



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**17<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, June 7, 2012**

Pages 957 - 1026

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

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**Hon. David Ramsay**

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Thursday, June 7, 2012****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 27-17(3):  
IMPLEMENTING THE NEW  
PUBLIC HOUSING RENT SCALE**

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the new public housing rent scale is scheduled to be implemented on July 1, 2012. We recognize the changes we are making are significant and there will be an adjustment period for all tenants.

As you know, there have been concerns expressed about the impact of the changes on seniors who reside without others in the house and often live on fixed income. These seniors have been paying zero rent under the old rent scale, but were to pay between \$70 and \$80 minimum rent using the new rent scale.

In recognition of the concerns that have been expressed, I am instructing the NWT Housing Corporation to implement an approach where seniors that live without other adults in their home would have the rent increase resulting from the new rent scales phased in over a two-year period.

The new rent scales will proceed as planned on July 1, 2012. However, for those seniors that reside in public housing that were paying zero in the past, 50 percent of any rent increase will be in effect on September 1, 2012, and the full impact of any rental increase won't come into effect until July 1, 2013.

Mr. Speaker, the new rent scale has many benefits for residents of the Northwest Territories. The approach makes public housing rent simpler, more predictable and fairer, and addresses the long-standing concern over the disincentive to work. I am pleased that we will be implementing this change that will benefit so many NWT households on July 1, 2012. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 28-17(3):  
PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES  
ENERGY CONSERVATION INITIATIVES**

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Public Works and Services' efforts to achieve our government's energy conservation goals are paying off. Through energy conservation programs and initiatives, we are reducing our government's greenhouse gas emissions, achieving considerable cost savings and reducing our dependency on fuel oil. These initiatives are key to effective and efficient government, and protect our environment so it will sustain present and future generations. Energy conservation isn't a single program or initiative. It is our normal way of doing business. It affects every department in our government and it is having real results.

The Capital Asset Retrofit Fund program is one of the PWS-managed energy conservation programs that is having great success. Through this program, we focus on reducing operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions by assessing government facilities and identifying the buildings that are best suited for energy saving retrofits and upgrades.

Our energy conservation initiatives have eliminated the need for six million litres of heating oil. In the past five years, this saved the government \$2.65 million and reduced our government's greenhouse gas emissions by 16,600 tonnes. Since utility funding was consolidated in Public Works and Services in 2010-11, our energy conservation initiatives have saved the government \$654,000 in ongoing utility costs each year.

Our early estimates from last year's energy conservation initiatives show that we could generate an additional half million dollars in ongoing annual utility cost savings. This could bring the estimated utility savings for the past two years to \$1.204 million. The cumulative reductions in greenhouse gas emissions could reach 25,156 tonnes by the end of the 2012 year.

A few examples of our highly successful energy projects currently in service would be:

- lighting system improvements for the Deh Gah School in Fort Providence;
- a new biomass heating system for Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchoko;
- an energy-efficient lighting retrofit for the Grandfather Ayha School in Deline; and
- an energy-efficient lighting retrofit and a building envelope upgrade completed for the nurses residence in Inuvik.

Alternative energy solutions are also being incorporated in the renovation and construction of buildings as part of Public Works and Services' design considerations. The renovations for Ecole St. Joseph School included a \$250,000 investment in biomass heating. The GNWT will be investing over \$1.5 million in alternative energy heating solutions as part of new capital projects like the health centre in Hay River.

While the cost savings are impressive, the savings realized are now directly funding other energy-efficient projects starting in 2012-13. This is the first step towards making the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund a self-sustaining government program this year.

Thanks in part to the ongoing support of this Assembly, the GNWT has become a leader in energy conservation.

Mr. Speaker, program monitoring along with the sharing of best practices with other jurisdictions, the private sector and our residents is very important in demonstrating leadership in the GNWT's energy conservation efforts. To that end, the department has finished publishing its second annual Energy Conservation Projects Report, which I will be tabling later today.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 29-17(3):  
2012 WILDLIFE SEASON

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, the NWT is experiencing hot, dry conditions and the forests across most of the NWT are critically dry. The fire danger ratings in the North Slave, South Slave and Deh Cho regions are at high or extreme and the NWT is in the midst of an early fire season. We have had increased fire activity over the past week and are presently dealing with a number of problematic wildfires within these regions.

The long-term seasonal temperature outlook from Environment Canada for June, July and August continues to project above seasonal temperatures for most of the NWT. Precipitation is forecast to be below seasonal for the same period.

Should weather patterns remain at seasonal or above seasonal conditions as indicated by Environment Canada, we can expect to experience a very difficult fire season. Municipalities have already had to enact fire bans in Yellowknife, Hay River and Fort Smith. In addition, Industry, Tourism and Investment had to impose a "No Open Fires" policy in Prelude Lake, Reid Lake, Fred Henne and Yellowknife River Park territorial parks. Campers have been asked not to light open campfires until conditions improve.

Activities to ensure that ENR is prepared for the 2012 forest fire season have been underway since fall 2012. Operational manuals and forms are up to date, standing offer agreements for aviation short-term needs have been signed, crew contracts are in place and seasonal/casual hiring is complete. Facility maintenance activities for air tanker bases, fuel systems, the lightning detection network, the automatic fire weather station network and radio communications have been undertaken. In addition, aircraft and crews were brought on early because of the fire hazard.

ENR is prepared to respond immediately should wildland fire become a concern. Available personnel, aircraft and support resources have been identified and are ready for mobilization.

The department continues to monitor daily environmental conditions and is ensuring that risk mitigation measures have been identified and are ready. As appropriate, the department is providing advice on proposed activities which may pose a fire management risk in and around communities. ENR is also in discussions with Municipal and Community Affairs and local fire authorities regarding local preparedness for wildfires.

At this point, conditions point to a prolonged and difficult forest fire season. While we have done our level best to ensure we are as prepared as possible, we are still at the mercy of the weather. With this in mind, I would ask that all residents avoid using open fires wherever possible and make sure any fires are completely extinguished before they leave. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 30-17(3):  
2012 SUMMER SAFETY

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly set a goal of achieving sustainable, vibrant and safe communities. Today I would like to take a moment to recognize personal safety on our roads and waterways.

The Department of Transportation consistently works to raise public awareness of safety issues.

Now that summer is here again, it is important to keep these safety messages in mind.

Cyclists need to wear helmets and follow the rules of the road. When enjoying water activities, wearing lifejackets and keeping mandatory safety equipment on board can save your life. When riding ATVs, proper helmets and driving at a reasonable speed are key to a safe ride.

When it comes to our roads, public education can foster change in driving behaviour. To that end, the Department of Transportation continues to promote safety through the Drive Alive program. Distracted driving is a key issue on our roads these days, and on January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, legislative amendments came into effect prohibiting the use of hand-held electronic devices while driving in the Northwest Territories. Driving deserves our full attention at all times.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories has reason to be proud of its contribution to Canadian road safety, as our record of zero fatalities on roads and trails has entered its eighteenth month. This is an important achievement and I encourage residents to continue this safety record into the summer and beyond.

A key factor that has helped us reach our zero fatality record is the use of seatbelts. We all know that seatbelts can prevent injury in a sudden stop or collision. In fact, you are 13 times more likely to die in a collision if you are not wearing your seatbelt. Buckle Up NWT, a seatbelt awareness and enforcement campaign, is underway to increase the number of NWT residents who always wear their seatbelts.

Further to this, the department has partnered with the NWT Association of Fire Chiefs and community governments. The department and enforcement agencies will be monitoring seatbelt use in each NWT community until May 2013. The location with the highest rate of usage will win a local concert with Aboriginal artist Ms. Leela Gilday in June 2013. The winning location will also receive \$5,000 for the fire department that serves that community. So I encourage all residents to buckle up and I look forward to announcing the successful community next spring.

With the construction season getting into full swing, I remind everyone to please obey all signs, drive defensively and slow down when crossing through road construction sites. Remember speeding fines double in construction zones.

Finally, when travelling on the highway, remember to be on the lookout for wildlife. Collisions with moose, deer and especially bison can be fatal. Slow down at dusk and dawn when visibility is low and drive slowly around animals or wait for them to pass.

On behalf of the Department of Transportation, I remind all residents to make healthy and safe choices on our roads, trails and waterways and wish everyone a safe and happy summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 31-17(3):  
"HEALING AND LEARNING TOGETHER"  
MAKES A DIFFERENCE AT NORTH SLAVE  
YOUNG OFFENDERS FACILITY

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, corrections staff are committed to manage offenders in the least restrictive manner possible, provide opportunities for culturally relevant rehabilitation and be leaders in progressive and holistic healing.

These extremely dedicated staff members work in conditions that are challenging and emotionally draining. They have committed to multiple years of training to make a difference in the workplace and influence the lives of the young people in their charge.

I recently joined a group of our corrections youth officers and employees at the North Slave Young Offenders Facility as they celebrated their graduation from the Healing and Learning Together, or HALT, program.

Effective and efficient government is one of our goals. Mr. Speaker, oftentimes small changes improve our systems and result in more effective programs. For the North Slave Young Offenders Facility, we've seen real changes through the HALT program training.

During the graduation, I heard employee after employee mention how the skills they had been taught over the years improved their work habits and their personal relationships as well. As Damien Ramm said, correctional officers have to deal with stress on a daily basis. This can lead to health issues, conflicts at home and an unstable environment to rehabilitate offenders. The skills he learned through his training with HALT have really helped him. By passing those skills on to the youth he works with, he helps them to become contributing citizens back at their home communities.

Staff members also told the group they have seen positive changes over the four years the program has been running. Youth offenders are now being managed in ways that emulate our vision and mission, in the least restrictive way possible and with the purpose of reintegration in mind at all times. Youth Officer Shari Manyika pointed out her training has given her the tools she needs to successfully deal with the increasingly violent offenders who are coming into the facility. Two of

our long-term workers, Tanya Ashley and Hiedi Yardley, who have worked both before and after the introduction of HALT training, feel youth at the facility have had direct benefits from the new approach by staff. Youth now are learning how to be internally motivated, think for themselves and have coping skills that don't involve substances.

These are powerful words from the front-line workers, progressive, innovative and effective.

Mr. Speaker, we will be continuing this valuable training and approach at the North Slave Young Officers Facility and the department will be looking at ways that we can expand the HALT program to our other facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT COST OVERRUNS

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the House was once again witness to another announcement of more money being required by the Department of Transportation and its Minister for the sinkhole we all know as the Deh Cho Bridge.

Many MLAs and many more residents of the NWT are extremely perplexed on how this department and its Ministers cannot seem to complete large-scale projects on time and on budget.

Moreover, it seems this time the department had to negotiate an agreement-in-principle within an already negotiated contract price in order to get the work done. I'm not sure if many people picked up on that but, Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely absurd.

The Minister and department claim they had few options as the work has fallen behind schedule and the opening of the bridge this fall was in jeopardy. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, but isn't this what negotiated contract pricing clearly defines when both parties sign a contract? Furthermore, what about the concept of holdbacks? As the client, why aren't these options being leveraged and exercised?

They're not, Mr. Speaker, because this government is trying to save face with the general public in committing to a November 2012 opening at all costs and our current contractor knows this, hence the so-called, "Pony up, GNWT, if you want to see your bridge built this year."

It's painfully obvious that this government is clearly setting a pattern of concern in how it deals with cost overruns for large-scale projects and negotiated contracts. It's only a matter of time when this

Member will bring further examples into this House that will prove this point once again.

So to all of you 41,462 men, women and children in the Northwest Territories, the Minister of Transportation just asked you for another \$241.18 each this week to make him look good. But don't worry, this pales in comparison to the final bill you'll get under your door when you see your invoice for just under \$8,900. No, the GNWT does not take PayPal.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA COLLEGE HOUSING POLICY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today: I've encountered an Aurora College policy which causes me grave concern. A student at Aurora College Yellowknife Campus in the third year of their program, one who is achieving excellent marks and doing very well, has run into a housing policy which I believe, quite frankly, is discriminatory.

My constituent has been subjected to unfair treatment and inconsistencies in regard to how the housing policy is applied and to its lack of timely and personal responses to all inquiries and appeals. There are many inconsistencies between the Aurora College housing policy and the actual application of that policy. The policy is lacking in clear definitions and often contradicts other GNWT generally accepted policies; the GNWT Affirmative Action Policy, for instance.

Unlike other learning institutions across Canada where students are treated on a first-come, first-served basis, the Aurora College housing policy is written to specifically exclude local students from Aurora College housing without any consideration for the student's financial situation and whether they are a local resident or not. Why is household income not part of the student accommodation evaluation procedures criteria? Why is it not a consideration as an extenuating circumstance?

The Aurora College housing policy unfairly affects all students, not only in Yellowknife but in Inuvik and Fort Smith as well. Why do we expect local students to be able to afford market rent housing when we don't have the same expectations of non-local students?

To quote my constituent, "The policy states that Aurora College is committed to providing an equitable process for allocating student accommodations. From the perspective of a born and raised northern student enrolled in a northern program funded by the Government of the Northwest Territories, this would seem to be untrue."

I appreciate that housing cannot be supplied to every student, but to deny Inuvik, Fort Smith and Yellowknife residents even the chance to apply for housing in their community is unfair. The response from the college to my constituent's appeal freely admits that the policy is lacking. That letter said, "The change in policy does not meet all students' needs, but we are required to follow the policy." That tells me that there's a recognition that the policy is not working but there is no will to act to correct it. An organization that recognizes a gap, as indicated in the above letter, should be acting to fill that gap and provide equal opportunity for all.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CONGRATULATIONS AND OFFERING  
ENCOURAGEMENT TO DEH CHO GRADUATES**

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In all our communities we're seeing the happy faces of high school graduates. Across the territory there will be about 400 grads. I'm especially proud of the graduates in Deh Cho communities.

Graduation rates are increasing but we still lag behind the rest of Canada, especially in our small communities. Even so, there are more opportunities than ever as technology and communications have improved so much in remote communities.

It is a big step in our lives to go to college or university. Many students may feel that it's too expensive, but it is an investment that pays off long into the future. We don't often mention the life experiences that you will get or the lifelong friendships that you will likely make.

The Northwest Territories has one of the most generous student financial assistance packages in the country, with grants and forgivable loans. There are hundreds more scholarships available through band councils, community organizations, industry and the schools themselves. It is true that finding and applying for these grants takes a little bit of time and effort, just as it does to get high marks in school. Almost all jobs with competitive wages and benefits require further study after high school. Those who don't finish high school or go further, run the risk of staying in low-paying jobs in sectors where they never find fulfillment or reach their potential.

To all graduates, I would say you can accomplish anything if you put your mind to it. If you are afraid or stepping out into an expensive field of study you may not enjoy, or if you have taken that risk and it didn't work out, don't be discouraged. You will learn valuable lessons about yourself and your future along the way. You'll probably come away with much more than you expected. That is how life is when you make decisions for yourself. Mahsi cho.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to speak to the Deh Cho Bridge concern and issue. Yesterday we heard the Minister speak in his Minister's statement regarding an agreement that they've reached that could run us up to a capped \$10 million. What stood out specifically for me was they're confident that both parties are committed to the success of this project. Of course, I'm more confident that Ruskin has figured out how to keep draining more money out of the GNWT coffers and the territorial government continues to roll over. If I may coin it in a typical sense of partnership, I would call this more of an abusive relationship than certainly a partnership.

Quite frankly, what happened to the fixed contract we were told time and time and time again? How many more figurative RSVPs will be told and sent out into our mailboxes that we'll be getting ready for? Will the opening date be pushed back one more year? Besides, how much more money will it cost taxpayers?

I remember one Member on this side of the House many years ago constantly talked about who is going to pay, who is going take responsibility for this particular project. It's gone from \$140 million to \$160 million to \$180 million. Now it's well over \$200 million.

All I hear about now on the street is, as the old slogan used to go, between a rock and a hard place. Well, people are now saying, well, I hate to be between a bridge and a hard place. Frankly, the citizens are getting tired of this. I'm getting tired of being held hostage to this particular project. How much more money does it continue to cost the taxpayers?

I've been a strong proponent of this particular project from the beginning because I believe in the concept. It's the management. I'd like the Department of Transportation to stop negotiating with a blank cheque that's sitting in the hands of Ruskin waiting for them to fill in the number.

Enforcement clauses were always written into all contracts, but apparently for this Deh Cho Bridge contract they must have been written in invisible ink. What happened to the day when a contract was a contract? I look forward to that being finally satisfied. To be frank, we're spending a lot of time, energy and money on this particular project and now the biggest critic is the champion. We need to see results on this. How much more money will it cost the taxpayers?

I will have questions later today to get to the bottom of some of this. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS  
OF FORT LIARD GRADUATES

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. While there are many important looming issues in the North, I'd like to speak about the community of Fort Liard. They are having a graduation today. They are celebrating the achievements of four students who are graduating from the Echo-Dene School there: Ms. Camille Bertrand, Ms. Monica Berreault, Ms. Ivy-Lynn Marcellais, and I am especially pleased to acknowledge my nephew Mr. Trye Timbre, who is among those finishing high school this year.

---Applause

Thank you, colleagues. He's a lucky man to be able to take not one but three young ladies to his grad.

Congratulations, graduates. You can truly be proud of your hard work and perseverance. That is what got them here today.

The theme for their grad this year is black and white, and it's a good one. Black and white creates definition and impact, contrast and absolutes. The world relies on black and white. It makes the words stand out on a page and notes stand out on a sheet of music, and we know just how powerful those things, words and music, can be. Pianos have black and white keys. In combination, they also create harmony.

Every year our world, our territory and our communities become more complex. The decisions our graduates and their fellow students make will be more sophisticated than the ones made by previous generations. More and more we live in a world where so many people seem to have lost sight of what is right and wrong, but in traditional culture there were absolutes that helped our people live in harmony and respect with one another and with nature. I encourage our young people to look to the wisdom of the elders and spiritual leaders for help with the decisions they face as they venture out into the world.

In TV and photography, black and white images were the precursors of extraordinary things, things previous generations couldn't even imagine. We all know it's a challenge for our youth in our small communities to stay in school.

As the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Nahendeh, I would like to congratulate once again Camille, Monica, Ivy-Lynn and Trye and all graduates in my riding. I want to recognize the support of the families, school staff and all the

volunteers that work in the school for encouraging our youth. They have what it takes to make a difference in this world. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are about nine months into this government here, and in that nine months I have heard a lot of concerns, a lot of asks and a lot of community concerns from this side of the table. All my colleagues have heard of Highway No. 7 quite a bit. I have heard access roads to gravel sources so the roads in the communities can be maintained. I have heard schools that need washrooms, who need new schools. Some communities haven't had a school retrofit for a long time. Myself, we are looking at getting a child development centre. If it's not done, two-thirds of the kids who are accessing that school are going to lose out this year.

I just read in the news that Colville Lake's airport runway just got washed out yet again. However, we are going to have to tell these communities that we are going to have to put these back on the backburner. Why? Because of the continuing saga of the Deh Cho Bridge.

It is something that we have been dealing with for a long time. Up until yesterday, up until the Minister gave his statement in the House and all the media reports that I have heard on the news this morning, I didn't feel the frustrations until yesterday that all Regular Members past and present feel about this project. The mismanagement of funds, signing off on a project that wasn't even complete with the planning process, for it to go ahead and yet now we are paying for those prices again. It has even bankrupted a southern company. It removed one of our Aboriginal groups out of the process. It is just continuing.

I believe, being new to this government, this is the third time that this government is coming back into this House asking for more money. I am not sure when it is going to stop. I do sure hope that this is the last time it's going to stop, because there are too many concerns from our communities.

I haven't heard the concerns from my colleagues across the floor, their concerns for their communities, the projects that they need, but I am sure there are some. Like I said, we are going to have to put that back on the backburner because of the money that we are continuing to put on the capital projects such as the Deh Cho Bridge.

I would like to see this project completed so that we can start focusing more on our small communities,

our communities where we can start putting projects and money for the buildings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
UNITED NATIONS DECISION ON  
MS. CECELIA KELL'S  
NWT HOUSING SITUATION

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the House is aware of the recent United Nations' decision that finally brought justice to NWT resident Cecelia Kell. In 1995 Ms. Kell fled her abusive relationship to a safe haven in the Alison McAteer House.

While she was away, her non-Aboriginal spouse, who was serving as a director of the Rae-Edzo Housing Authority, had her name removed as a co-holder from the Aboriginal housing lease with the approval of the LHO board. Ms. Kell was served an eviction order and lost her home. That began a legal journey of 17 excruciating years through a series of rulings eventually leading to the Supreme Court. Finding no justice even there, she took her case for review under the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. In its judgment this year, the United Nations found that the Government of Canada and the NWT, the NWT Housing Corporation and the Canadian legal system itself acted prejudicially by discriminating against an Aboriginal woman. The UN recommended the government provide her a house and financial compensation for material and moral harm. It also recommended the government recruit and train more Aboriginal women to provide legal aid, including on domestic and property rights.

Responding to the decision, the GNWT has said that a lot has improved since 1995, that adequate checks and balances are now in place and that no further changes are planned as a result of the recommendation. Yet, in its recent update on Housing Corporation's operations, the Auditor General for Canada cited unsatisfactory progress on recommendations to establish a clear picture of the state of the delivery of the Public Housing Program, including whether local housing organizations are processing. I'm still waiting to hear how Ms. Kell is being compensated for her suffering.

These events are a source of shame for us all. We shouldn't have to rely on you and the Auditor General to tell us how to protect our citizens' rights. As we embark upon our review of the Legal Aid Act and services, these recommendations should be firmly in mind. The recommendations of the 2011 community justice review and the phase 3 Coalition for Family Violence Report provides valuable

advice for ensuring such injustice never occurs again.

I will have questions for the Minister of Housing, Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NEW PUBLIC HOUSING  
RENTAL SCALES FOR SENIORS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to say it's a good day today for the seniors of the Northwest Territories, and by thanking the Minister and thanking this government for delaying the implementation of charging seniors rent until September. Also, to go a little further, then to implement a two-phased approach to the seniors' rent by giving them the opportunity to look at the reasons why we're going to implement the rent at a lower cost than what the Minister and the government really wanted to do.

Today is the beginning of June and I guess there is Christmas in June also, because it's a good present for the elders. I want to say thank you to the Minister for listening to us, listening to the concerns.

This government has the obligation to take care of its residents, especially the elderly people, the ones who are very vulnerable in the communities. The decision to delay should also be seen as a period that this government should sit down and listen to the elders and tell them why they're going to be charging them rent and, more importantly, to listen to the elders while the elders tell them why it makes it hard for them to pay rent in our communities.

This government and this Housing Corporation need to work with us on this side and they've done that. It's a start in that area and I applaud the Minister for realizing this, and that it needs to be done in a way that is effective and efficient and that we can move on this together.

I wanted to say to my colleagues here, to the gallery, to the Minister, thank you very much from the Sahtu elders and the seniors across the North that we've done something good for the seniors. We've done something that we hope we see that the seniors do want to make a contribution, but we need to sit and listen to them to see how we can do this together.

So I want to say thank to the Minister, Robert C. McLeod, for this. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NWT TRACK AND FIELD EVENT  
IN HAY RIVER

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to use my Member's statement today to encourage the 1,189 youth participating in the NWT track meet going in the next couple of days in Hay River.

My colleague Mrs. Groenewegen and myself would like to thank some of the Members from the Legislative Assembly that travelled down to Hay River to see the exciting grand opening of the NWT track meet this year: Premier Bob McLeod, Minister Robert C. McLeod, Mr. Daryl Dolynny, Mr. Alfred Moses. Thank you for coming to Hay River.

The NWT track and field event is organized by over 300 volunteers. It has a great economic impact to Hay River. I would like to encourage the youth to have fun, make friends and try your hardest. The event involves over 100 coaches. Thank you, coaches, for all your hard work and efforts for the youth.

The event involves 36 teams from 19 communities. The 19 communities are as follows: Colville Lake, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Fort Providence, Fort Res, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Gameti, Inuvik, Kakisa, Nahanni Butte, Ndilo, Norman Wells, Rae Edzo, Trout Lake, Wrigley, Yellowknife, our neighbours beside us, K'atlodeeche and, of course, the host, Hay River. Good luck to all the participants. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
BOARDING HOME FOR  
INUVIK SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The high school years are difficult for many students. It can even be tough for sensible and smart young people who get strong support from their parents. The reality is that teenagers face some big challenges and a lot of pressure. I'm sure we all remember if we think about it. I fear those challenges were forgotten when the system was designed to support students who have to leave home to complete high school.

This is still happening in our small communities such as Tsiigehtchic and Sachs Harbour. Those students go to high school in Inuvik and have to live with other families in their homes. Sometimes this works out and sometimes it doesn't, but all too often students don't get the support they need. In some cases it's dealing with distractions of living in a larger centre. Sometimes the arrangements actually cause additional problems. The result is too many young people drop out of high school and go back home.

We cannot let that go on without doing something about it. I know the issue was raised many times by our colleague Mr. Jacobson during the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, so I am surprised it seems to have fallen upon deaf ears. Our students will be back in Inuvik again this fall and there is still no sign of a boarding home to accommodate them.

In reviewing this matter, I noted that the Education Minister often said during the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, that student accommodation in Inuvik is the responsibility of the district education authority. I am again surprised the Minister has suggested he is not the boss.

Someone has to be accountable when district authorities fail to provide the basic support our students need. If students from Tsiigehtchic and Sachs Harbour are going to succeed in high school, they need a stable environment in a boarding home.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to recognize two important board members of the Status of Women Council: Ms. Georgina Jacobson Masuzumi from Tuktoyaktuk and Doris Camsell from Hay River.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize Louise Bradley, president and CEO of the Mental Health Commission of Canada; Geoff Couldrey, executive vice-president of the Mental Health Commission of Canada; Michelle McLean, vice-president of public affairs of the Mental Health Commission of Canada; and Dana Heide, associate deputy minister of Health and Social Services.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my sister-in-law Doris Camsell and, of course, Ms. Jacobson Masuzumi.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome the staff of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. We had a really good presentation and launching of the Mental Health Strategy today. I also recognize Dana Heide, who is the associate

deputy minister and board member of the commission as well.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. I'd like to welcome my mother in the House today, Ms. Georgina Jacobson Masuzumi. Welcome. I'd like to welcome all our visitors here in the public gallery today for taking an interest in our proceedings here in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you for coming.

Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 95-17(3): NEW PUBLIC HOUSING RENTAL SCALES FOR SENIORS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask some questions to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. The Minister just made a very important, significant announcement regarding the implementation of the seniors' rental charges and delaying it until September 1<sup>st</sup>. I want to ask the Minister, between now and September 1<sup>st</sup>, what type of work he will do with the seniors in terms of explaining the reasons why the rental charges will be coming in, what type of consultation his staff or the communities or LHOs will be doing to see how we can talk and listen to the elders and see that the rent will be reduced quite significantly in the first year of the second phase of this implementation of charging the elders' rent.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leading up to the new rent scale, all the tenants, including seniors, will have an opportunity to meet with their local LHO and they will be given an indication at the time of what their rent can be expected to be. With the rent scale change, it will be July 1<sup>st</sup>. With the seniors, now with the new implementation of September 1<sup>st</sup>, there will be an opportunity for them to work with the local LHOs and give them an indication of what their rent is going to be.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** We had our meetings here as a committee and we had the NWT Seniors' Society come and meet with us one fine, early morning and talked about the rental issue with the seniors and the Housing Corporation. I want to ask the Minister if the NWT Seniors' Society asked for a meeting with the Minister and staff about this new implementation, especially the delay. Would the Minister be able to entertain having a meeting with them?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I did have an opportunity to meet with the NWT Seniors' Society. Obviously, with an issue of importance like this,

there was mixed views on it. Some thought it was a good thing. Some said we should just stay at zero. There were a few that said, well, why don't you just meet us halfway and phase it in? Listening to that and listening to concerns of the Members, we took that into consideration and we decided to go with September 1<sup>st</sup> and implement it over the next two years.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Can the Minister tell us his reasons why the reduced rate for the first year of implementing the seniors' rent charge starts on September 1<sup>st</sup>?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Well, we listened to what Members had to say. We listened to what some of the concerns were for the seniors out there. We thought this would be an adjustment period, because to go from zero to \$70, \$75 or \$80 dollars, as was the original intent, we thought this would be an easier adjustment to graduate up to the higher rent.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

#### QUESTION 96-17(3): NEED FOR BOARDING HOME FOR BEAUFORT-DELTA STUDENTS IN INUVIK

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a follow-up on my Member's statement. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education a couple of questions. What is the Minister doing to address the need for a boarding home in Inuvik for students from small communities in the Beaufort-Delta?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** This particular issue has been addressed with the Beaufort-Delta Education Council and there's been some correspondence back and forth. This has been an ongoing issue and I did raise that issue with the board chairs, as well, during a chairs meeting. They're fully aware of it. They're doing what they can to accommodate those students that will be in Inuvik from outlying communities. We will continue to monitor that and we'll continue to pressure the BDEC to assist those students to the best of their ability in the community of Inuvik.

**MR. BLAKE:** If the numbers show that students from small communities are not succeeding in Inuvik, will the Minister take the steps necessary to provide a boarding home by this fall? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Those need to be addressed with the

Beaufort-Delta Education Council. My staff is listening. Definitely, my department will follow through and monitor, especially this fall, how many students will be attending Inuvik from the outlying communities, and the succession plan. I can get back to the Member about the number of students who will be boarding in Inuvik, and where they're going to be boarding and provide that information to the Member from BDEC. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 97-17(3):  
UNITED NATIONS' DECISION ON  
MS. CECELIA KELL'S  
NWT HOUSING SITUATION

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement earlier today with questions for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. My statement today outlined a very sad chain of events for Cecelia Kell and an international embarrassment, obviously, for us. Could the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation tell me what steps have been taken to act on the UN recommendations and get Ms. Kell a home and pay the recommended compensation? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister of Housing, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're fully aware of the situation and we take the recommendations from the UN very, very seriously. We would like to try and set up a meeting with Ms. Kell to try and work out some details. We have six months to respond to the recommendations, but as of right now, we are trying to meet with this lady and work out the details. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the comments from the Minister. I know that the Minister recognizes that this is a serious situation and will do good work to get this rectified, and I ask that we would be kept apprised of the progress on that.

As the UN decision pointed out, Ms. Kell's traumatic experiences point to the need for greater public understanding of property law and ensuring that clients of our LHO partners are aware of their rights. Since we are trying to stress the breaking down of silos and coordinated actions across government, such as through the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy, can the Minister say how he intends to work with his ministerial colleagues to ensure, for example, the Department of Justice's Legal Aid and Community Court Worker programs incorporate knowledge on rental rights into their services? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Well, I can speak from the Housing perspective and say that we've got

some checks and balances in place to ensure that a situation like this doesn't happen again. One of the checks and balances is to not allow for a person to be removed from the lease without their notification, and I think that's what happened in this particular case. I will commit to working with my counterparts and the Minister of Justice to see how we can better inform his department on some of the steps going forward, and the communities too. They have an opportunity to work with their tenant relations officer.

I think the recommendation from this has probably taught us a very valuable lesson in how we need to inform people of the particular rights they have. I believe we'll start working on that when the rest of our tenant relations officers come in. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the comments from the Minister again. I'm not questioning the comments, but I do want to point out to the Minister that the final checks and balances are indeed the court system. This wasn't just an NWT failure. This was a total Canadian failure. I think what we need is to bring the accountability and complete the circle. I would appreciate it if the Minister would commit to bringing that to committee on how, in fact, that will be done. We will know that our legal system, which is our final check and balance, will indeed be able to back up the systems that I know the Minister will be putting in place within Housing. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I would be pleased to meet with committee. I mean, we have six months, obviously, to respond to the recommendations. We're trying to get the pieces in place right now. But once we've completed all that work and I've had an opportunity to discuss with my counterpart from Justice, I think it might be prudent for both of us, actually, to come before committee and give them some time and explain to them how we plan on dealing with any situations. I don't think we'll have any more situations like this in the future. If we put the proper pieces in place, then that should rectify the problem that happened in this particular case. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks again for those comments. Again, of course, I wasn't speaking about this case now. I've backed off and I'm speaking in a sort of a systemic issue, so I think the deadlines are sort of mute with respect to that.

Again, I have to be a bit reticent in just accepting the Minister's intentions compared to what the final result is, because the recent update by the Auditor General on recommendations for improvements to the Housing Corporation operations some years ago found that there has been unsatisfactory progress on ensuring applications for housing are

dealt with consistently and according to policy. In fact, if my memory serves, I think only 17 out of 45 were done correctly. This speaks to the need to ensure everyone gets equal treatment. Can the Minister say what steps his corporation is taking to finally move on these recommendations, when the improvements will be made and how the corporation will continue to monitor for compliance? And applications are a good example of what we're talking about. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I kept referring to this particular case in my answer before because this is the one that brought about this situation. In the overall picture, working with the Housing Corporation and the Auditor General's report, obviously, that was from a few years ago, we've taken great steps in the meantime since then to improve how we work with our LHOs. One of the things we have done is we're implementing a territorial-wide housing information system. I think that's going to give us the ability to monitor the workings of the LHOs a lot closer. They're doing a fine job out there, but we need to be a little more connected, I think is what I'm trying to say, and communicate a lot more. Also, we just announced the other day, we're setting up an NWT Housing Appeal Committee, and I think this may go a long way, too, in addressing some of the concerns.

As far as the Auditor General's report goes, I mean, we've listened to some of the recommendations. I think we've done a very good job in responding to some of the recommendations, and I think we'll see a great improvement in the overall delivery of housing and the appeals system for tenants that feel they've been wronged. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 98-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are in follow-up to my Member's statement that I did earlier, and it's regarding the Deh Cho Bridge here. It's going to be directed to the Minister of Transportation.

With the asks for money continuing to come in, does that affect the amount of years that this bridge will be paid off in, and how many more years would that be expected onto what was initially predicted? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, it doesn't. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Keeping with the impacts of this big project, can the Minister please let me know how

this is going to affect other capital projects throughout the Northwest Territories, what kind of impact it's going to have? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We wouldn't know that. Obviously, the ask is \$10 million, but we wouldn't be able to define that question at this stage in time. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Can the Minister confirm and let us know if he believes that it will have an impact on other capital projects in the small communities? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** That's an opinion, Mr. Moses. I need a question. Rephrase.

**MR. MOSES:** I'll switch the questions up here. Can the Minister give us an operational cost for this bridge on a yearly basis? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I'm not sure if the Member is looking for a once it's completed operational cost or if he's looking for an annual cost on what the payback would be on that bridge over 35 years. I'm unable to answer much of what the question was. Thank you.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Considering that it will be the taxpayers who will be paying for this bridge, I'm looking for the operation and maintenance of this bridge on an annual basis. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to get that information for the Member. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 99-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My residents are concerned about the construction of the Deh Cho Bridge as well. I would like to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions. I think the concern is that it was really no great surprise that the cost continues to rise and they continue to come to this House for expenditures. Can the Minister assure this House that once this final deal is done, the bleeding will stop, so to speak?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All expectations are that this will be the final ask. It's going to allow us to have the bridge open this fall. We have also negotiated an end to the claims back and forth on the construction of the project. This is going to be something that we continue to

pursue until the bridge is complete in November. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate some of the past issues that the Auditor General's report spoke of incomplete designs, et cetera. Is the Minister confident in telling this House that all considerations and risk factors have been taken into account to date and that they can achieve this November 2012 opening, especially with this new deal that he is talking about with the contractor? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the question. Again, it's our expectation that the bridge will be open in November. We were weighing a few different options in how we could look at this. This was the option that would allow us to get budget certainty and also schedule certainty that would enable us to move forward and complete this project by November.

Again, it wasn't easily arrived at. We have been in negotiations for a number of weeks with the contractor. This is our best effort to move this project along and get the project complete. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, I guess I'm trying to get at the point that in the past there were unforeseen and incomplete things being done. Can the Minister assure us that all aspects of bridge construction have been considered and that this side of the House and the general public have no reason to expect further delays or further cash output from our government and hence the taxpayers of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, there always could be potentially unforeseen circumstances, but again, my expectation – and I have been following this project closely for a number of years – is that this will be the final ask of this government to see the completion of the Deh Cho Bridge in November of this year. We can move on after that. Thank you.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All things being considered, I know that last year we had shipping delays, production delays. Is there any of that on the table? What does this House have to expect, or have all things been considered? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, pertaining to the completion of the construction of the Deh Cho Bridge, this is all encompassed in the negotiated deal that we have with the contractor to complete the project. It is in there. This is our way forward so that we can see the bridge get completed this fall so we can get budget certainty and we can get schedule certainty. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 100-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions as well will be about the Deh Cho Bridge, similar to my colleague. They will be directed to the Minister of Transportation. Has Ruskin ever failed to comply with directions from our engineers to comply with a particular schedule? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for the question, but that's more of an operational question. It would be something that I would be more than happy to go back to the department with and provide the Member with the answer. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, that's a pretty big question. You would think the Minister would know if he was certainly asking for up to \$10 million as he pointed out in his Minister's statement, so maybe I'll try it again.

Is the department aware in any manner that our engineers - and I believe they are called associated engineers watching the project - have they ever instructed Ruskin to complete this project on schedule? Has there been any pushback or refusal from Ruskin to do so? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide this answer. Back in March it became apparent the contractor wasn't going to be able to complete the project on time. We had a number of options, three of them. The option that we chose was to work with the contractor to figure out a way that we can negotiate the claims that are out there and complete the project on time in November. That was the schedule that we wanted to maintain. That's how we negotiated an end to the claims and also put ourselves in a position where we could say that everything is included in that deal. We're going to have the bridge project completed in November.

Again, if the Member wants further detailed information, we can get that for him. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, maybe can I get some understanding of why they would refuse to comply with our direction provided by our engineer at the particular time? I think it is cited in March. Is he saying if our associated engineers instructed Ruskin to comply with a schedule, why would they refuse to comply with the schedule? What grounds would they have with the ability to refuse a contractual schedule? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, it's in our best interests as a government to work with the contractor to move forward and not look back. I believe the negotiated settlement in completing the project and working with Ruskin is a much better approach than going back and dealing with the long list of claims and being stuck in court for a number of years. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still missing the answer of why they would refuse to follow instructions provided by our particular engineers. It almost sounds like, if I'm understanding this correctly, that it's costing us more money because we are complying with the will of Ruskin. Is this approach costing us more money, as mentioned in the press release, up to \$10 million? Why aren't we enforcing our legally obligated contract which we negotiated with them earlier? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, it's not going to cost us any more money. That is the message that we have to get out there. If the bridge wasn't going to open this fall, we would be faced with a minimum of \$9 million for various costs associated with the delay. We would also have hanging over our heads a number of claims, a myriad of claims that exist for the last couple of years with Ruskin.

What we have done is get some budget certainty and, again, that budget certainty, we have \$13.7 million left in the construction budget. We are looking for another between \$7.2 million and \$9.5 million to add to that \$13.7 million to complete the bridge by this coming November. That's something that we are intent on doing. We need to find a way forward. We need to get this project completed. That is our full intention to do just that. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 101-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continuing with the main theme here on the Deh Cho Bridge today, I have some questions for the Minister of Transportation. What is the expected time of completion or payback on the mortgage or bonds that we currently hold on the Deh Cho Bridge?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thirty-five years. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** My next question is concerning the tolls on the bridge and what effect those tolls will have on the repayment of that debt service.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. We're anxious to begin growing our resources here in the Northwest Territories and in the Slave Geological Province. A lot of revenue will depend on truck traffic across the Deh Cho Bridge. So if we can grow our economy and get more trucks moving across that bridge, we'll increase the revenue there. So again, it's all dependent upon truck traffic that crosses that bridge. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you. As my colleagues have indicated some of the concerns with the high cost of the bridge, one of my questions is what has been removed from the bridge project that was in the original design of the bridge?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. I missed the beginning of the Member's question. So perhaps you could allow him to re-ask that question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Bouchard, could you speak into the mic?

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll ask my question again. As I indicated, I was concerned with the high costs of the bridge, but my next concern was the items that have been removed from the bridge, from the original design. What items have been removed?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you. Those items would predate my tenure as Minister of Transportation, but I'd be more than happy to get that for the Member. Thank you.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question is the estimated cost of delivery of some products to the North and to Yellowknife and beyond. Does the Minister have any indication of the costs these tolls will have on commodities in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Yes, years ago there were looks into that subject, but really it remains yet to be seen on what that impact would be. Some would argue that there wouldn't be an impact, others would say there is and that's been the debate since I've been a Member of this House since 2003. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 102-17(3):  
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM AND STUDENT SUPPORTS

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point in time in the North, we make it very clear to

encourage our youth to go on to post-secondary education. My question is to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Our Student Financial Assistance Program is a very good one here in the Northwest Territories. I wanted to ask, the subsidy that the government provides to students has not increased for some years. I know this has been under review since the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. I would ask the Minister what is SFA likely increasing by. How much? Mahsi.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We like to brag about our SFA program comparable to other jurisdictions. We have one of the best Student Financial Assistance programs, and as the Member alluded to, we are in the process of finalizing the recommendations that were brought to our attention.

I did meet with the standing committee to review those and we will be coming forward with those recommendations and making some changes to reflect on what we've heard from the students, from the teachers, from the parents and all of those individuals from the general public. So in order to make those changes, we need to come back to the standing committee and we will be doing that in the near future. Mahsi.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you. I want to ask the department again in terms of trying to encourage our students to go on to college and university. What is the department doing to encourage more students to take on a challenge? Mahsi.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. We do have various organizations that are working with us, whether it be the Mine Training Society, whether it be career development officers at the community level that do promote and encourage students, especially those individuals that are in Grade 10, Grade 11, Grade 12 that attend post-secondary as part of their tour orientation. So we do encourage those students to pursue post-secondary, and we work closely with the career officers and identify those individuals, what their interests are and work with them.

Our SFA is there for them, highlighting which area of interest and work with those individuals through their principals, through their teachers as well. So we're doing what we can as a department working with our outreach workers in the community. So we'll continue to pursue that. Mahsi.

**MR. NADLI:** I'd like to thank the Minister. For this fall, just recently there were some realities that came out in terms of facts because attendance was cited as a concern. What plans does the department have to address those concerns on attendance rates for this fall? Mahsi.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. The attendance, we currently deal with that through high school and through the Student Achievement Initiative that we pursued. We do have a plan in place. We're rolling out the implementation plans. That's one of the areas of interest is attendance, deal with the attendance. But when it comes to post-secondary, the students are more mature and they need to be independent. So we can't really monitor the post-secondary students per se, but we're doing what we can with the schools, the high schools to continue monitoring. The results of absenteeism have become a challenge. So we work with the education authorities to deal with those matters. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 103-17(3):  
NEW PUBLIC HOUSING  
RENTAL SCALES FOR SENIORS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions today for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. I'd like to follow up on the statement he made earlier today. I am pleased to hear of the delay in the application of the renewed rent scale for seniors housing, but I'd like some clarification from the Minister. It's not really very clear to me. I'd like to ask the Minister what the purpose is of this delay and what is the purpose of the phase-in. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of the delay was we listened to what committee had to say, their desire to have those out there that have paid zero for so many years adjust to have them start paying rent now. So we listened to what committee had to say and some Members had to say. We listened to some of the comments from the NWT Seniors' Society. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you and thanks to the Minister for that clarification. So I have to then ask the Minister if he has been listening to the concerns of the NWT Seniors' Society and been listening to the concerns of Members, it should be no surprise to him that the Seniors' Society in particular and Members have supported this.

The Seniors' Society feels that they have not been adequately consulted. I see nothing in the statement and I heard nothing in the Minister's answer that suggests that there's going to be any consultation with seniors in this two-month period. So I'd like to ask the Minister what the Housing Corporation is going to use the two months

between now and September 1<sup>st</sup> for. Are they going to use it for consultation or are they going to use it for any specific purpose? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you. We're going to use that two months to give them an opportunity to prepare for a change in their rent come September 1<sup>st</sup>. We're also going to use it as an opportunity, as I responded before, to work with a lot of seniors that are in public housing and give them an indication of what their rent will be and what they can expect to pay in the future.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. Those goals are laudable. I appreciate what the Housing Corporation is planning on doing. There has been a specific request from the NWT Seniors' Society for consultation with them and with other seniors, and I believe that I know at least some Members have suggested to the Minister that these two months from now to the implementation on September 1<sup>st</sup>, should be used to do some consultation and also to do some analysis of the impact on seniors. Why will the Minister not use these next two months or two and a half months to do that?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We know what the impact is going to be on the seniors. I have no problem in the next couple of months of sitting down with the NWT Seniors' Society and getting some input from them. We know what the impact is going to be on the seniors. The seniors know what the impact is going to be on themselves. It's going to be \$35 a month, half of what we had originally intended to charge, come July 1<sup>st</sup> and next year it's going to be \$70 a month. If there's an opportunity to meet with the seniors, I have no issue in sitting down and having a discussion with them. As far as an official consultation where we go out across the land, we've already done that. It's going to cost us close to \$60,000. That's money that we can best use putting back into our units.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I hear that the Minister is willing to meet with the seniors. I would hope that he will live up to that commitment. I'd like to, I guess, ask the Minister: Will he take some initiative to contact the NWT Seniors' Society?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** If there are folks from the NWT Seniors' Society who are listening to this broadcast, I would like the opportunity to come and meet with you.

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

QUESTION 104-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be speaking again, like some of my colleagues have on the Deh Cho Bridge. Earlier today we heard from the Minister himself who said it's not going to cost us more money. I guess I'm really questioning why we're really here. It is costing us more money. We've heard that there's going to be a supplemental coming and I think the people of the Northwest Territories are feeling this new ask feels more like a ransom than the completion of a project, and I think the people are sick of it. Really what we have here is a new negotiated deal with a negotiated price with an agreement-in-principle icing coating. I'm going to ask the Minister right here: I'm a little bit confused in the legality of what is really binding moving forward, so can the Minister indicate to me which deal this government is bound to at this moment in time?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. David Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're bound to getting this project completed by November. We're bound to protecting the public purse. We've negotiated a settlement to all the outstanding claims. That's what we're bound to. We're trying to move forward. There's no sense in fighting with the contractor. We need to move forward and put our differences behind us and get the project complete by November. That's what we're bound to.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I'm not sure if the word is legally binding or legally bound. It's a bit confusing. The reason I'm asking that first question is that legally binding, when we first negotiated this price with Ruskin, there was obviously holdbacks involved. These are legal parts of large-scale projects. Anyone who builds houses or any type of infrastructure knows that. What's happening now with these holdbacks? Are these being leveraged, and if not, why not?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** When the contract was originally done with Ruskin – that again predates my time here as Minister of Transportation – there are holdbacks on the construction in that contract and I believe that is industry standard at about 5 percent. That is the current practice and that will continue to be the practice.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I think we're going down the rabbit hole somewhere but really, quite frankly, we don't know whether something is legally bound or binding, we don't know whether these holdbacks are going to be applied to the so-called debt, so I'm going to ask my third question to this which is: What does it take to terminate a contract or contractor if

they're not fulfilling their negotiated price that they signed with ink with the GNWT?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I'm not a lawyer and that's a hypothetical question.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sense some written questions coming down the pipeline. I appreciate my last opportunity to ask some questions. You heard from this side of the House, you heard will the bleeding stop? Can you assure us, we heard responses, expectation it will be open, we can complete it, and always there could be circumstances. I'm going to make this a very simple question to the Minister. Can the Minister guarantee to the people of the Northwest Territories that this will be the final supplement asked by this government to complete the Deh Cho Bridge?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I could never guarantee that. What I can guarantee is we're doing our utmost to ensure that that bridge is completed in November, that we're protecting the public purse and we're moving this forward and we're not looking back.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 105-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Transportation's reply to one of my questions was that it wasn't going to cost any more money. I think my colleague Mr. Dolynny tried to bring up that issue a little more clearly, but we didn't get any clear answer. My next question for the Minister of Transportation is: What's the point of having a negotiated contract when we're asking for somewhere between \$7.2 million and \$9.5 million more, and explain to maybe the House why that isn't actually costing more money, because it sure sounds like real money and new money to the taxpayer?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. David Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In negotiating a way forward, and negotiating with Ruskin on the completion of the Deh Cho Bridge, I mentioned this earlier in response to another question, if we don't open the bridge in November, it's an immediate \$9 million hit to the Government of the Northwest Territories. What we've done is negotiated our way out of a number of construction claims on the project that run in the millions of dollars, somewhere probably around \$10 million. This way we're going to move forward. Yes, it is

going to cost us some more money, but we're getting budget certainty and schedule certainty, and we know what we need to get the project done. That's the most important thing, is that we're protecting the public purse. This is the best decision, best course of action the government can take on the project at this date.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'm trying to get a sense of who is actually in the driver's seat of this particular problem. The Minister has just said if we don't meet the fall deadline, it's going to cost us \$9 million. He says we have to pay potentially up to \$10 million to make sure we comply. I'm confused that the negotiated contract isn't being implemented. Did Ruskin agree, if we paid more money, they would comply with the original direction provided by Associated Engineers to comply with the fall deadline, again, if we paid more money?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** It became clear in March that Ruskin would not be able to complete the bridge in November. We entered into a series of negotiations between the contractor and the Government of the Northwest Territories that would see the negotiated and outstanding construction claims and would ensure that the project was complete in November. I'm not sure if I can make that any more clear than that.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Maybe I can't make it any more clear from this side of the House, which is what's wrong with our contract in this particular regard? We keep asking why doesn't the department, and use our legal division in the justice system to implement and force this contractor to comply with the contract. The simple ask is this: What's the problem with our contract that we're being held hostage by paying more?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** This contract dates back a number of years. I wouldn't be able to comment on the decision of the previous government.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These words will sound familiar to the Minister, but what's the point of having a contract if the Minister isn't going to be responsible? Therefore, the question simply is: Who is responsible for the failure of the implementation of this contract? We need a name and someone to take responsibility. I'm sure that sounds familiar.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I'm responsible for decisions made during my tenure as Minister of Transportation. This is a decision that I have made, with the support of my Cabinet colleagues, to move this project forward to ensure that the bridge is complete in November. This was the best course of action that the government could take at this time. It's not easy coming back and asking for more money, but this is the best that we can do. I assure

Members that we are doing all we can to ensure that the project is complete this November and that we get the budget surety and certainty that we're after.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 106-17(3):  
PHARMACEUTICAL  
BULK PURCHASING POLICIES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask questions of the Minister of Health and Social Services on the drug purchasing policies, bulk purchasing policies. I understand that the western provinces announced last year that they had an agreement and arrangement for bulk purchases of drugs to cut down the costs. I'm wondering – we heard yesterday that we are at the table with the provinces – have we signed on with that deal. Are we able to take advantage of that deal as several Members of the House recommended some time before that deal was made?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are part of the rest of the provinces in any sort of bulk purchase of pharmaceuticals that is negotiated.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Is that now in place? What are the provinces that are part of that deal and associated with that? Maybe I'll leave it at that for now.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, that is in place now. All provinces and territories are part of the deal and I believe at this time there is only one drug where they are able to buy in bulk at this time. Just one.

**MR. BROMLEY:** My original question was: Are we part of the western provinces bulk purchasing deal? I assume they have a bulk purchasing deal that deals with more than one drug, but I would also be interested in what our savings are with the one drug the Minister mentioned.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I don't know what the savings are on the bulk purchase of that particular drug to the Northwest Territories. I know there is a plan to add more drugs onto this bulk purchase across the province. I think it's being led by maybe, I believe, British Columbia that has the lead role, but I wasn't aware that it was only the western provinces. I can get that information on that specific project and let the Member know.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for those comments. I have to say

that it's very upsetting, that despite this opportunity being brought up repeatedly by this side of the House, that we are not taking advantage of these opportunities. I would like to get full information provided by the Minister on what exactly we are doing, what agreements we're part of now, what our plan is in the future, and why we are not part of the western Ministers bulk purchasing plan that would yield significant savings. Would the Minister commit to providing that in lieu of the lack of action on this?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I know that the department is developing a Pharmaceutical Strategy for the NWT health system, so I'm sure that I would be able to get the information. Because I don't have the information here specific to the western provinces bulk purchase of drugs doesn't mean that we're not engaged in it. What I do know is that we're engaged with the federal one, and from what I heard was that at this time it's some process to add drugs to this and at this time there is only one that they're able to achieve across the territory. But if the western provinces are moving through quicker and they're having better success, then I'm sure we're a part of that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 107-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions as well today for the Minister of Transportation. I have to say, when I heard his Minister's statement yesterday, I was dismayed at the news that it contained, and I also, like many Members over here, feel that this project has been, somebody used the term boondoggle awhile ago. It's been a boondoggle from the start.

**AN HON. MEMBER:** The Minister.

**MS. BISARO:** Yes, it could have been the Minister. I feel that we've been in this position a number of times before and we're now over a barrel again. I think some Members may know the term BOHICA – bend over here it comes again. I feel that's where we are.

I'd like to ask the Minister if he can explain to the public how we got to this place where we are. How we got to a situation where we are again having to pay more money. A year ago or so we were asked for money, we gave up more money. As a government and as Members we approved it, and things were rosy then, everything was going to be wonderful. We are now in this situation. How did we get here?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, many of the decisions the Member talks

about were decisions of previous governments and, yes, some people ask questions and some remain silent when decisions are made by government, and that happens. We got to the position we're in today. The original budget was \$165 million. During the life of the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly there was a decision to put another \$15 million into the project. Late last year, because of a year-long delay, there was another \$10 million decision, and today we're faced with the \$7.2 million to \$9.5 million ask of government, to see the completion of the project. Again, we've negotiated. In that settlement we've negotiated an end to the construction claims on that project. It is, for us, a way forward and we have to continue looking forward and not backwards. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I'm hearing the same thing over and over. I'm hearing we have to get the project done, we have to move forward. I agree, but I don't necessarily agree that we need to spend more money to do it. I have the same question that has already been asked and I have yet to hear an answer that makes any sense to me. We had, apparently, a negotiated, guaranteed price for this particular project. Sometimes the parameters change. I understand that. But I would like to know from the Minister what happened to that negotiated guaranteed price. Why has it gone out the window? What changed that made us need to spend more money? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Again, the decision to negotiate the construction contract originally with Ruskin was not a decision that I made. I'm responsible for decisions that I'm making and this Cabinet is making in regard to this project. Again, in answering other Members, it's quite clear, if you look at the options that presented themselves, what this government should do. I'm not sure what Members opposite would consider a prudent thing to do. Just throw our hands up and let the project mire in this long, drawn out claims and fight with the contractor, and be locked in a legal battle for years to come and the bridge not be opened this fall, or we could put our differences aside, come up with a negotiated settlement that would see the completion of the bridge and negotiate the claims that were outstanding, and not be faced with at least a \$9 million hit when the bridge wouldn't open this November. Our intent is to open the bridge in November. That is the way forward and we will continue to pursue that. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I'm not sure if I should thank the Minister or not, but I appreciate the answer. I am still struggling to understand. I haven't yet heard what has changed that requires us to spend more money. We had a contract and there was a price attached to that contract. In the terms of the contract, in the parameters of the project, what has changed that now requires us to spend 10 million more dollars? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Like I mentioned earlier in answering other questions, in March it became apparent that the project would not be able to be completed in November. We had to go back. We had to look at a way to ensure that the project would be complete in November. We didn't really want to look at another year's delay in the project which, undoubtedly, would cost us more money. There were a number of outstanding claims associated with the project. This wraps it all up. It gives budget surety. It gives schedule surety so that we can see the completion of the Deh Cho Bridge. We're looking forward to the day when traffic can begin to move across that bridge sometime in November. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard the Minister say probably three or four times now this afternoon that we have schedule certainty and budget certainty. I'm having a very hard time believing those words. We've had budget certainty for probably the last three years and we've gone from \$165 million to \$202 million.

My last question to the Minister, we talked previously in the government, and it might be a previous Minister, but I will ask this Minister if he will commit to a full-cost accounting of the project once it is completed. All the in-kind man hours that have been donated, will he share that full-cost accounting with the Members and with the public? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** While I say we need to look forward, and I do believe wholeheartedly, we have to see this project through to completion, and we're going to do that, once the project is complete, and I've made this commitment to the House in a previous sitting, is that we will go back, we'll take an entire look at the project from its inception, so that we can learn some valuable lessons in other future large infrastructure projects around this territory. There has to be lessons learned. I believe when we go back and take a look at the process, how things unfolded and how they came together, I think that's what Members are looking for, that's what the public is looking for, and I've already made a commitment to do that. But right now our focus should be on completing that project so we can move on and get that work done. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 108-17(3):  
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT  
COST OVERRUNS

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on the questions by my colleagues on

the Deh Cho Bridge and ask questions of the Minister of Transportation.

I'd like to start by saying that I agree that his project has been an unmitigated disaster from the get-go, and there are some good reasons for that, and we have now, as a House, put in place some policies that will help guard, to some degree, against future recurrences. I'd like to start with ATCON, the original contractor. Can the Minister assure me that we are completely severed now and there are no ongoing unresolved claims with ATCON, the original contractor, and we're done on at least that front? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There remains one outstanding claim with ATCON that the department continues to pursue and look for a negotiated settlement to that claim.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Weledeh appreciates that response. So we have at least one other source of surprise cost coming forward in the future. Are there any other further risks that have not been mentioned today that the Minister would care to outline for us at this time?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's question. No, there wouldn't be. We still do have the sum. It was about \$13 million from the Government of New Brunswick. We have remaining in that account about \$7 million. That is to address deficiencies or issues after the bridge is complete. We will be able to look at some of that work. It is minor work. That funding is in place to allow that to happen. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Speaker, how long after the bridge is completed will toll collection begin? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, the rate we are going, it will start on day one. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure that was the right phrasing the Minister used there, the rate we are going. I probably wouldn't refer to that, but I appreciate the comment.

People of the Northwest Territories, as is clear from the comments of my colleagues today, have foregone a lot of infrastructure options, a lot of provision of important services. These costs will continue to accrue as we pay back the hundreds of millions of dollars in interest and so on. Will the Minister commit to avoiding any such ventures in the future where costs are for a project predicted to continue to rise way beyond the original estimates where the risks are extreme and uncertain and where there is marginal economic benefits being

enjoyed by the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's question. I think there is a lot to learn. I commented on Ms. Bisaro's questions about a complete look back at the project once it's complete. We need to ensure the upfront work is done so that we know what we are getting ourselves into. That's what we intend to do on future projects, is do that upfront work so that we can ascertain costs and risks before we venture in. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 8, oral questions, on the orders of the day. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent denied

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

### Tabling of Documents

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 22-17(3): PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECTS ANNUAL REPORT 2011

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Public Works and Services Energy Conservation Projects Annual Report 2011." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Blake.

### First Reading of Bills

#### BILL 3: AN ACT TO AMEND THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

**MR. BLAKE:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, 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; Tabled Document 17-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 7, 2010-2011; Tabled Document 18-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011; Tabled Document 19-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 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. By the authority given to me as Speaker pursuant to Motion 2-17(3), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Ms. Bisaro in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** I call Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of documents to consider here. We have Tabled Document 2-17(3), Tabled Document 3-17(3), Tabled Document 17-17(3), Tabled Document 18-17(3), Tabled Document 19-17(3), Bill 1, Committee Report 1-17(3) and Committee Report 2-17(3). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 3-17(3), NWT Main Estimates 2012-13, to continue deliberation of Health and Social Services, then on to Executive, Aboriginal Affairs, Finance and the Legislative Assembly.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We will resume after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Okay, I'll call committee to order. We are on section 8, Health and Social Services. Mr. Beaulieu, do you have witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you would please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu, would you mind introducing your witnesses, please?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With me today to my right is Deputy Minister Debbie DeLancey, Health and Social Services, and to my left, Assistant Deputy Minister Derek Elkin, Health and Social Services.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Committee, we are on page 8-17, activity summary, Health and Social Services, program delivery support, operations expenditures summary, \$34.772. On my list from yesterday is Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is in regard to population health, the discrepancies between the amounts here in that line. In 2011-12 the main estimates were at \$3.678 million. The revised estimates ended up being \$6.391 million. I was wondering what the increase was, and then what was the justification behind making the '12-13 Main Estimates at \$4.426 million. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is the supplementary appropriation that comes to the Assembly from the department every year and would be the Canadian Blood Services and people that go for southern treatment. Adults and children that are in southern treatment are three of, I think, the largest costs from that supplementary appropriation.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you. If that's the case, from the main to the revised there was a difference of \$2.713 million. Is that something that we'll be looking at possibly revising for the main estimates for this fiscal year under population health? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. We do come back for those costs with a supplementary appropriation every year, depending on the need.

**MR. MOSES:** No further question. I just needed some clarity and I thank the Minister and his staff for that clarity. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Page 17, Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome back to the Minister and the Department of Health. I need some clarifications on some of the numbers on this page here under the word "other." Can I get a better explanation what that encompasses? We see a substantial decrease from the revised estimates from 2011-2012.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you. Just to clarify, the overall other expenses or the detailed line, other? I just want to clarify.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. Yes, I have no problem clarifying. The 2011-2012 revised estimates of \$11.874 million, main estimates proposed \$9.295 million.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you. That's the roll-up of the item that the Minister just previously talked about. So that is related to the supp appropriation related to the Canadian Blood Services, blood products.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. I believe that this is involving a number of, or a few potential patients and if these patients continue to reside in the Northwest Territories and give indication that they'll reside in the Northwest Territories, my question is why can't the department continue with a main estimate calculation given the fact that the treatment is relatively the same year after year.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Last year a lot of this cost was driven by two babies that required blood services, expensive blood services. So it's quite possible that this coming year that cost may not be there, but we don't know that at this time.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. I guess it's a simple ask to the department, I mean, if there's an open dialogue with the parents of these patients, if they give indication that they're going to reside or continue to reside in the Northwest Territories, wouldn't it be prudent to save a lot of grief in creating a supplementary appropriation when we can actually put it in the main estimates at this juncture?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. I'll have the assistant deputy minister respond to that detail item.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you. In terms of being able to forecast the number of clients that are accessing blood products during the year, that's something we find out from the authorities after the fact. Again, due to client confidentiality and transferring of that kind of data between the authorities, usually at the end of the year we find out what their expenses are. So, again, we don't know whether or not we're going to have this under expenses for the upcoming year.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Okay, I'm getting a bit confused here. We're doing a budget here for the 2012-2013 area and we're not going retroactively in time, we're going forward in time, which means if we know forward in time we have patients that are going to be under our care and attention, could we not put

this in the main estimates and not have deviations and having to have supplemental appropriations that happen immediately after this process? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. Much like the supplementary appropriations that go forward for firefighting, the Department of Finance would prefer to not put these types of costs in the base. So only when it's verified that the money has been used, then we get it through a supplementary appropriation as a standard process.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I don't understand the direct link between firefighters and firefighting which we do not know and something that we do know. I'll leave it at that, but I'm going to ask the department moving forward to take a look at this because, again, comparing this to firefighting, these are two different types of entities.

With that, my next question involves the contract services and the details of other expenses. We see a drop from the \$5.776 million down to \$3.028 million. Can we get an explanation as to that drop? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you. Again, that item is related to the \$1.9 million in the supplementary appropriation related to Canadian Blood Services. That's the line item that it starts on.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Okay, so we're seeing two different charge items dealing with the same entity, again creating confusion for those that would have to look at these estimates year after year and, again, creating a lot of extra work. Even by me talking for 10 minutes on this, this is creating work. Will the department put some commitment moving forward that these types of items be looked at that would be encompassed within the main estimates?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Department of Health and Social Services is prepared to go back to the Department of Finance to see if the number can be put into the base so that this doesn't occur in the future.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** No further questions, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Questions? Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to follow up on my earlier questions on the telehealth infrastructure and use of the technology. I appreciated the Minister's information that we actually do have telehealth infrastructure in all 33

communities. That was really good news. I'm wondering, first of all, what activities or programs are we currently using that equipment for.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have the breakdown of proportion but we use that service for a number of clinical activities including speech and language pathology, psychiatry, family counselling. It's also used for training sessions for authority staff. It's occasionally used to arrange visits for families with patients in other centres and very occasionally for meetings.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That's quite a list and I imagine the list could only grow as we get familiar and more proficient and the technology improves. Thank you for that information. I'm wondering, given that the equipment is in all 33 communities, are we fully using it. Are all 33 communities fully up to snuff and engaged in implementing this technology to its fullest capacity?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the 33 communities we have 73 locations using it but we could expand the use of this technology. There is room to expand the use of this technology, for sure.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Just to probe that a little bit, that could be interpreted with different degrees here, so I'm interested in... Let's start with the basic use for the most fundamental things on the list. Is every community capable of using it for speech pathology sorts of work and for counselling, say?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, for both speech pathology and counselling.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That tells me that the basic skills are there and engaged and I'm sure as people get more familiar, they will work towards the upper level of achievement as was the basis of my question. That's all I have on that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Page 8-17, Health and Social Services, activity summary, program delivery support, operations expenditure summary, \$34.772 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 8-18, Health and Social Services, activity summary, program delivery support, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$18.197 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 8-19, Health and Social Services, activity summary, information item, program delivery support, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 8-21, Health and Social Services, activity summary, health services programs, operations expenditure summary, \$192.989 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. First, I just noticed that the NWT hospitals funding is down \$7 million. Maybe I could start with getting an explanation of what's happening there. I know our expenses have not changed there.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That is the reallocation of funding between the authorities that saw the move from the 2011-2012 Main Estimates to the revised, so that it went up in the hospitals because that's where the deficits were. The reallocation from the other health and social services authorities and then we're back on budget from back to the main estimates compared to the other main estimates there's a slight increase.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I understand that now. I just wanted to follow up a little bit on the physicians versus the nurse practitioners to make sure I have this right. My understanding is from the Minister's discussion, I think it might have been with my colleague Mr. Yakeleya, that there is now or there's an intent to provide some flexibility in how authorities allocate their physician dollars, to some degree, to incorporate the possibility of nurse practitioners allocating some of the current or past physician dollars towards the nurse practitioners, given that we often fail to hire the physicians for the positions we have.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The process that we would be following is first providing direction to JLC, the Joint Leadership Council, of all of the authorities and asking them to come up with a physician recruitment plan and look at the flexibility of putting the possibility of allowing, within that plan, a role for nurse practitioners. Then once we get the plan, which we're expecting this fall, in September, actually, we would then take that funding model for physicians, or the physician recruitment model, back to the Financial Management Board because the money that's in physician funding is approved by the Financial Management Board.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Is there a target in terms of the portion? Are we asking for sort of a 20 percent flexibility for nurse practitioners? That sort of thing. Do we have an idea yet of what we're looking for there?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** There's no target at this time. We don't know. We know that a couple of authorities have used nurse practitioners and are very interested in building that flexibility into their funding, but we don't have a target percent at this time.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate that information. It helps give me some perspective. I wonder if the Minister would know what the experience is locally, even at the Primary Care Clinic. I know from talking to constituents that they really appreciate the nurse practitioner availability, and often, I can't give you a proportion, but often are very happy to go to nurse practitioners as opposed to a physician. Is that experience significant, do you think, within even the Yellowknife situation, and would the thinking extend to even an enhanced use of nurse practitioners in Yellowknife?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The experience for the patients seem to be very positive in Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife as indicated, and anywhere, even in the smaller health centres, where we're using nurse practitioners, it has gone very well.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That's really it. I guess the last part of my question was, does the Minister also see this enhancement being made available in the regional centres such as Yellowknife and the communities that he mentioned?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The request to the JLC is based on doing something at the regional centres and Yellowknife.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Next I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is going to be in regard to the NWT hospitals. I see from the main estimates 2011-2012 there has been an increase to the main estimates in 2012-2013 in the amount of \$1.832 million. Knowing for one that the Beaufort-Delta Health Authority runs on a deficit of about \$3 million, and that's been something that's been consistent over the last few years, and that we have the Yellowknife authority here that also runs on a deficit, I believe, knowing that and accumulating the costs and something that's been trending I guess over the last few years, can the Minister give me some details as to why these deficits are occurring?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The primary factor behind the deficits at the Beaufort-Delta authority has been nurse and front-line staff overtime, callback and relief, as well as some costs related to physician services, but less so. As well, another factor which is dealt with in this year's budget is they were currently funded at a 17 percent benefits and the cost of benefits is actually closer to 23 percent. In the 24/7 operations they have to incur those full costs so we're addressing that in this year's budget.

**MR. MOSES:** Thanks for the description on why these deficits have accrued. Knowing that, would the Minister look at putting those into the budget for the next year and the years following? It's

something that has been trending over the years and it's not changing. If we put it into the budget, we wouldn't have to be coming back for supps for future and it would give the authorities a little bit more breathing room, a little bit less stress knowing that they do have the funds to do their job and not be worried about going over budget and getting into that deficit.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are in an ongoing process of trying to base fund the authorities appropriately. As Mr. Elkin said, this year's budget does include some base adjustments for Beaufort-Delta and Stanton to deal with issues like unfunded staffing issues. We are continuing to work with each of the authorities to do the detailed analysis, and as we do that we bring the business case forward to FMB to seek forced growth, so that we hope over the next couple of years we can actually get the authorities more right funded so that they are not constantly incurring deficits for ongoing costs that can be anticipated.

**MR. MOSES:** No further questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Next is Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have questions for the Minister and deputy minister but, unfortunately, some of these questions pre-date their positions and for that I do apologize. However, I know that the accountability is in play, because I will be pulling questions out of the Auditor General's report that was tabled here in March of 2011, so it is very relevant in the questions in terms of what work has been done by the department since the tabled report. Within the parameters of the report, it was very well documented that there was contribution agreements in place with a number of the health authorities but there was lacking performance agreements. My question has to do with performance agreements. Has the Minister, has the department rectified signing all authorities making them accountable for the performance of their budgets to make sure that they are delivering all the programs that they are receiving money for?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We haven't done that yet. We set up accountability steering committees with the authorities to develop this.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I would assume that the Minister and the deputy minister, who is here, are much in line that this is a very, very important part of delivering health care to the Northwest Territories. Giving authorities money without having any strings

attached really puts the delivery of patient care at risk, which leads me to my next question.

At the same time the Auditor General took an extensive look at how we deliver our services for diabetes and it was indicated at that time "that the department does not use administrative data to monitor diabetes programming, nor does it systematically collect data on diabetes prevention and treatment results." With that comment, can we receive some assurances that disease states like diabetes, because this is an Auditor General report that has been in the hands of the department now for some time, have we made strides to deal with the comment that was just read? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We are working on that. The department and the authorities had entered into pilot projects on chronic disease management with the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation providing expert support and an evaluation framework. There is a pilot project underway right now to address some of the concerns raised by the Auditor General, and it's taking place in Yellowknife, in Behchoko and Norman Wells, with a view to then evaluating it by this September and applying the findings more broadly throughout the system.

The other tool that we are working on that will help to address the Auditor General's recommendations is the implementation of the electronic medical record on a system-wide basis, because the electronic medical record then does provide one place to both put reminders and clinical practice guidelines for diabetes, and then to track that those things have been addressed on a timely basis.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I do appreciate the response. However, I do have to make known that the department did agree with establishing a chronic disease model and having that first draft developed in the 2011-2012 budget year, and that there was going to be a primary community care draft and response back. It appears that the department made promises to the Auditor General back then and is being very slow on delivery.

Again, I appreciate what I'm hearing, but my question would be, if I picked another disease state, cardiovascular, or if I picked a myriad of cancer issues, would the department be in a similar position? Is the department making strides to make sure, as I heard earlier, we still don't have performance agreements in place to deliver these programs, but can we get some assurances that we are working towards resolution, given that the Auditor General basically cleared a perfect path for us to follow? Thank you.

**MS. DELANCEY:** The work that we're doing on chronic disease management with the CHSRF

focuses on three areas. It focuses on diabetes, it focuses on renal care, it focuses on mental health, but the intent is that the mechanisms that are developed and tested and the best practices will then be applied to a number of chronic diseases such as the ones the Member has mentioned. It is a process that is rolling out, sometimes more slowly than we would like, but it's work that's being done by practitioners throughout the system that are doing this in addition to their day job. We think that's important because when frontline staff are involved, they understand the process and we get buy in.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I'll be coming back to the Auditor General report here later on in this budget process.

My next question has to do with medical equipment. In the line entry here we have as medical equipment under \$50,000. There seems to be a slight increase. However, it is well known that we have, especially at the territorial hospital, a number of large pieces of equipment that are nearing their lifecycles. A lot of this major equipment was purchased in the late '90s, early 2000's. Some of this equipment is now entering 12 years of lifecycle and needs to be looked at. I'm speaking specifically to things like the CT scan. I'm thinking about things like the large mammography units that were purchased back then.

I don't see much in the budget here to deal with those large ticket items above that \$50,000 mark. Does the department have a plan of action? Is there an approved capital list of these products, and if so, can they share some of those top line items that could be plaguing the people of the Northwest Territories in either replacing or enhancing the current delivery of health care services across the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you. First, the item in the budget here, items under \$50,000, is a slight increase. We have a comprehensive medical equipment evergreening plan that's managed by the biomedical department at Stanton. Every five years we update our evergreening plan. This increase reflects our forecast for the next five years of what our annual costs of evergreening minor medical equipment.

Last fall, as part of the '12-13 capital plan, we have approved about \$3.2 million of a five-year evergreening plan for our major medical equipment. We did a comprehensive review of forecasting what our annual costs would be to evergreen all of our major equipment. Items that are planned for the '12-13 year across the health system include endoscopy, physiological monitoring, anesthesia equipment, operating microscopes and clinical chemistry analyzers. We, again, do bulk purchasing between all the major facilities, Stanton, Inuvik, Fort

Smith and Hay River, to get economies of scale when we're purchasing. Then we have a list, again, going for the next five years of all our major pieces of equipment, and then we'll renew that evergreening plan every five years to make sure we have enough funding in the system.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I appreciate the details. Would the Minister or the department consider sharing the findings of this evergreen plan, sharing their approved capital list for outdated or near lifecycle of major capital equipment, and if this could be submitted to the Social Programs committee so we can keep a monitoring of this as these large ticket items appear over the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, we can share that information with the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to get a little bit more clarification on questions I had asked yesterday in regard to the seven positions. There were four positions that were allocated through the THSSI funding, and I believe that Ms. DeLancey mentioned that three were being staffed right now. I did have a question as to the plans that the department has after two years, 2014, when those jobs do expire. I know she mentioned, I think, there were some in the shared services and administration, and the work that they do, and that we just didn't want to leave that onto the wayside. Can she clarify? What's the plan the department has in regard to this funding and if they'd be willing to look at funding this position within their own department should the funding not come, when the funding expires? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There are four THSSI positions that we are in the process of filling. Three of them are deemed new positions because one was replacing a position that was an existing position. They all relate to implementing change in the system, the shared services, the Medical Travel Policy, the Medical Travel Program redesign, the territorial support network. We are looking at having the bulk of that work completed within two years. So as I said yesterday, if THSSI funding is continued, if we're successful in negotiating an extension and the work's not done, those terms might be extended, but they are not positions that are deemed indeterminate, so they're not positions that we would be funding from within.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Mr. Moses has no further questions. Committee, we are on page 8-21,

activity summary, Health and Social Services, health services programs, operations expenditure summary, \$192.989 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Page 8-22, activity summary, Health and Social Services, health services programs, grants and contributions, grants, total grants \$40,000. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Contributions, total contributions, \$149.419 million. Total grants and contributions, \$149.459 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** We are agreed. Thank you, committee. Page 8-25, activity summary, Health and Social Services, supplementary health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$26.243 million. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, probably a clarification in order. We know that the details of other expenses both come to the same total from the revised estimates of 2011-12 to \$10.471 million. Could the department indicate why the insertions of the numbers and the mannerisms that we see here before us? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Thank you. We have moved remaining administration of the Extended Health Benefits Program from the department to Alberta Blue Cross, so it is going from a fees and payments to a contract with Alberta Blue Cross. So we are just moving how we pay the money out.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Could the department give us more details? Is this the long-term contract we have gone in with Blue Cross? Are there measures reporting for performance? Maybe a little bit more details in terms of what this new relationship with Blue Cross is all about.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Madam Chair, the contract is achieved through competitive tender. We don't have the term of the contract with us here today.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, I would just assume that the Minister and the department have no problems sharing the terms of the contract with the Social Programs committee.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The department has no problem sharing that information with Social Programs.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I appreciate it. Thanks to the Minister for providing that. Extended benefits or

extended health benefits has gone through its ups and downs over the years with the obvious relocation of the office to Inuvik. The Minister has no doubt heard discussions that I know I have had with the Minister in terms of improvements that could be done with extended health benefits. I agree moving the processing of this to the Alberta Blue Cross Adjudication Program is definitely a step in the right direction, but there is an approval process for those items that don't fall under the formulary. These are so-called special items. Can the Minister indicate what improvements have been undertaken to streamline the process for the people of the Northwest Territories who are waiting for items that are not considered on the formulary but are definitely needed for either disease condition, medical condition or prosthetic or medical device? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Madam Chair, we have made no improvements to that system so far, but we do have it in our work plan for this fiscal year.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, I appreciate the Minister making comment to that. Further to that, would the Minister agree in principle to work with the Social Programs committee to work on solutions, communication, profiling that with community to get feedback from community as we make improvements to help streamline this service for the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Madam Chair, the department agrees that we will work with the Standing Committee on Social Programs to make those improvements.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. We are on page 8-25, supplementary health programs, activity summary, Health and Social Services, operations expenditure summary, \$26.243 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Page 8-26, activity summary, Health and Social Services, supplementary health programs, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$15.772 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. We will move to page 8-29, activity summary, Health and Social Services, community health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$87.998 million. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just some clarifications on some of the numbers on this page under the term "contract services and other expenses." Can we get an explanation to the decrease of slightly under \$2 million? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Madam Chair, I will have the assistant deputy minister respond to that question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Elkin.

**MR. ELKIN:** Madam Chair, the decrease from the revised main estimates to the 2012-13 mains is due to a \$2.1 million supplementary appropriation related to southern placements for children. Again, we came forward last year, after we knew what our placements were, for supplementary estimates. Again, we will do the same this year, but it is not built into the base.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Elkin. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, again, I don't want to belittle the situation again here, but I'm trying to deal with a set of books that prevent us from having to come back time and time again for supps and supplementary asks from the government. Do we foresee that this is going to be a continuum for the supplemental on contract services year to year during the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Madam Chair, we would agree again to put this item into the base, in consultation with the Financial Management Board.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, I appreciate the department's agreeing in terms of making this process as streamlined as possible.

My next question has to do with program delivery details. Although slight in nature, we do see a decrease in children and family services where they predominantly show a steady increase over a number of budgets. Can the department give us an indication why there was a slight decrease in that budget? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Madam Chair, it is the same item. Residential care children southern placement is the majority of this increase.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Madam Chair, I think I'm looking at the line entry of \$21,682 which is a decrease from last year. Can I get clarification from the Minister as to why there is a decrease?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. I think he meant \$21 million. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is a decrease on the revised, because of the system that we are currently discussing. Last year we had the mains and then we went to a supp and it increased. Now we are back to comparing main to

main. It looks like it's a decrease, but it is actually a slight increase from the mains of last year, but a decrease on the revised mains.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I do apologize. I said thousand and it should have been millions, which makes my question that much more relevant. I didn't quite understand that response, but I will look back at Hansard to try to decipher that number.

With prevention and promotion being one of the flagships of this department and the flagships of Cabinet, I can attest that it is also the agreement of Regular Members. Prevention and promotion needs to be looked at. It is disheartening to see that we typically have been spending \$6.2 million-plus in this category and now we see a decrease in this fiscal budget, thereby going against the grain, so to speak, in terms of the message that we are trying to portray to the people of the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister and the department indicate why we are seeing a decrease in an area which is clearly wanted and needed, and we are going backwards in times rather than forwards in times? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Madam Chair, it's a sunset of a strategic initiative. I believe it was the family violence and also the transfer of the Homeless Fund to the NWT Housing Corporation from the Department of Health and Social Services. However, we do have some federal funding. I can have the deputy minister provide detail on the federal funding.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the later section of the main estimates, there is a \$12 million entry for wellness funding that's received from Health Canada, and although there is no new funding for prevention and promotion in this year's budget, we are in the process of working with Health Canada to re-profile how that \$12 million, which is available for Aboriginal communities and First Nations, can be spent. We are moving toward a beginning in the next fiscal year, a five-year agreement that will focus on three key areas: healthy child and youth development, mental wellness and addictions, healthy living and disease prevention. So though we have not included any new GNWT funding and prevention and promotion in the budget, we are working with Health Canada to reallocate funding to prevention and promotion, and the other part of this work is focusing on the development of community wellness plans. We do have a position that's being funded through Health Canada that is out working with community governments to develop wellness plans. This funding will be used to fund those wellness plans on a multi-year basis as opposed to the process now where groups have to come forward every year for proposals. So we are hoping that by using

this federal funding more effectively, we will start to see an increased investment and increased results in the area of prevention and promotion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thanks to the deputy minister for that response. Can the department indicate what our budget last year was in prevention and promotion services in the Department of Health and what it is this year? I'm looking for a percentage of what we spent in our budget in the area of prevention and promotion in the 2011-2012 area and what is that new budget or percent in this year's budget. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thanks, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to have the deputy minister try to respond to that. We may not have the information here.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thanks, Mr. Beaulieu. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We do not have that information with us. One of the challenges, of course, is carving out a definition of what we consider to be prevention and promotion, because the amount that's on this line item is only a small part of what's actually spent within the system. So, for example, it could include immunization programs, it could include some of the work that social workers do. We can certainly attempt to do a calculation and provide it with some definition of what's included.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. I do appreciate the fact that if we can get that information to the Social Programs committee, that would be definitely advisable.

With that in mind, my next question in relationship to that question is how does the Northwest Territories fit vis-à-vis our northern counterparts, vis-à-vis the other provinces across Canada in terms of the percentage of their budgets in the area of prevention and promotion in health, and also could that information be broken down and provided to the committee? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** My understanding is that we are fairly average with that. There are a couple of jurisdictions across the country that have agreed to increase the percentage of their budget towards prevention and promotion and we are trying to do the same as well.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. I do appreciate the Minister striving towards improving that number, but

I believe my question is: Would these numbers in terms of last year to this year in comparison tools to all our territories as well as provinces, could that be made available to the Social Programs committee for evaluation? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, we can make that available to Social Programs for evaluation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Next on the list I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple things. I, too, felt concerned about the decrease in prevention promotion, but I'm glad to hear you're looking at creating some kind of agreement with the wellness funding of \$1,200. That was very good to see.

In terms of adult continuing care, I see that the numbers actually dropped about \$300,000, and with the increase in senior population and limited spaces in long-term care facilities, what does the department have in place to address the growing population of our seniors, as well as lack of space that's provided? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will have the deputy minister respond to that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What appears to be a reduction in funding here is actually because there was some one-time funding provided to one of the authorities to address some contractual pressures. Overall, there is a recognition that we need to do more in this area in terms of continuing care services and beds available, and we are working right now on updating our needs assessment that was done for continuing care a few years ago as a basis for addressing that issue.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you. In this needs assessment, what are you looking at? Are you looking at the amount of applications or requests to go in long-term care facilities, the amount of hospital visits from our senior citizens? What type of criteria are you looking at in this needs assessment, and if it's broken down to regions or communities or even regional centres such as Inuvik? I know there's a waiting list for a long-term care facility in Inuvik or Simpson, or I know they're just getting one in Norman Wells.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you. Very briefly, the Member has touched on some of the key elements. There was a needs assessment done in 2009. It's out of date. We need to look at demographics; we

need to look at exactly hospital visits. We know that, just like southern jurisdictions, we have some people staying in acute care beds in hospitals because they don't have a place to go, a long-term care facility. We're looking at our waiting lists and we're looking at trends for the type of continuing care that's required.

**MR. MOSES:** From the needs assessment of 2009, I'm sure it might have addressed some of those concerns into which regions. We would need more long-term care facilities or extra beds. Were those results particular to those kinds of needs assessment and did the department act on those needs assessments of 2009 into which regions or communities needed the most support? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, our response was the replacement and additional beds to the Jimmy Erasmus Long-Term Care Facility in Behchoko and the Norman Wells 18-bed long-term care facility also. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** The Member for Mackenzie Delta isn't here, but I'll speak on his behalf with the elders facilities in Aklavik being shut down. It has increased the amount of people wanting to get into a long-term care facility in the hospital, which does put a backlog and a waiting list for others that do need to get in there. So does the Minister have any plans in how to address this regional issue? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I'd like to defer the question to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik, one part of it was used by independent long-term residents in Aklavik. The other part Health and Social Services had had before. Our plan is to convert that into more units for independent seniors. We plan on starting the work this summer, getting the initial plan there and get the work started, then hopefully have tenants in there before Christmas. That's the plan for the Joe Greenland Centre right now.

I need to stress that the Joe Greenland Centre is not closing down. The Housing Corporation owns the building and we're doing some renovations to allow more seniors to live in there.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** I think I'll say on this topic here and in regard to the seniors' independence, that's great to see, but we're also talking about health care and care of our seniors and the seniors that can't live

the independent lifestyles and they're living at home with their families and putting stress on their families. We've had requests to find spaces for them. When we know there's backlog and there's no way we can do it, it just adds more to the problem. I was just wondering if the Minister had any solutions to the situation in the Beaufort-Delta region as it pertains to elders who need ongoing care at this time.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We do recognize that we do have a gap in some places in our continuum of care. We have home care services, which we are trying to expand for adults who are living independently. There is some seniors independent living; there is long-term care facilities. But what the Member is talking about is really an assisted or supportive living, which is somewhere in between. It's for seniors who don't need to be in long-term care but need to be in a facility where there is some support. We are in the early stages of having some discussions with the Housing Corporation to see if we can work together to start looking at a program to address that gap.

**MR. MOSES:** I was going to switch over to another area here. Awhile back we had sort of a press release of this Betty House here in Yellowknife, and under the activity description for community health programs, programs related to emergency shelters and counselling, what is the department doing to provide counselling, therapy and services to Betty House, in particular?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that aside from the capped contribution from the Government of the Northwest Territories there are no plans at this time to have any O and M spending on Betty House.

**MR. MOSES:** Seeing that it's a new facility and we do have a lot of high incident rates of clientele that do go there, I think it would be in the best interest of this department to work at bringing those services into the House. Some type of counselling or some type of partnership where they can assist these clientele with the help and support that they need. Is that something he might be bringing into the next business plan for the next fiscal year?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The person services that may be needed for individuals living in Betty House can be provided by the YK Health and Social Services Authority, like any other member of the city of Yellowknife. That part we can still cover. I was more or less responding to the actual operations and counselling services that may have to be available within the envelope of Betty House, but I also understand that this is what the Member

is referring to, then we will take that back to the Department of Finance to have that discussion to see if there can be money found in that area. At this time we had not planned on participating in that way.

**MR. MOSES:** That's great news and that's great to see that initiative and working together in that area. There was another mention here of treatment services related to children, youth and families. My colleague talked about child and family services earlier. In another aspect, the Community of Hay River Interagency Committee just had a meeting not too long, and they talked about treatment facilities or treatment programs for youth. We didn't get a chance to bring them up in some of the business plans, but it is something that the community of Hay River is very strong about.

They've really gone through a lot in the last couple of years. They've taken great strides in creating awareness around the alcohol and drug problems in the community, and it's something that really needs to be supported.

I'm just wondering if the department has taken any consideration or action into some of the recommendations that came out of that. If there are any youth treatment programs, whether it's counselling, therapy, I'm just wondering what kinds of programs the department offers to youth. Not just in one of our communities but throughout the Northwest Territories. To our small communities, to our regional communities, to the capital here in Yellowknife.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Youth are counselled also with community counselling programs. We have about \$6 million in the Community Counselling Program across the territory, and they counsel adults and youth alike.

As far as actual youth facility infrastructure or building for youth treatment facilities, the department hasn't looked at that closely. We do know that the treatment of youth in a facility environment or in a treatment centre, the numbers for the territory are very low. I think we've treated 12 youth in three fiscal years, the past three fiscal years, because the majority of situations with youth are that they must volunteer to go to treatment in order to make this viable. Most youth that do go to treatment are forced into treatment. Unlike adults, you don't usually come out and say that they have an issue, an addiction issue or other types of issues. Nats'ejee K'eh is the treatment centre for adults. We actually thought about looking at that facility and saying maybe, if there can be one program per year or something, working with Health Canada on developing a youth treatment program within that building. Right now the past fiscal year Nats'ejee K'eh ran nine different programs for adults. I think five treatment programs for female and five for male. We're looking at if that is the right

mix and if there would be a requirement for an actual one of those programs to be a youth treatment program within that facility and Nats'ejee K'eh will work with Health Canada to develop an actual treatment program for youth.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Time is up. We'll move on to Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to ask, to start off with, if we know currently how many children are in care outside of the Northwest Territories and how many are in care inside the Northwest Territories.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We know the number, of course, but we don't have that info with us.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I wonder, I know the Minister is aware, having been on the Social Programs committee and our review of the act, that these are important statistics to monitor and I'd appreciate it if he could supply those numbers to committee. They are important for monitoring and seeing how well we're doing. They're relevant in this case. Another number is for the children in care in the Northwest Territories, what number are in their own home communities versus which number are not. I wouldn't expect the Minister to have those at the tip of his fingers, but again, I know he understands the importance of those numbers and why they're relevant. I'd appreciate those numbers if possible.

I'd like to move on to the community child and family service committees. I'd like to find out what the department will do different, given the failure to establish any last year, and recognizing the challenges that the Minister has spoken to, what will be done differently? What is the total number of committees that we're trying to get on the ground this fiscal year?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We will provide youth in care outside the NWT and youth in care within the NWT to Standing Committee on Social Programs.

The child and family services committees across the territory, the main thing we are doing different is we've hired a coordinator, who starts this month, who will be going to the communities. We've had our staff going into the communities and right now we're trying to get the one committee that was working during our review of this child and family services committee in Fort McPherson. We feel that is going to start up again. We are fairly enthusiastic about the results when we had our staff member go into McPherson to work with them. This coordinator is going to be working in the child and family services and our target will be the five additional to the Fort McPherson. We'd like to do five additional. If possible, we're going to try to do as many as possible.

We have the task of dealing with health and social services authorities at the regional level and we have advised them that we are interested in seeing those child and family services committees getting off the ground as soon as possible. So there may be more than five, but our target is five at this time.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for that information. I appreciate that. I know the Minister is aware that there is quite a range across communities and if it happens that we can focus on those with the greatest interest and concern, that would be great. Just one specific, I know my community of Detah did express an interest to the interim Minister of Health and Social Services for a presentation with respect to this. I don't know whether this Minister has had a chance to follow up, but hopefully that didn't fall through the cracks. I just thought I'd mention that.

I guess, just sort of continuing on a similar vein with respect to the review of the Child and Family Services Act that was done, will we be seeing legislation coming forward to address the recommendations that were made by that Social Programs committee on the Child and Family Services Act during this fiscal year?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Our intention is to go to the community, working with the authorities to go to the communities where the need is greatest, where there are most kids in care. Also, in as far as Detah goes, we have a meeting set up for fall. In fact, I'm personally going to be meeting in Detah with the CEO from the health and social services authority from YK for this specific item. I will just have the deputy minister respond on the work that we're hoping to do in the revision to the Child and Family Services Act.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the legislative revisions to the Child and Family Services Act, we are looking at them and we're planning to bring a legislative proposal forward in the next fiscal year, 2013-14.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the comments from the executives. I will look forward to that. There were quite a number of recommendations made at the operational level as well. I know the Minister is aware. From things as mundane as the prehistoric computer system that our social workers are forced to use and deal with, to their despair, to even recommendations related to foster care and so on. Where are we at on those and can we expect some of those to be addressed this fiscal year? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The department is willing and prepared to provide our response to the report,

and I'm not talking about the initial response, but any actions that we have taken in relation to the 73 recommendations made by the committee to the committee.

**MR. BROMLEY:** One specific: Did they replace the prehistoric computer system?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I don't think that has happened yet.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I know this department has a really good anti-smoking campaign. I would suggest that one of the biggest things they could do, having observed social workers, is replace the prehistoric computer system as an effective anti-smoking mechanism.

I'd like to move on. This committee made recommendations on a community model for an addictions treatment process, relatively recently, that has a high potential for success in our communities based on its northern design that was tried out in I believe it was Old Crow in the Yukon and so on. Will this budget be supporting the application of this process in our communities this year?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** That is not likely. We have evaluated the program and the success rate is low. Only three individuals that had attended the treatment were still sober after 12 months.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Of course, there is a second number that's important there, three out of how many, and that needs to be compared to what I understand is a 4 or 5 percent success rate for other programs. It would be interesting to hear those numbers. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** There were 12 people that attended that treatment. It was only given once in 2004, I believe.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'd say a 25 percent success rate, five times our current success rate, would be nothing to sneeze at. I don't know how fully it was applied in that case, but it seems like it would be a worthy investment to at least try a demo project or two.

I think it's well acknowledged by this Minister and this House that this is a serious and challenging difficulty. I know there's lots of work being done in the mental health and addictions area and so on, but I'm continually frustrated when suggestions are brought up that there seems to be a willingness to prove they're wrong before trying them out. It would be nice to have a can-do attitude sometimes with some of these things, recognizing we have to be objective and go with the data.

I guess my last question is: I believe the Minister knows Ms. Cindy Blackstock, and she is bringing a national suit about the failure to fund properly especially Aboriginal children in the sense of child and family services activities. Can we get an update

on the status of that and its applicability to our situation in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Going back to the Old Crow treatment, we are prepared to relook at the principles, re-examine the principles of that treatment. A good point, you could look at it from the perspective that 25 percent is maybe better than some of the rates that we have been achieving. I apologize for that. We will look at the principles of that again.

We also have the Matrix program that we're looking at in Fort Smith. We found that had a fairly good success rate, so we're prepared to look at that.

On the Cindy Blackstock lawsuit, we don't have an update, but we can get an update and provide a written update to the Standing Committee on Social Programs.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Mr. Bromley, your time is up. I can put you back on the list if you need to be there. Next on the list, Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It was brought up earlier today, but I'd like to bring it up again, on the elders' long-term care. It always seems like we run into barriers with the wording. If it's not wording, it's policy. It seems like we have to find another definition to be suitable for the communities and their needs, referring to maybe an elders care facility that is needed in the Mackenzie Delta. Without the need of a nurse on hand 24 hours a day, but you know, that's what the communities want, as the Minister mentioned. But I think that we need to start planning. We have over 300 elders over the age of 60 in the communities, and we can't be depending on Inuvik's facility. There's already a backup for people from Nunakput and also Inuvik. There's a clear need that we need to find something that's suitable, whether it's Fort McPherson or Aklavik. I'm hopeful within the next year here we see something that's in the budget to meet the needs of the elders. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As indicated by the Minister of the Housing Corporation, Joe Greenland should be ready this summer or towards the end of this summer, for allocation of those units to the elders in Aklavik. Our deputy is working with the president of the Housing Corporation on trying to build or renovate these places and build these places for elders to live in and provide assisted living from our department. We're prepared to do that in Joe Greenland, so that we support the elders that will be moving in there.

As MLA Blake said, when we use the term long-term care, then we say, well, we can't afford the four and a half nurses that are required to run a long-term care of this magnitude. They're saying

don't call it long-term care. What we need is for the adults who live there, have some nursing support, home care support, security support and so on. So we are working with Housing to try to achieve that over there.

In Fort McPherson, the community indicated that one of their major needs was for us to increase the physical accessibility to the current senior citizens home and also provide an elders daycare. So a lot of the individual families are taking care of their own elders in the community and they want to be able to work. So they want us to set up working with the Housing Corporation, because it is their facility, to have an elders daycare in that facility and have a washroom that is accessible for the elders, easy for the elders daycare workers to be able to assist the elders in that home. So that is something that we want to work with the Housing Corporation on achieving in those two communities.

**MR. BLAKE:** The next item I'd like to ask about is home care. At the moment we have one part-time person in Tsiigehtchic and I believe only one person in Fort McPherson. That's not adequate for the needs of the communities. I'd like to ask the Minister if there are plans to make a full-time position in Tsiigehtchic and add one or two more people in Fort McPherson. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We have asked the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority to work with the community through what we refer to as a Primary Care Team. Included in that is the home care workers, and to re-evaluate the needs in both of those communities of both Tsiigehtchic and McPherson to see if they can provide home care to the residents that need home care. I think if we're successful in building in this elders daycare, it will be the home support workers that will be working with the adults in Fort McPherson. I think the authority would have to increase the amount of home support workers that they would need for Fort McPherson.

**MR. BLAKE:** No further questions at this time.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Next on my list is Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My questions surround the topic of emergency shelters. I'm hoping the Minister of Justice is also listening to these questions. The Member for Yellowknife Centre brought up in general comments yesterday the issue of the Yellowknife downtown emergency shelter. He went into great lengths to talk about the concerns that the citizens around the shelter area have with respect to how things are being run. The fact that there is still consumption of alcohol happening, delinquency, no solutions being offered. If they are, they are being remiss in doing so.

The Member used a term that these people are lacking hope. They needed hope. I've been reminding myself that it's more than just hope; they need a purpose to move on. Many Members were involved with the follow-up not that long ago with the shelter administration. We did get an update. There are about 283, on average, patrons to this shelter that frequent it quite often. Again, I'm talking from multiple angles here, Madam Chair. As a previous business owner in the downtown core of Yellowknife, my first inclination when this project came on was one of relief, only to find out that this became a funnelling effect for some of the lost souls to congregate in the downtown core, which basically culminated to more violence, more theft for the shop owners and a lot more disruption for the downtown merchants and in respect, as well, for the patrons and residents of the downtown core.

I know the Minister didn't have a chance to respond to the Member's comments, but given the fact that this involves Yellowknife, involves many constituents of mine, involves many constituents of many Members here on both sides of the House, can the Minister take a moment now that he's had time to think about a response, what is the department looking at doing for program review to enhance the quality of life for these patrons who are in need of intervention, substance abuse intervention, counselling, redirection, job deployment and rehabilitation? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Our intention is to start discussions with YK Health and Social Services Authority, for them to work with the organization that is currently the shelter, the John Howard Society, and to bring those issues to the forefront and that they're to discuss those issues. Direction will be given to YK Health and Social Services.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I do appreciate the Minister bringing awareness to the situation. My question would then follow that the results of these findings, would this be considered the first phase of a number of different types of emergency shelters that could be provided to other areas of concern? I know I have the Member here from the Sahtu who has issues in the Norman Wells area. I know there are issues up in the Inuvik area. I know there are issues in Hay River. Will the Minister look at committing a so-called protocol or set a policy for day shelter use in terms of what programs can be developed? Is this the first stage, Madam Chair, that this department can be counted on to make the necessary improvements so we can redirect these lost souls?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We haven't thought in depth about the situation outside of what is

happening with the day shelter in Yellowknife. Like I indicated, we want to provide direction to YK Health and Social Services to work with them. The objective would be for them to come up with an evaluation that indicates what the problem is and what the solutions are. That kind of thing would most likely be applied to other communities where the situation is similar.

However, what I will commit to doing with that information is to discuss that at the social envelope Ministers meeting which is chaired by our Minister of Justice. We feel that it's going to include more than just Health and Social Services. It most likely will include other social departments. I think this type of initiative would most likely be dealt with at the social envelope Ministers' level. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** At such time as we do get a result to this question – and I know I'm speaking to the Minister of Social Services and that's why I wanted the Minister of Justice to be within earshot – at such time as we can have programs in place, that we can actually have these protocols in place to create programs for these people who need purpose. The issue of violence, the issue of safety, the issue of theft is widespread in the downtown corridor. Merchants are screaming for our attention. I guess with this could also be brought to the social envelope Ministers is to have more policing in place with more recommendations from RCMP and in conjunction with the municipality to create more foot traffic, foot patrol and drive patrol to protect the citizens and the businesses of the downtown corridor while we're working on improvements to this program.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I am again prepared to have that within that direction to Health and Social Services to ensure that they engage the RCMP, so that any of these recommendations or solutions that come out do involve the RCMP or have the RCMP's blessing.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on my list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to ask the Minister, he talked about the success rate of a program in Yukon. I want to ask the Minister if he knows the success rate of Nats'ejee K'eh.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We recognize the capacity. We know the number, the capacity. The last government, we believe, was 48 percent. We know the number of people that complete the program. The completion of program is 38 percent. I'm not talking about 38 percent of the individuals that enter. I'm talking about the 38 percent of the full capacity, is how many the

percentage of people that finish the full 28-day program.

We don't know what the five-year success rate is at this time. We do recognize that this is the standard from individuals in the field that they were rated at a five-year success rate and we don't have that number. We would have to track the clientele for the last five years in order to be able to come up with that success rate. I don't know how difficult of a task that would be, but we could attempt that if we go back and get the individual names from Nats'ejee K'eh. There's going to be some doing with access to information and so on, but we'll try to get that information just by using numbers.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The Minister is correct; he's given me some numbers for Nats'ejee K'eh on the capacity and finishing and he's very correct on the success rate. We can probably do it very bush league type and I can tell you how many people in the Sahtu went to Nats'ejee K'eh and how many stayed sober after six months, eight months, 12 months. I think what the Minister, I'm not too sure if I really want to know that, because that takes a lot of effort and energy and we want to do something that's different, like prevention. Like you talked about before, how we can best use those resources, time, and effort. I'm not going to ask the Minister for that information. I just wanted to know if he had those stats. For me it's an indication that we just have to know that we need to do some work in that area. There's no use going too hard on that.

I guess what I want to know is where we go from here, the different programs that we have and different perspectives on how we want to deal with addictions in our communities. We certainly had some uptake to different programs and styles, how we go about doing it. For myself I think one area that needs to be looked at, and the Minister can take this as a suggestion, that the place where people can go for hard drugs is now in our communities. It's really hard for our younger people who are getting into it and sometimes it's very difficult to get out of because that's a powerful thing. It's nobody's fault, but we need to look at someplace where, somewhere in Yellowknife or the North, that we can have a place like that.

I just want to offer that suggestion to the Minister. I wanted to see how it's going with the child and family committees in our region. I know there was a strong push for that at the last Assembly. They had some discussions on that Child and Family Services Act.

I guess two things. The treatment itself and the success rate, and the different requirements that now regions are asking for and someplace where the younger people can go. I think Yellowknife is a good spot for the hard drugs. I know right now they're going to Grande Prairie and things like that, but we have some places here that we could look

at. That's going to be our challenge here: who goes first. That's why we have to have that discussion. I'm hoping the Minister is looking in those areas that I just brought up. Those are my comments.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Our Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan talks about filling the gaps, and those are some of the gaps that we are hoping to fill. We recognize that we do not have a good treatment facility within the Territories on hard drugs. That we might be able to provide treatment for alcohol at Nats'ejee K'eh, but I think the hard drugs is certainly a gap that we need to fill, and the Member is correct that the issue is starting to spread into the smaller communities as well. We're going to be using the community counselling as much as possible. We need to get stats, if need be, and then to work with community counsellors to be able to bring the stats down and provide a service to the communities.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** That's all for me.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question here related to the description of programs with regard to special living requirements to assist people to live in their homes. There's been some discussion about providing home assistance for elders. I wanted to ask a question with regard to this budget, and the need to provide assistance for independent living for older adults, not elders, but challenged adults. We have quite a number in the city of Yellowknife at the moment who are living at home with their parents or other caregiver, and who will soon need to be in not an institution, but a house with some supervision, sometimes 24/7, sometimes maybe 10 or 12 hours a day, but we have very little facilities to accommodate these people. I'd like to know whether or not this budget, apart from existing programs and facilities, includes any funding to expand the independent assisted living services that we have for challenged individuals.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, there is no increase in that budget.

**MS. BISARO:** I'm sorry to hear that answer from the Minister. I'm not sure whether or not the department is aware, but I would hope the department is aware, that there is a significant cohort of individuals who will soon need to be housed on their own in independent living, and we do not have the infrastructure in this city, in this community to handle it. We don't provide many other supports for individuals who need that kind of assistance. I'd like to ask the Minister, if there's nothing in this budget, what kind of a plan does the department have to assist individuals to go from a

home situation to an independent living situation. Not an institution; I don't want us to build more institutions, but we do need to acquire houses, and we do need to acquire staff, to provide supervision in those houses for these individuals who want to live on their own but need some assistance. What plan does the department have to expand our current provision of programs and services for these individuals?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We do not have a plan to expand that budget item beyond what is there. In fact, it's slightly lower this year than last year.

**MS. BISARO:** That is again unfortunate news. Not what I wanted to hear. I would urge the department to do some inquiry, particularly within the city of Yellowknife, and determine the number of people who will soon be requiring and needing independent assisted living. It's an area where the services are generally provided by non-government organizations, but the funding generally comes from GNWT, and I think we're going to find within the next five years that there's going to be a huge need for housing these particular individuals and I would ask the Minister if he would commit to look into the situation, get some numbers and report back to the Standing Committee on Social Programs or at least to me as a Member for Yellowknife.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The department is prepared to go to the authorities. The community health programs in this area of residential care of elderly persons with disabilities is something that's driven through the authorities and working with the non-government organizations. We can go to the authorities and indicate to them or ask them if they do see forced growth in this area and ask them to come forward with forced-growth submissions to address the issue that the Member speaks of.

**MS. BISARO:** I appreciate that commitment from the Minister, but the funding ultimately comes from the GNWT. The authorities don't have the ability to raise funds. To the Minister: If you get forced growth submissions, will you entertain them seriously and what sort of justification do you need in order to fund the authorities to the fullest? It's fine to say you're going to ask the authorities, but when they put in the request, are you going to recognize the need and are you going to fund that need?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** After our discussions with the authorities on these forced growth areas, submissions from the authorities, we will take them forward to the Financial Management Board and we will put them as part of the budget process.

**MS. BISARO:** That's fine.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Moving on with questions I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to follow up on my general comments about

the mental health programs. Specifically, I know the Minister is aware that this House is on record as wanting to see action in the way of diversion in particular, especially diversion from our court systems and corrections systems, which are ineffective without mental health issues being addressed and certainly very expensive and drawing resources away. On top of that, the crime bill, Bill C-10, is exacerbating those costs greatly and detracting from other important programs. My more specific questions for the Minister are, I'd like to start with: What has the department done to date? What is planned for in this budget? What resources have been identified to do that work?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. With that we'll go to Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department is participating with other social envelope departments right now, in developing a joint work plan to look at mental wellness courts or specialized courts in the Northwest Territories. We're doing this under the authority of the Social Envelope Deputy Ministers Committee, looking at having a work plan by the end of this summer.

When the mental health and addictions action plan is tabled, we certainly have tried to reflect in there some of the interdepartmental work that needs to go on to address diversion, and how we make sure that there are services available so that if specialized courts are in place and people can be diverted from the corrections system, there are services that can support them. There are no new resources in this budget to reflect this work at this time. As we go forward with the planning and work plan, we would identify additional resources through the business planning process for the next fiscal year.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I don't want to talk about the Social Envelope Committee. I think we're well aware of that and so on. I'm asking specifically about the Department of Health and Social Services' work in this area. What work have they done specifically? What are their responsibilities? I think the House is well aware that this has been identified by the House as a priority, so we want to know that things are happening, that the resources are identified. What is Health doing to fulfill their part of this envelope committee specifically? Thank you.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Our role in this initiative, as I said, is to ensure that there are proper supports and programs and services in place. In our work to develop the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, we certainly are aware that there are a number of gaps and services, and so our role will be to implement the commitment in that action plan to try to fill those gaps and make sure that the services are there to support individuals who we are trying to keep out of the correctional system.

**MR. BROMLEY:** So the unspoken here is that it's all a gap. We do not have any programs and services in place currently in mental health to assist with the diversion program. Is that what I'm hearing?

**MS. DELANCEY:** At this time, we don't have any programs that are specifically designed just to do that. Certainly, counselling programs and other programs are available to people in the correctional system, as they are to any other resident. There is no specialized program at this time just for people that are dealing with the justice system.

**MR. BROMLEY:** What special services are needed?

**MS. DELANCEY:** We believe that that's correct and that is why we're working with our colleagues in the Department of Justice and other departments to get a better sense of what those areas are and make sure that that need can be addressed.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'm just having a hard time accepting that this late in the game we don't know what specialized services are required. This is our own system. I can spend 15 minutes on the Internet, or so could our research people, and find out what all the other jurisdictions are doing, what they've had put in place. We're talking accountability here. What specialized services are we missing that are required for diversion from court systems into mental health? From what I've seen, these are just mental health programs. I want to hear now the specifics, so that we can have some accountability in knowing that these are being addressed. What are these specialized services that the deputy minister is talking about to fill the gaps?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The department is spending \$20.168 million on social service delivery, which includes social workers, mental health and addiction workers, mental health and addiction program funding. We have \$2.931 million with non-government organizations for residential care for alcohol and drug programs related to addictions, mental health, disabilities and chronic illnesses. We have \$2.7 million family violence funding, which includes emergency shelters and counselling services; \$1.8 million for community wellness programs including the Bailey House in Yellowknife. Specific to more of the mental health and addictions, that's what we have in our community health programs and others that are in other pots, throughout the department.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the Minister's comments there. That's exactly my point. The mental health diversion courts are put in place with no additional costs in other jurisdictions. Sometimes there are additional costs. Usually they're quite

modest. We have, I'm assuming, a lot of programs, and the Minister has indicated some. This is not the mountain that the department is making it out to be. We passed a motion in this House directing, requesting, recommending. It's been identified repeatedly in committee work. This Minister has said he's all about prevention. The question remains, what are we doing? What are we doing for this relatively straightforward request? We can analyze until the cows come home, but tell me what the analysis is? Where are the gaps? What is your responsibility? What will you do and where are the resources to do it towards this end? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We are trying to plan. We don't think that this is something... We recognize there are some technical aspects, legislative aspects to what the Member is asking. What we need to do is we need to plan for it. We want to make sure that we are doing this right. Our responsibility is fairly clear, that if we have individuals that are prepared to divert from... If the court is going to divert an individual to some counselling, to take him out on the land, to deal with him in a different manner, keep him with the family, do the various things that are needed, then we do have the programs in place.

As the Member says, it's not going to be a real high cost. In fact, we view it in the social envelope Ministers as, actually, a cost-saving measure. We recognize that if we're able to keep individuals from just going into a corrections system, that we're saving thousands of dollars a month for every year that we're able to keep one individual out of the corrections system and into counselling, working with the community, doing things that we think would be positive for the individual to possibly remain in the community and do other things that they would be required to do as directed by the court. We don't think it's going to cost money but we think it's something that we have to plan. We would like the opportunity to discuss this, plan it and do it properly, and we think that by providing what we have in place already, we intend to eventually put this in place. When we do put it in place, we want it to work and we don't want to be picking people up and then putting them in jail for a longer period of time because they didn't listen to the court order. We want to have a system that individuals can flow into and have success here and save real dollars by keeping people out of corrections.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. If I could interject for a second, the Member, I'm sure, didn't quite get the response he's looking for. Would the Minister, through the Social Envelope Committee, make commitments to the Social Programs committee on this subject moving forward?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, I will.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Would this be in agreement to the Member?

**MR. BROMLEY:** Yes, thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you very much. We're on page 8-29, Health and Social Services, activity summary, community health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$87.998 million. Committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 8-30, Health and Social Services, activity summary, community health programs, grants and contributions, total grants and contributions, \$69.941 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions with regard to the numbers on this page. Under community services, the family violence funding has increased about \$400,000. Could I get an explanation of where that funding will be used? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to have the deputy minister provide a response to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That funding is increased funding to stabilize existing shelters and it will be used in the Beaufort-Delta, Fort Smith and Hay River.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for that explanation. That's what I thought, so that's confirmed.

The next item down is community wellness programs. It mentions Bailey House in Yellowknife. I have heard, I believe, that we are developing a community wellness strategy and we are putting wellness committees, I think it is, in communities in the NWT. I'd like to know from the Minister, can I get a bit of an explanation in what we are doing in each community. Is it a wellness strategy in each community? Are we putting a wellness coordinator in there? What is that program that we're doing regarding wellness? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a coordinator, one coordinator, and she's going to be working with each of the communities to put a community wellness plan together. The wellness plan is going to look to the state of the

communities at this time and then develop a plan to increase the wellness community by community.

**MS. BISARO:** I presume this is going to take awhile; we have 33 communities. One coordinator is not going to set up a plan within this fiscal year, I presume. So what communities are targeted for the 2012-13 year?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We plan on expanding some of the work in wellness. One of the things we are hoping to do is work with community organizations or Aboriginal governments within the communities to help us develop these plans, so it would not be just one individual that is developing all of the plans, but we'll try to work with the Aboriginal groups, Tlicho Government, as an example, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and so on. We're going to be engaging the groups when we develop the wellness plans across the territory.

**MS. BISARO:** I didn't hear where we're targeting in this fiscal year, but I'd like to know if the Minister can advise me when the City of Yellowknife will be contacted to develop a wellness plan or a wellness strategy for my community. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We are starting with the organizations that I just spoke of, the Tlicho, the Inuvialuit and YK Dene. We've also met with the NWT Association of Communities at the last meeting in Norman Wells and advised all the communities that we were doing this. What we're hoping is the communities will work with our coordinator, well known to all in the Association of Communities as she worked for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs for many years and had a major role within that association. I'm hoping that we get some uptake from the communities, but for now we're starting with those three organizations.

**MS. BISARO:** I'd like to know from the Minister if it is the intention to have a wellness plan in each of our 33 communities, will there be the development plan for Yellowknife. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We are hoping to proceed with every community that wishes to have a wellness plan. We will work with every community that wishes to have a wellness plan.

Having said that, we have to realize that developing a wellness plan in a city the size of Yellowknife would be a difficult task. It may be portions of the city. We need to do a lot of work, a lot of planning in order to come up with a wellness plan for the city of Yellowknife. Of course, in the smaller communities it would be a lot easier. Most organizations in small communities encompass the entire community, whereas in Yellowknife various organizations would only take portions of the community and deal with only portions. So it could be a task, a major task in communities even like Hay River, Inuvik and Fort

Smith as well. We recognize that, but we made the offer that we are prepared to try to develop wellness plans in all 33 communities.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for the information. I guess I would suggest that, yes, Yellowknife is a larger community, but city council already has a Social Issues Committee. Yellowknife City Council already has a social plan that they rolled out a couple of years ago and I think the Minister only needs to look at the example of the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition which has gathered together all organizations and all people who are interested in dealing with homelessness in our city. So I would urge the city not to look at this as a difficult task, but to look at it as a slightly larger task than for a community of 100 people, but Yellowknife needs to have a wellness strategy as much as any other community. Fifty percent of the population live in this community, so when you get the request from Yellowknife, as I'm sure you will, please don't look at it as putting it to the bottom of the pile because it's going to be a tough thing to do. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I commit not to put Yellowknife at the bottom of the pile. I would have the department take the wellness plans in the order that interest is shown.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, that is good.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Moving on, I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up with the one right below that, the home care. I was happy to see half a million dollars more resources towards that. I wondered if that was directed anywhere in particular or to any particular aspects of the program. Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mr. Chair, I didn't hear the Member, but I think the deputy has and I will ask if she can provide a response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Mr. Chair, the home care, the enhanced funding is being allocated among health and social services authorities proportionately to increase their ability to keep up with costs of providing home care.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** We are on page 8-30, 8-31, Health and Social Services, activity summary, grants and contributions, total grants and contributions, \$69.941 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 8-32, Health and Social Services, information item,

community health programs, active positions. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Being none, page 8-33, Health and Social Services, information item, details of funding. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out here, the main estimates from 2011-12, 2012-13, for the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority as well as Stanton Territorial Health Authority, they are both significant I think. One is just over \$3 million and the other one is over \$5 million. We discussed this earlier in previous discussions earlier today, but those are significantly high numbers. I just want to get confirmation whether the department will commit to addressing this issue that has been ongoing regardless of trends, but we need commitment that they will make commitments so we don't continue to see these deficits as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mr. Chair, we have agreed and we have agreement from all of the authorities that we will make deficit adjustments and that we will... The term alludes me right now but we will be taking money from authorities that have surpluses, and with the amount of money that each of the authorities that have surpluses are allowed to keep and then we will have the rest of the money moved around to put money where the deficits are greatest, make those adjustments. The plan at this time, if there continues to be deficits in Inuvik and Stanton, or in Beaufort-Delta, pardon me, and Stanton, we would continue to make those adjustments, moving money from other authorities.

Ultimately we are hoping to right the budgets to put the budgets in the right places so that we are not always making these foreseen adjustments so that we would try to work with the governance issue is one thing. The shared services, those are the type of things we wish to do in order to adjust the budgets to the appropriate budget in the future.

**MR. MOSES:** Mr. Chair, I am going to put this out there. We have already practiced that policy once, where we took money from other authorities. We put into Stanton, so we put into Beaufort-Delta Health Authority. Sure, they weren't very happy that because they are doing good practices they were to give up some of their budget. Looking into the future, knowing what just happened from history and that money that they would be not spending will go to another authority, they might just take the initiative to spend all of their money. What does the department have as a plan of action should there not be any surpluses in other authorities to move that money around? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**MS. DELANCEY:** Mr. Chair, first of all, the Financial Management Board has approved the change to the Surplus Deficit Policy for the authorities, so authorities now have a very limited cap of how much of a surplus they can accumulate. That will prevent the situation that the Member is concerned about from occurring.

Secondly, we continue to work with the authorities on the analysis of their structural deficits. We have been coming forward piece by piece for base adjustments to address those deficits. You have seen some of that money in this year's budget. We are working with the authorities on, as the Minister said, a plan to right-size the budgets we hope within a period of five years through the sustainability initiatives the Minister has mentioned, through increases to the Canada Health Transfer that we will be in a situation where authorities are appropriately funded.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Moving with questions, we have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My questions are on the same line as Mr. Moses. I, too, am quite concerned about the deficits that the health authorities, particularly Stanton Health Authority and the Beaufort-Delta Health Authority have incurred over quite a recurring number of years. It may not have been on this Minister's watch, but it has been a number of years that we have been hearing about we are going to look at the operation of these two hospitals. We are going to determine what they really need in terms of funding. We are going to fix it, but it hasn't been fixed yet. I have to agree with Mr. Moses that the Minister said that we are going to take surpluses from one authority and we are going to use it for the ones that are in deficit. As he said, that has been done already. I don't think that is any way that we can plan in order to get authorities on an even footing.

I really think that there needs to be, and I presume from the DM's response that there is, some work being done to try and figure out just exactly how much money is needed at these authorities so that they can break even, what services and programs they should be providing and that they should be funded to that level. Again, it has been a long time coming. I don't hear that it is going to be coming in any short order.

I was struck when we were discussing the numbers for NWT hospitals. There was a reference to the revised estimates for 2011-12 were almost \$95 million and the estimates for 2012-13 is about \$88 million, so we have a difference of some \$7 million, and the explanation was that is the surplus that we moved from the authorities that had extra money

and we moved it into the ones that didn't. But we are going to be left with a \$7 million hole again in 2012-13. We know that it is costing us to run these hospitals more than what we fund them for. I have to ask the Minister – this has been asked of previous Ministers – what is the plan apart from, yeah, we're looking at it? What is the plan and when is there going to be a definite plan and a solution to this problem of deficits within our health authority? Thank you.

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

**MS. DELANCEY:** Mr. Chair, the plan is rolling out. There is a plan. The plan involves some fairly detailed financial analysis. One of the challenges we have which Members have heard about before is that we have eight authorities with different financial systems. It makes it very difficult and time consuming to do the financial analysis. We continue to work with Stanton and Beaufort-Delta. In both hospitals there have been numerous management changes made that have resulted in savings and efficiencies. We continue to look at the potential for shared services. We are continuing to analyze specific cost-drivers such as some of the ones that Mr. Elkin mentioned earlier, particularly in the Beaufort-Delta region, hospital and staff costs, it is unfunded staffing costs.

As we get business cases developed, we have been bringing those forward to the Financial Management Board. We know there are some areas in our structural deficit that are going to require additional funding. For example, the physician budget at Stanton Hospital which, right now, is being funded in part... More than a \$2 million shortfall is being funded through THSSI funding. When THSSI funding expires, we'll need to deal with that. The reality is that we are not able to get additional funding in the base budget for these authorities until we can provide a persuasive business case to the Financial Management Board. So we recognize that this is not going to happen overnight.

The other missing piece is something that was recommended, touched on in the Auditor General's report, which is the need to have a funding model for the authorities. That work is also going on, but these two pieces of work are integrated and, quite frankly, it's not something that can be done in a short period of time.

We can certainly provide a committee with a summary, once again, with the adjustments that have been made. Some of the ongoing drivers for the structural deficits have been addressed. Others have not been addressed and we are continuing to look at those. That's why we really are to a five-year plan, because we know we won't have this work finished in the fiscal year, but we are chipping away at it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the DM for that thorough explanation. I certainly would like to see what's been done to date. I'd also like to see the cost-drivers that the department is anticipating attacking and going after. I would like to request that information, but would also like to request an update every six months on where things are at.

I think part of our problem is we see these numbers once a year and kind of freak out. It would certainly be helpful to us as Members if we realize that there's, as you say, chipping away at the numbers and it's gradually going down. So any information that we get, if it provides historical information as well as current information, that would also enable us to know whether or not progress is being made. Thank you. That's all I have.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Page 8-33, Health and Social Services, information item.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Details of funding allocated to health and social services authorities. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 8-34, Health and Social Services, information item, lease commitments (infrastructure). Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 8-35, Health and Social Services, information item, lease commitments (infrastructure). Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Health and Social Services, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** This would include up to page 8-39.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Committee, I would like to have you return to page 8-7, Health and Social Services, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$349.926 million. Committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that we have concluded final consideration for the Department of Health and Social Services?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I'd like to thank our witnesses here today, Mr. Elkin and Ms. DeLancey. If I can get the

Sergeant-at-Arms to escort them out of the Chamber, please. Thank you.

Noting the time, committee, we will take a short break and we'll return after that. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Welcome back, committee. Next on our list we have the Department of Executive. With that, we have Premier McLeod. Premier McLeod, do you have any opening comments?

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Mr. McLeod, go ahead.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I am pleased to present the Department of Executive's main estimates for the fiscal year 2012-2013. The goals for the Department of Executive are centred on our role in ensuring effective coordination of government activities; supporting informed decision-making related to policies, planning and programming; and coordinating the implementation of strategic activities to advance the priorities of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

The overall proposed budget for the department is \$22.862 million for 2012-13, which is an increase of \$8.857 million or 63 percent from the 2011-2012 Main Estimates. The overall increase is due to \$155,000 in forced growth and \$9.301 million for other adjustments related to devolution negotiations and implementation planning, offset by sunsets of \$599,000.

The Department of Executive provides overall coordination and support and ensures departments are moving forward in a collaborative, transparent and integrated way. A new committee of Cabinet structure has been established to support the vision, goals and priorities of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. A key role for the department is to support evidence-based decision-making:

- by providing information, advice and support to Cabinet through the Cabinet Secretariat;
- by reviewing and evaluating program effectiveness and efficiency through the program review office;
- by developing and distributing statistical data for policy and program development;
- by analyzing key indicators, measures and outcomes to aid with informed allocation of resources and effort; and
- by regularly reporting on our progress.

The directorate includes the office of the secretary to Cabinet and the office of devolution. The office of the secretary to Cabinet is responsible for providing overall leadership for the public service, supporting

Executive Council decision-making, and coordinating the development and implementation of government-wide direction.

The office of devolution includes two branches: negotiations and implementation planning. Members will be aware that the Devolution Agreement-in-Principle includes funding for the Government of the Northwest Territories and Aboriginal governments to address a number of significant issues before a final agreement is reached.

The department anticipates revenue of \$2 million related to federal government contributions to support activities between Devolution Agreement-in-Principle and Final Agreement. Although this amount is well below the Government of the Northwest Territories investment of \$9.3 million this year, a critical lesson learned from the Yukon devolution experience was the need to carefully plan for the transfer of authority and staff and to make the necessary investments to ensure a smooth transition.

The executive operations branch includes the strategic planning unit, program review office, Bureau of Statistics and the regional operations offices for the Department of Executive. In addition to the core business activities, there are a number of priority areas that will be advanced during 2012-2013.

A key area we are focusing on is finalizing an ambitious work plan for program review, which will complement the planning work being done by strategic planning and be supported by statistical analysis from the Bureau of Statistics. Members have told us it is important to evaluate our plans on an ongoing basis to maximize their efficiency and effectiveness and we have heard them. The program review office will also support initiatives to reduce red tape, which is a priority of the Refocusing Government Committee of Cabinet.

Based on the success of the Single-Window Service Centre pilot project initiated in October 2010, the regional offices will be expanding government service officer positions into five new communities: Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tulita, Fort Liard and Gameti. This will bring the total number of single-window service centres to 13, thereby improving access to Government of the Northwest Territories programs and services, as well as increasing Government of the Northwest Territories employment opportunities in several small communities. Executive, together with Finance, is leading work on organizational design, to take into account opportunities for decentralization presented not only by devolution but also by reviewing all government operations.

Also included in these main estimates is the Cabinet support branch of the Department of Executive, which is responsible for ensuring

systems are in place to support informed decision-making and successful implementation of Cabinet direction. The branch includes the Cabinet Secretariat, legislation and house planning, corporate communications, protocol, the women's advisory office, and supports the Commissioner's office.

Other key activities for the department that are reflected in these main estimates include the Ministers' offices, which include the Premier's office and support to Ministers.

That concludes my introductory remarks and I am prepared to answer any questions that committee members may have. Thank you.

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

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. 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?

Thank you. If you would be kind enough to introduce your witnesses to the committee.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left is Penny Ballantyne, secretary to Cabinet; to my right is Mark Warren, assistant deputy minister for the Executive.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Thank you, Ms. Ballantyne and Mr. Warren. Welcome to committee. With that, we're going to be going, committee, to general comments on the Executive. General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to ask the Minister about the relationships we have with the Aboriginal governments. I know we have an Engagement Strategy. I guess it's two-pronged. One, are we going to continue to support the efforts made by this government to strengthen our relationship with the Aboriginal governments right across the North? It's pretty diversified and quite challenging. However, this should be strengthening our employees to not be so complacent and go out and expand their ability to look at different points of view, the different nations and different governments. We are on Aboriginal land, so come around to those types of issues. We also go to work together. That's the end goal for these 42,000 people we have in the Northwest Territories. The big ticket prize is Ottawa. We have to keep our eye on that. How do we stay together? Sometimes we have to walk together, not one too far ahead of the other. I'm going to ask the Minister on those type of

discussions that we have with our Aboriginal governments.

The other area I want to ask is: How do we work effectively and efficiently with the people in Ottawa? The Minister talked about our relationship and we have a Federal Engagement Strategy with the Conservative government, Mr. Harper. They're in power. They have the numbers. They certainly have given us some fairly good money to do some things here. I think we have a relationship that we know we can continue to benefit from. Sometimes I really don't like what they're doing, sometimes, but I guess Ottawa has more than the Territories to look after. I'd like to see how we can effectively use whatever tools we have in Ottawa to advance our initiatives such as territorial-wide projects like the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the fibre optic link and the hydro. Things like that on a big scale. The biggest one, the Premier and I had the pleasure of witnessing the signature of another Aboriginal government to sign on to devolution. Congratulations there, Mr. Premier. I don't know how you did it, but you did it, and I don't want to know how. I just want to say that to you.

That brings me to how we govern ourselves here with this. I look forward to the lands that are going to be under our jurisdiction. There's a land use framework on how we use those types of tools that we have. The Crown lands are now going to be over to the territorial government. How are we going to work on those issues with our Aboriginal governments who are in settled and unsettled land claim issues? That's going to be really challenging for the Cabinet. You need all of us to move on these type of issues here. I think that's something that we need to be cognizant of.

My other comments are with the self-government negotiations. More specifically the one that's close to signing in my region is the Deline self-government arrangements. I've talked to some of the Members and they're pretty optimistic. They're looking at maybe two years. I'm not too sure. I'm not involved in the day-to-day, face-to-face negotiations. All I get are briefings from the government here or when I go to Deline. They tell me about some of the stuff and they think they can come through that with some type of agreement. The Deline self-government negotiations are something that is an interest of mine, and I'm not too sure if I will be able to see or will see an LP, legislative proposal, to give the final sanction to that piece there. I know the other communities in my region are working on different levels of self-government, so we'll continue working on that.

I wanted to also talk to the department here on Aboriginal governments on the duty to consult and accommodate when appropriate to the Aboriginal people and their treaty rights. Especially to the treaty rights. They're very important. There are

different views of the treaty rights; however, when you go to the communities, the honour of the Crown is always at stake, and we have to be very careful when we go into areas that we may have to consult a little further and accommodate some of those issues here.

I think for myself those areas that I wanted to touch upon, the last one is the issue of – I'm not too sure if this is the department to talk about decentralization. We know devolution is being negotiated. They are looking at positions in the North. We just now have 95 percent completion of our budget for this year. I have with me some information from the research that I asked for and I looked at... Maybe I should talk about it with the Department of Finance, but I wanted the Premier to know through Executive, that when you look at the positions being added to the GNWT this year, there are 62 new full-time positions and 66 part-time positions being added to the GNWT's budget. Of that, there are notes here I can share, that there's 57 full-time and two part-time positions being added to Yellowknife, according to the numbers here. You can check them for yourself, but that's about \$7 million being added to the economy in Yellowknife. When you look at positions being added to the regions and the small communities, there's five full-time and four part-time. That's about \$738,000. There's a great disparity, a huge gap.

I'm going to ask probably the, I don't know if it's this Minister or the next Minister about decentralization, because right now it doesn't look too good or favourable on our side. These positions are now pretty huge and they're all being added to the Yellowknife economy, nothing in our community. I can't wait for you to come out with a decentralization policy while this is happening. I'm awake here. I have to make sure that we get our fair share in the region, and get our fair share in the communities. I want to ask you: Is this what we mean by decentralization? It's already happening. It's right in the budget here. It's black and white. The positions are coming to Yellowknife. There are 62 added to the budget, 57 of them added to Yellowknife, and two part-time. The regions and communities are getting five full-time and four part-time in the regional centres and small communities. I don't like what I'm seeing right here. I'm not too sure how we can start working on this and I would really like to see a policy that stops this, that says this is not good. We need to look at next year's budget, hopefully, and I'm not too sure how devolution will affect this. You have \$7 million coming into Yellowknife. That's \$7 million into the economy. That's just on salary. That's an estimate. I'm not too sure if that's a correct number. That's a lot of money that's not coming to our regions and small communities. All we're doing is building up Yellowknife. Building, building, building up Yellowknife.

My time is up. I'm tired.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next on general comments I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's been a long day here. I'll try to make these really brief and quick so that we can get into detail here. I just wanted to make some comments on the program review office, the good recommendations and the hard work that goes through there. It's something that I don't think we should take lightly within this government and start implementing some of those recommendations to make some of our departments more efficient, and spending the dollars that we do have wisely and with quality programs. The only review I've seen, I think there are some good recommendations that came out of there.

With the NGO Stabilization Fund, it's good to continue to see that in there, but I believe for the amount of money that's in there it doesn't reflect the amount of applications, the amount of money that's being asked for. In the terms of distribution across the Northwest Territories, I think there's got to be a better model so that we can start supporting some of our regional centres and our smaller communities, as they are probably seeing some tough times trying to keep their organizations above ground and all continue to operate. I was glad to see that there are five new GSO positions. I hope each year that we get to add another one or two. They're very helpful, especially in the small communities with some of our elders and others that are not too familiar with the process of filling out forms. They're very helpful in getting those completed. They save time further on down the road.

In terms of devolution, just a little bit more information and updates would be good to get as they're put out to the public. If not just for us, for the public, so that we know what's going on. Even maybe from the office itself, the implementation team, any challenges that they have speaking or working with the communities.

Something that I've brought up before is the Forging the Future Conference that was done last Assembly, and possibly taking the role on, because we had some really strong youth leaders who made some really good contributions, some good feedback, some good recommendations, that I think they wanted to see some action too and they did bring it to the Legislature and I think we should follow up on that.

These are just some quick, basic ones and as we get into detail I'll have more questions. Seeing as we got a long night here, I just wanted to keep it short.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Moving on, I have Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to commend the Executive on what was mentioned; the single-window service centres that are in some of the communities there. I know there's been great success in Aklavik and I'm glad to see that extending to another five communities, including Tsiigehtchic. I think that's a very good initiative by the department and I look forward to the outcome of that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. General comments. Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of brief comments as well. I think one of the biggest factors in this department is devolution. I think it's one of the keys to the future of the Territories and one of the progressive things that we're looking at doing. Along with this devolution are also the concerns of what that brings for the future, what existing things that we're signing right now with the federal government, what will we be able to change, what will we not be able to change.

The other thing that one of my colleagues mentioned was decentralization and the potential of jobs for devolution. I'm a strong supporter of that concept of getting those jobs out to the regions, into groups where the communities can take on these jobs and be ready for them.

I think one of the tools that are available to us right now is the program review office. They have done some reviews of the government. It may be something that we want to extend out of that office, is to look at the viability and the operations that are currently happening in the federal government and what devolution can bring to the Territories. My feelings towards the program review office are kind of mixed. I think they do have some good ideas on some of the reviews. One of the reviews I don't, that they just implemented, was this new office building in Yellowknife, which I strongly don't support for several reasons and one of those reasons is decentralization where we're going to build a bigger office in Yellowknife again, giving us more reason to have more offices and jobs in Yellowknife. I think it's anti-productive to what I'd like to see the government doing as far as decentralization and moving the devolution jobs out to the regions.

Along with another colleague that talked about the NGO stabilization, I know there's a pot of money there, but it seems like it's not quite enough. It seems like – and I may be corrected here – they're going to some of the larger organizations that are territorial organizations that are centralized in the capital. It would be nice to have some additional funding for out in the regions and the communities.

That is some of the concerns that I have in the current budget for this department. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. General comments. I have Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make the point that I think, as we move with the negotiations of the devolution AIP, I know in the end I think the goal is to make sure that the government has an inclusive process, so that there is at least a successful understanding in terms of how things are going to work. My interest is to ensure that, as the former NDP leader said, we don't leave anybody behind. For those purposes, my intention is to ensure that this leadership at least gives it a good try to address some of the fundamental differences and the challenges. If we are very skillful negotiators, then I think perhaps there could be some points of compromises from all sides.

That being said, I just wanted to point out that I think Detah was a beginning of a great process and resulting from that, we have the current Aboriginal Engagement Strategy. I'd like to see it continue. It's a positive step and we need to build upon, at least, the milestones that have been achieved to date. I'd like to at least see maybe a progression of building upon that gathering that happened in October, and suggest and recommend to the Executive and the negotiators that are dealing with this file, to at least attempt to have a forum of some kind before the conclusion of an agreement-in-principle. That's my only point I wanted to make.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. General comments. Seeing that we're finished, we're going to give the opportunity for Premier McLeod to respond to general comments. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Members, for your comments. Perhaps the best approach is to address each of the comments raised by the individual MLAs.

With regard to relationship with Aboriginal governments and our employees, this is something that we've taken as a very important priority. We will be releasing our Aboriginal Engagement Strategy, I think maybe tomorrow. The reason we haven't released it yet is we were translating into all of the Aboriginal languages. We've managed to get that done now. Our whole Aboriginal Engagement Strategy is based on respect, recognition and responsibility. We're going to follow that; not only our government, we are also going to have our employees follow that approach. We've developed a handbook that we're hoping to get some feedback from and that we can release. As well, we will be providing public information and providing awareness and public education on Aboriginal rights and treaties so people can understand all of those issues.

With regard to Ottawa, everywhere I go, everybody I talk to, I say wouldn't it be nice if we could to together in Ottawa to pursue our objectives, and we can accomplish a lot more by doing so. In dealing with Ottawa, I think we have a good relationship with Ottawa. Right now, we are finalizing a Federal Engagement Strategy. We have some very big priorities that we need to work with the Government of Canada to make happen, the issues that you raised.

The Sahtu and how we govern ourselves, the land use framework, this is something that we're working very hard. We're working on the Land Use Sustainability Framework. Through Section 6 of the agreement-in-principle we are going to be working with all Aboriginal governments to see how we're going to work together. I think we are looking at everybody being responsible for their own areas of responsibility but we work together. In our experience, we want to work with all of the MLAs, because we find we have a lot more chances for success if we work with the MLAs and their regions and their constituency and their Aboriginal governments.

Self-government negotiations, I think we're getting back on track. There were some issues, governance issues, but I think that we're getting back on track. It is my expectation that in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly we'll be signing off on a number of agreements.

Duty to consult, we're covering that in the Federal Engagement Strategy, so you'll be able to see what we're doing there.

Decentralization, I think this is a very sensitive area, because we can't just go out and start moving positions. We have to have a process. We have to take into account that there are sensitivities with our employees, so we have to have a process where for priorities, for those that don't move with decentralization. We are working with all the deputy ministers right now to identify potential areas for devolution. The numbers that you quoted, I think if you read the whole report you'll see it's not 62 positions. It's 31 positions, which is still a lot. It gives us a greater chance for success with decentralization because there are more positions. I think that is only a 0.6 percent increase. It's our expectation that we can work on the plan. We're going to work with committee and I think that we will work on it over the summer, and I think that we'll have some idea where we're going to go in the fall.

With regard to some of the other comments, the program review office, as I said, we're giving them direction, and with the direction that we give them, if they make recommendations, then we have to deal with the recommendations if it's going to be useful.

The NGO Stabilization Fund, I think we've tightened up the criteria. We put out the requests earlier. We're hoping to get the money out earlier. It's a

tough one because the demand is always a lot more than the money we have.

Similarly, with the general services officers, I think we'd like to see more and we'll continue to try to find this. It's certainly a good way to get people into the smaller communities.

Devolution implementation, we'll be working on that and we're prepared to present at every opportunity to committees.

Forging the Future, I talked about that in the past. We want to continue but we want to put our own brand, the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly brand on it.

Decentralization, as a government, we're not here to make excuses. We're here to get things done, so we're going to be working on that.

With regard to being inclusive, don't leave anybody behind. We're reaching out to everybody to find common ground. As I said, in the seven months or eight months that we've been here, I've met with 21 Aboriginal governments. I've had 21 meetings with Aboriginal governments, so we're reaching out and we're certainly prepared to build on milestones, and we are going to be responding to your request for an October forum very shortly. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. General comments are concluded. Does committee wish to proceed to detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I'll turn over to page 2-7. We'll be deferring that until consideration of detail. If I can get you to turn to page 2-8, Executive, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 2-9, Executive, information item, revenue summary. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, just on the federal government's contribution to support activities between Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, the Minister has indicated \$2 million. So this number here, is this number still... When you divided up to the Inuvialuit, the Metis Nation and Sahtu and ourselves, just part of some of the Aboriginal governments have not yet to date decided to sign on. Is this for all of us that who are signing on to the negotiations? I'm just trying to figure out where this money is, how much is left of it. Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, later on in one of the pages is where the money is for the Aboriginal governments. This is the contribution from the federal government to our government for implementation planning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, would the implementation planning involve the Aboriginal governments that signed on with the GNWT to do the planning post-devolution, et cetera, on this planning?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, that is correct.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 2-9, Executive, information item, revenue summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you. Page 2-10, Executive, information item, active position summary. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you. Page 2-11, Executive, action item, directorate, operations expenditures. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions here. I want to revisit the issue of decentralization. I thank the Premier for his remarks and his comments. I understand that the government is looking at how the project, for lack of a better word, will be rolled out, how various departments are going to try and analyze who can be moved, what can be moved and when. There is some indication, I guess, that there might be something this fall that maybe committee will be able to have a look at.

My concern at this point is committees have no opportunity to consider what criteria the government is using to determine whether or not a particular position could or should be moved. We have discussed decentralization a lot. There is an awful lot of interest on this side of the House that jobs be moved into the communities, kind of an economic stimulus. I don't disagree with that, but I do have some concerns about how the decisions are being made about which positions would be moved and where they might go. Each position has relatively specific needs attached to it. Could I ask the Minister to kind of give me some idea as to what criteria are we... Or are there criteria that are being used as you deliberate this issue? If so, what are they? Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, we have no criteria right now. What we have done is we have requested deputies to identify potential areas that perhaps could be eligible for decentralization at some point. We are doing some work, identifying inventories of office space and housing that is available throughout the Territories. We are getting requests from MLAs that we should decentralize immediately.

I have indicated that we are going to work with committee. Certainly, for those centres that have office space and houses, the likelihood is that we

probably could move fairly quickly, but we are going to work with committee to establish criteria and to agree upon a process going forward.

There are a number of things that we have to take into consideration. First and foremost are our employees. People are already asking questions about where their jobs are going to be moved. We have to be very careful. We have to have a plan. We have to be strategic. We have to make sure that there is agreement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, thanks to the Minister for the information. I appreciate that there are many factors that have to be considered. I'm not one that feels that we should rush into this. That's why I asked whether or not there are criteria. I'm pleased that criteria will be developed. In my mind, office space and housing are absolutely two of the most major things in terms of moving positions outside of Yellowknife. To the opportunity for committee to provide some input into the criteria that will determine how and when positions would be moved, is there going to be that opportunity and when? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, I think that is something that we need to discuss with committee. In my view, we need to find a way to meet this summer, if possible. I believe I have written to committee indicating that. If I haven't already, I will be writing soon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, I look forward to the maybe anticipated letter to come or one that we already have and haven't seen. I appreciate the commitment of the Minister to involve committee. If we have to meet this summer, that could be rather difficult, but I look forward to the invitation for us to provide our advice. Thank you. I am done.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Moving on to questions, I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to start off with the office of devolution, if I could too. I am just wondering what is the expected life of this. We start off anticipating a long haul and now we hear negotiations are done this fall, expected to be a final agreement in place. I imagine it will take some time for implementation. I'm wondering what the expected life of this new division is. Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, the Member is correct; that is our expectation. Right now implementation planning will sunset 2013-14 and April 1, 2014, is the effective date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chair, it's great to get specific information. It is rare. Thanks to the Premier for that. That was very good.

Without trying to be hyperbolic or maybe I should say without trying to be too hyperbolic, will the Premier lead the charge in asking all of our residents what they want for a unique northern and responsible land and resource management regime, asking them what comprises, in their minds, economically, socially and environmentally sustainable land and resource management? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, my expectation is that we will do that in due course. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Mr. Chair, I'll shift it to the other extreme here. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2014, to due course. Is there any way the Premier could hone in a little more on that? The reason I ask is that I have long said, and many people have said, that it would have informed our negotiations, for one thing. Obviously, it's pretty late in the game for that now, but it could be very important to implementation and to decisions on what sort of model we follow, for example, in taking down authority. Leaving it to later will be too late. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** There could be a number of different ways to do it. I think, first and foremost, we have to decide on which approach we're going to take. If we take a delegated approach, then we have some discussion paper approach we could have. We are working on one outlining our perspective with regard to land use, so sustainability framework. Similarly, if we go with mirror legislation or through the MVRMA, I think there will be limited opportunity to change it because of the fact that it's premised on land claim agreements. I think the best avenue would be through our Land Use Sustainability Framework. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the comments from the Premier. The point being here, the residents of the Northwest Territories, perhaps rationally in the mind of the Premier, would like input on this. That's a big decision and a decision that's made on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. I'd say it's very irresponsible not to go to our people and have their input on that, especially as this government is on record, as are our partner governments at all levels, at criticizing the federal land management regime. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The previous Assembly spent, as far as I recall, about \$800,000 going through a process to get input from people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I don't know where to begin in response to that, Mr. Chair, other than give up, I guess.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'll take that as a comment, Mr. Bromley. Going back to Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I did forget I wanted to ask a question with regard to a

recommendation from the Auditor General's most recent report. It was a follow-up on four audits that had been previously done. Within their report, they made three recommendations that apply across government, and I bring it up here at the Executive because the Executive, under the directorate, states that it is responsible for the implementation of government-wide direction. The Auditor General identified three barriers to the operation of the government that are barriers to effective program management. They were: inadequate information to manage programs and make decisions; insufficient monitoring of third-party program delivery; and an absence of detailed action plans to implement audit recommendations. The suggestion of the Auditor General was that this needed to be dealt with government-wide. I'd like to ask the Minister whether or not he agrees with the Auditor General that this is something that his department needs to take hold of and take responsibility for. Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My previous view was that I thought we had sufficient oversight. We have an audit committee that is chaired by a number of deputies and involves the Audit Bureau. We have a number of other checks and balances. I communicated that to committee; committee felt that was unacceptable. We agreed with committee and are taking steps to provide the necessary oversight to address all of those shortfalls that the Member has read out to us. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. What sorts of steps are being taken? How will these three inadequacies be addressed? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We are working on that. First of all, we are reviewing our existing processes. Right now we'll have to work with the Minister of Finance. The Auditor General doesn't necessarily forward his reports to the Department of Executive, so we have to look at that. Do we have to change the process?

Secondly, with regard to measuring performance by third parties, I thought we had a third-party accountability framework. I guess we'll look at reviewing that. We'll have to have a tracking system for all Auditor General reports. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that information. I'd be happy to provide you with a copy of the Auditor General's report if you feel you need one.

In terms of getting this work done, I know there's a fair bit there that needs to be done, but I wonder if the Minister could advise what kind of a time frame they are looking at to try to have the investigation

and the analysis done to try to change things if things need to be changed. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I was going to say as soon as possible, but I think a better idea is it's our intention to meet with the office of the Auditor General to get more background and insight into his recommendations. I would expect that probably within six months we will be able to have some idea with where we're going with this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** That's great to hear. I would just ask the Minister if he could advise committee in six or eight months' time. Give us an update on where things are at. That would be much appreciated. Thank you. I'm done.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As per our normal course, we'll make sure committee is apprised as we move forward. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Page 2-13, Executive, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$9.980 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 2-14, Executive, activity summary, directorate, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$1.451 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Contributions, total grants and contributions, \$1.451 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you. Page 2-15, Executive, information item, directorate, active positions. Any questions? Mr. Bromley.

**Mr. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I could find out what positions are dedicated to the office of devolution. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that question, we'll go to Ms. Ballantyne.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The positions that are dedicated to the devolution office include an expert policy advisor, a project officer, devolution communications officer, the executive director of implementation, a devolution project leader, an HR implementation leader, water management planning and implementation leader and the departmental devolution lead. I should have said there are two expert policy advisor positions there.

**MR. BROMLEY:** On this page I counted nine, if I was counting accurately there. So in Yellowknife, headquarters, I think you said there were seven other departments of the 13, for example, in Yellowknife and the rest are what are dedicated to this office. Thank you.

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** I'm sorry; I didn't quite complete my list. Also, that was the implementation planning side and on the negotiations planning side, we have our chief negotiator, two assistant negotiators and another policy advisor. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I came up with that, 13. Is there overlap with the office of the secretary to Cabinet positions?

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** All of those positions are in directorate.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That's fine. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 2-15, Executive, activity summary, information item, directorate, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 2-17, Executive, activity summary, Ministers' offices, operations expenditure summary, \$2.970 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 2-18, Executive, activity summary, Ministers' offices, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, zero dollars.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 2-19, Executive, activity summary, information item, Ministers' offices, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 2-21, Executive, activity summary, executive operations, operations expenditure summary, Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of questions here and both of these items have been referred to in opening remarks but I want to follow up at this point. The program review office, I know from previous information that we have been advised that they are developing a work plan. I noted the other day when Mr. Ramsay was speaking that he indicated that the program review office was looking at the Business Development Investment Corporation. The last information I think that we had was that committee would be asked for input into the work of the program review office. Is BDIC on the list of the work plan for the program review office in 2012-2013?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was a request from the last government that the PRO is working on. The request is still out there. I don't know if we've had any feedback from committee as to what areas they would want to see covered.

**MS. BISARO:** I'm not sure if the committee has been asked to provide input into what the program review office should do, so maybe we ought to get

our communications straight. There's a lot of interest on this side of the House as to what the program review office is doing or could do. I would hope that we could either get the request from the Minister's office, or if we have it, we can be reminded that we have it so that we can as a committee respond.

Does the Minister have any idea when the program review office work plan will be finished? We are within, or almost to the end of the first quarter of this fiscal year. When can we expect a finalized work plan for 2012-2013 for the PRO?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I will provide a copy of the letter to the Member. We expect to be close to finalizing our ambitious work plan by the end of this summer.

**MS. BISARO:** My other question has to do with the NGO Stabilization Fund. The Minister referred to it when he responded to opening comments. There has been some adjustment. I think the Minister's words are that they tightened up the terms of reference or the criteria. My concern is that by tightening up and doing sort of a partial analysis or changes to the terms of reference for this fund, it has absolutely eliminated anybody who doesn't deliver services on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

There are many, many NGOs out there who do provide services not necessarily on behalf of the government. They certainly provide services that are required by our residents and that are needed by our residents. They also need funds to stabilize them, to help them. I appreciate, as the Minister said, that the asks for the NGO Stabilization Fund are probably three times as much as what there is to give out, but I think we need to seriously look at the terms of reference for this fund and consider whether or not we want to make the focus as narrow as it is right now. There are just so many NGOs who could use a small amount of money to keep them going and provide services to our residents that are required. I think I've asked the Minister this before, but I would like to know if there is going to be a full-scale, comprehensive review of the NGO Stabilization Fund anytime in the near future.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think our objective in tightening up the criteria, in the past we've had political groups and environmental groups applying for funding, and there's a whole bunch of groups out there that look for funding, and I guess we tried to tighten it up so that it addresses those that we want to reach out to. After every fiscal year or every call, and after the money's been given out, we review the program on an annual basis. We will be reviewing it again after this year.

**MS. BISARO:** I want to say that I am truly appreciative of the change in timing for the call for applications this year, and I think the awarding of

funds is going to be a heck of a lot faster than it was last year. That's a really good thing.

With regard to reviewing the criteria, I wonder if the Minister would consider to review those criteria and do an analysis of this year's awarding of funds, if he would consider to do that in conjunction with the Standing Committee on Government Operations.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Definitely, I think we would benefit greatly from the input of Members.

**MS. BISARO:** Good to hear that from the Minister. Thank you very much. That's all I have.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Page 2-21, Executive, activity summary, executive operations, operations expenditure summary. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to convey my thanks to the Premier in this area, the single-window service centres. I know when I spoke to the lady in Fort Good Hope she was very happy. People are very happy about this service. A very good move by this government and this Premier, to put this important service in our communities and that this type of stuff goes a long way to helping our people. I want to let the Premier know that, because the lady told me to say thank you to our government. She was happy that this kind of service was going to continue and that the Premier also indicated other communities in the North would see this type of service. I want to just say thank you and my appreciation to the Premier for moving on this important small piece of support that we have in our communities.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'll take that as a comment. Moving on. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I just wanted to say that I strongly support the comments of my colleague Ms. Bisaro with regard to the Stabilization Fund. We requested that there be a tune-up in the timing and whatnot on this and the Premier responded in spades. I know that's really appreciated by a lot of the groups out there. Thank you for that.

I especially agree with the need to recognize those who are not providing services to government. They actually are, it's just that we don't recognize them in a formal way. They are often working on the commons and so on. I would recommend something, or request consideration of something, like an equivalent fund just called a support fund for NGOs. Have a Stabilization Fund or whatever for those who do provide services. Something like that. I think that's a degree of attention that's required there. That's just a comment. I welcome any feedback.

My first question is with regard to strategic planning, I see there's advice and support for cross-

government planning activities, an increasingly important role, I think, as we realize how difficult it is to deal with silos, and this government is dealing with them. I wonder what resources are we putting into that, if that can be generalized. Perhaps it can't. What programs? I know the anti-poverty one is one. I'm wondering if there's a component of that to the early childhood development, if the Executive is involved in the mental health court, the whole prevention approach. If there are some general comments on that, it would be appreciated.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In this area we make sure that we provide high-level coordination to make sure the work gets done, and also we provide support to all of the issues that you raised and also to all the Cabinet committees. In terms of resources that we have there, maybe I'll ask through you, Mr. Chairman, to have my secretary to Cabinet expand on that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ms. Ballantyne. We'll go to Mr. Warren.

**MR. WARREN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In support of the strategic planning function, we have four strategic planning analysts that support that on a government-wide basis and, as the Premier has stated, they also support the seven committees of Cabinet that we've established to help achieve the priorities of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Warren. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That's good information to have and it helps me to understand the process a little bit more. I'll leave it at that. I am curious on how that actually works on the ground, but maybe we can have that conversation another time.

If I can move on to the Bureau of Statistics. They, the proverbial "they," say what we monitor or measure reflects what's important to us. I know we profess to pursuing sustainability. The route to sustainability is a learning route. As our understanding deepens and so on, we realize that we need to measure new things. How does that change? Do we regularly adjust what we measure? When is the last time that's been done?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to suggest that maybe we had a job shadowing opportunity for Mr. Bromley with a strategic analyst, but through you I'll ask Mr. Warren to answer Bureau of Statistics question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Warren.

**MR. WARREN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we definitely do a regular evaluation of what are the

appropriate indicators to look at. One of the things that the stats bureau has gotten more engaged in, is meeting with the various committees to help provide the input ahead of time rather than after the fact. So rather than trying to find the statistics to support the decisions after the fact, to try and use those statistics to help influence the informed decisions beforehand. So, for instance, a number of the stats bureau staff do sit on committees such as the Anti-Poverty Strategy Committee and Mental Health Addictions Committee and stuff like that. It is a regular updating of information.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Warren. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Just one further clarification there. Does that include an updating of what we measure or is it just the updating of information relating to what we're already measuring?

**MR. WARREN:** Yes, absolutely. I mean, reviewing what the appropriate indicators are is the first step, and then trying to make sure that the available data is there to support those indicators is important, yes.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you again for that information. Just moving on to the program review office, I think it's been awhile since we've heard anything new, although we have had updates from the program review office. I assume they have been working on other things recently. I don't know. Would it be possible to say what those things are or will be hearing about that soon? Thank you.

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

**MS. BALLANTYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the analysts in program review have also been busy. They've been busy supporting these committees that have been established in addition to the new initiatives, so they're working jointly with their colleagues in strategic planning and in the Bureau of Statistics to provide that support, not only to the committees of Cabinet, the new initiative committees, but also to a couple of the deputy committees. For example, as we're looking at the decentralization exercise, we have access to those analysts to help us with information gathering and analysis as well, so they're providing a very important support role. As specific projects are identified for them to work, we will have to figure out how we keep all of that going while they take on some additional projects, but in the meantime, they are more than busy. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** It must be wonderful to have all these resource people. We've just started here and we're up to quite a few people. I wonder if there's been any consideration to providing the same level of support, or even maybe a tenth of that, for this side of the House for our committee staff, who are

certainly hardworking people and haven't changed in numbers, to my knowledge, for quite some time.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly, we will put in a good word to the Board of Management. I think it's very important to have good information to help make good decisions. We'd be happy to share our information with the committee so that they get the benefit of all the information the government has. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Premier's commitment there, and I'd love to be copied on the letter to the Board of Management. I hope to see that very soon.

In terms of the program evaluation, I think that is an important role. We have been talking about that in committees and I think, actually, we probably picked that up not only from our own observations but from the repeated calls from the Auditor General's office for those sorts of activities. That is a very valid role, and I assume that that's part of the work that they're doing for these various committees of Cabinet and so on.

I wonder if I can get any more detail on the red tape. What's the direction on the red tape that's being asked to be reduced? Just to help me understand what's happening on that front. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** This is something that has been a priority of this government. We work very closely with the Canadian Association of Small Businesses that see red tape as a hindrance to making progress, so we are working through our Refocusing Government Committee of Cabinet. Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask the chair of that committee to provide further information. I'd ask the Minister of Finance to provide more detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. We'll continue this with the Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The red tape initiative is going to have two focuses. One focus is going to be, of course, internal within government, and to look for those types of improvements that will speed up processes, in terms of paper, steps required, things that maybe haven't been reviewed in many years. The one where we think there's an opportunity to do good work is, as the Premier indicated, we've consistently been ranked very low by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, for example, in terms of the red tape. We think some of that is tied into the federal government, but we want to work with independent business folks, we want to work with the chambers, communities to get some very specific feedback on what and where they see the blocks, the red tape that everybody complains

about when dealing with government. We intend to move forward here as we're through this budget process and we get geared up for the rest of this fiscal year to start that process. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, page 2-21, Executive, activity summary. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate your patience. One last one just to cap that off. I know Ms. Bisaro, I think, asked about this, but will we... Let me rephrase that. I'm sure that committee will have an early opportunity for input on the terms of reference for looking into the red tape aspect. Could I just get that confirmed? Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, through our protocol that we're working out with the committees, we definitely will make sure that happens. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Page 2-21, Executive, activity summary, executive operations, operations expenditure summary, \$6.756 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 2-22, Executive, activity summary, executive operations, grants and contributions, grants, total grants \$350,000. Contributions, total grants and contributions, \$350,000. Committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 2-23, Executive, information item, executive operations, active positions. Any questions? Being none, page 2-25, Executive, activity summary, Cabinet support, operations expenditure summary, \$3.156 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 2-26. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I noticed the Native Women's Association grant-in-kind took a bit of a hit there, a 70 percent hit or whatever. Also, the Native Women's Association funding has increased, not quite as much. Can I just get an idea about what's transpiring there? Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Native Women's Association is moving and so the money is moved from a contribution to a grant, I believe. It's the same dollar amount; it's just how it's broken out. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 2-26, Executive, activity summary, Cabinet support, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$92,000. Contributions, total contributions, \$731,000. Total grants and contributions, \$823,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 2-27, Executive, information item, Cabinet support, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Moving on. Page 2-28, Executive, information item. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask: Indicators of what, basically, on this one? It's apparently an interim expenditure, but quite high compared to the last time we spent money on this and we're working on baseline indicators, but I have no idea what baseline indicators of what. Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is work that we're doing on behalf of the Inuvialuit. They asked our bureau to collect information for them and they're paying us to do it. It's information that we provide them. I'll have to check whether it's privileged information or not. If it's not privileged, I can advise the Member of what kind of information we're collecting for the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I think I understand it now. I'm not sure that I need those details. I assume we're out there collecting information and there are things that they need as a government that we're handy at getting. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Page 2-28, Executive, information item, worked performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I'll get committee to turn back to page 2-7, Executive, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$22.862 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree that final consideration for Department of Executive is completed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you very much. I'd like to thank Mr. Warren, Ms. Ballantyne and the Premier. If I could get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

Welcome back, committee. We are on Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations with Premier McLeod. Premier McLeod, do you have any opening comments?

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Please proceed, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I am pleased to present the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations' main estimates for the fiscal year 2012-2013.

The department's main estimates propose an operations expenditures budget of \$7.304 million, a decrease of 4.1 percent from the 2011-2012 Main Estimates. This decrease is due to the sunset of resources which were provided for hosting the 2011 Western Premiers' Conference and the comprehensive mandate review project the department undertook.

No forced growth or investments have been requested for 2012-2013. Any new initiatives and ongoing work aimed at advancing the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly priority of Building a Strong and Sustainable Future for Our Territory will be supported from within existing resources.

In addition to its day-to-day responsibilities, the department has led the development of a government-wide Aboriginal Government Engagement Strategy that will assist the Government of the Northwest Territories in fulfilling the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's priority of renewing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal governments. In doing so, the Government of the Northwest Territories and Aboriginal governments will be better positioned to advance their respective and shared priorities and serve the interests of all Northwest Territories residents.

The department is also leading the development of a Government of the Northwest Territories Federal Engagement Strategy which advances the vision of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and the priorities identified in the Believing in People and Building on the Strengths of Northerners.

The department will also continue to focus on doing its part to building a solid foundation for intergovernmental relations by working effectively with its federal and Aboriginal partners to finalize land, resources and self-government agreements in all regions of the Northwest Territories.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an overview of the department's 2012-2013 main estimates. I look forward to discussing them with you in more detail. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Do you have any witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber?

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. I'll get the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring the witnesses in, please. Thank you.

Premier McLeod, please introduce your witnesses, please.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left I have Gabriela Eggenhofer, deputy minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations; and to my right I have Richard Robertson, director of finance and administration.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. We'll open up the floor to general comments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'm hearing detail. Page 4-7, this will be deferred until consideration of detail. I'll get you to turn to 4-8, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Seeing none, page 4-9, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, revenue summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 4-10, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, active position summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Seeing none, page 4-13, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditures, \$2.456 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Sorry, that was \$2.456 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-14, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, activity summary, corporate management, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$300,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-15, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, corporate management, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-17, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, activity summary, negotiations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.442 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-18, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, negotiations, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 4-21, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, activity summary, implementation, operations expenditure summary, \$696,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-22, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, implementation, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, the Aboriginal...(inaudible)...needing funds, I think the Minister is going to come forward with a detailed plan as to how this fund would be expended throughout the year, the \$350,000. That's for gatherings similar to the one we had at the beginning, the one at the beginning of the Assembly with the Caucus meeting in Detah with all the Aboriginal leaders. We started on our working relationship with the government. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a fund that we use to work with Aboriginal governments. Instead of dealing with individual meetings, we split it out amongst the seven Aboriginal governments. I believe they are all in the neighbourhood of \$50,000. So this year we parcelled it out amongst all the Aboriginal governments and the money has all been given out. Once it's approved, it will be. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Yakeleya, you're asking questions on page 4-25. Page 4-22, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, implementation, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Seeing none, page 4-25, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, activity summary, intergovernmental relations, operations expenditure summary, \$1.710 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-26, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, activity summary, intergovernmental relations, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$350,000. Contributions, total grants and contributions, \$350,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-27. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just wondering, I noticed there is no funding for the Northern Leaders Forum. From what I understand, in the last government I believe that was a very good place to gather for many of the leaders and also the Premier. I would like to see that continue if not this year then hopefully we can plan for next year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, definitely we would look at reapplying for funding now that we now have support for it. Right now we are taking a bilateral approach dealing with Aboriginal governments. This would help develop a vision going forward from the previous Assemblies or so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Page 4-27, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, intergovernmental relations, active positions. Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 4-28, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Affairs, intergovernmental relations, information item, lease commitments (infrastructure). Are there any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** There are none. Page 4-29, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Seeing none, page 4-30, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Committee, if I can get you to turn back to page 4-7. Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$7.304 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that we have concluded final consideration for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I would like to thank Mr. Robertson and Ms. Eggenhofer and the Minister for coming today. If I can get the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses out of the House. Thank you.

Welcome back, committee. We are on Department of Finance. We will move over to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Miltenberger, do you have any opening comments?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I do, Mr. Chairman. I am here to present the Department of Finance's main estimates for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

For 2012-13 the department has identified a total operations budget of approximately \$142.1 million, which is comprised of:

- A \$65.4 million contribution to the NWT Housing Corporation, of which the department has no direct authority over this contribution funding other than providing the corporation with its operation cash flow, and \$76.7 million for departmental operations.
- The \$76.7 million for the department represents a 94 percent increase from the 2011-12 Main Estimates. This is primarily the result of a \$22 million reclassification adjustment on how all levels of public governments will be required to account for income tax credits. This change will make the tax system more transparent by ensuring that expenditure programs are not disclosed by netting them from tax revenues.
- The other major item contributing to this increase is a \$15.6 million contribution to the NWT Power Corporation in support of the corporation's general rate application. As Members are aware, the GRA proposes to reduce the impacts to residents of the power rate increases that would have been necessary to ensure the corporation generated sufficient revenues for its operations.

As the government's lead revenue department, the revenues managed by the department are projected to total approximately \$1.41 billion or about 92.5 percent of the total GNWT revenues being forecast for the 2012-13 fiscal year. This represents a 10 percent increase from the revised 2011-12 forecasts. This is attributable to a projected increase of \$74 million in federal transfers and a projected increase of \$55 million in corporate income tax revenues, due mainly to an absence of negative prior year adjustments.

Each of the business activities of the department provides a foundation for all other activities of the government, through assessing new revenue sources, managing expenditure growth, protecting assets, providing critical fiscal, financial and economic information, and promoting accountability.

The department's 2012-13 Main Estimates continue to support the work identified in the department's strategic plan which was tabled during the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly. This work supports the priorities identified by the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and continuing initiatives that will support the sustainability of our territory for future generations. Two important results have been achieved to date, including the successful negotiation of an increase to the borrowing limit from \$575 million to \$800 million, and the renewal of key federal transfers such as the Canada Health and Social Transfer agreements to 2023-24, and the Territorial Formula Financing Agreement to 2028-29.

As Members are aware, the Premier has issued specific mandates to each Minister to support the priorities of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Specific activities in the department's 2012-13 Main Estimates include:

- the continuation of several modern management initiatives such as the renewal of the Financial Administration Act, the planning and implementation of financial shared services in the regions, and finalizing the new Knowledge Management Strategy;
- the assessment of a financing and procurement options of a proposed fibre link through the Mackenzie Valley;
- supporting the efforts to ensure a successful completion of a Devolution Final Agreement and the implementation of the agreement;
- a fiscal strategy that supports the priorities of this Assembly but also recognizes the GNWT has finite resources and we need to continue our plan to reduce our overall short-term debt burden;
- developing a strategy that recognizes the volatility of our revenues and plans to ensure stable revenues for planning and budgetary purposes.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Do you have any witnesses you wish to bring into the House?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please bring the witnesses into the Chamber? Thank you.

Mr. Miltenberger, would you care to introduce your guests to the committee here? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left I have Mr. Mike Aumond, deputy minister of Finance. To my right I have Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar, the deputy secretary to the FMB.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. Kalgutkar, Mr. Aumond. Welcome back to the House. We are on Finance. I am opening the floor to general comments. I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have too many comments here, but I did want to make a couple of comments. At the outset I have to say that I am dismayed that overall the government and in particular Finance, because this is where most of the revenues come from, is that there is no new source of revenue in the 2012-13 budget. There has been an opportunity in the last two years. The Minister has held a roundtable with organizations and individuals and has had lots of input into possible revenue sources and yet has not acted on that. I know the Minister feels that this is not the right time to go after a tax. I am not suggesting a tax. There are other opportunities for us to get revenue, particularly from our corporate entities that are operating within the territory.

I look at the statement by the Minister on the second page of his opening remarks. We are looking at an increase of \$74 million in federal transfers, a projected increase of \$55 million in corporate income tax. That is a fairly large increase in revenue, but on the other hand, the government is pretty much, they're telling us we don't have money, they're telling us that things are very tight, we can't spend, so to speak. I'm exaggerating a little here, obviously. Yet in the last day we've been advised that we need to spend \$10 million perhaps on a capital project. We are looking at a supplementary appropriation already for this budget year. We haven't even got ourselves one-quarter of the way into it. So I'm feeling that although I agree with the fiscal strategy that the Minister has put forward, I'm feeling like we are being asked to hold our nose and not spend money on the one hand, and yet the government can pretty much spend however much money they want on the other and the philosophy doesn't really jibe for me. So I simply wanted to express my displeasure at that.

I note the renewal of the Financial Administration Act is a focus of this department's budget and I'm really glad to see that. It is an act that does need renewal. It's been sort of talked about for the last two years and I would hope that we would get to either an LP position this year so that we can start to move this forward, because I think there does

need to be some action relative to the Financial Administration Act.

As the Minister points out, we are looking at a fibre link through the Mackenzie Valley, I absolutely support that. I think that is something that we do need to look at and I wish the department good luck in trying to finance it.

The last bullet from the Minister is developing a strategy that plans to ensure stable revenues for planning and budgetary purposes. I'm not sure if he's referring to a stabilization fund or not, but that is a concept that I agree with. We get huge swings in our revenues from corporate income tax and if we can find some way to minimize those swings and to provide sort of a fairly level income through our revenues from year to year, I think that would certainly be a good thing.

Lastly, I want to mention I'm hoping in the very near future that we will have a legislative proposal for the Northern Employee Benefits Service concerns. They need some legislation that can provide them with some security and some coverage through the law. So I'd like to know from the Minister whether that's coming forward in the near future. I know that it's being worked on, but it's been in the works for probably five or six years and I think it's time that we actually take some concrete action here. So I'm hoping that will be coming in this fiscal year. That concludes my remarks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Moving on with general comments, I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for these opening remarks. I guess the first item for me is the incredible \$15.6 million of taxpayers' money being added to the NWT Power Corporation, piled on already tens of millions of dollars in support of their general rate application. I guess this relates to the work done in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly on electricity rate reviews. At least two Members of this Assembly in the House today said that there would be a price shock if we went ahead with the source of recommendations, I guess you would call them, that they came out with in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly and it was repeatedly denied. Would the Minister agree that this is trying to deal with the price shock that we're dealing with now as predicted by those two Members? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Your opening remarks are concluded, Mr. Bromley?

**MR. BROMLEY:** No, that was a question, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** We will leave questions until later on. We're on opening comments.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'll leave that question, Madam Chair. Of interest, of course, is the renewal of key

federal transfers, in particular the Territorial Formula Financing Agreement, the 2018-19. I must have been dreaming, but that's the first I've heard of that and I know we had a pretty good one in place up to 2014. I'm wondering if the Minister could comment on how it looks for the subsequent four years, if the previously existing one is still good through 2014 or if this one replaces that. That would be good to know about. Of course, the others are important too. We'll hear about those eventually, I'm sure.

I also agree that the Financial Administration Act needs a lot of attention and we had some discussions before on that. I'm sure we'll have lots more. So I'll be looking forward to what comes forward on that.

I was disappointed that the Petroleum Products Act wasn't mentioned again. Just for clarity, the concern there, one of the concerns is the taxes are very random in that for the different fuels and there's little explanation or reason to them. So I think they need a good review and revision. But the big one is that the natural gas is currently not taxed. So anybody that uses them, the biggest corporations in the world can use them for energy generation and pay no tax, whereas the municipalities next door would be paying tax on what they use in terms of diesel fuel generation and so on.

I'm wondering what this department is doing in terms of preparation for devolution and I didn't see much on that. I was also disappointed that there wasn't a commitment to doing a review of resource rents, especially given devolution and our anticipation of very soon taking over those authorities and I would hope that there would be some work started on that soon. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next on my list, Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome to the Minister and the delegation here this evening. I know everyone is a bit tired.

I have two items that I would like to bring; observations during the process or preparation for the Department of Finance being here today. One in which is an observation in accounting practices and it has to deal with the issue of amortization.

Coming from the corporate side or the corporate sector for most of my adult life, amortization I know is dealt with a little bit differently in the public sector. That said, in a lot of cases throughout the process of the Finance review, as well as some of the departments, it was very notable that the amortization numbers were identical from year to year, and as a person who came from the corporate world, that would raise a lot of flags. Whether the departments weren't prepared in time for the

budget numbers or the main estimates, but this repeated itself multiple times in multiple departments, and when questioned, the finger kept being pointed back, well, these are the numbers we got from Finance. So I'll let the Minister comment as to why, or he may want to let one of his designates comment on it, but as a corporate executive I found it quite I would say concerning, that amortization numbers... There's a depreciation calculating factor, there's a sliding calculating factor that has to happen. To have that number repeated or to have the same number in departments and the different expenditure summaries is, I guess, somewhat questionable.

My second area of open comments – and I'll do it in this context instead of doing it in the detail – is no stranger to the Minister and Department of Finance, because I know I spent some time with him and this has to do with the tobacco tax and the collection thereof. When this was brought forward, we were told as Members that the internal Audit Bureau was involved in the investigation of how this government was dealing with the tobacco tax. Subsequent to that, discussions pursued with myself and the Finance team, but there's still gaping holes, Madam Chair, in terms of how I believe this government is calculating the tobacco tax. There is no doubt there is a loophole in the system. There's a manual component in the system and whenever you have manual components, there is doubt and it creates lot of questions. Subsequent to that, the department is using statistics to validate their numbers and those are also statistics which are questionable.

Smoking rates for the Territories are considered much higher than the Canadian average yet this government is using averages that are less than Canadian averages. If you take that to any senior people throughout the Territories, they would be somewhat amused with those numbers. The calculations and statistical calculations that the Department of Finance is apparently using to validate tobacco tax collection, in my humble opinion, is wrong.

This is a pursuit that I will not let go. This is a pursuit I will take the levels that I need to take to make sure that the revenue that is entitled to the taxpayers is put back in the coffers in its capacity. Calculations up to and including anywhere from \$4 million to \$10 million, in my estimate, is not being collected appropriately. This could be a value-add for days like we had today when we were having to spend another \$10 million on the bridge. More importantly, I would rather take this money, since it's a tobacco tax, and put it towards prevention, which these Regular Members have been fighting desperately to get back into the budget so that we can help the people and their health care in the Northwest Territories.

I'm a bit dismayed, again, that this issue has been in its opinion. It was looked at to a certain degree by, like I said, the Internal Audit Bureau. I'm not denying the fact that they spent some time doing that. Auditing is an art and I can tell you that when you're auditing a big topic such as tobacco, there are many shoeboxes in the bedroom, and picking one shoebox and auditing and saying everything is fine is not the way to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there is a problem. There are many shoeboxes in the closet and we don't have the resources, we don't have the manpower or person-power to go and audit every one of those shoeboxes. We need to close those elements of doubt. That element of doubt is the manual process of tobacco tax collection. That was the only way we can validate, if we're truly collecting every dollar out there. Otherwise we're using statistics, and again those are statistics that can be questioned as to where your source is, what year you're picking it from, and there's a lot of interpretation into statistics.

I think the people of the Northwest Territories deserve facts. The people of the Northwest Territories deserve actual numbers. As I said, this will be something that this Member will not drop until I see solutions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My comments on this department will be mainly on the revenue summary and the projections that are projected for this year's main estimates. I'm looking at most of them and most of them are showing a positive side. I'm looking at the difference from the revised estimates and main estimates, and I'm showing an increase of \$132 million. My question is: If those numbers don't materialize, where will we be without that?

I'd like the Minister and the department to maybe explain where some of these projections are coming from. The Minister has indicated in his opening statements that \$55 million will be coming from corporate income tax revenue, which is a phenomenal amount from what I can see, and is well above what's happened in the last couple of years. I'm interested in seeing where those numbers come from.

As well as in the taxation area of the eight items that deal with taxation, some of them show an increase, and my indications are that the economy in the Northwest Territories is on the upturn, a bit, but that seems like a very optimistic projection in taxation, as far as I can see.

I also wanted to put my comment in there, as well, about the amortization within departments given to Finance and how some of that stuff was a cookie-cutter approach to the costs. A lot of times it was repeated. Like my colleague Mr. Dolynny indicated,

it's phenomenal that that could happen, and would happen, and most likely was done out of a quickness of projections, I think.

My biggest concerns are the revenue. If that \$132 million doesn't show up, what position does it put us into for years to come? It creates our positive \$74 million that the Minister indicated in his opening address, to what could be a negative \$50 million, so there's a big influence there in where those projections and how solid we feel those projections are.

That's everything.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. We are on opening comments. Are there any further opening comments? Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister has been telling us, the people and the public, through the newspapers, and telling everybody that we really need to watch our financial spending for the next couple of years before we start to look at how we reap what we sow in year three and four. The Minister, for me, has his hands on the pulse of the fiscal. He's like when these big planes are flown and there's the pilot and the co-pilot and he is navigator. The navigator is there to tell you how much fuel you have, what kind of weather, where it's raining, everything. The Minister is like that within our government. He knows where the fiscal is, what's happening. We're coming close to our borrowing limit or we're getting broke or we're spending too much. Just like the navigator. He's telling the pilot how far we are from the town we're going to. He will tell you how far we're going. He watches everything. The Finance Minister, for me, is like that on the fiscal realities of our government.

In here the Minister has pointed out some things that we need to be aware of. One of the things that we have made a decision on was to help the small communities and we're making this contribution back to the NTPC to support them. More important, it's to support our residents in the communities.

I want to ask the Minister in here if he has looked at all the revenue. One of the things we talked about, I think Mr. Bromley talked a little bit about it, was called the resource rental revenue. I think we talked about the Resource Management Act as something that we could take advantage of all the resources that are possibly happening here in the Northwest Territories. How do we do that? Is that through a devolution process? For me in here we are in devolution and we are in that process. We are going to implement the devolution deal. The way it reads here, there are no ands, ifs or buts about it. We're going through that process. Having the Aboriginal governments with us through that process, we're going to put a deal together. That's what I read. That supporting the efforts to ensure the success or completion of a Devolution Final

Agreement and then the implementation of that agreement. For me, we are walking that road. It's plain and clear here. I guess now we need to get our ducks in order to make this happen, to make it to our best advantage.

I want to just ask the Minister on the resource revenue, the avenues that we could look at to take advantage of the tax regimes and how do we continue to watch our spending for years one and two, and then look at how do we go about making some of these tough decisions amongst ourselves, to know which projects will get the green light and which ones will get the red light and wait until the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. With devolution, how are we going to see some of this revenue stay here for sure, in the Northwest Territories?

The previous Minister we had was on the position of decentralization, and there are some numbers here that I looked through again, and as I told the previous Minister about some of the positions that stay in Yellowknife, we're pretty close to some numbers here. I know that some of these positions, I quoted at 62 full-time positions and six part-time positions being added to the GNWT because of the sunsets and deleted positions, Yellowknife is probably about to 30 to 34 positions. I may be a little off with those numbers for accuracy. Probably we're looking at the \$4 million coming into Yellowknife. That's still quite a lot of money.

Those are some of the questions, I guess. Throughout the life of this government, we could have some debate as to the merits of them. I want to close off this discussion with my comments here.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. We are on opening comments. Are there any further opening comments from Members? We will move to the Minister of Finance for a response to opening comments. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will quickly give a response. The Member for Frame Lake indicated that the government gets to spend what they want and MLAs are told we have no money to spend and, I would, just for the record, make it clear that we spend what the Legislature votes us to spend. It is a collective budget of this body here, this august body that we are now before.

The Member also commented that a major concern is that we don't have a lot of new money to spend. As you look around at the landscape around us, pick a province or another country where there's layoffs, freezes, rollbacks, pension cuts, benefit cuts. Yes, the fact is that we could always spend more money, but the fact that we are here spending and discussing how to spend \$1.5 billion dollars and we have had no layoffs, we've had good collective agreements signed, we're going to continue to invest in all the things we need to, I think we should take comfort and solace and some

pride in the fact that our glass, in this case, in my opinion, is half full.

We are working towards new revenue. The most imminent source of new revenue, and not resource rents at this point, but the most imminent source of revenue is going to be the signing of the Devolution Agreement. When that money flows, the resource revenue sharing agreement gives us about \$60 million a year and our share will be about \$45 million a year. New money. It's not anywhere in our budget yet because the deal is not signed. We will have the discussion of how to put that money to use. Over time as we take over authority for land, water and resource development we will look at what other opportunities are there. The most immediate one that will come within 18 months is that.

The issue of no new taxes in this time, I think, is still pertinent. I know we will have other discussions about other revenues, but we've been focused on efficiencies and working towards the issue of devolution. The legal authorities are absolutely critical but there's also those fiscal benefits that are there waiting for us. We've already left over \$300 million on the table, as we've talked about this. Three hundred million dollars that we could have put to good use.

We will be bringing forward an LP on the Financial Administration Act by Christmas is the plan. We are very confident in the economic viability of the fibre optic link and Inuvik becoming one of only two places in the world that does that type of remote sensing. It will add significant stability to the economics in Inuvik and the Inuvik region.

We are looking at a Revenue Stabilization Fund. We indicated that in the budget address. We want to move forward, because we agree with the Member, there are these price shocks or revenue shocks, and if we can come up with a way to level those out and cushion them, similar to what we are trying to do with the cushioning of the power rates, that would be a good thing.

With the NEB we intend within 18 months to have, as well, a legislative proposal that we can put on the table. Mr. Bromley indicated the concern about the \$15.6 million we're putting in to cushion the impact of the general rate application. I want to make a clear distinction: The rate restructuring is a separate issue from the fact that there were no rate increases for five years. That five-year no rate increases would be impacting us regardless of what kind of rate structure we now have. The fact is, when you have no new revenues as your expenditures go up, there's a widening gap that is not sustainable. We've acknowledged that we have to come up with a better way, through regulatory reform, to even those out, to minimize them, as well as look at efficiencies to the system to do that.

Our transfers have been done. When we were in Victoria last December and the federal Minister of Finance came into the room, when he laid the document on the table, it covered the health transfer, the social transfer, equalization and the formula funding arrangements with the territories, and those amounts were laid out. There is some work being done to clarify some of the information that was in there, but it covered, pretty well, the majority of our fiscal relationships with the federal government.

We are going to do a review of petroleum products to deal with some of the issues and application issues that the Member has mentioned. Once again, the intent is not to look at raising taxes, but if there are efficiencies and loopholes, we want to look at those.

Devolution is a priority, as well, for finance. It's on the third bullet, I think, on the last page of my opening comments. It's in our mandate letter from the Premier. We are fully engaged at all the tables that deal with the negotiations with the organizational structures. All the work that's being done given the financial implications, Finance is there.

Amortization is done according to the accepted practices. We work with the Auditor General of Canada. They review our books yearly. It's an issue that has grown in profile over the years. It's become much more visible, and their need to account properly, so we do that. During detail I'll ask Mr. Kalgutkar to speak to that.

Mr. Dolynny said some fairly strong things about tobacco collection, and his assertion that somewhere out there is \$4 million to \$10 million going missing every year. We have spent over 600, more like probably 700 now, hours of auditor time and a significant amount of time of other staff going through this. We've reviewed it with everybody, and at this point Mr. Dolynny indicates he still has these significant concerns. He questions the stats we use, which are either our own stats or from Stats Canada. He makes some assertions. We've opened every shoebox that we're aware of that we've seen. We've put a lot of time to this. He says, in his opinion with his experience with the folks he's talking to, that there is some clear smoking gun out there that is not visible to us, so we've asked. We've asked Mr. Dolynny, we've asked other folks that have raised this issue, give us that smoking gun so we can backtrack and have the evidence to track this \$4 million to \$10 million now, because like Mr. Dolynny, we are very interested in if that money exists and it's not coming to where it should be, which is to the government and to the people of the North. We want to work with the Member to track it down. We need that piece from him. Barring that, of course, the work that I've seen, the work we've reviewed that all the folks have done, is the

evidence that we have before us, and all the copious amount of effort that was put into that.

In regard to the revenue summary questions, the corporate income tax, if you could stretch the corporate income tax back into the past another three years, you would see that at one point we received an overpayment in corporate income tax, a big overpayment, and we had to pay that back. The last three years we've been paying that overpayment back, which has dropped our normal corporate income tax down much lower than it would if you had longitudinal view of, say, 10 years. We're finishing that now and our projections are that our corporate income tax will go back to those normal rates that you would see over a longer span, that aren't visible the way they're laid out in the document that's before this House.

Amortization, we'll have that discussion, as I indicated.

Devolution, as the Member for the Sahtu talked about, I've spoken to that. Decentralization is critical. The Premier has outlined the commitment. In regard to finance, we have three positions in this document. One of them is forced growth. The other two have reprofiled positions using our own internal resources. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister. We are on page 5-7, finance, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$142.121 million. We will defer this page until we have done detail. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Move to page 5-8, information item, Finance, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions? Seeing no questions, we will move on to page 5-9, information item, Finance, revenue summary. Any questions? Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The biggest concern that I have is this large amount between the projected amount and what we're currently collecting in corporate income tax. Can the Minister indicate a little bit more detail on how we are calculating that number and why is there such a big discrepancy in that number?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Minister indicated, we are seeing, I guess, our corporate income tax is projected to come back to historical levels. The federal government collects corporate income tax for us and estimates what they will collect and we use that in our formula. But as the Minister had indicated, this last year we just finished, in March, making our last repayment on an overpayment we received some years ago. Now we are looking to have corporate income tax returned to levels that we would have received in the

previous years had we not had to repay the overpayment from the previous years. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Okay. For my clarification, the numbers that we're looking at the past have a large payment made to the federal government. Is that correct?

**MR. AUMOND:** I think over the previous three or four years we paid back the overpayment that we received from the Government of Canada. In '12-13 we have no payment due to the Government of Canada, and our corporate income tax is projected to be back to the historical levels that we would have received had we not had to make the repayment. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** My next question would be: If we don't attain that number, what affect does it have to the bottom line, I guess, and how do we recover if we don't meet that level?

**MR. AUMOND:** The corporate income tax comes to us in installments from the Government of Canada. If we don't collect the amount of money we're projecting, then the bottom line is impacted by that amount, whether it's over or under. But because we don't have the payment back to the federal government, we have a high degree of confidence what you see in front of you in terms of the projection is what we expect we'll get with respect to corporate income taxes. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Madam Chair, I hope that those projections come close to those numbers, because if they don't, we're going to be in difficulty.

My next question would be towards the other taxation indicators which all show an increase. To expect the economy in the Northwest Territories to be picking up currently, is that one of the reasons we are expecting increases in all the taxation areas?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thanks, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I share the Member's assessment that things are on the way up. In the Northwest Territories there is increased activity in a number of areas. We tried to capture that in the budget address. The revenues indicate, would corroborate, that there is that type of positive upswing. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** My last question is about the grant from the Government of Canada and the increase. Can the Minister indicate what the main reason is for getting a larger increase? Is it because of the increase in population? Is it the way they calculate it? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct; it's the way the grant is

calculated. The attributes that make up our gross expenditure base have been calculated and projected to go up, and the number that you see from the grant from Canada is confirmed from Canada, so we can count on that going forward. We do not expect our grant from Canada to increase. We had about almost 9 percent. This year we're expecting more in the area of escalation more along the lines of 3 percent going forward, or in that range. The Member is correct; it's how the grant is calculated that is the cause for the increase. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** My next question is: What are we expecting in the future years? Have we leveled off the base now? Do we understand where the calculations will be? Is it an annual thing, a negotiation with the federal government as we go along? These numbers fluctuate up and down. Do we have an agreement that is going to give us a base to go forward?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The agreement we currently have is to 2018-19. It's tied to a number of escalators. They are adjusted as you move forward, things like provincial and territorial expenditures, tax efforts. For example, if there's a significant downturn in all the provinces and territories and they all cut back spending, there is going to be a consequential negative impact on our arrangement, as well, because one of the escalators in there is tied to that factor in the provinces. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister. Next on my list is Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My questions are somewhat in line with the Member for Hay River North. The recent population statistics showed that we increased by a whopping two people lately and we're still trying to find where those two people are. Given the fact that population is relatively flat and taxation is based on a per capita increase in the area we see here, where is the department getting their calculations or their crystal ball, so to speak, that we're going to be seeing an influx of people? Our statistics show, like I said, an increase of just two people in the last census.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. When I indicated that it looks like things from an economic point of view are improving, one of the assumptions in that is, for example, if you look at the Sahtu, there's a huge amount of activity. If that oil play in fact advances past the exploration stage, I believe we will see an increase in population. As the other diamond mine

goes on stream, there's potential there as well. We have six, seven, eight, as the Premier and the Minister of ITI have laid out, significant projects on the drawing board in the pipeline for development, all of which would not be able to be totally staffed using northern forces. So we'll bring people here. So there are those opportunities. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** I share the optimism of the Cabinet in terms of population growth. I guess we'll see when the dust settles.

The line entry called investment pool cost recoveries, we're seeing a significant drop from the main estimates of 2011-12. Can we get some explanation as to why we're seeing such a recovery and what exactly does that definition entail? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** This line is tied to the winding down of the Opportunities Fund. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Speaking about the Opportunities Fund, we know that that fund has wound down. This fund had an opportunity of people borrowing against it, or I guess we had the ability to borrow with it, to the tune of about 1.45 percent. With the increase in the borrowing limit, this increased our ability to borrow for large infrastructure. Can the Minister allude to what was the total value in terms of dollars available us with this Opportunities Fund when it was in our control? I'll ask that first question, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Kalgutkar.

**MR. KALGUTKAR:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At its peak, the Opportunities Fund balance was around 120 or 125 million dollars. Now that we've divested our interest in it and paid that fund back to Canada, the remaining balance is around \$7 million. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** I've heard various numbers. I've heard as high as \$135 million, but I'll take the word of Mr. Kalgutkar. What was the percentage? What was our interest rate, if you will, with the \$125 million at our disposal, Madam Chair?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd have to ask the Member to clarify the interest rate that we would lend to ourselves, that we'd lend to other people or other businesses?

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** How much would the GNWT charge for having this money at our disposal when we were lending it out to organizations?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We made one loan of any significant size and that was to Discovery. That interest rate was part of a broader package of negotiations that included the movement of headquarters positions and those

types of things. The interest rate was in the range of about 10 percent.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I think we're going down the wrong rabbit hole. I'm not looking at what we were lending this money out to a proponent that was wanting to borrow against that fund. We as a government had access to money from the federal government. The federal government would charge this government a fee, a percentage, for the use of this \$125 million. Madam Chair, what was that percentage?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I apologize if I seem like I'm being obtuse or a little slow here. We get the money and we pay 1.4 percent.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I heard 1.4 or 5 percent. If I'm wrong, please correct me at the next opportunity to the Minister. Where I'm going with this point, Madam Chair, is we had at our disposal opportunity money at 1.45 percent, but the government went out and increased our debt limit or our borrowing limit up to \$800 million, which obviously is required, but we dissolved this amount of ability to borrow at 1.45 percent and I believe now, Madam Chair, if we can get confirmation, we're now paying almost three times that interest rate for the very same money that we had at a third of that. Can we get some clarification if that is indeed the math that I'm using here, that we lost opportunity at 1.45 percent to pay three times more to borrow that same amount of money back?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you. The Member is correct. At the benefit of being able to borrow money at a very low rate now, we no longer have the Opportunities Fund, we no longer have that benefit.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. I appreciate the Minister clarifying that. It's a bit disheartening knowing that we had \$125 million at our disposal to do good work and now we've had to collapse this Opportunities Fund to a higher borrowing limit and paying three times the interest rate. It baffles my mind that that was a great deal. Anyone who is out there listening or anyone in this Chamber now, their ears have perked up. This has put us in a real precarious situation in terms of costing the taxpayers a lot more money. Can the Minister maybe indicate really in this arrangement where was the value added to the taxpayers in terms of getting a larger amount of money, but we're paying a heck of a lot more interest rate on that money now, Madam Chair?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you. The discussion with the federal government, they made it clear to us that they were not going to cover off the Opportunities Fund under the borrowing limit. We had an arrangement prior to that, it was satisfactory and worked fine, that the Auditor General said was fine and the federal government, Finance Canada said in their opinion they

disagreed and this would become part of our borrowing limit. We are not in a position to do that, so we made the decision, we were negotiating an increase to our borrowing limit. It wasn't going to be bumped up enough to accommodate the Opportunities Fund. So in the overall long-term cost benefit, we rolled up the Opportunities Fund and went with going with the borrowing limit. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you. I do appreciate the Minister giving a very detailed approach and finally sharing some of these numbers in its gross format to show the people of the Northwest Territories what's happening with the interest rates, what's happening with the borrowing limit. No question, but more of an observation.

I really have to wrap my head around this in terms of did we really get a bang for our dollar with the ability to borrow more money, but we're now paying three times more interest rate. It's one in which I have to really calculate and I might come back to the House with future questions down the road. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. I'll take that as a comment. The Minister agrees. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just following up on my colleague for a sec, were there conditions on how that money could be used, the Opportunities Fund money could be used or any restrictions that the federal government put on that money? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There were fairly broad conditions, but it mainly had to be tied to economic development activities. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. My understanding, is it public what the amount of return was on the money that was lent out and is it possible to report whatever our return was minus that 1.4 percent?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The loan was public. It was very topical and extensively covered in the newspaper. The loan was repaid in full early and I indicated what the interest rate was. I don't know. I'll ask Mr. Kalgutkar. I don't think we have that detail. So we don't have that detail on that particular loan here. It's been wrapped up and paid off for some time, but that information is available and I agree to provide it to committee if that's their wish. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I would appreciate receiving that and how it was calculated in terms of the numbers.

Now, just looking at corporate income tax, I know last year it was reported, I think by this Minister, that it was almost a record year for diamond

exports. I believe it was in the order of 2.1 to 2.3 billion dollars and obviously our corporate income tax is quite low. Is that because those dollars will be reflected in this fiscal year in terms of corporate tax? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you. There are a couple of things and I'll ask Mr. Kalgutkar if he wants to add further. Corporations can reach back three years when they do their filings for corporate income tax and make adjustments and do whatever is in their benefit in terms of how they file and where and what amounts and what's in their filing. As Mr. Aumond indicated, we as well are just concluding the repayment of a large overpayment that we received a number of years ago that we paid back over three years. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Minister Miltenberger, do I need to go to Mr. Kalgutkar?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Madam Chair, it may sound more authoritative if Mr. Kalgutkar says it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wasn't sure where I was going. Mr. Kalgutkar.

**MR. KALGUTKAR:** Sorry, Madam Chair, can you repeat the question? I didn't hear it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Mr. Bromley, could you rephrase your question? Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Actually, I'm happy to just accept the Minister's. I had forgotten some of those things, and he reminded of some of those things. So I think that's fine. I'm happy to move on.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to follow up quickly regarding the matter Member Dolynny had brought out. I'm just trying to understand perhaps the context of the bill of goods that we were sold by taking this particular option of returning the \$135 million, or \$134 million, it doesn't really matter. Potatoes, potatoes at this particular case because it's all gone. But what was the bill of goods sold to us, that this was in our benefit that we had money that cost us a 1.45 interest rate versus now we're using a market rate of 3.5. I mean, there must have been some reasoning why turning it back was better for the territorial government. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. There was a debate about where the Opportunities Fund would be accounted for, under our borrowing limit or not. That was an issue that was ongoing. At the same time we initiated the requests initially as a territory and then with all the

other two territories and got the Minister of Finance to agree to a review of the territorial borrowing limits of all three territories. Our particular circumstances were such that the Opportunities Fund that we have, Yukon – and I don't think Nunavut had it – was being perceived by the federal government in their opinion should have been under our borrowing limit, which would have clearly exceeded that ability in that level. So as we had the discussion, they indicated in their negotiations with us that they would not be increasing the borrowing limit to accommodate the additional \$125 million. So it would be we had a choice, and the choice was wrap up the Opportunities Fund and deal strictly with the negotiations for the borrowing limit, recognizing that, yes, there was a cost, as Mr. Dolynny indicated from Range Lake, that we lost access to lend ourselves money at a very cheap rate. The longer-term benefit was, as we move down the road to devolution and as we move down the road to having to deal with these fiscal constraints that we've been dealing with now, that the borrowing limit will give us more flexibility in dealing with the infrastructure issues and some of the other anticipated expenses that we didn't currently have prior to the borrowing limit being increased.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I appreciate the answer. A couple of things, though, that popped out of that. The Minister pointed out a debate that was ongoing and you kept referring to a discussion, we had a discussion. I wouldn't mind knowing who the debate was with and who the ongoing discussion was with. I'm not sure my memory serves me correct and I, of course, look for guidance from the Minister if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure that this wasn't brought to Regular Members as a particular option. What I'm going to do is bundle this with one other question. Where is the debate, with whom was it going on, was there or is there reasoning why there was no discussion, and I guess if the discussion was only with the feds and Cabinet, were they not offering a corresponding deduction? In other words, their existing borrowing limit minus the \$135 million. Were they negotiating or was it a term of dictating, where they just said give us the \$135 million and we'll do the other?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** When I say "we" the government, it was done through the very capable people in Finance negotiating with Finance Canada. It went through all the due processes with Cabinet and FMB. There were, and I recollect sitting at a number of briefings with committee about the borrowing limit, about what was underway, how things were going, what we were looking at. We've also had a number of briefings on the Opportunities Fund and I'm sure we could fill shoeboxes with paper of all that work that was done. That was the deal. The bottom line was the federal government was not prepared to offer us an

offset in our borrowing limit to allow us to include the Opportunities Fund.

**MR. HAWKINS:** What actually has worked to our advantage, in this particular case, for turning back the Opportunities Fund? I thought it was actually working quite well as a vehicle for lending money at a rate of 10 percent. I'm not going to question the context or phraseology of our good Finance folks, but I'm just wondering where the political discussion or the emphasis on the investment vehicle. At 10 percent return I thought that would be considered a good one. Maybe if the Minister could help me understand that particular thing, because it seemed to be an excellent vehicle for making cash for this government.

If my memory serves me correct, as well on another point, I think we're in the range of about \$8.22 million left over from that fund we got to keep. It seems as if it could generate money. Any thoughts from the Minister on that particular problem?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The number that was used is there was \$7 million residual in that fund that we kept in accrued interest and such and we're putting into the planning process is slated towards economic issues. This is talking about history that can be changed. The harsh reality for me was we hadn't lent this money out. We were lending it to ourselves. We had \$125 million in the bank that, according to how the federal government did their accounting, was considered a debt. So for most people if you think you have \$125 million cash, they had given it to us through their Immigrant Investor Fund. It was cash in the bank.

We weren't lending it out after the Discovery loan because of the debate over where it was going to be accounted for and would we have to roll it up. We had to deal with that reality that even though it didn't make sense and, yes, we had a stack of applications that the Minister of ITI had, of potential business ventures that we would have gotten a good return on our dollar for, in the broad scheme of things, the choice was we had to turn it back because we weren't going to get that bump up in our borrowing limit to allow for that and our bigger goal was the deal with the issue of the borrowing limit because of all the other pressures we had, due to the stopping of the stimulus money and the using of all our free capital to make sure that we took full advantage of the stimulus program that was happening in the last three years of the last Assembly.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I guess my last question, and I'll say with respect, of course, that I recognize the Minister's last response. I mean, we really are talking about that kind of horse that's since been gone for years as if it mattered on today's debate. It's well out of the barn, down the pasture, not even worth talking about. I appreciate that point.

I guess my last question in this particular regard, I suspect the Minister will answer it fine, but I suspect my last question will really be built around, was part of this a trade-off so we could get the extra access capital so we could get potential to use that as the Inuvik-Tuk highway? As our contribution? I mean, I'm just trying to get a sense of, don't take shell game as a negative context, that's not what I mean by it, but was there a bit of a shell by trading one for another and did we trade this Opportunities Fund over for the extra limit so it could be targeted at that particular initiative? Again, noting our percentage that we're required according to the agreement, I'm just trying to get a sense, was that part of the structured reason why we did this.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** When the federal government put \$150 million on the table towards the Tuk-Inuvik highway, we indicated to them that we were in no position, with their existing financial arrangements and borrowing limit, to even be able to contemplate partaking in that project in addition to all the other cost pressures we had. Was it a factor in the discussion when we talked about the borrowing limit? Absolutely. We've laid out all the conditions, all the checks and balances that have since arisen and been committed to in this House through myself, through the Minister of ITI, through the Premier, but yes, that was a factor in that discussion.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I figured the Minister was going to answer yes in some capacity, so I'm fine with his answer.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Page 5-9, Finance, department summary, information item, revenue summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-10, Finance, department summary, information item, active position summary.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-13, Finance, activity summary, deputy minister's office, operations expenditure summary, \$85.991 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-14, Finance, activity summary, deputy minister's office, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$81.058 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Madam Chair, I had a question on page 5-13.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** We have agreed to that page, Mr. Bromley. We're on page 5-14. Did you have a question on page 5-14? Mr. Bromley, does your question refer to the Housing Corporation?

**MR. BROMLEY:** Yes, it does.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** We will be looking at the Housing Corporation on page 5-14. We are on page 5-14. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I guess maybe I can just get a quick explanation of that contribution to the Housing Corporation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As I indicated in my comments to the departmental budget, we're the banker and we basically flow the money through to the Housing Corporation to run their operations and do the work they do with housing.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Just on the contribution to the Inuvik gas situation, is that a one-time cost, do we know, or is that expected to be an annual cost?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** At this juncture it's over the next four years.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I understand that's \$5 million per year for the next four years.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I'll get Mr. Kalgutkar to speak to that, but the amount does drop from \$5 million on down. I'll ask Mr. Kalgutkar to provide the detail.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Mr. Kalgutkar.

**MR. KALGUTKAR:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The total contribution that's part of the GRA which includes the Inuvik gas issue is \$15.6 million. As we phase the rate increases in over the next four years, our contribution does drop, and the full requirement at the end of the third year will be made up by the rate base.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I understand that now. It would seem to be reported as two different things here. These are both the general rate application and the Inuvik gas pertaining to the general rate application. Is that correct?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley. Page 5-14, Finance, activity summary, deputy minister's office, grants and contributions, total contributions, \$81.058 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-15, Finance, activity summary, information item, deputy minister's office, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-17, Finance, activity summary, fiscal policy, operations expenditure summary, \$23.494 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-18, Finance, activity summary, fiscal policy, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$22.200 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-19, Finance, activity summary, information item, fiscal policy, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-21, Finance, activity summary, budget, treasury and debt management, operations expenditure summary, \$11.567 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-22, Finance, activity summary, budget, treasury and debt management, grants and contributions, grants, total grants, \$6,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-23, Finance, activity summary, information item, budget, treasury and debt management, active positions.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-25, Finance, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, operations expenditure summary, \$18.633 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-26, Finance, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$11.085 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Is this an amount that's expected to occur on an ongoing basis or is this adjusted from year to year?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. You're referencing the Power Subsidy Program, I believe. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is the Residential Power Subsidy Program.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the question of whether the amount stays the same or is adjusted annually, Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The rate is adjusted somewhat annually and is, of course, dependent on what happens with power

rates. As rates increase then the subsidy increases accordingly.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I guess as the amount of power is used, especially in thermal communities where the subsidies apply, that amount would go up. Is that correct?

**MR. AUMOND:** It all depends on what the consumption is, of course, for an individual ratepayer, but as each unit of energy, each kilowatt hour, the price of that kilowatt hour goes up. Anything past 1,000 kilowatt hours, the subsidy goes up accordingly.

**MR. BROMLEY:** The \$3,000 subsidy for the previous two years has been discontinued, and that was a business subsidy, I believe. That's been discontinued. Was that a one-time thing just for those two years? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I think you meant \$3 million. I will go to Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**MR. BROMLEY:** My last question is: We're not paying anything to Northland Utilities here. Has something changed in the agreement there, dropping from \$500,000 last year?

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Kalgutkar.

**MR. KALGUTKAR:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This was all part of the rate going to the one rate zone, so those subsidies that we provided to the Power Corp and to Northland Utilities sunset at the end of '11-12. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar. We are on page 5-26, activity summary, Finance, office of the comptroller general, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$11.085 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** We are on page 5-27, information item, Finance, office of the comptroller general, active positions. Questions? Seeing none, we move to page 5-29, activity summary, Finance, office of the chief information officer, operations expenditure summary, \$2.436 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** We move to page 5-30, information item, Finance, office of the chief information officer, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$100,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 5-31, information item, Finance, office of the chief information officer, active positions. Any questions? Seeing no questions, we move to page 5-32, information item, Finance, Liquor Revolving Fund. Any questions? Seeing none, we move to page 5-33, information item, Finance, Liquor Revolving Fund, active positions. Questions? Seeing none, we move to page 5-34, information item, Finance, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions? Seeing none, committee, we will return to page 5-7, operations expenditure summary, department summary, Finance, \$142.121 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Does committee agree we have concluded consideration of the Department of Finance?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you to Mr. Aumond and Mr. Kalgutkar. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Alright, committee, we will move to Section 1, Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, do you have any opening remarks?

**HON. JACKIE JACOBSON:** I do, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please proceed.

**HON. JACKIE JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the 2012-2013 Main Estimates for the Legislative Assembly.

The Legislative Assembly is seeking funding this year of \$18.508 million. This constitutes a decrease of 5.3 percent from last year's budget. The decrease is caused mostly by the sunset of election year and transition expenses and the paying down of the building mortgage for the Assembly.

I am pleased to report that the Assembly will make its last mortgage payment on the Assembly building this month.

---Applause

We will take full ownership of the building from the society next summer and are planning a celebration along with the 20th anniversary of the opening of the building in 1993.

Other notable items in this year's budget include the transfer of responsibilities that are related to funding for the administration of Minister's pay and benefits to the Assembly, the establishment of an in-house security force, an Electoral Boundaries Commission, and renovations to our committee room to allow the broadcast of committee meetings to all our residents throughout the territory.

As always, I want to thank the Board of Management of the Assembly for assisting me in administering the affairs of this institution and developing this year's budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opening comments, and I welcome any questions Members may have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do you have witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber?

**HON. JACKIE JACOBSON:** Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Does committee agree the witnesses should enter the Chamber?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Mr. Speaker, would you please introduce your witnesses for the Members? Thank you.

**HON. JACKIE JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my left I have Darrin Ouellette, director of corporate services. To my right I have Tim Mercer, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Committee, we will defer page 1-7 until we are done with detail. We move to page 1-8, information item, Legislative Assembly, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions? Page 1-9, information item, Legislative Assembly, revenue summary. Any questions? Seeing none, we will move to page 1-10, information item, Legislative Assembly, active positions summary. Any questions? We will move to page 1-13, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, office of the Clerk, operations expenditure summary, \$7.902 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. We move to page 1-14, information item, Legislative Assembly, office of the Clerk, active positions. Any questions? Seeing none, page 1-17, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, office of the Speaker, operations expenditure summary, \$325,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Page 1-18, information item, Legislative Assembly, office of the Speaker, active positions. Any questions? Seeing none, page 1-21, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, expenditures on behalf of Members, operations expenditure summary, \$7.808 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Page 1-23, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just wondering, I know this is not an election year so the budget for this category has dropped, but the year prior to the election it was actually quite low compared to this year. I'm wondering why the increase between the two, sort of, equivalent years, '10-11 and '12-13, the ones before and after the election. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKIE JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we have the extra staff member that's going to be working the Boundaries Commission and the voters list across the territory for the next election. We had numerous people on the voters list that were deceased or moved on out of the territory. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you. That explains it fully and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Speaker on the last month's payment on our mortgage. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Okay, we are on page 1-23, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, office of the Chief Electoral Officer, operations expenditure summary, \$838,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Page 1-24, information item, Legislative Assembly, office of the Chief Electoral Officer, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Page 1-27, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, statutory officers, operations expenditure summary, \$1.635 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Before we leave that page, Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I noticed there's nothing under the amortization. I noticed for every other department that's taken into account, but I haven't seen that for this one. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKIE JACOBSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have no capital assets. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Anything further, Mr. Blake?

**MR. BLAKE:** Nothing further.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Page 1-27, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, statutory officers, operations expenditure summary, \$1.635 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Page 1-28, activity summary, Legislative Assembly, statutory officers, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$250,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Page 1-29, information item, Legislative Assembly, statutory officers, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thanks, committee. We would turn to page 1-7, department summary, Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures summary, \$18.508 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Is committee agreed we have concluded the department for the Legislative Assembly?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Thank you, committee. Thank you, witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses from the Chamber?

Thank you, committee, we will come back to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Miltenberger.

#### **Budget Commitments**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Over the last few months Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly have been working hard on a compressed 2012-13 planning schedule.

This included the review of departmental 2012-13 business plans in April and consideration of the 2012-13 Main Estimates in Committee of the Whole during the Third Session.

As part of their review, Members of this House have recommended amendments to the 2012-13 budget.

The Financial Management Board has considered these recommendations. Based on our discussions, we are prepared to make the following adjustments:

With respect to the Department of Finance:

- \$250,000 will be transferred from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the Heritage Fund. Although this transfer is being made in advance of a final Devolution Agreement, this small contribution will confirm to NWT residents that investing in our future is a priority of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

With respect to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs:

- Funding in the amount of \$200,000 associated with delivery of the Ground Ambulance Program scheduled to sunset on March 31, 2012, will be reinstated.

With respect to the Department of Health and Social Services:

- \$900,000 to enhance prevention and promotion programs in 2012-13.
- \$367,000 to continue to support initiatives that support the design and implementation of phase 3 programming and evaluation of past activities of the Family Violence Action Plan.

With respect to the Department of Justice:

- \$47,000 for the establishment of an additional legal aid family lawyer to help reduce the wait times for family law clients. Better than Christmas.
- \$215,000 for the implementation of an alcohol and drug treatment program at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre.
- \$49,000 to continue to support initiatives that support the design and implementation of phase 3 programming and evaluation of past activities of the Family Violence Action Plan.

With respect to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources:

- \$1.7 million to increase funding for alternative energy initiatives. The allocation of this funding will be reviewed by the Ministerial Energy Coordinating and Climate Change Committee of Cabinet over the next few months. The committee will meet with the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure in September 2012 to review the allocation of these funds.

Also, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment will be announcing an additional \$1.250 million to enhance early childhood development programming in 2012-13. The department will re-profile its existing budget to fund this important investment in our children.

Also, with respect to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, the proposed staffing of an NWT permafrost scientist will be delayed until the second half of the fiscal year. The department will lapse the budgeted funds not expended as a result of this delay.

The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation will delay full implementation of the seniors rent component of the new public housing rent scale until September 1, 2012.

I will follow through with these commitments in the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2012-2013, which will be tabled in the House within the next few days.

Finally, Madam Chair, I think this is an example of consensus government working. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'd just like to say, from this side of the House, I concur that we did work hard to impact our budget for the benefit of our constituents in the whole of the Territories, and I look forward to implementing the budget as we go forward with that, Madam Chair.

COMMITTEE MOTION 5-17(3):  
RESUME CONSIDERATION OF ESTIMATES FOR  
EDUCATION AND CULTURE ACTIVITY  
UNDER ECE,  
CARRIED

I move that this committee resume consideration of the activity education and culture under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment Main Estimates 2012-2013 on page 10-17. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. The motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. It's being distributed now.

Motion is non-debatable.

---Carried

Members, we are going to page 10-17 of the main estimates. Activity summary, Education, Culture and Employment, education and culture, operations expenditure summary, \$192.575 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. We will turn to page 10-7, department summary, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditure summary, \$289.107 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Is committee agreed we are concluded the Department of Education, Culture and Employment?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Mr. Menicoché, what is the wish of committee?

COMMITTEE MOTION 6-17(3):  
RESUME CONSIDERATION OF ESTIMATES FOR  
PETROLEUM RESOURCES ACTIVITY  
UNDER ITI,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee resume consideration of the activity petroleum resources under the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment Main Estimates 2012-2013 on page 12-17. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Now we can go to page 12-17. Activity summary, Industry, Tourism and Investment, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$6.802 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. We can turn now to page 12-7. Department summary, Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditure summary, \$49.560 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you. Are we agreed we have concluded the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Mr. Menicoché.

COMMITTEE MOTION 7-17(3):  
RESUME CONSIDERATION OF ESTIMATES  
FOR ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITY  
UNDER ENR,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Madam Chair, I move that this committee resume consideration of the activity environment under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Main Estimates 2012-2013 on page 13-17. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** The motion is carried.

---Carried

We will move to page 13-17. Okay, committee, we are on page 13-17, activity summary, Environment and Natural Resources, environment, operations expenditure summary, \$5.936 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. We'll turn to page 13-18, activity summary, environment, grants and contributions, contributions, total contributions, \$2.549 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. We will return to the department summary on page 13-7. Department summary, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditure summary, \$65.693 million. Are we agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Are we agreed that we have concluded the Department of Environment and Natural Resources?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, committee. Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 8-17(3):  
CONCURRENCE OF TABLED  
DOCUMENT 3-17(3): NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES MAIN ESTIMATES 2012-2013,  
CARRIED

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, be now concluded and that the Tabled Document 3-17(3) be reported and recommended as ready for further consideration in formal session in the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Menicoche, what is the wish of committee?

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Madam Chair, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro):** I will now rise and report progress.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, and would like to report progress with four motions being adopted and that consideration of Tabled Document 3-17(3) is concluded and that the House concur with those estimates and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced

without delay. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Miltenberger.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Friday, June 8, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
  - Motion 6-17(3), Changes to Seniors Public Housing Rent Scales
  - Motion 7-17(3), Appointment of Human Rights Commission Members
  - Motion 8-17(3), Appointment of Equal Pay Commissioner
  - Motion 9-17(3), Establishment of an Independent Ombudsman's Office
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
  - Bill 3, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
20. 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 17-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 7, 2010-2011
- Tabled Document 18-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2010-2011
- Tabled Document 19-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 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

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, June 8, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 9:52 p.m.