourism and parks, operations expenditure summary, \$11.172 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I heard on the radio and I also heard here in the House about the Aboriginal tourism strategy and the council that you formed and what you've asked this Aboriginal tourism strategy to do. I want to ask the Minister through the life of this government is this tourism council now set for the next three or four years.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, it is, Mr. Chairman. In July 2011 the Minister of ITI appointed several Members to that committee.

MR. YAKELEYA: Certainly, you have my support, Mr. Minister and staff, to see how this tourism is supported and funded by our government to promote. I understand the Olympics certainly gave a boost to the Northwest Territories with our venue there. Hopefully, it would spring from there to do other initiatives that are unique, especially to the culture of the people of the Northwest Territories. I believe that this tourism, this specific Aboriginal Tourism Initiative Strategy, is heading in that direction.

Certainly, I do know that our regions are sometimes supported by all-weather roads and some are not by this transportation system. We have different challenges. How is the Minister going to work with the ones that are mostly fly-in and weather sometimes plays a part of things that can happen in some of our communities? Sometimes planes don't fly all the time when the weather's bad. A lot of our communities are fly-in like Deline and Colville Lake and Fort Good Hope, even Tulita. For the communities up the coast. I'll wait for a briefing with the Minister for more detail. This is something that the Minister and his staff have been aware of.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council is an important step for us. We will be looking to review the suggestions from the Aboriginal Tourism Forum. It's going to go through the advisory council and then we will be able to plan and develop and implement an Aboriginal tourism strategy here in the NWT. So it's exciting for us to be moving forward with this, and what we're hearing out there is that travellers want a real experiential type of trip. They want to be immersed in culture and they want to learn something when they're here. We've got lots of

culture. We've got lots of history. Unique communities. I believe it was Mr. Nadli who said earlier that there are lots of opportunities here and I think he was right on the money when he said that. As we work toward the development of this Aboriginal tourism strategy, I think it will pay huge dividends for many of our communities here in the NWT.

MR. YAKELEYA: One of the things I look at, especially when we have potential such as many parks and I want to talk about my favourite one is the proposed Doi T'oh Territorial Park on the Canol Heritage Trail. One of the things we looked at was skill development with our leaders. I know it's taken some time. I hope the Minister has some initiatives that will look at skills development with our young people. Maybe junior park rangers or junior guides in the park that will give some training to some of the younger people. I'm hoping that, I know our park is not quite turned over to the territorial jurisdiction. Hopefully, in the future, once that is done, there is some progression and plans to put together plans on a junior parks training program in the North for some of our young people that are entering into post-secondary school, coming in out of high school or in Grade 11 or Grade 12. Something that will show good potential that they will be good people, good ambassadors for our park.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Member is correct; we have to look at opportunities for people to get involved in the tourism industry here in the Northwest Territories, especially in small communities, opportunities for young people to get involved, whether it's as guides or servers or working the front desk at a hotel. It's all in the hospitality industry and helps the tourism industry here in the Northwest Territories. Any opportunity to get some training for young people is something we should always be looking toward.

On the development of Doi T'oh Territorial Park, we are seeing some work continuing on remediation of the Canol Heritage Trail and that has been initiated by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development through its contaminants and remediation division. This is a multimillion dollar process involving assessment and remediation of waste sites along the trail, and ITI has provided AANDC with potential locations within the proposed parklands along the trail for sites of potential human use such as campgrounds, emergency shelters and river crossings. It is a work in progress, but we continue to move forward on the development of that park.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just closing on this Canol and this...(inaudible)...proposed territorial park, his department has been very good with me and good with the people also, in terms of moving this along. It's just a slow, slow process and sometimes very

frustrating because a lot of government hands are in it and take the assessment. Even the previous ITI Minister, I have been at him in getting this project on the go. It's a beautiful area and I know it's something that I'd like to see in the jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories, but you don't want to take a beautiful park that has a lot of liabilities without having the federal government or even the U.S. Army saying, well, we're responsible for cleaning up this area here. I know that's going to put us in a lot of debt here. I understand that. Just talking about the Canol Park, my feet are sore from how many years I've been walking on that trail. My feet get really sore now.

But I want to say to the government that they've been very good in this area here. There is some infrastructure that I know the Minister has talked about, and his staff have been talking about wayside parks in the community and in the Sahtu. For infrastructure and programming and that and training and planning, we would like to see some of the initiatives. Actually, your superintendent actually talked to me about this, which I thought was good. He said, well, let's put a park in some of the communities. That is something I've been waiting for a long time for your superintendent to say that to me. Let's start doing it. It's showing me the initiative that you're getting the message out. I look forward to seeing where your staff could start putting some initiatives like this to the community and saying we want to put a park in there, tell us what kind. Let's just start on a small scale. I don't know if that's something that's correct that I should be saying here, but it's something that I'd like to see in here and I hope that it's in your budget planning for infrastructure and small capital planning, or how you go about it, because I know capital planning comes in the fall time. I just want to say that to the Minister. He's got some pretty good staff in the Sahtu and they've been doing some work on the Canol and doing some wayside park planning...(inaudible)...stages, so I'm going to leave it at that. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I really do appreciate the Member's support for the development of that territorial park and his strong advocacy for the establishment, it isn't lost on us. In fact, it's probably the reason why it continues to move forward. Again, I wanted to thank him for his support and his advocacy for that park. I know the beauty firsthand. I had the opportunity to travel into that area with the Member, and it is a beautiful area. At some point in time we will have a territorial park there, I'm sure.

I think that was about it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Page 12-27, activity summary, tourism and parks, operations expenditure summary, \$11.172 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 12-28, activity summary, tourism and parks, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$3.847 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just wondering why we reduced the support for sport hunter outfitter marketing from \$600,000 to \$300,000 this year. Clearly, the need is ongoing and I imagine things are getting more stressed as time goes by. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was at \$600,000. It was set to lapse and we did our best to come up with \$300,000. It was set to go away entirely. It's a number, even at \$300,000 we're not sure how much longer we can continue to put that funding on the table, and that was our best effort on getting money into that.

MR. BROMLEY: I did express my appreciation and support for that amount earlier in my general remarks. However, would the Minister agree that we were less than candid in our interactions with the outfitters, given the caribou situation, and they ended up getting out on a limb because of that poor communication?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We've always been upfront with the funding, but I'm not sure if the Member was referencing something else previous to my tenure as Minister of ITI.

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, I was referring to during the 16th Assembly when the caribou did crash and we were, as a government, less than candid leaving the outfitters with commitments that they obviously couldn't fulfill given the situation. We knew it. They didn't.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I shouldn't comment on that because it was in the last government, but I think what we have to do is look forward. We have to take the positives out of this. We have identified \$300,000 for that Sport Hunt Marketing Initiative. We need to work collectively. There's going to be another count of caribou, and if the stars align correctly, maybe there will be some tags at some point in time. I think we just need to continue to move toward that and work with ENR and hopefully that can happen. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I agree with the Minister. I think that's the right attitude and I do appreciate that the department did retain some support for the outfitters. My hope is, as the Minister says, if the tags don't materialize next year, then this support is there again to help tide them over so they can take advantage when the tags do return, and we're all hoping that's very soon. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. More of a comment to a good question. Page 12-28, activity summary, tourism and parks, grants and contributions, contributions, \$3.847 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 12-29, information item, tourism and parks, active positions. Any questions? Page 12-31, activity summary, economic diversification and business support, operations expenditure summary, \$22.222 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to first ask about the NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation. I think there have been discussions about the need for some consolidation of services and some more efficiency within that agency. I'm wondering if the Minister can tell me what's happening on that front. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct; there is a program review being conducted by the program review office of the GNWT at the BDIC. I sat through almost two days of strategic planning with the BDIC, back a couple of months ago, and they are interested in seeing things move forward so that the suite of business services and programs to residents and businesses here in the NWT is streamlined. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that further information. Will that be coming to committee, then, and what does it look like the time frame is on that? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Chair, yes, the review should be complete by this fall. We certainly would look forward to at the earliest opportunity this fall to get that information before Members. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, thanks to the Minister for those remarks. I look forward to that program review office report.

The department and this division specifically is also the lead on trade matters. I know we are hosting the Agreement on Internal Trade, I believe it is. The GNWT is hosting this year. Is the Minister committed to retaining support for local businesses over outside businesses outside the Northwest Territories coming in and taking over from local businesses?

The example I use is, for example, an undertaking service is something that it takes a certain population to develop, and when one does develop, we obviously want to keep it. It would be run by people that know us and our families in a way that helps with that whole process. It has a lot of local benefits over an external company coming in from afar. That is an example.

We know that in that field the corporations are getting bigger and bigger and starting to roll over local providers of this sort of service. That is just by way of an example. Can I get assurance that the Minister is protecting our local businesses, especially our small ones? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Chair, yes, we are set to host the meeting next week. We have had to re-evaluate how those meetings would take place. It is going to be a conference call with other Ministers from around the country and the federal government as well.

In regard to the Member's comments about allowing international companies to come in and take business away from local businesses, I think we have a few things we can look to to protect us from that happening. Of course, there is the Business Incentive Policy here in the NWT. There are regional economic measures. There are Aboriginal economic programs. I believe those will protect businesses here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, I think the Minister probably meant national corporations, if this is the internal trade. It just has to do with Canada. I was meaning companies external to the Northwest Territories, but Canadian or other companies within Canada that more and more seem to be Americans these days under the Conservative government, but I was referring to national companies. If I can just get confirmation on that. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Mr. Chair, that is correct. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, thanks for that confirmation. Thanks for the Minister's assurances there on protection of local businesses in the Northwest Territories.

The other one we know is that the Minister is spending time in Ottawa with the federal government and other provincial-territorial governments negotiating the European and Free Trade Agreement, so-called free trade. There is no such thing but that is what they seem to call it, and negotiating on behalf of our municipalities because, in this particular so-called Free Trade Agreement, corporations are always digging to get access further and further and now they are trying to get access to our municipalities and eventually they will be in our homes. They already are in some ways. They are driven in this way and want access at every level, while protecting the naturally confidential aspects of this demanding and non-transparent process. Has the Minister managed to consult with our municipalities to get their input towards the negotiations on the European Free Trade Agreement in a way that doesn't defy this demand for confidentiality and non-transparency? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Chair, first of all, I believe it is good that the Northwest Territories is at the table to protect our interests. We are included, not excluded, in these discussions. I want to put that out there first and foremost.

In regard to municipalities, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities had expressed concerns over any international agreement that would be binding upon municipalities and the tendering or procurement practices. The FCM suggested that the FCM be included and CETA at discussions. The FCM has also called on all provincial and territorial municipality associations to present resolutions to that effect to the respective provincial or territorial governments. The NWTAC made a subsequent request to all their member municipalities. A subsequent CETA resolution was received and discussed at the NWTAC general meeting which took place in Norman Wells a couple of weeks ago. ITI staff were there to make a presentation with regard to CETA and any possible impacts it may have on NWT municipalities. Subsequently, a resolution was carried at the AGM within the NWTAC top priority category that urges the GNWT to exempt communities from the CETA. The formal NWTAC resolution package is expected to be provided to the GNWT for a response in the near future. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: That is excellent news. Was that process initiated by this government? Did it come from municipalities independently? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Chair, it was a joint effort. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Excellent. Thank you for that comment. What is the situation with Nunavut? Does the Minister know what Nunavut's stance is on this Free Trade Agreement? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Not today, Mr. Chair, but perhaps next week. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. I would ask the Member to maybe refrain from asking more questions on Northwest Territories issues. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may just be allowed to complete the thought and relieve you of that concern, I think it is important that we are low on population in the North. It is useful to get together with our sister territories and develop common positions. I believe I have heard the Premier say that a number of times. I know that the Minister, too, agrees with that. I would have thought that we would have been in consultation with our sister territories. Are we in consultation with any of our sister territories? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Mr. Chair, when it comes to the European Union Agreement that is currently being

negotiated between the federal government and the European Union, as the Minister has indicated, provincial and territorial parties are there. We have been at the officials' level in discussions with our counterparts. However, it is a complex process. Due to the confidentiality of not really pursue chairing of the confidential positions by the various parties and as the Minister has indicated, this is an evolving negotiation, so it would be hard to define the exact position of one of those parties at any given point. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bromley, your time is up. If you want to ask more questions, I will ask again here. Page 12-31, activity summary, economic diversification, business support, operations expenditure summary, \$22.222 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I may, just to conclude that discussion; I appreciate this opportunity. Obviously, that is exactly the concern. It is a very well designed process to be totally non-transparent and try and reduce the communications and transparency. I am glad to hear the work the Minister is doing on this with the municipalities. I hope he will take these concerns to those meetings. I hope he also expresses concern about the lack of transparency, such as not being able to talk to our sister territories because of concerns about confidentiality. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's comments and they're duly noted. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll move on to Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to ask the Minister on the impacts of closing and opening of mines and the oilfields and closing down. Is the Minister working on these things that we can have within our reading material? For example, Selwyn-Chihong is downscaling their mining production. This has some impacts in the Sahtu because the road comes through the Northwest Territories when they want to take out the minerals to market. Is there something that the Minister is working in the North?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I need a little bit more clarification from the Member in terms of what exactly he wants to know we're working on.

We know the status at any one time of the various projects that are underway across the Northwest Territories in the area of development and

advancement. If there's one in particular he wants an update on, we can provide that, but I'm not sure if he's looking for a comprehensive view of all the projects that are ongoing or how that works. So maybe I'll just go back to the Member for clarification on what he's looking for. I'd be happy to provide it again.

MR. YAKELEYA: Not specifically any type of project. I think I'm just looking at the overall photo of the economic model the government is working on. I know we talked about some mines here are closing down. We know their lifespan. Imperial Oil, that pipeline they say every 10 or 15 years, ever since I was young, it will be done in 20 or it should be done in 10 years. Mr. Chair, I'm over 50 years old and that pipeline is still running and we keep saying 10 years and 20 years, but nothing yet. So is there any type of... I guess what I'm looking for is some type of economic model that shows the impacts.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there is. What I might suggest, though, is at some point in time we can look at mining and get in front of the standing committee and the Regular Members just to give you an update on where projects are at. In the past six months I've been at the Cordilleran Round-up in Vancouver and also to PDAC with some of the Regular Members, as well, and I'd be more than happy to give Regular Members an update on the advancement of mining projects around the territory. We've also got the Mineral Development Strategy, which we're going to pursue; also the Economic Development Strategy. So there are a lot of exciting things happening and I think if the Members want an update on where projects are at, we'd be more than happy to sit down with the committee to go over what those prospects are.

Also on the other side of that, the prospects in the area of petroleum development in the territory is an exciting opportunity, as well, and I'd be more than happy to provide that to the Members as well. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I'll stay tuned until we get to the EDI meeting when the Minister has that type of information coming forward.

The question I have now for the Minister is one I spoke to earlier, about the strong support of I have for the Minister to support our local fur trading program, Take a Kid Trapping program, and the amount of support the communities have seen in Colville Lake and some of the smaller communities. This program is very valuable, especially in the lifestyle. So I want to just give more of a comment and tell the Minister that we support it and we look forward to this program. It's doing a lot of good for our kids. It's showing them that this government is supporting their program. So that's what I wanted to say to the Minister.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Again, I appreciate the Member's support. He's shown unwavering support for the traditional economy since the time that I've been a Member. We're happy at ITI to advance the traditional economy through programs like Take a Kid Trapping and the CHAP program. We've seen unprecedented growth in fur prices. Just for example, beaver up 111 percent, mink up 36 percent, muskrat up 84 percent. There's tremendous opportunity for trappers around the Northwest Territories. We've doubled the grubstake and money that we can offer upfront to trappers in the territory. We've doubled the amount through the CHAP program, the Community Harvesters Assistance Program. We're doing what we can to encourage people to get involved in the traditional economy through trapping and it's been very successful.

As I mentioned earlier, the Ministers I've spoken to in the Yukon certainly like the program that I told them about while I was there and would certainly like to have programs like we have here in the NWT in the Yukon when it comes to trapping. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 12-31, activity summary, economic diversification and business support, operations expenditure summary, \$22.222 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Okay. Page 12-32, activity summary, economic diversification and business support, grants and contributions, grants, \$625,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Contributions, total contributions, \$13.043 million, total grants and contributions. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to comment briefly on the SEED program and the needs of the film industry. There's been some work done to enhance support for the film industry and I think it's been greatly appreciated, but there still seems to be a lot of frustration in that industry for the lack of the kind of support that they need.

I know this Minister supports the film industry. The 16th Assembly did some work in that area, but as the Minister knows, there is huge potential for business development here and for economic benefits that roll through the Northwest Territories and we have some really wonderful examples of successes. Often, though, they have to be based outside of the Northwest Territories and they still remain few in number, whereas we have a lot of talented artists that want to get better programs on the ground. Is there anything this Minister is contemplating to respond to that ongoing

expressed need and frustration for the film industry? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's comments. I do certainly support the advancement of the film industry here in the Northwest Territories and take any and every opportunity to promote the shows that have been filmed here when I am in other jurisdictions. When I was in Whitehorse, this is a competitive industry and certainly was impressed with what they had to offer in the Yukon.

Going forward I think it's very important that as the Minister I've worked with the Regular Members to develop and advance what we have to offer here in the Northwest Territories. So as we move through the summer and then get into business plans in the fall, I'm really looking forward to sitting down and discussing some options for us to advance the film industry here in the Northwest Territories and that's going to happen by working with the Regular Members.

MR. BROMLEY: That's all, thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Moving on to questions, we have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make quick comments. The Great Northern Arts Festival, it's \$25,000 last couple years and that's what they're getting this year. I just wanted to ask the Minister if that's a fixed contribution agreement with the society or is it just what this government is allocating to them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In addition to SEED it's one specific contribution.

MR. MOSES: I'm not sure how much SEED money the society goes after, but just due to the increased costs of flying that we've been seeing lately, the increase to accommodations, the low number of tourism in the community of Inuvik, I think this would be a good opportunity to help our artists out in the Northwest Territories. Even partner territories, as they come up and showcase their artists, their talents, and the work that they do. It will also bring increased money to the economy of Inuvik. It also would create income for some of our artists. Would the Minister be willing to entertain an increase in the contribution of that \$25,000 in future years?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The \$25,000 that's there goes directly to helping to organize the event. The various artists that display their wares at the arts festival would access funding through the SEED program. Whether or not the Great Northern Arts Festival receives anything more than the \$25,000,

again that is something I would be willing to sit down with Members and discuss.

MR. MOSES: I just appreciate the comments and the willingness to sit down with regard to the contribution. We'll just take that further and when I go back I'll have a meeting with the society and get a little bit more information to them. Thanks for the comments and the answers.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. More of a comment. Moving on to questions, I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page 34 the agricultural development infrastructure. I think this is a very important contribution and I'm wondering what sort of monitoring the department is doing in terms of our food security and progress on this initiative. I think we're starting to realize that this is an important industry and needs our support and has a lot of potential for meeting our needs in a way that also provides northern jobs and so on. If I could just get some idea of how we keep our finger on the agricultural pulse.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I certainly share the Member's enthusiasm when it comes to growing – pardon the pun – our agricultural industry here in the Northwest Territories and supporting the local production of fish and meats. Very important for us here in the Northwest Territories.

We've had some real opportunity I think through the Growing Forward Program funding that's come to us from the federal government to advance initiatives around the Northwest Territories. We've got the Small Scale Foods Program in northern agri-foods, inter-settlement trade, traditional harvesting and commercial wildlife. Also, I've seen it first hand when I travelled to the Sahtu and was on a tour with Doug Whiteman in the Sahtu, a gentleman who grows tons of potatoes in Norman Wells and raises chickens. He also processes wild meat at a facility in Norman Wells. It was very, very impressive. That type of ingenuity and hard work, if it could make its way into a number of other communities around the Northwest Territories, I think that would really help on the cost of food in some of our smaller communities.

When I was in Fort Simpson just the other day with Mr. Menicoche, we were staying at the same bed and breakfast as two young ladies who were working for ITI as part of the Community Gardens Initiative and they were on their way to Wrigley to plant a garden for the community. It's efforts like that that I think will make a real difference. On the food security issue, I'll go to Deputy Minister Vician just for an update on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In addition to the Minister's comments, we are continuing to work closely through these contribution arrangements to ensure there are elements of food security built into the programs that a number of our operators are bringing forward across the North. We're also working with the federal government through the Growing Forward Program which does require oversight with regard to how our food production standards are being brought forward.

For the benefit of committee, we've had a very successful year in 2011-2012 with full disbursement of the contribution funds that you note on 12-34 and anticipate fully subscribed allocation that deals with all regions of the territory and all types of food supply, fish, poultry, reindeer, garden produce, and dealing with that whole spectrum. It's very exciting and very much a very valuable program of the department, and we're expecting as much success this year by the enthusiasm we're already hearing this month.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: It's clear that I have lots of colleagues that share your enthusiasm for this real high potential area. I agree that there are a lot of amazing and wonderful entrepreneurs out there. I noted that they also play a big role in the communities for sharing their expertise. They're all very much outgoing that way and are real nodes and worthy of our support. I'm very glad to hear that this is fully supported.

I guess maybe just to move on here. Are these \$300,000 essentially federal dollars? Are those the going forward or is that in addition to that? I'm wondering what that amount would be.

I'm also – just to get my questions in all together here – wondering if there's been success on the work to get in place a mushroom enterprise, the guidelines for mushroom enterprises in terms of permits and so on. Where we're at on that. I believe work was started in the 16th Assembly on that and if we do have a big fire year, and we had some fires, last year there could be again hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of mushrooms that would be exported from the NWT, or transported at any rate. Last time most of the people benefitting were from outside the NWT. We want to capture that in the North as well.

My final one is with regard to the fish program of support. I know my colleague from Hay River South had a suggestion. I'd love to see local people taking advantage of this industry and I wonder if we have a mentorship support program in the fishing industry. Something that allows young people to get out with the fishermen, experience the program,

even on a short-term basis to help solicit interest in that industry.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll go to Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll speak first to the Member's question with regard to the funding that's reflected on page 12-34 on the agricultural and meat and fish programming. Those funds are GNWT budget allocations. They are stand-alone. So that's the GNWT making that investment. They're used as part of the leverage to draw – and if you refer to page 12-38 there's \$369,000 from Growing Forward Program, which is what we call a vote 4/5, work on behalf of others. That's the federal contribution proposed for this year under Growing Forward Program, which sunsets, I should mention at this point, March 31, 2013. We use the leverage to show our equity share and these two programs continue on.

If I may on the fishing side, we continue to support the Fishermen's Federation in the Northwest Territories through a number of programs. Those programs help the operators deal with capital ongoing support programs. We don't have a specific mentorship program with the FPMC, Great Slave Lake fishery; however, we know a number of the operators are working with young people, trying to encourage them to take on the lifestyle, to work on the boats for the seasons and in the winter. It's an ongoing effort and obviously a challenge not just uniquely here. It's everywhere trying to continue the labour market in this fishery area.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Vician. I believe there's also a question on mushroom farming as well. We'll move to Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a comment on the idea that the Member had in the area of mushrooms. If it is a bad fire year and there is an opportunity there to harvest mushrooms, that is a great business opportunity and could be a business opportunity for a number of communities around the Northwest Territories. If there are interested parties in those communities that want to come forward and apply for some of the funding that we have at ITI, we'd really like to see that happen. Back in 2011-2012 Arctic Morels Canada had gotten some funding from us. A small amount of funding, but I think there would be opportunities there and I think that it's good that the Member brought that up, because it's an area that often gets overlooked and we could see some communities harvesting mushrooms and we'd love to help them do that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: That's great. I appreciate the Minister's and the deputy minister's remarks there. I think there might be a need for some coordination

with ENR, which I would appreciate if the Minister would take that on.

Just in terms of the mentorship, it's so important, I think, to get young people exposed to these opportunities at a time when they can get turned on to different industries. If there was a possibility, I would appreciate if the Minister would keep his eye open for a potential to support some sort of mentorship program to get young people exposed to that possibility. That's all I had, just a comment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley, for that comment. Members, we're on page 12-32, page 12-33 and page 12-34. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to ask a question to the Minister on the support for commercial harvesting and processing and marketing fish and meat in the Territories. We have heard it on the news and my colleague Jane Groenewegen has talked about it.

I want to ask the Minister, we have world-class fishing here in Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake and other areas in the North here. We have some money here allocated to the marketing of fish and the meat. We heard from the news report the fishermen's situation. We also heard from our colleague here. I want to ask the Minister if we are making headway on this initiative here. I'd certainly like to see some of our foods in the stores or even again in our institutions here. Especially with the fish and the market and the meat.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a clarification. Did the Member want me to comment on the \$225,000 to commercial fisheries or is he talking about the commercial harvest processing and marketing of fish and meat, the \$550,000 on page 12-34? I just wanted to get some clarification.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I'll have the Member respond to that. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$550,000.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$550,000 is for marketing of fish and meat in the NWT. We've seen some of that money get spread around the Northwest Territories into all five regions. I can get a breakdown for the Member if he likes. It's the promotion and support of commercial harvesting, processing and marketing of fish and meat in the NWT. It will increase the availability of locally produced and healthy food in NWT communities. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to the Minister providing that to me sometime. I certainly appreciate that. I want to ask about this, because at the Grey Goose Lodge in Deline we have a world-class lake there with fish and they don't really serve the Great Bear Lake trout at the restaurant. We have to go to the store and buy Captain Highliner's cod fish and chips there. Why are we not having the fish from Great Bear Lake served at that lodge or wherever? Why do they have to go to the Northern Store to buy Captain Highliner's cod fish? There's something wrong there.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I agree with the Member; there is something wrong with that. I've had trout from Great Bear Lake and I can attest to that. That's some of the best trout you'll ever eat.

In the last fiscal year, '11-12, we provided through the program just \$28,000 to the Deline Land Corporation for a feasibility study on meat and fish processing in the community, and also to the Deline Land Corporation \$120,000 for the construction of a meat and fish processing plant. So we've gotten some of that money out the door and we're hoping it will make a difference and we'll get some of that Great Bear trout into some homes in the communities in the Sahtu and around the territory. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Again, committee, pages 12-32, 12-33 and 12-34. Economic diversification and business support, activity summary, grants and contributions, grants, \$625,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Contributions, total contributions, \$13,043, total grants and contributions, \$13.686 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 12-35, information item, economic diversification and business support, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 12-36, information item, least commitments, infrastructure. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 12-37, information item, Fur Marketing Service Revolving Fund. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Pages 12-38 and 12-39. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Under page 12-37, Mr. Chair, the repayment of the fur account loan. I see we're in the bracket here. There's \$1.1 million. Why is that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I had a similar question on this page when I was going through with the folks from ITI, but we'll allow Ms. Magrum to answer the question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Ms. Magrum.

MS. MAGRUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When a trapper brings their fur into the ENR office, they're provided an advance payment on that fur. After the fur sale, that fur advance is repaid to the department. That \$1.1 million in brackets is the repayment of the fur advance. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Ms. Magrum. Mr. Yakeleya. Pages 12-38 and 12-39, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Due to the deferral, committee, on page 12-17, does the committee agree that we will defer the final consideration of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, committee. I'd like to thank Minister Ramsay, Mr. Vician and Ms. Magrum for their time this evening. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he'll escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Okay, committee, moving on. We're going to be dealing with section 5 on NWT Housing Corporation. Does the Minister of the Housing Corporation have any opening comments?

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Please proceed, Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2012-13 Main Estimates for the NWT Housing Corporation. The main estimates propose a budget of \$113.209 million, an increase of 0.3 percent from the 2011-2012 Main Estimates.

The budget includes a contribution of \$65.458 million from the GNWT for 2012-2013. As Members are aware, one of the five priorities identified by the 17th Legislative Assembly was to address housing needs. Housing is a complex issue in many of our communities. There are significant differences in housing needs and challenges between our market and non-market communities, and there are needs along the entire housing continuum from homelessness to home ownership. Our approach to housing should strengthen self-reliance and support residents in meeting their own shelter needs, but also needs to recognize the importance of housing in supporting community sustainability, contributing to efforts to reduce poverty and to reflect the linkages between housing and education and health issues.

Of course, these challenges need to be addressed in the context of declining federal funding to support social housing in the Northwest Territories. Public housing continues to be the largest program offered by the NWT Housing Corp with approximately 2,400 units and planned expenditures of \$43.9 million in 2012-2013.

A number of actions are being taken in 2012-13 to improve public housing. The new rent scale will be implemented on July 1, 2012, and will make rents simpler, more predictable and fairer. This new rent scale also addresses a disincentive to work that has long been a standing concern.

In 2012-13 over \$15 million will be spent to improve the quality of our public housing stock. This will include 26 public housing replacements, 130 major retrofits and a variety of minor maintenance and improvement projects. These investments build on the \$141 million we have invested in public housing stock over the past six years.

The 2012-13 budget also contains a \$2.4 million forced growth investment to offset the increased utility costs related to public housing. While some successes have been achieved on the consumption side with the energy investments and investments in upgraded stock, these don't completely offset the rising costs for utilities. An additional \$700,000 has been identified to continue the energy upgrades on public housing during 2012-13.

Finally, the budget also contains an investment of \$511,000 to support the operating costs of 27 additional public housing units that have been added in Gameti, Wekweeti, Whati, Jean Marie River, Trout Lake and Nahanni Butte.

In support of home ownership in the Northwest Territories, the NWT Housing Corp will spend approximately \$10 million in 2012-13. A new emergency repair program called SAFE will be introduced and \$1 million has been allocated to support this program. SAFE provides support to low and modest income homeowners to address emergency repair situations like freeze-ups, heating

system failures and major electrical problems. Unlike other NWT Housing Corp repair programs, this program will be available at any time during the year. There will be a streamlined application process and the eligibility criteria will be broader than for most programs.

Changes will also be made to the CARE program during 2012-13. That will expand accessibility to the preventative maintenance activities for low-income homeowners. Overall, the CARE program will help about 300 homeowners complete repairs to their homes during 2012-13. In addition to the public housing program during 2012-13, the NWT will spend about \$5.9 million supporting other rental housing. This spending includes administration and maintenance associated with 117 market rentals, 335 households operating under our HELP and Supported Lease programs and 483 homes operated by community-based organizations.

This year we are also introducing the Transitional Rent Supplement Program. This Rent Supplement Program will provide financial support to reduce the affordability problems and core need among residents and market rentals. The Rent Supplement Program will provide clients with up to \$500 per month for a two-year period. The subsidy will be paid directly to landlords. This program will address a gap in the housing continuum, identified during the shelter policy review related to the high shelter costs for the working poor living in market rentals. We expect the \$1.2 million investment will provide assistance to approximately 175 households. Implementation will start in September and we are planning a quarterly phase-in to ensure continuous uptake.

Starting in 2012-13, the NWT Housing Corporation has taken over responsibility for the administration of the Homelessness Assistance Fund and the Small Community Homelessness Fund. These main estimates reflect the transfer of \$325,000 for these two programs from the Department of Health and Social Services. A homelessness coordinator will be added in 2012-13. In addition to being responsible for the administration of these two programs, this position will act as a focal point for the GNWT homelessness activities. The individual will work with federal funding agencies, community groups, and coordinate with other GNWT departments that support programs to address homelessness by chairing the GNWT Homelessness Committee.

Two additional priorities during 2012-13 will be to complete an evaluation of the two programs being transferred from Health and Social Services and work with smaller communities on homelessness activities. Work will also be done to continue advanced planning for the NWT Housing Corporation investments in Betty House, the

planned 30-unit transition home for women and children in Yellowknife.

In 2012-13, there will also be a number of other activities planned to help strengthen management of our housing program. For example, on April 1st, we introduced our new territorial housing system which is a centralized information management system that dramatically increases our capacity to monitor and manage our programs. This new system provides real time information on key indicators like waiting lists, rent collection and arrears and occupancy.

A new Maintenance Management Program will be developed during 2012-13. These systems lower the workload of our community partners, the local housing organizations and allow the NWT Housing Corporation to better support them. The main estimates also include increased capacity for training and workshops with LHO staff, and during this year, opportunities for bulk purchasing, will be examined to lower overall operating costs. A broad base examination will also be undertaken on the approach to the delivery of housing services at a community level. This will include looking at roles and responsibilities and a funding model for LHOs.

On the revenue side, as it was noted previously, our efforts to address housing needs are further challenged by the declining federal funding for operating social housing. As Members know, the GNWT will see reduced annual funding of \$2.1 million over the life of this Assembly as part of the ongoing declines that we will see all federal funding for operating social housing eliminated by 2037-38. For these main estimates, an investment of \$990,000 was made by the GNWT to offset the federal decline in 2012-13.

The other major revenue change relates to an additional investment of \$1 million made by the GNWT to offset the initial revenue decline expected with the implementation of the new public housing rent scale.

That concludes my opening remarks. At this time I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Committee members, you may notice you may have a few pages missing in your opening comments. Copies will be sent down to you shortly. Mr. McLeod, do you have any witnesses you would like to bring into the Chamber?

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you very much, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister McLeod, would you like to introduce your witnesses to the committee, please?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have with me to my right Mr. David Stewart, president and CEO of the NWT Housing Corporation; and to my left I have Mr. Jeff Anderson, vice-president of finance and infrastructure, NWT Housing Corporation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Stewart, Mr. Anderson, welcome back to the House. At this time we'd like to open committee to general comments. The floor is open for general comments. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have to say that I'm pleased with many of the moves that are taking place with the new approach to housing recently proposed and I'll be looking forward to chatting about some of the details.

I guess my first question would be on this year's financial approach. The \$700,000 additional dollars identified to continue the energy upgrade in public housing, how many upgrades would \$700,000 typically support for energy upgrades? How many houses could be upgraded for that amount? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. As we indicated, Mr. Bromley, we are going to do general comments collectively, so I'll let you continue if you like. The Minister will intend to correspond accordingly to each Member in one statement. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that reminder, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the SAFE program. I think that's a better approach than we've had in the past. When I've had occasion to work in small communities especially, I've noticed a real need for something like that. I'm glad to see the Minister come up with this solution. I hope he will be monitoring and doing evaluation on this. I think it could be a bit preventative in the long run. If that turns out to be the case, I think we want to be capturing that and maybe even bump up that investment towards lowering long-term costs.

The preventative maintenance, good program, I'm just going over the Minister's remarks that I do have in hand here. I think the Transitional Rent Supplement Program looks good. I believe the Minister said we have about \$900,000 – I'm going off recollection here – that we're having to divvy up for that we're not getting from CMHC this year and we're putting in about another \$1 million for the new rent scale. A question in that regard would be do we expect if there is improved success at collecting rent from this approach, that we would eventually see that amount decrease and start to have the program moved towards paying for itself more than it currently is.

In the new rent scale program, there is still some discussion to be had with regard to seniors' rent. I have had occasion to meet with seniors and I'm not getting the sense that they were satisfied with the degree of consultation that's been had on that. In the big picture, I do agree with seniors paying rent. But I want to be sure that those that need special recognition get it, especially in communities that have an extremely high cost of living or even the 70 or 80 or 90 dollars proposed might be significant.

I will just leave my general comments at that and I'll be interested to hearing a response from the Minister and any further comments from my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. General comments. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Housing Corporation, just in the short time I've been here, are just trying to set up some signposts in terms of a quick evolution. I think last fall we heard it quite clear, the overwhelming concerns about people in terms of trying to aspire at the end of the day to maintain a living in communities and, at the same time, become homeowners in their own home community. As a result, it was an ongoing effort in terms of trying to remedy the rental system to make it fairly equitable so people in communities found it at least doable at the community level, and trying to survive the high cost of living and the depressing job opportunities. People are challenged at that level.

So there was a level during the shelter review policy to try to change the system. As a result of that, we also had a moratorium in terms of evicting people. Now we have an effort in terms of our new rent scale.

I applaud the Housing Corporation for taking those steps, but I still feel there is still some contrast. At the end of the day, people that want to should be given an opportunity to own their own homes. We all live in almost like a market system. At the end of the day, you try to encourage people to buy their own homes. That's the way to go. That's how the Canadian system works.

The circumstances of the Northwest Territories are fairly unique. People are challenged at the local level to try to purchase their own homes. They have to rent. They don't have much choice.

One of the points I wanted to make is I drew up an example earlier. People who have lived in a house and rented for the past 30 or 40 years, raised their families in there, are still paying rent to this day. At some point would the department consider perhaps some creative options? They are fiscally challenged. If you are fiscally challenged, surely we should try to look for some solutions in terms of meeting the needs of people in delivering programs

and services. Perhaps we will have to look upon other people for their ideas. So be it.

There has to be some options of trying to encourage people to own their own homes. If people do own their own homes, of course they will have some responsibility of maintaining their house and in turn they will have a level of assurance that one of their basic needs is covered and they are free to move about in the community and become positive contributors to society in general.

Speaking of contrast, we still have some very stark contrasts in communities. People continue to go through the challenges of being evicted. But at the same time, we still have empty houses in the communities. It's something that perhaps the department has to consider, at least be aware. I mean, truly you must be aware. But it's just contrasting in some communities where people try to survive, try to measure up to paying their rent and at some point if they default, they face the ultimate consequence of being evicted, but then you see an empty house that's unoccupied and they have to make ends meet.

So those are just some points that I've kind of noticed. The point is that I think we have to try to be creative and have to try to at least inspire people to own their own homes and see if there are ways about how we could make it possible.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Moving in general comments, I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The comments I have, I could probably talk for two days on housing, but we only have a certain amount of time here. So I'm going to get right to the point.

The point is that we have a desperate need for good quality energy-efficient homes in our communities. We have people in our homes who are living in houses that were built in the late '70s, '80s that need attention in terms of the energy retrofits. I have gone to communities in the last month, during the winter, and the houses are not fit for the communities because they're shifting in the ground and that, and the doors are not shutting properly. The furnaces are turned right up. Upstairs it's hot, but downstairs it's just cold. The floors are in pretty bad shape. These are some of the older units. So, Mr. Chair, the Minister and his staff are doing a lot of catch-up on a lot of these units.

The federal funding he talked about is declining. We are in a situation where the federal government is going to cut us off from housing, social housing in 2038. Yet we have a lot of our people that depend on these units. There are a number of people in the tons of e-mails here that show that they do not qualify for the programs. You either make too much or you make too little. You're damned if you do and damned if you don't kind of situation with the people. So we have empty units in our

communities. The Minister knows about this. I've taken Minister Beaulieu and Minister Abernethy to Colville Lake and we have seen those empty units in Colville Lake for the last three years. Nobody can apply for them. Same with in Deline. The Minister has provided me with some information and I appreciate it. There's been 23 units that are under repair. I've gone back there the last month and these units are still sitting empty and people are still living with other people for over a year.

So we have a real crisis in our communities. These units are empty; we can't get them in for some odd reason. Our programs do not quite make it for them to get in. They've either got bad credit, arrears, a whole gamut of reasons why we can't get a family into it and they're still sitting empty. I think I can ask the Minister to look right across the Northwest Territories. You will see how many empty units are boarded up, people not getting in them. There is something not right for us.

The Minister made his opening comments. There are some things in there that I liked what the Minister said. The first time I hear the Minister talking about the Small Community Homeless Program. If we are going to start charging rent to elders, we are probably going to have some homeless elders, based on income support and household income. We are finally getting a Homeless Fund for small communities. There are 27 small communities. We are going to spend \$300,000 in our communities. There are six market communities. We need help in our small communities.

The Minister has some programs here that I think he is making some changes to the way we do our business with housing. I want to say that the one biggest one that I am going to put up a fight is the charging of the rent for the seniors. I don't think we need to do that. We are taking \$300,000. This government here is going to be charging rent to the seniors. They say it is \$80 or \$90, but it is household income. In the future, the elders are going to have difficulty paying their rent.

We had a meeting with the NWT Seniors' Society. They told us about this. The NWT Seniors' Society represents the seniors. They told us that they needed more time. The way they explained it is that they should have met and talked with them and consulted with them and talked to the elders in the Sahtu. Housing should have been talking to them and this is what they want to do. How can we work this out together?

I'm glad the Minister made some changes to the employment, because that is what we talked about. That is what my constituents talked about, an incentive for young people to go to work and not be hit with skyrocketing rent once they get a job and then it goes back down. That is what we talked about. We did not talk about elders being charged

rent, not from my side. I don't know who in the district or in headquarters said let's do this and let's push it through. Not the Seniors' Society because they told us that is not done by them. They did not support it. They gave us a letter saying delay it, do an analysis. This government here is willing to do that, to charge seniors rent. That is what should be known before the implementation goes through, all good things that you are going to be doing. We the 17th that is charging elders rent for what, \$300,000? You could find some money. We can find it together. Leave them alone.

This one here – there are good things you did in housing – but this one here bugs me. I go back to the community and say why they are charging this. Even the Seniors' Society said that. They do not agree with this government so much that they didn't even take your guys' money, the \$20,000. They refuse to take it on principle. You give them \$20,000 for a contribution and they told us they didn't take it. That is serious stuff. So for myself, I said we could do a lot of good things, but this one, this one bothers me. It bothers my people; it bothers the elders that I represent. We should delay it, look at it, go back and talk to my elders. You're pushing this one down. You're pushing this implementation, this policy. You're pushing it down the elders' throats. They never discussed it. Talk with us.

So for me, Mr. Chair, when I go back to my region and I talk to the elders, they have told me is people are not very happy. This is the government that's going to do this to the elders. We need to sit and talk about it a little more.

For \$325,000 or \$35,000, I don't know where your thinking is at.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. General comments. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a few comments on the CARE program. I see it's mostly geared towards low-income homeowners. Up in the riding of the Mackenzie Delta, I mentioned earlier today we have many people, especially in the community of Aklavik – which is isolated a good portion of the year – that pay almost double the prices of food and gas compared to other areas of the territory. We have a number of people in the community who would like to access funding, whether it's for replacing a roof or doing major repairs to their homes. They aren't eligible for the funding that's available because they are told they make too much, yet they're barely getting by. I'm hopeful that's something we can all work towards over the next while to make those sorts of changes.

I noticed also in the Mackenzie Delta that there will be mostly repairs that are being done, but I've noticed there are a lot of new places that have gone up over the last year or two. I'm hopeful in next

year's budget I will see some multiplex units going up in the region.

I know in the community of Tsiigehtchic a lot of the units are full, so I think there's a need there in the community for more units. At the moment, those are the only comments I have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I do have a couple more people to speak on general comments, but noting the time I will now rise and report progress. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I will now rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses from the Chamber? Thank you, witnesses, for your attendance.

Report of Committee of the Whole

ACTING SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please? Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, and would like to report progress with two motions being adopted. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Beaulieu.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, June 5, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success
 - Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013
 - Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act
 - Committee Report 1-17(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories
 - Committee Report 2-17(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, June 5, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

