



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1729
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1729
4-17(4) – Labour Market Symposium (Lafferty)	1729
5-17(4) – ‘Wek’eahkaa, A New Day’ – Men’s Healing Program (Abernethy)	1729
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1730
Electoral Boundaries Commission Interim Report (Dolynny)	1730
Sustainable Economic Opportunities Strategy (Bromley)	1730
Trout Lake School (Menicoche)	1731
Impacts of Alcohol Abuse (Yakeleya)	1731
New Health Care Facility in Hay River (Bouchard)	1732
RCMP Presence in Tsiigehtchic (Blake)	1732
Reflections on Budget Address (Bisaro)	1732
Beaufort-Delta Regional Council Meetings (Moses)	1733
Long-term and Extended Care in Hay River (Groenewegen)	1734
Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway (Hawkins)	1734
Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Award Recipient Mr. Daniel Sonfrere (Nadli)	1735
ORAL QUESTIONS	1735
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	1745
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1746
MOTIONS	1746
1-17(4) – Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker (Menicoche)	1746
FIRST READING OF BILLS	1746
Bill 1 – Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act	1746
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	1746
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	1766
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1766

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, February 11, 2013****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 4-17(4):
LABOUR MARKET SYMPOSIUM**

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government believes NWT residents can reach their potential and be healthy, educated people, free from poverty. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment continues to work with industry stakeholders to improve the opportunities for training, education and employment across the Northwest Territories.

In 2011 the department held its first Labour Force Development Symposium, which was used as a platform to introduce the first NWT Labour Force Development Framework – People, Partnerships, Possibilities. It is a tool for working together towards improved labour market outcomes, and sustainable labour force growth and development. Over the years northern partners have come together to find common ground to ensure that our people and our economy are strong now and in the future. We are working with industry stakeholders toward a shared vision: "A healthy, educated, multi-skilled, safe and innovative workforce that guides the labour market and reflects our diverse cultures."

Mr. Speaker, that is always top of mind as we negotiate with industry partners on socio-economic agreements, assess training and education requirements, discuss where we can deliver more resources, or determine how we can support our residents and clients with better access and streamlined processes. As well, we look forward to recommendations from the Anti-Poverty Strategy to help achieve these goals.

As we go into our second labour force development symposium tomorrow, we are optimistic that our discussions will continue to be productive. We have

80 delegates, including federal and territorial government departments and agencies, Aboriginal organizations, Aurora College, non-government organizations, industry, private institutions and societies. Our theme is The Labour Market: Sharing Best Practices and Development, and this is our focus as a department: to make sure we have the ability to maximize prospects for the North based on strong partnerships.

We recognize that we have work to do to ensure our residents continue to have opportunities, resources and supports to reach their potential. I look forward to continuing to share information and putting into practice the advice we have from our partners to create a strategic path for success for the benefit of all Northerners. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 5-17(4):
'WEK'EAHKAA, A NEW DAY' –
MEN'S HEALING PROGRAM**

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we are accepting participants into a new pilot healing program in Yellowknife for men who use violence in their lives against their intimate partners. This voluntary program is key to helping communities be sustainable, vibrant and safe. It is based on this Assembly's main goal of believing in people and building on the strengths of Northerners.

Through a naming ceremony with elders, the 24-week program was named Wek'eahkaa ("Wek ea caw") A New Day, to reflect our healing philosophy. Each day brings with it a fresh chance to take control of our actions.

Wek'eahkaa is for men who have been violent in their intimate relationships. The program helps them to find their own strength, build on it to change their behaviour and take responsibility for their past actions.

Men will be supported as they develop their abilities and resources. Group sessions will focus on how to build respectful relationships, to understand how behaviour affects others and to consider the possibilities for healing and repairing the effects of their abuse.

Wek'eahkaa is based on very successful models running in other jurisdictions. We have worked with our NGO partners and listened to men throughout the North to custom design a program for NWT residents. Ultimately, our goal is to have a program that is accessible and relevant throughout the NWT. It is an investment in prevention, education and awareness, and it is built on partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, an Advisory Committee of NGO partners, the RCMP, cultural advisors and staff from Justice and Health and Social Services supports and guides this pilot program. They have been working with the contractor, the Healing Drum Society, to make sure the program is ready. Program staff has been trained and are ready to start. Referral information is being distributed for potential clients, service providers and the public. As word is spreading, calls have been coming in from men who feel they are ready to learn from this program.

We know that family violence is deliberate. We also know that this violence is based on a pattern of behaviours against the will and against the well-being of family members. This program will be a significant step towards positive change. This is a hopeful program. It invites men to consider what kind of person they want to be, how they want to treat their partners, their children and their communities. The participants want to change.

This new approach holds a great deal of promise, and I know I speak for all of us in expressing our thanks to the many people who have been involved in developing and delivering this program. Most importantly, I want to offer this Assembly's support to the men who have chosen a better way. 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 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of last week, it was hard not to pick up the paper, scan the local news on the Internet, or stop in a coffee shop without the people talking about this interim report by the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Frankly, I'm excited to hear from the people about their thoughts on democracy, whether it's representation by population, representation by culture and language, representation by geographic distribution, or a combination thereof.

Mr. Speaker, it would be easy for Members to weigh in on this topic, but I will refrain from

commenting on the subject for now as I feel this is a time for the people to share their voice.

We have been elected to listen and, more importantly, hear the wishes of our constituents, and to pre-empt this process by jumping the gun, and speaking out now before the people have had a chance to share their views is definitely not in the best interests of positive outcome.

We ask that all residents across the Northwest Territories take the time to inform themselves on the mandate of the Electoral Boundaries Commission to review the three options that were presented to report on, and to think what would be the best solutions for the entire Northwest Territories and future generations.

Our future rests in the hands of the people. We will be facing some difficult choices in the months to come, between the promises of this future and the prisons of our past. Mr. Speaker, we can't afford to get this wrong.

In closing, all we ask is that the people of the Northwest Territories attend the various Electoral Boundaries Commission's public hearings, or submit their comments directly to the commission itself. I would further ask that my colleagues here in this House allow due process to proceed in the proper sequence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, the 17th Legislative Assembly envisioned promotion of strong individuals, families and communities by developing a socially responsible and environmentally sustainable Economic Development Strategy. I look at the Economic Opportunities Strategy approach and wonder how we could possibly have left behind the people, families, social responsibilities and environment.

The strategy discussion paper is a partnership of the industry department, NWT Chamber of Commerce, Northern Aboriginal Business Association and the NWT Housing Corporation. Blatantly missing is the social and environmental expertise to back up an otherwise impressive panel, expertise that's necessary to fill out our Caucus priority.

Shamefully, we in the NWT have the largest income gap in Canada: \$185,000 a year between the richest and poorest 20 percent of households. Most current opportunities for wealth and employment are clustered in a few major centres, including remote mines that increasingly fly non-resident workers to and fro every two weeks. In some

communities up to 50 percent of households have annual incomes below \$30,000.

Proven research reveals the negative impacts of such unequal incomes on the health of society: as inequity increases, crime, substance abuse and poor economic performance that worsens. Sound familiar? Well, we had a wonderful opportunity to meet people's concerns and recognize this situation in our consultation document. Sadly, we focused on industry and how to make even more big bucks. Rather, we want to help the economy that serves the needs of all our people, not just one that further enriches the already successful.

As with social responsibility, apparently we don't need to design our economic strategy to serve environmental sustainability either. We'll just tweak development permits, and even under the ever more dismantled environmental protection regime, presto, we'll have an environmentally sustainable economy. I don't think so.

Committee wanted and was promised input at the earliest stages of this undertaking. Without that, the Minister has forged ahead on an effort that will have little credibility and doesn't meet our priorities.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

For the disadvantaged of Canada's most inequitable society, this strategy will mean little. Its terms of reference are a business-as-usual approach by the usual businesses aimed at more of the same, no matter what priorities this Caucus said we should pursue. As some are saying, why don't we just reprint the last one?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TROUT LAKE SCHOOL

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It can be extremely frustrating to be an MLA for a riding with small communities and see the government put aside their needs. I was hoping to see the planning study for a new school in Trout Lake addressed in this budget, but there's nothing yet.

We are in the 21st century, all of us; the people in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Fort Smith and the people of Trout Lake. You might not think it's the 21st century if you dropped into the school in Trout Lake. It is a one-room school in the current community centre. A little partition was put up last year, but it's still more like a one-room schoolhouse some of our parents went to than a modern school. The high school students still have to go to Fort Simpson just like the old days. Very little has changed, although the world has changed so much, and the students in

Trout Lake should be no less prepared for it than young people in other communities.

The community is small but the student population is growing. Our Statistics Bureau tells us the growth rate is more than 6 percent a year for the past 10 years, from 2001 to 2011. The school is too small and every year it feels a little smaller than it was. I have spoken before about the pressures this puts on both the students and teachers.

We have spent lots of money building superschools. It is time we start focusing on our small communities. They need stand-alone schools with all the modern teaching aids available. I call on our Education Minister to adjust the capital plan. The last one we saw called for work on a new school in Trout Lake to begin in 2018-2019. That is simply too long a wait. We have to get a planning study done so that we are ready to go. We have to move this project up on our priority list. I look to the support of this Cabinet to address the need for a new school in Trout Lake in this year's capital planning process.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPACTS OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Far too many people are hurt or killed every year in accidents related to alcohol abuse. About half of the drinkers in the Northwest Territories drink heavily, at least once a month. Heavy drinking often leads to dangerous behaviour. More than half the NWT population experiences harm from someone else's drinking. In 2009 about one in four of those accidents were assaults. This is going on every year. Thousands of people are harmed due to somebody else's drinking, even if they don't drink themselves. Of course, many drinkers are harmed too.

Alcohol was a factor in 22 percent of all injuries and 55 percent of all deaths relating from motor vehicle accidents between 1996 and 2004. About one-third of all motor vehicle accident-related deaths were young people.

There's a link between alcohol abuse and violence. About 85 percent of homicidal deaths are alcohol related. Alcohol was a factor in about half the suicides in the years from 2000 to 2009. Drunkenness was a factor in almost half the accidental deaths in those years, and chronic alcohol abuse was 37 percent amongst those victims. Injury is the third leading cause of death in the Northwest Territories.

The Sahtu region has the third highest rate of accidental deaths in our territory, after the Beaufort-Delta and the Deh Cho. In recent months, a young girl died of exposure in Fort Good Hope. On

Christmas Eve, a 27-year-old man was medevaced from my hometown of Tulita to Alberta, after a serious snowmobile accident. He's lucky to be alive. He wasn't wearing a helmet and he was drinking.

The government should do more to educate people about the risk of death and terrible injuries when they drink. Our government says it promotes safety, but at the same time allows unlimited purchase at our liquor stores, now including the one in Norman Wells. A few people there look forward to end the restrictions and everyone in the region has to live with it.

Bootlegging is like a plague in many of our communities, but I don't see much being done to stop it. Our government makes millions by selling alcohol, and alcohol abuse is killing our citizens and putting pressures on the health system.

I'll be asking questions to the Minister of Health on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEW HEALTH CARE FACILITY IN HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my short time here in the Ledge in the last 16 months, obviously we've had a lot of questions in Hay River about health care and the health care system. You would think that would be odd, Hay River being the beneficiary of a new health centre being built there. We hope that in the springtime this facility begins and that it's going to be a great facility for 50 years to come.

But there are a great many of questions out there in the community about what's going to happen with the long-term beds in the Hay River area, and what's going to happen with all the other services that aren't going to be in the current new facility that the new facility doesn't have designed in it, and what will happen to the old hospital facility.

My concerns here today are that the Department of Health should have had a clear picture for the community of Hay River of what exactly health and social services is going to look like for Hay River for the next 50 years. This facility, as I indicated, is going to be a facility for the next 50 years in the community, yet there are too many questions out there on what is going to happen. Where are all the services for the community of Hay River going to be? What is the future of community health and social services going to be in Hay River?

Later on today I will have questions for the Minister of Health on how the Department of Health can create such a facility and not have a blueprint of what that health system in Hay River is going to look like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RCMP PRESENCE IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been reviewing the budget presented last week by the Finance Minister, and I am very happy about what is in the budget, but I do have some problems about what is not in the budget.

One of the main goals we set at the start of this Assembly was sustainable, vibrant and safe communities. Yet, once again, this budget leaves some small communities with poor basic services.

There is no RCMP detachment in Tsiigehtchic and police presence is not adequate. The officer assigned to the community is based in Fort McPherson. We all know that having police in the community helps deter crime. Police response to calls from Tsiigehtchic is slow. This results in crimes that could have been prevented. This year there will be more crimes that could have been prevented because this budget does not address the problem.

The situation is even more critical during freeze-up and breakup periods when the road traffic is interrupted. Over the years the community has suffered and it seems we are telling the people just go on suffering. There are many innocent victims of crime that could have been prevented. I know it will cost some money to put an RCMP detachment in Tsiigehtchic and that is the government's excuse for compromising the safety of the community.

This government does not talk about the positive effects and even cost savings that come from a safer community. It is really sad that our smallest communities need police detachments. That says a lot about the times we're living in. We are elected to do something about it. We are elected to make our communities safer and healthier and we all promised to do our best.

I will be asking the Justice Minister when we will do our best for the community of Tsiigehtchic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON BUDGET ADDRESS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, like my colleague, have had a chance to consider the budget address from the Minister of Finance, and I also would like to comment on the government's plans for our next budget.

I have always agreed with the fiscal strategy we adopted at the beginning of the 17th Assembly. We have been prudent and, as the Minister said last

week, we need to live within the means that we have. A stay-the-course budget it is and I am okay with that, but I am not totally satisfied with the proposed use of the dollars that we have.

On a happy note, I am pleased that the budget indicates the Midwifery Program will be stabilized and expanded, but no new midwife practice will get up and running in 2013-14. The money will go to planning at headquarters, and that's not what we need.

Secondly, the budget includes \$9.4 million to continue to subsidize electricity rates for residents, yet I have heard no indication from the government of any concrete plan to get us out of the subsidy business. How long will we continue to pour millions into the subsidy pot?

On another note, the Minister's address talked a lot about economic development. I agree; we need economic development to grow our territory, but where in the budget address was the corresponding acknowledgement of environmental and social impacts? We cannot focus on economic development without also focusing on land use planning, socio-economic impacts and environmental concerns. I didn't hear much about those from Minister Miltenberger and that's a concern.

Fourth, I again appreciate the continued focus on early childhood development in the budget. It was a good move in 2012-13, to place \$1 million into early childhood development programs. I have to say again, though, that it should not have come from the inclusive schooling funds. That part of the education budget will remain underfunded because of that transfer.

Fifth, I am again pleased to hear the Finance Minister commit to funding the implementation of our Anti-Poverty Strategy through an upcoming supplementary appropriation. I look forward to the action plan once it's developed. This will be money very well spent, and spent properly, will bring efficiencies to government operations.

Lastly, I am concerned about the seeming lack of focus and lack of money for mental health programs and services. Lots of mentions and talk about addictions, but we will have no success in treating residents' addictions if we don't also treat and consider mental health at the same time. These two issues cannot be separated.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: The Minister's address mentioned slow revenue growth several times, but my thoughts on that will be left for another time.

I look forward to discussing the budget in detail in the coming weeks. There will be lots of questions

from this side of the House. I eagerly anticipate the answers from the other side. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BEAUFORT-DELTA REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity last month to attend the Beaufort-Delta Regional Council meetings in Inuvik, where we bring all of our mayors, our chiefs and councils into Inuvik, where they have an opportunity to sit down with Cabinet, Cabinet Ministers and all of their staff and ask some pretty tough questions and also look at creating some type of resolution and give the Ministers an opportunity to look and see what's happening in our small communities and our region with our people in that area.

I was very happy that this was my second time sitting down with the Beaufort-Delta Regional Council and listening to their concerns. This year I was very pleased to say that all the leaders from the community were very engaged, they asked a lot of good questions, the dialogue was very good. When the regional council meets, at the end of their meeting – they met for three very long days – they came up with resolutions. Last year the chair of the committee brought forth a bunch of resolutions to the Premier and his office, and they were able to deal with some of them. This year we're waiting for those resolutions and we will continue to try to get them on the agenda. We've got five more weeks here in the House to try to get some of those resolutions that our leadership from back home brought forth.

The leadership was also very interested in the collaborative approach that some of these departments are doing and working together, and they support that. They support departments working together to be more effective and more efficient in the communities, especially when we have a lot of issues.

Our leadership in the Beaufort-Delta, as you are aware, is very strong. They have strong voices, they have strong leadership styles and work very well with one another. As such, for all the years of experience, their wisdom, knowledge, their expertise, I would hate to say that their voices go unheard in this House and within this government. I'll be making sure that as we move forward over the next fiscal year that their voices and the concerns of their residents are heard in this House.

Over the next five weeks, I'll be sure to bring some of those resolutions to our committee and look at getting support to go forth into this budget year or

as we move forward with this 17th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
LONG-TERM AND EXTENDED CARE
IN HAY RIVER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to follow up on the topic raised by my colleague for Hay River North. It is a very important and very pressing issue at this time.

The good news is we're all living longer. The bad news is this government has to find the capital to deal with providing long-term and extended stay care beds for our aging population.

This is a fact, that there are 10 long-term care beds in the existing Hay River hospital. Another fact is that the new health centre does not anticipate having any long-term care beds. So there is a timeline that's fast coming upon us. The new hospital will be up and operational, and you know, in capital planning, years go by very, very quickly. We were on the waiting list for many years to get the new health centre we're getting now and we can't get back in the line. I don't know if we can get back in the line fast enough to get a facility for these long-term care beds. So I would like to suggest an option, and I'm sure there are numerous options, but this is an option I would like to suggest to the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Public Works.

Right now the wing of the Hay River hospital that contains the 10 long-term care beds is operating. There will be the acute care wing, which will become open when the new health centre is built and operational.

I would like to suggest that a lot of our infrastructure we have is functional one day and not necessarily ready for the wrecking ball. I would like to see this government undertake a technical review starting soon, if they agree, to look at the use of the existing Hay River hospital as a full-sized or converting it fully to an extended care facility. I don't know if it's viable, I do know that the requirements for air handling and different codes are more strenuous for an actual hospital versus an extended care or long-term care facility. I am not, obviously, as a layperson, familiar with what all of those codes and what all of those things are, but there people who are, and I think that this building is worth taking a look at.

I think that it would require a technical review, a review of the ongoing operations and maintenance that would be involved in keeping this going, because the number of people that are going to be requiring those services in Hay River is going to be growing greatly over the next few years. We can't

wait. We need to know what the game plan is going to be going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INUVIK-TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to use the occasion today to talk about the Inuvik-Tuk highway. As you know very well, over the years you've heard me always say that I've been a supporter of the highway, and that support for the principle of the highway has not changed at all. I believe in some vision, in a manner of speaking, that it is nation building in its own way.

It is a new highway and may I remind this House, certainly the Transportation Minister and, of course, our Premier – the one that led the great vision I talked about last week in Ottawa – a new highway is supposed to be a federal responsibility. Now the territorial government is wading into this and, of course, gets us into an interesting pickle, whereas our public is picking up the tab for what should rightly be a federal responsibility.

The primary issue I'm hearing today, as we wait for these costs to the highway, is that the public wants to know what this is going to cost. They're sitting in a manner here they're anticipating, but all we hear is rumour that it will cost \$200 million, \$250 million, \$300 million, even \$350 million. Those seem to be numbers that float around. Of course, the concern that we've always heard is, don't worry, the feds will pick up that 25/75 split. That was great news and new news on the \$200 million highway, but of course, if it's \$350 million, are the territorial citizens going to be the taxpayers that back this particular project?

I acknowledge and certainly support the principles that our Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has and his focus. He has had a relentless focus, and I would like to give him credit for that, about developing the North and creating opportunities that have not existed before, and he certainly does deserve that credit. I do caution our House in the context of what will our costs be.

In short, I want to bring this down to a couple of things. The first thing is, before a number is debated and voted upon in this House, I would certainly like a public number, a plain-language document of costing and reporting out there for the public so they can see it, and have a chance to consume it, and understand the particular issues that this will build and certainly be for our territory. Whatever number that ends up, it should be given to the public with a full opportunity to have some discussion on this. That way they can provide the feedback to the Members of the Assembly and say, look, I would like you to support this, or in some

cases maybe not support it because it's such a large number.

The other issue which I will be bringing up in question period is the royalties. People are concerned about how much the royalties may be; if so, how much, and why are we paying royalties, considering how much highway in the future needs to be built. I will have questions for the Transportation Minister later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE AWARD
RECIPIENT MR. DANIEL SONFRERE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Friday I was honoured to present a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award to a respected elder and advocate for Dene languages and culture, Mr. Daniel Sonfrere. Mr. Sonfrere is highly respected for his lifelong determination to preserve and promote the Dene language and culture.

[English translation not provided.]

Mr. Daniel Sonfrere continues to work tirelessly for the preservation and promotion of the Dene language. As part of a committee of six elders, all of them fluent in the Dene language, he works with a translator and linguist to record and preserve our language in a topical dictionary. Mr. Sonfrere hopes that this dictionary will continue to help the young people learn from their Mother Tongue.

February 6, 2012, marked the 60th anniversary of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Canada. To celebrate this event, the Government of Canada created a commemorative medal to recognize the outstanding contributions of 60,000 Canadians of all ages and walks of life.

Elder Daniel Sonfrere is worthy of this reward for his legacy of language and great dedication to his people. We are reminded daily of the influence he has taken in shaping the community that the Hay River Reserve is today. I was deeply honoured to attend the ceremony, along with Chief Roy Fabien of the K'atlodeeche First Nation, and to make this very special presentation as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Deh Cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 36-17(4):

RCMP PRESENCE IN TSIIGHEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement earlier today, I will have questions for the Minister of Justice. I would like to ask the Minister how long is the RCMP's response time to complaints in Tsiigehtchic compared to Fort McPherson.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that specific information in front of me. I do know that in the summertime they have regular planned patrols of the community where they drive in from Fort McPherson. In the wintertime, if there is an emergency, they will charter a plane to come in. I will commit to getting the Member some specifics on actual response time.

MR. BLAKE: It's very interesting they charter a plane to Tsiigehtchic when we have no airstrip. Can the Minister describe the benefits of having a permanent police detachment in those communities lucky enough to have them?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I should have said they will have a flight into the community, not necessarily a plane. I had an opportunity to visit Tsiigehtchic with the Member in April where I had an opportunity to talk to leadership with the commanding officer for "G" Division. At that time, the commanding officer of "G" Division did commit to meeting with the community and working on a policing plan that met the needs of the community. I understand that a number of activities or items were agreed to.

I also understand that, having a meeting with some Gwich'in leadership in December, that plan has come off the rails a little bit.

I have had an opportunity to sit down with the commanding officer of "G" Division, who has indicated that he will go back to the community and sit down with the leadership again to try to bring that community policing plan back together. At the end of the day, policing patrols are at the discretion of the RCMP, but as a government we're very concerned about having coverage in small communities and we believe that one of the best ways to do this is to work with the community and develop individualized community policing plans. I will commit to the Member today that the commanding officer has promised and indicated that he will go into the community, and work with your leadership to develop a plan that works for Tsiigehtchic.

MR. BLAKE: Will the Minister meet with the community leaders in Tsiigehtchic to discuss putting in a police detachment there?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: At the current time, there is actually a dedicated police officer in Fort McPherson to provide services to Tsiigehtchic. I'm happy to sit down and talk about options and possibilities about how we can provide a greater range of services in Tsiigehtchic. A stand-alone detachment is going to be a minimum of \$5.5 million investment to develop a detachment. I think we need to work on other options first. I'm certainly willing to meet with the leadership to talk about options that would work for them.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister meet with the community of Tsiigehtchic to create a long-term plan and implement the plan?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I've already committed to go to the community and meet with the leadership. I've also indicated that the commanding officer of "G" Division and RCMP from Fort McPherson are absolutely willing to go and work with the community. So I guess again the answer is yes.

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

QUESTION 37-17(4):
LONG-TERM AND EXTENDED CARE
IN HAY RIVER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to the issue that was raised by my colleague and myself from Hay River, I would like to ask my questions to the Minister of Public Works and Services. Knowing that Hay River is going to be in need of long-term care beds, I would like to ask the Minister if the existing hospital could be considered as one of the options for a long-term care facility for Hay River. It is strategically located on a beautiful green space. The rooms in acute care and extended care are very large. There are ample developed home-like common areas. There's a very expensive and large kitchen and cafeteria there for residents that would need to take their meals there. There's lots of parking. There's a very well-located security desk that would allow you to see everybody coming and going. It would just seem that if this building could be re-profiled as a long-term care facility, it's worth looking into and I'd like to ask the Minister if his department would undertake a technical review of the building.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As with all assets that belong to a department, once the Department of Health and Social Services vacates it, it will become the responsibility of Public Works and Services, who will do a technical assessment on the building to figure out if there is any future for that building and whether it can actually be used for other purposes, then it would enter the normal process for disposal which may include, or could include, re-profiling. We would have to do a technical assessment on the building, figure out what it is, factor in deferred maintenance, costs of operating, all those types of costs. Through the normal disposal process, that will be done.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: That is not the answer I was hoping for. There is no place for these folks to go if they vacate the building. We can't wait until after the building is vacated and then start doing an assessment of whether or not it could be used as a long-term care facility. There are no other 10 long-term care beds in Hay River and we certainly don't want to be shipping our people out of Hay River to other communities. We know that the years pass quickly in this place and the new facility will be open, it will be upon us. If we're going to look at this as an option, this assessment would need to start to take place now. I would like to ask the Minister what it would take to get that ruling, a request from the Department of Health and Social Services. What would it take?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: A request from Health and Social Services wouldn't hurt.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: So if the Department of Health and Social Services wanted to consider this facility as an option – I say an option because I don't want to pre-empt other options but I just know how capital dollars work around here, I know how tight they can be. If the Department of Health and Social Services made a request, Public Works and Services would begin to look at the structure, the utility of this building as a long-term care facility, and prepare a report as soon as possible.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: An analysis of this magnitude would actually cost some money so we would have to actually look for some money as well, which means we may have to come back to the House seeking some dollars to do that.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not one that's normally in favour of a lot of studies and reviews, but in this case, I would support that.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Comment. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 38-17(4):
SCHOOL IN TROUT LAKE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've long stood up here and debated with the Minister of Education about the need for a new school for Trout Lake. I think our last discussion in this House was last October. I would like to ask what the Minister has done to advance the Trout Lake new school replacement project since then.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Trout Lake school, Charles Tetcho School, has a capacity of 20 students at this point. It does have up to 33 students that we have a capacity for at that size. Right now it's at 61 percent for 2011-2012 enrolment figures. Based on that, from the information I have there's not much need for additional space requirement. However, I have committed to the Member and will be visiting his constituency, and I want to look at the actual facility itself and discuss further how we can move that along expeditiously. As the Member indicated, 2018 is far away, but that's an area we continue to work with with the MLAs during the capital planning process. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I've also long made the case that that is not a school in Trout Lake. The old one had burned down. The school is being housed in the community centre right now, and our government has committed to replace that school, and that's what I'm asking the Minister today.

So I'd like to ask the Minister, given that, when will this government replace that school in Trout Lake.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Again, it's based on the capacity of the students in the schools for the Northwest Territories. We deal with 49 schools and the Charles Tetcho School was constructed in 1993, so it is almost 20 years now and that's an area that we need to re-evaluate, the number of students in a school and also the population in a community.

Again, I will be visiting the community and looking at the school, and we can discuss further what the next steps should be. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm trying to point out to the Minister that, for example, if a school had burned down in Yellowknife and they put them in the community hall, how long would it take them to replace that school.

So I'd like to ask the Minister once again, when will that school be replaced for a new stand-alone school in Trout Lake. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, currently we have the school in Trout Lake. We have students learning in Trout Lake; 20 students

that are registered in school. We do have a facility. It may not be a fancy facility, but this is an area that we are closely monitoring. At the same time, this is an area that I've been pushing my department, especially for small schools, how we can expedite this process.

When it comes to capital infrastructure, every year we go through that. We push through various schools to be included in the capital planning process. Unfortunately, there are other pressing needs, other pressing issues that come forward as a priority.

So with this particular school, we'll continue to push that forward. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's time for small schools in small communities and enough of building big schools in big communities. I'll take up the Minister's offer to come to my riding, and I certainly look forward to meeting with the leadership of Trout Lake and to show him the exact needs. The community actually disputes the numbers that he's using. They're actually saying that there are about 25 students already and growing yearly.

I'd like to ask the Minister, will he commit to start the work to do a planning study for the community of Trout Lake for a new school. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are the discussions that we need to have within my department and with the school board as well. What it comes down to is the needs of the community, the number of students.

I did commit to the Member that I will be visiting the community, and highlighting the Trout Lake School and how we can take that matter forward. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 39-17(4):
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. In my statement earlier today, I know the 17th Assembly Caucus clearly stated an emphasis on strong individuals, families and communities, and developing a socially responsible and environmentally sustainable Economic Development Strategy.

We know there are big challenges to achieve this and that expertise in all these areas is, obviously, required. How did the Minister set out to ensure the Economic Development Strategy meets the social and environment Caucus priorities, when the discussion paper itself is a sponsorship of business

only, and no environmental or social expertise appears to be included? Mahsi.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Economic Opportunities Strategy focuses on growing the economy here in the Northwest Territories. At the same time, we have a parallel process with the Anti-Poverty Strategy that the government has initiated as well.

Our belief is that we can find a way forward with the economy and focus on economic opportunities in the various regions around the Northwest Territories, and that's what this strategy is set up to do. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: The strategy discussion paper lists the reference materials that will be the basis of analysis; that's industry profiles, regional economic profiles and a literature review of economic strategies. But where's the social analysis and the environmental studies such as the need to control growth in greenhouse gasses, building a carbon-neutral economy?

Does the Minister really believe that the socially responsible and environmentally sustainable aspects of an Economic Development Strategy can happen without specific and thoughtful preparation and design in that work? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We have a number of folks involved in the Economic Opportunities Strategy, including the Northern Aboriginal Business Association, the NWT Chamber of Commerce, the NWT Association of Communities. We have an expert panel that's set up, as well as the department. We're not setting out to conduct this Economic Opportunities Strategy without talking to people. We've been out to a number of communities already. We're looking for feedback from residents around the Northwest Territories.

I know the Member mentioned big business in his opening statement. This isn't all about big business, Mr. Speaker, it's about opportunities, especially in the smaller communities, if you look at the commercial fishing, agriculture, tourism, the traditional economy, as well, with trapping. We have to turn over every stone when it comes to finding opportunities out in the regions, and we have to find out what those obstacles are to get economic development happening in some of our small communities. Mr. Speaker, this is our effort to do that. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the Minister's comments. I don't disagree with much of that, but a quick look at the parameters of the discussion, the strengths will be examined. That's mines, forests, airports, and connections and the like. No people there. The weaknesses are studied. That's regulatory processes, roads, access to land. No

human capacity there either. There are opportunities; for example, interest from foreign investors and, finally, threats...(inaudible)...threats to the business environment.

Again, where's the environment, where are the people and where are the cost priorities? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The North has always been criticized for having too much red tape, government's getting in the way of business. We believe that the regulatory regime that is in place is going to protect the environment. This is a stand-alone strategy. It focuses on growing the economy here in the Northwest Territories and we should let it do just that. Focus on economic development here in the NWT. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister seems to think that the environmentally sustainable aspects and social responsibility can just happen without being designed. I say that's baloney. Ploughing forward with blinders on is not going to serve us. That's an old method that's been disproven. We need a comprehensive holistic approach here.

So I ask, how will the Minister move to correct these oversights, and if he doesn't, why bother spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on this exercise when we're coming up with more of the same? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I appreciate the Member's concerns; however, I don't share those concerns. I believe we can move forward with an Economic Opportunities Strategy that's going to benefit every region across the Northwest Territories and find new ways for us to grow the economy, especially in the smaller communities, and that's what we're going to start out to do. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 40-17(4):
LONG-TERM AND EXTENDED CARE
BEDS IN HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my Member's statement, we are having concerns in Hay River about the new health centre and what's not going into it. I have questioned the Minister on this in the past, about the 10 long-term beds. Can I get an answer from the Minister of Health and Social Services on what he has done since the beginning, what he and the department have done for a solution for the 10 long-term beds in Hay River?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The very first process to adding long-term care beds to Hay River would be to go through the capital planning process. I've had discussions with the executive and the Department of Health and Social Services about initiating the initial discussions that are needed at the senior bureaucratic level to talk about adding this project to the capital plan for the GNWT. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I have a question on the Minister's answer. I'm wondering if the Minister has indicated to the executive that this is a priority, this is something that we feel that Hay River has been left out of the process somewhere along the line. They designed a new health centre and excluded the 10 long-term beds that are currently in the hospital.

Has the department and himself stressed the fact that there is some shortage that is going to be happening very soon once the new facility is open?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, the department is aware that the long-term care right across the Territories is a priority. We are doing various things like trying to get the current long-term care beds up to full staffing. Also, we are adding long-term care beds within the overall system.

Long-term care is a territorial program, so even though long-term care exists in Hay River, there are other long-term care beds where we are expanding. Yes, we are doing what we can to make sure that the department does understand that long-term care is a priority. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I respect the Minister's answer and I understand the long-term beds solution throughout the North, but we are dealing with Hay River, one of the largest centres in the Northwest Territories. I am hoping the Minister's statement doesn't mean that he's looking at putting Hay River residents elsewhere.

Is there a commitment from the department? I know the Minister of Health has indicated, in a public speech, that they are looking at solutions in Hay River for those 10 long-term beds.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, the plan is not to move people that are from Hay River that require long-term care into long-term care beds outside of Hay River. All the long-term care needs in Hay River will be addressed within Hay River. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my statement, I am just a little bit bewildered that we're making a 50-year plan without some of these answers already being made.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Has the existing hospital, the old hospital, been part of their assessment for keeping the long-term care beds in Hay River? Have they included that in their assessment?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, no, we had not assessed H.H. Williams as a long-term care only facility. We had assumed that when the new health care was built, all of the services would leave the Hay River current H.H. Williams Hospital. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 41-17(4):

ALCOHOL AND ADDICTIONS TREATMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I quoted some pretty astronomical numbers in regard to the alcohol abuse-related deaths, injuries, accidents and suicides. On that pendulum swing right over the next, people who want to sober up and they use Nats'ejee K'eh, can the Minister inform me that at Nats'ejee K'eh, with a budget of \$2 million and an occupancy rate of 46 percent, if Nats'ejee K'eh is working with the people of the Northwest Territories?

I also understand that the Minister is seeking information from the communities and I support the Minister on the community addiction forum as to get some home-grown solutions. Is Nats'ejee K'eh working for our government?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that Nats'ejee K'eh is not operating at full capacity. There is no question about that. Also, the people do successfully complete Nats'ejee K'eh. We don't have an instrument that's going to determine whether or not the Nats'ejee K'eh graduates were fully successful in achieving their battle against addictions, because at which point do we measure success? Is it one year of sobriety? Five years? Or is it a lifetime of sobriety after that? We are trying to get a feel from the communities and the people that have gone through Nats'ejee K'eh, through the community counselling, and then making a determination whether or not that is successful. But we do know that it is operating well under capacity. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the Liquor Commission, made about \$46 million last year, 2011-12. That's the money they made. They contribute about 3 percent of that to promotion of healthy style living and responsible drinking. Nats'ejee K'eh runs on a \$2 million budget. The

capacity rate is about 45 percent. That runs roughly about \$14,800 per client to take a 28-day treatment program.

Has the Minister given some stern direction to the Department of Health and Social Services, saying that Nats'ejee K'eh needs to change its program so that people in my region and other regions can come down there that would make it successful, and that would fill that centre and not be at 45 percent?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, as per our earlier discussions in the House, I have gone to see the board, Nats'ejee K'eh. I've met with the board at Nats'ejee K'eh. The board and the executive at Nats'ejee K'eh are sending a proposal into our department to look at different ways that they think they can deliver the addictions program at Nats'ejee K'eh to have greater success and also open up the options.

Currently, they have only men's programs and women's programs only. They don't have youth treatment and so on. They were going to propose the various types of treatment, perhaps even family treatment, youth treatment, and male and female treatment, and come back to the department. I have not seen that proposal as of yet. However, they indicated to me, when I met with them, that they are going to send me that proposal. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that 85 percent of reported crimes in the Northwest Territories are alcohol and drug related. Ninety percent of inmates of Northwest Territories correction facilities have addiction issues.

With the usage of Nats'ejee K'eh and looking at the programs, is the Minister looking at a culturally relevant program? I believe that these numbers have to reflect a lot of the smaller communities, and a lot of the inmates in our centres are Aboriginal people. Is the Minister seriously looking at a drug and alcohol treatment program, not a mental health and wellness program?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, that seemed to be the problem, that they had moved away from purely alcohol counselling to more of counsellors that have degrees in mental health and that they looked at a lot of this as mental health issues. It appears as though the communities that want to use Nats'ejee K'eh would like to see that become more of an alcohol counselling type of facility as opposed to a lot of the mental health counselling requirements that are now associated at Nats'ejee K'eh. That's the exact review that we had asked the board to come back with, an alcohol type counselling versus something that had a lot of mental health type of counselling such as only counsellors with their degrees in mental health who we doing the counselling there. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the Sahtu we have a high population of youth, I think about 79 percent, that are 15 years and over. Can the Minister tell me where the youth go for drug and alcohol treatment programs in the Northwest Territories?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We are looking to try to develop something at Nats'ejee K'eh. As I indicated, perhaps some treatment programs that would be built in in the summertime for youth.

Right now all of our youth that end up in treatment end up in treatment in southern placements. I think that the numbers of youth going to treatment, that type of treatment where they are placed in a southern treatment facility is very low. I think I at one time used the number five youth had gone to treatment over a two-year period from the Northwest Territories. So it's difficult to build a program around that type of number, but we figure that if we can adapt something that's in the North and targeted to youth from the North that there may be some uptake at facilities such as Nats'ejee K'eh. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 42-17(4):
NURSING SERVICES IN
BEAUFORT-DELTA COMMUNITIES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In continuing with my theme with the Beaufort-Delta Regional Leadership Council, upon returning back to Yellowknife I had some information in my mailbox regarding nursing services in a couple of the smaller communities in the Beaufort-Delta region. On two separate occasions over the Christmas holidays, there were two communities that only had essential services of nurses, and my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

My first question is: Knowing that you're going to be low on nursing or have staff shortages for that time in those communities, was there a plan put in place to restaff those positions during that time, and even before then, how long did the Minister and his department know that they were going to need staffing in these communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've always known that there is a staff shortage of nurses right across the Territories. We also know that we have a separate governance system in every health and social services authority across the territory. We can't share resources as though

we have one single governing system with doctors or nurses the same. So the health authorities with their own governance system get the nurses in, they hire the nurses or they hire locums to fill in these positions. So in reality, the department is not specifically aware where and when the nurses are not going to be, although they advise us that these places would have only essential services for certain periods.

As the Member indicated, in one place for 11 days they only had essential services. So we are aware all the time that there is a shortage of nurses, but where the authorities will deploy these nurses, we are not completely aware of that. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: I have a concern, because it's during a high time where there are a lot of incident rates, such as people going through a hard time during Christmas, depression and those types of areas where there's a possibility of something happening.

The Minister has also said that authorities don't share their staff, but he's always preached about this Yellowknife doctors pool going out to the communities. That's where I think that when the department finds out that there's going to be a staff shortage in the community, that they make a plan and create a plan so that people in these small communities have those services should they need them, especially the emergency services.

My next question for the Minister is: What was the action plan should there have been an emergency for these two communities? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. Other than providing information to all of the community groups in the various communities where the health centres would close, with the exception of essential services, I don't know if the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority actually had an action plan in place that would say that this is what we were going to do in case of emergency. I suppose that they would treat it like any other medical emergency. If there was a medical emergency at any time while there was staff at the health centre or not, they would be treated in the same type of urgency. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. I understand that the Minister mentions that he doesn't know if the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority had an action plan in place, but as the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services and his department, I believe that he should have an action plan in place should any other small community in the Northwest Territories go through a nursing shortage or lose staff for a period of time, especially during a critical time of year, which is around Christmastime.

My next question for the Minister – hopefully he has these stats on hand. Was there any emergency calls in these two communities during this time and

can he provide whether or not there were any emergency calls in these communities? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. I do not have that information. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just following up, as a responsibility to the Department of Health and Social Services working out of the department, I feel that it's their responsibility to help create these kinds of action plans and move nurses around, should a community need a nurse or need some type of services. Would the Minister commit to looking at that as an action plan for the future so we don't have to bring these questions up in the House again? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The department and I are certainly aware that these are issues. Again, the current governance system allows each of the health authorities to employ nurses right across their own authorities. So each of the authorities would have a geographical area and they would employ the nurses to the locations. They're independent from other authorities, and also independent from Stanton Hospital and independent from the Department of Health and Social Services. That is an issue; we see that as an issue. So recognizing that we're doing something about the governance issue starting with the doctors, and also recognize that that's a major issue with nurses as well. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 43-17(4):
NGOS REGISTERING UNDER
BUSINESS INCENTIVE POLICY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment as the Minister responsible for our BIP policy, Business Incentive Policy.

I have been advised by a constituent about a difficulty encountered with them and the BIP policy. It had to do with a request for proposal, an RFP, that was let by the government – Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority actually – and it's for an RFP which has previously often been handled by an NGO. But NGOs, according to the BIP policy, are not eligible to register as a business, so I'd like to ask the Minister why not. Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member brings up kind of a grey area here. An NGO could certainly apply for BIP status if it has a

business arm. The reason an NGO itself cannot become BIP registered is... There are a number of reasons. First, they don't pay taxes, or they don't pay income tax. They usually receive significant government funding through other contribution programs. They often receive other government-based incentives ranging from free rent on a building or pay zero through tax assessments and often receive cash donations sometimes significant in nature. Also, they often receive non-cash-based donations. They have to be treated much differently than a business would be.

MS. BISARO: Thank you to the Minister for that very fulsome answer. I appreciate that NGOs are not like a business. However, NGOs provide a service which very often is an extension of our government health services or our social services. An NGO is providing a service for the government. It's unlikely that most NGOs would have a business arm. I will just leave it at that.

I'd like to know from the Minister, in terms of an NGO providing a service versus a private business providing a service, does he consider that in comparing an NGO application for an RFP and the business application for an RFP that they are applying on a level basis? Is it a level playing field?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I wouldn't want to hazard a guess, not knowing the particulars in the situation the Member talks about, but if the Member would like to divulge – she doesn't have to do it here today – the situation, if it is an NGO bidding against a registered BIP business here in the Northwest Territories then the NGO not getting BIP status, there's a reason, and I mentioned the reason why, the NGO wouldn't receive BIP status to compete with a registered BIP business here in the Northwest Territories. I'd like to, maybe, get the Member to provide us some further details and we can look into this situation.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I'm happy to provide that information to the Minister so we can discuss this a little more fully. I totally agree with the Minister that it's a grey area and I think it's one that we need to look into.

I want to ask the Minister, my understanding of the rationale for BIP is that it is to encourage local businesses to keep business locally, I guess. For instance, an NGO that has responded to an RFP and is running a service is employing people within the community, they are keeping dollars within the community, their employees are spending dollars in the community. I see the BIP as employing local people, enhancing local employment and enhancing northern employment. Does the Minister agree with that?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As I mentioned earlier, NGOs could certainly have a commercial aspect, a commercial arm to their operation, and that is a component of their operation that could become

BIP registered. Then those benefits the Member talks about are apparent.

I think, again, it is a grey area. It's the first that I've heard of this situation coming up, and it's certainly something I look forward to discussing with the Member and the Regular Members opposite, to try and find a way forward with it so that everybody knows what the rules of engagement are when it comes to tenders and NGOs and BIP registered businesses and how they would compete against one another.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I will take him up on his commitment.

I would like to ask him at this point – there is at least one RFP out there that I'm aware of that an NGO is applying – if he would be able to, in looking into this situation which he said he will do, will he agree to hold off the awarding of any tenders for any RFPs that are out there where we have NGOs competing against a business until we clarify this area?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Once the Member brings forward the details of the situation, I would certainly be more than happy to talk to whichever department the award would be awarded through and have a discussion about next steps.

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

QUESTION 44-17(4): INUVIK-TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to use this opportunity to follow up on my Member's statement, which was in whole about the Inuvik-Tuk highway and some of the costs and components thereof. I guess my first question is: When will a plain-language document be available for the public to see that actually specifies and drills down what the project is and what the actual costing estimates are? That way we will have something to debate and discuss publicly before an actual vote happens in the House.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the public's consumption, there's the EIRB report that was out on the 25th of January. We're waiting for funding approvals and project approvals through the federal government. We look forward to getting those in due course. There's a process that has to be followed and we intend to follow the process.

MR. HAWKINS: I think that report hedged around a \$300 million figure. Is that the actual cost that we will be working from on a construction basis, and is that the figure that the public can be referring to the Inuvik-Tuk highway as the actual cost?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We haven't got a formal funding agreement with the federal government in place yet. At the earliest opportunity – I just signed a letter late last week – we're going to be in front of the Member's Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure as soon as possible to give his committee a full briefing on the project and next steps.

MR. HAWKINS: One of the critical components that has been referred to as part of the cost of this potential highway – and, of course, the final decision has yet to be made – is the royalty required by the regional government. Is an actual number pegged to what the royalty is, and why is the Government of the Northwest Territories paying for a royalty when we've made a concession on the road as being transferred for land and other options and we're actually paying for the gravel? Will there be a royalty attached to the final figure of this highway and how much, if so?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Through the Inuvialuit settlement, the land claim agreement that the Inuvialuit have, they have provisions for granular royalties paid to the Inuvialuit. That is something that is in the land claim. That is something that we continue to look at negotiating, both the royalty rate and the land tenure for the highway itself. Those discussions continue to be ongoing.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From what I've been hearing on the ground, is an actual royalty rate has been negotiated and signed off between the territorial government and the IRC. I have yet to hear what that final number is and I think the public deserves to know. Also, why isn't the government negotiating a zero royalty considering two things: first of all, this road is, in essence, at the request of people in that region, which I think is a reasonable request per se, but by the same token will this philosophy apply to every single new highway established here? Are we setting a dangerous precedent when we consider the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Tlicho winter road alignment and so on?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I just want to let the Member know, and other Members know, that we haven't signed off on the royalty rate, we haven't signed off on land tenure. Those are discussions that continue to be ongoing with the Inuvialuit, and we hope to conclude those discussions and negotiations with them very soon.

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

QUESTION 45-17(4):
LONG-TERM AND EXTENDED CARE
IN HAY RIVER

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now that we have established that, in fact, it is Mr. Beaulieu's jurisdiction, that the hospital actually belongs to him, now I will ask Mr. Beaulieu if the Minister would agree to write a letter to his seat mate, the Minister of Public Works and Services, asking Public Works and Services to do a review of the existing H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital facility to look at any potential costs of renovations in view of a staffing model and program that would allow it to continue to operate as a long-term care bed facility?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can write a letter to the Minister of Public Works and Services, asking that that unit be assessed for long-term care facility as opposed to being used as a hospital. It would still, I think, have to go through the capital plan. It would, in essence, be skipping over a process. But I can do that. I have no problem doing that.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I understand what the Minister is saying, we would be skipping over a capital planning process, but the fact is we already own a building in Hay River. This government has infrastructure on the ground in Hay River. We need to replace the 10 long-term care beds that are not anticipated in the new health centre. You could leave them there, add another wing, and you could have a larger... And the demand is growing. It isn't like the number is going to still be sitting at 10 in three years from now when the new health care facility opens. I just have a question then.

Who would be responsible for paying for this review and responding to these terms of reference for this review? Would that be the Department of Health and Social Services or the Department of Public Works and Services?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: If we were to request that the Department of Public Works and Services reviewed the building for use as a long-term care facility, Health and Social Services would pay for the review.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'd like to ask the Minister, if he has the funds, if he would be able to find the funds from within to commit to having the dollars to go with that request to review that facility.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The plan was always to make sure those long-term care beds did not

disappear into the system. It was just not to put them into the hospital. In their current location, we can do an evaluation to see about the feasibility of keeping the long-term care beds in H.H. Williams up until the time when those beds are replaced.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to ask the Minister, does he need any further political support for this concept, for this idea. Would he like my colleague from Hay River North, would you like us to approach the Seniors' Society, the Town of Hay River, other stakeholders from within Hay River to get support for this idea of looking at the H.H. Williams Memorial Hospital as a long-term care facility in the interim?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: It would be difficult to stand up in the Legislative Assembly and ask for some political support on this, but we can, hopefully, based on the merit of the assessment in the community for the need of long-term care beds in Hay River. It would be based on that that we would extend the use of that facility.

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

QUESTION 46-17(4):
RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL CHOICES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Reading the Department of Finance and, specifically, the section on the Liquor Commission, there is a corporate culture, a vision, a mission, a mandate, values, et cetera. I want to ask our Minister, in light of this corporate culture and one of the visions is that our customers will have a healthy and responsible attitude towards alcohol consumption, and we'll provide them with the opportunity to discover, enjoy and share a wide variety of beverage alcohol. Since the lifting of the restrictions at the Norman Wells Liquor Store, the amount of liquor has gone up by 50 percent in the Sahtu region. I want to ask the Minister what provisions within his department that share this vision that our people have a healthy and responsible attitude towards alcohol consumption, what is his department doing to ensure that?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been working, as a government and as the Department of Finance, with the Liquor Commission in a number of areas. We try to educate and encourage people, pregnant mothers not to drink, we encourage people to drink responsibly, we encourage people not to drink and drive. We, of course, as a government, work with Health and Social Services. There have been discussions in this House today about Nats'ejee

K'eh. We work with the schools. We work with just about all departments of government to try and deal with these particular issues related to addictions and alcohol.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Northwest Territories Liquor Commission sales in the Sahtu, in Norman Wells was about \$2.3 million, up from last year about \$220,000 from the previous year, about 10.5 percent. With this campaign program, when you are asking people to have a healthy and responsible attitude towards alcohol, it just flies right over their head.

How is the Minister measuring the effectiveness of this program? How is he getting people to have a healthy and responsible attitude towards the consumption of alcohol? When you look at the alcohol-related crime stats, it certainly doesn't indicate the effectiveness of this program.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Member is correct. As a territory, as a government, as individuals and communities, we haven't managed to come to grips with the ravages of alcohol addictions. The social indicators are all there, incarceration rates, shelters that are full with crimes that are committed that are tied to alcohol, involve alcohol, and the rate of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Spectrum Disorder, they are all there. It's a crying shame, as the Member says, at this point in our political evolution that we are still having this discussion and the fact that Northerners have an intense proclivity to do things that are bad for them. In this case, alcohol.

We're going to continue to make those investments. We are going to continue to, hopefully, work with the Members and communities to find out what we do to get people to make the right choices. The Member and I have had this discussion over the years. Sometimes it seems like almost on a daily basis. At the end of the day, government can do so much, but the final decision is going to be the person who decides to pick up the bottle and take the drink. We can't be there in all those cases. In fact, in all of those cases, we're not there when that happens. So how do we beat that challenge? That's a question that still bedevils this Assembly, and I have been standing here now in my 18th year and I worked for 20 years before that, 15 of them in Health and Social Services with the same issues before us. It is a challenge for the North. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister is right; that's the 46 million dollar question. How do we educate our people – with the high crime rates, high incident rates – to drink responsibly and have a healthy attitude towards alcohol? The Minister talked about this, and the Minister of Health is on a mission to look at this issue, hear the people of the Northwest Territories and come up with some creative ideas how to approach this business of alcohol.

Is the Minister working with the Minister of Health to take some of those ideas that possibly could help with the liquor store to educate our people, so in 10 or 20 years we don't have to have this type of discussion? Can we say yes, we have a solution?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This challenge is a game of inches where we look for success in often, sometimes, very small increments. In this case, the Minister of Health and Social Services has struck a panel, a very blue chip panel, made up of Northerners to provide those recommendations.

Yes, we do work together as a government. We work together as a Cabinet, as an Assembly, to try to make the best decisions possible with the resources we have available. We will look, with great interest, at the recommendations of that panel. The Minister of Health and Social Services will be coming back to us with those recommendations and we will have those discussions. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Finance, in light of the amount of work that we have to do regarding alcohol abuse in the Northwest Territories and the revenue that he receives on the sale of liquor in the Northwest Territories, is the Minister looking at increasing that percentage to promote some strong, heartfelt campaigns to look at alcohol from a different perspective in people's lives?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As a government over the years, going back at least three Assemblies with the State of Emergency report, Stay the Course report, and the work that's been done on addictions, initially it was linked with mental health, the investments we've made in staffing and putting in alcohol and drug workers, addiction workers, mental health workers, community health workers, in review of that process and the debate over facilities, very clearly we are spending a significant amount of money. We are looking at the recommendations of this blue chip panel with great interest, and we will see what they say and then, when that's done, we will have a collective discussion through the business planning process about how we adjust to go forward to try to achieve greater success in this very critical area. Thank you.

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

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 4-17(4): NWT HEALTH CARE CARDS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

1. What is the estimated population of the NWT, based on figures from the NWT Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Canada, at December 31, 2012?
2. What is the number of active NWT health care cards?
3. Please provide detail of the audit process and standards used by the Department of Health and Social Services to validate NWT health care card status.
4. How many NWT health care cards validity audits has the Department of Health and Social Services completed in 2012?
5. What were the results of the NWT health care card audit process in 2012?

Thank you.

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

WRITTEN QUESTION 5-17(4): ALCOHOL-RELATED HEALTH CONDITIONS

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

1. Please provide the actual cost to the Department of Health and Social Services of alcohol-related health conditions.
2. Please provide the success rate for individuals who have completed a 20-day program.
3. What specific measurements are used to determine the success rates for alcohol treatment programs?

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

WRITTEN QUESTION 6-17(4): MACKENZIE VALLEY WINTER ROADS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Transportation.

1. How many loads have been trucked up the Mackenzie River winter roads to date this winter season and what is expected to be the total number of loads for the 2013 winter road season?
2. How many loads are projected to travel on the Mackenzie Valley winter roads in 2013-2014?

3. How many vehicle accidents have occurred on the Mackenzie Valley winter roads to date this winter road season?
4. How many maintenance cycles are within each contractor's section on the Mackenzie Valley winter roads?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address, day three of seven. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Mr. Hawkins.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 12-17(4):
LETTER ON POSSIBLE BREACH
OF FAM DIRECTIVE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use this opportunity to table a document. It's a letter I wrote on January 7th to the Finance Minister, Minister Miltenberger, and it's regarding a possible breach of the FAM Directive 3307. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Mr. Menicoche.

Motions

MOTION 1-17(4):
SETTING OF SITTING HOURS BY SPEAKER,
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

Mahsi.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 19, first reading of bills. Mr. McLeod.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 1-17(4):
TLICHO STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi,

that Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act, has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. The item before us today is the NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee would like to consider Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will start with general comments on this document right after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, committee, I'd like to call us back to order, please. We have agreed to consider Tabled Document 9-17(4), Main Estimates, 2013-2014. We've also agreed to begin with general comments. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he would like to bring witnesses into the House.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms if he would please escort the witnesses to the table.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me Mike Aumond, deputy minister of Finance; and Sandy Kalgutkar, deputy secretary to FMB. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. So, each Member can speak

initially for 10 minutes on general comments. General comments. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have some opening comments here. I'm going to limit my comments more around one part of the budget and allow my opportunity to be more detailed as we get more in depth by department.

The concern I have is that we've seen our social umbrella expand to greater deficits, and when you look at past budgets and even this budget, there is no economic balance that we see for the Territories moving forward.

In 2011-2012 we spent roughly \$360 million in health and that constituted about 26.4 percent of our overall budget then. As we progressed over the years, we are currently, according to the main estimates here, at \$363 million and change, at 24.8 percent of our overall budget. So we've taken, basically, an erosion as a total means of our expenditure in Health, which really, when you look at it, has to beg some questions. Again, our social umbrella requires continued investment, we have got forced growth, we've got a whole flurry of initiatives that have been identified by this side of the House and in Social Programs committee, and again, the concern we have is where are we going.

To top that off, if you look at out of the \$363 million that we have in Health, about \$100 million or so of that is medical travel. So when you really analyze how much money we're spending on health, true health – and I'm not talking about transportation from facility to facility – we're only spending about 17.9 percent of our budget in what I consider true health.

When you look at the economics of scale, when you look at what's happening across Canada, most provincial jurisdictions, according to the last reports, are spending well in excess of 42 percent, or .42 dollars of their budget dollars on health. Most experts and economists believe that with the continued pressures on health and, as you mentioned in your statement earlier today, people are living longer and putting more pressures on the system. The anticipation is that budgets across Canada, provincial budgets, will have to exceed over .50 dollars, or 50 percent, of their budget on health.

So it's clear in this day and age that although the Minister has come forward and has provided a tight budget, or a budget of restraint, health, and a question in my mind, is one of those areas that we cannot restrain. We've got to keep up with demand; we've got to keep up with forced growth; and we've got to keep up with that social umbrella that our people in the Northwest Territories are dependent on.

I think we'll probably find out more in the details segment when we get to the Department of Health,

the fact that we've got to look at some key areas to keep up with those expenditures, and those areas will be definitely in prevention and promotion, and we believe that the chronic disease management is definitely suffering, and a proper management model was not mentioned, per se, in this budget.

I think the people will look to this government to create some framework around specialized wellness, of course, and mental health and addictions. What we've got before us and what has been presented is more of a piecemeal approach, and we were hoping that the 2013-2014 budget would have had more adequacies to achieve what I considered our Assembly's goals and mission. I think the NWT residents expect us to deliver on these most important priorities in the specialized wellness.

I think, more importantly, in concluding my area in Health and Social Services, there has been some degree of investment in this budget with respect to midwifery. You know the studies have been done. There has been some very serious and solid recommendations made, and I think the time has now come for our children to be born in their homes and in their communities. I believe that the amount of money that has been put aside is really a good gesture, but really by no sense or any means an era that we're going to see midwifery in this term, or at least in this fiscal budget term, which is unfortunate.

Madam Chair, I know I'll have a lot more details as we proceed. I just wanted to open up my comments on a bit of my disappointment on the fact that I believe we're losing ground in health care, and I'm hoping that we're able to look at some opportunities in the near future through any type of supplementation by this government and this Minister to put more emphasis on those areas I mentioned before. So thank you, Madam Chair. Those are my opening comments.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member raises a concern that we should be putting more money into social programs, specifically health and social services. When I was Health Minister for five and a half years, I made the comment repeatedly that if you doubled the budget of health care, we'd be back within a year or a year and a half saying we need more to do all things for all people. I don't think, looking to the fact that other jurisdictions are spending 40 to 45 percent of every dollar on health care, not social services, not housing, not anything else, is a sign of success. The reality is, every jurisdiction will tell you that they're on the fast track to bankruptcy. The sign of spending that kind of money, untrammelled, uncontrolled health care costs, is not affordable. That's a practical reality.

I think we should take considerable comfort in the fact that we have a combined system, not just health care as a stovepipe, but when you link all the social programs we provide, we provide a selection of services that I have always said are, in my opinion, without equal in any other jurisdiction. You talk about the \$180-some million we put in subsidy programs, our medical travel, our support for seniors, our no rent or modest rent for seniors over 60, we have an array. If this Legislature decides that they want to, in fact, spend 40 cents of every dollar on health care, and at the same time agree that we're not going to raise taxes, and at the same time agree that we want to do all these other things, then we best gather around the table and sort that particular direction out, because we've been managing ourselves very, very carefully to stay fiscally balanced to make sure we have all those services there and at the same time do the investments in infrastructure and do all the other things that are critical to our territory.

I would suggest that when you look at the whole package that we put forward as a Legislature as a budget, that a lot of the issues that are not directly health related are tied to health care. The quality of life in the communities, the housing, the water, the roads, the ability to get a job, all those things are tied, in the long run, to health care.

I appreciate the Member's concern, but I would strongly speak against looking to those poor jurisdictions that are paying that kind of money on every dollar to try to deliver health care costs, when they will stand up and all say that if we keep on this path we will be bankrupt.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the Minister's reply and his concern about deficit spending and potential bankruptcy in other jurisdictions. I would, though, like to make mention that budgets invoke change in policy. Budgets provide ladders of opportunity. I believe that we have a huge amount of opportunity that is still not being tapped into in the Territories. We have crumbling infrastructure. We've got maximum capacity. In fact, we've got overcapacity subscribed. If we pick our Stanton Territorial Hospital, for example, this hospital was designed for 10,000 visits per year. We know this hospital is now at 20,000 visits per year. They are working out of closets. In fact, they don't even have room for closets anymore because they've been used for all different sorts of service oriented work.

I'm concerned. We've got no nurses in the communities. We've heard that time and time again here in this House. We've got concerns with long-term care facilities, long-term care beds as our aging population is bestowed upon us. We've got issues with home care. Again, keeping people in our homes as long as we can, especially in our small communities. I'm really concerned that as much as we want to look at fiscally tightening and

battening down the hatches and controlling the economic levers for our success, our spending on health care has not kept up with the times and has not kept up with the demands of the Northwest Territories. The residents demand more. I think the residents need to hear a future in health care spending. I'm not saying 42 cents of every dollar needs to be the magic number but, believe me, the current flow of 24.8 cents of our dollar being spent in this budget does not equate or fit the means of what we're seeing provincially, and I think there's a huge opportunity going forward.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We agree that we have infrastructure challenges, which is why we have taken the planning steps that we have in terms of two years of fiscal discipline so we can, in fact, put more money into infrastructure. We have a \$3 billion infrastructure deficit. We've identified and we're starting to put some very serious money into Stanton and we've acknowledged that it needs a midlife retrofit. It was built at a time when the population was a lot lower. That's going to be a \$200 million to \$300 million project and we're on the road to taking care of that. We're building long-term care facilities. In this budget, we've put in millions to better staff some of the existing facilities in Smith, Simpson, I believe, and Yellowknife. We recognize that as well.

Once again, I don't think we should use the amount of money we spend as the clear comparator. That we're going to compare ourselves, okay, it's not 42 but it should be 30.

I say again that I think we have a level of services in this territory that are without equal in this country. We have to compare what you are getting for the money we spend. When you combine all the things we put money into to assist people, I think that's the test we have to look at. It's too simplistic to say Ontario spends this much on health care, we have to spend something like that or, for some reason, we're not doing enough even though we have the best seniors benefits in the country, we have some of the best student financial assistance in the country, the best pharmacare, the best medical travel, we have midwifery as an insured service that is going to grow now to other parts of the territory. Most other jurisdictions don't even have that as a service. I think we have to be very careful how we move on this. We can do this if that's the will of this Legislature, but we have to be prepared to make those trade-offs as we do that.

We do have nurses. One of the challenges is to get all the grads to want to work someplace other than Yellowknife, and come up with a training program that allows new grads to be given another component to allow them to be able to go into a community as a nurse in charge.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I find myself well aligned with Mr. Dolynny's comments. The Minister says we've been fiscally responsible. I'm going on my sixth year and it seems like every year we find ourselves more in debt despite increasing the debt and taking into account the redefinition of debt. We've made some really unfathomable decisions on big, costly infrastructure projects that really don't have an economic return. We seem bent on continuing that sort of bizarre decision-making.

I'm just going to go through the budget address by way of helping to focus my comments, if that's helpful at all for people who might want to follow me.

I note the mineral exploration grew 44 percent in 2012. I frequently hear that's not happening. In fact, it's grown now over a four-year period. Despite the Minister's portrayal of austerity and so on, and many of the economic indices as being negative, in fact, they are positive in many cases. Just a comment.

I am a bit perplexed that, given the absence in our growth in our human population and the increase in our revenues, that's portrayed in a very negative way. I would say people around the world would be very happy if they had the same number of people and revenues were increasing. I guess it's that slavish commitment to growth is the only way to be healthy.

Again, the Minister has portrayed austerity for the people and luxury for big enterprise that likes to build roads and bridges. I can't agree with that and I don't think that's the sort of things we want closing down services to our people and so on, or failing to provide the necessary services while we spend money on these big non-economic pieces of infrastructure. The statement in line with that, we will not use revenues from non-renewable resources to fund government programs and services is, to me, just a further commitment of luxury treatment for big industry and austerity for our people. We know, and will be talking about all the services that are... In fact what the Minister is referring to here is roads and bridges. We have so much infrastructure which has just been discussed, building infrastructure that needs attention and is part and parcel of our services. I do not support that.

The \$1.15 million, I was happy to see that in A Shared Path Towards Wellness: A Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan and I'd like to hear more that explains exactly how that will address the Justice's concerns about what mental health services are needed before they can support a mental health court, which I believe this

government is committed to and recognizes the need for.

Concern regarding effective spending of early childhood dollars, I have expressed, already, concerns about that. We approved dollars a year ago and, apparently, at least some of them were not spent until very recently. This means inefficient spending when we try and spend a whole year's budget in the last few weeks of the fiscal year. That may be more pervasive than just early childhood.

Midwifery, glad to see some money there. I think it's not sufficient and it's not focused at putting programs on the ground, so I know we're going to be having more discussion on that.

I appreciate the recognition of service needs for our seniors and the growing proportion of people who are seniors in our population. In fact, we do need both staffing of facilities and more infrastructure there.

I was very pleased to see the commitment come forward with supplementary appropriation to meet the requirements to implement an Anti-Poverty Strategy if and when we get there. I'm anticipating that will be fairly soon.

The Minister noted an investment of \$1.2 million to help Northerners capture the benefits of Sahtu oil and gas exploration. This is the first in a long list, and I'll tell you how far we're going to stretch this \$1.2 million. We're going to capture the benefits. We're going to mitigate the associated impacts. We're going to fund career development. We're going to fund training programs. We're going to support local businesses. Still with the same \$1.2 million. We're also going to fund the collection of additional environmental baseline data for groundwater, surface water, and wildlife and environmental assessments and permitting, and increase resources for monitoring oil and gas activities. That's not the end of the list for this \$1.2 million. We're also going to provide for additional RCMP resources. The Victim Services Programs. Again, my point is, recognizing what is happening in the Sahtu, the \$1.2 million will hardly be noticeable. What else are we going to do to meet that need? Where are the federal dollars? What are we doing to bring those in?

We do need to commit to mitigating the high cost of energy but I'd sooner reduce the high cost of energy. I note we are subsidizing again fossil fuel energy, \$9.4 million just in this one fund alone for electricity rates. It's less than last year, at least. I think that was \$17 million. My point has always been that we should take the reduction from year to year over the next few years, and put those into energy infrastructures and programs that actually reduce the cost of living. I still don't see that happening.

An extra \$523,000 to support transboundary water negotiations. Again, we have sailed the amount dedicated to this every year for the last several years. We are now over millions of dollars. I'm just wondering when we're going to stop, especially given that we don't have any authority in this area. Recognizing, at the same time, that there is good work happening here. I think the Minister talks about living within our means and I think that's one area where we're rapidly approaching if not have surpassed our means.

Very happy to see the \$700,000 for energy-efficient wood pellet boilers in public housing units, although I note that is included in the energy initiatives, and in fact this means that other programs are being put into that and actual energy initiatives are declining.

I mean, just looking at diamonds alone, \$2 billion worth non-renewable resources shipped out of the Northwest Territories. That's greater than our annual budget by far. I'm assuming that we should be able to make a donation to the Heritage Fund for future generations. So I will look forward to that. I haven't been able to look at the budget to see whether that's there, so I would appreciate knowing how much we will be contributing this year. Given the \$2 billion and other resources, it obviously should be significant.

Finally, I see in the conclusion the Minister mentioned early childhood development again. I appreciate that mention. I think that is recognized as a real priority of the 16th and 17th Assemblies. I'm looking forward to an early childhood framework coming forward and identifying dollars that we need to put into that and going for those through our supplementary appropriation.

My last comment on the Inuvik-Tuk highway is amazingly profiled here as a "critical, major infrastructure." I don't know how this could possibly be portrayed with the words "critical, major infrastructure." There is no business case for this road. It is clearly a politically motivated project. It is the farthest thing from critical. We heard some discussion of infrastructure that actually is critical, such as our medical infrastructure and our highway system, existing highway system, that is falling apart. We are unable to entertain maintenance of it given our continual redirection of dollars into new projects.

That's all the general comments I have. I look forward to any response.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's comments and his ongoing attention to content and detail.

With regard to being more in debt, I would just point out once again, if you put us on a national

comparative scale, we are one of the best managed and best run jurisdictions in the country with our debt to GDP ratio and the amount of interest to revenue that we are paying to service our debt. Most of our debt is self-liquidating.

We actually have about \$150-some million or \$180 million of actual debt that's not, at this point, self-liquidating. We made a conscious point during extremely challenging economic times to invest money, to do some very strategic borrowing to, in fact, protect programs and services, not lay people off and still put money into infrastructure, and we've done all that. So we're not just going out of control here. We have very carefully managed debt. I would suggest, as well, that big project that the Member says has no value, I think that the bridge is a legacy piece of infrastructure that is already showing its value. I think the \$200 million to \$300 million we spend on a big project like Stanton is going to be critical money that should be, and needs to be, spent and will be spent.

It is easy for us to say, in this part of the country where there are roads and bridges and paving everywhere, that a road that opens up a part of the Far North, a critical part of our territory, has no value and it's not critical and it's not important. I would suggest to you that if we look at the big picture, that is a big project. It is part of the Northern Strategy of the federal government. It feeds into the value of the North, and roads, in my opinion, as Prime Minister Diefenbaker pointed out, are always good investments. And we're not closing services down. In fact, we're expanding services as you look around us with early childhood, midwifery, all those program areas, we are continuing to expand services. If there is a strong exception to the fact that we say it would be fool hardy to put highly volatile resource dollars into running base programs and services, then we should have that political debate and we should look at other jurisdictions. Let's look at Norway and all that resource money. Not only did they not put it into programs and services, they took it completely offshore. In fact, they haven't allowed any of that resource money into that economy and they've developed a very strong, vibrant, sustainable economy.

If you look at the trouble that Alberta's having this very day and age, as we sit here talking, with their shortfalls because they put all that money into programs and services, they've used it to run their day-to-day operations. When the price fluctuates down, they are \$6 billion short. They are paying a premium. They are losing on every barrel of oil, but unlike Norway, which has a \$600 billion plus Heritage Fund, Alberta is \$18 billion after all the years of the oil boom that they've had and the money they've had. So if you want to have that discussion, we should have that about what's the best way to do this. Should we grow the base?

Should we aim to 40 cents on every dollar because that's what other jurisdictions that are carrying enormous deficits have put money into those program areas and somehow that would make us a better run jurisdiction? We should have that discussion.

We've picked, as an Assembly, a track that is worth staying on and I think we have to work hard to stay on that track. We are \$50 million more next year into the capital. Devolution is coming and some of those resource royalties will be flowing to us. The red flag projects will be back on the list. We are going to expand midwifery. We are going to do a lot of other things.

For the record, Madam Chair, I will point out, as well, last year the Legislature agreed to put \$250,000 to the Heritage Fund. That was to the base. So there is another \$250,000 into the Heritage Fund again this year, and it will stay in the base until that figure gets changed through the budget process. We are stretching the money we have in the Sahtu as far as we can. There is also money that's going to come to us through this Environmental Research Fund that's going to allow us to supplement that money as we work on groundwater, surface water and wildlife work.

Madam Chair, I appreciate the Member's comments. I think overall we have a good budget, and we look forward to the discussion with the Member and others as we go forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. I am going to use the Chair's prerogative to allow Mr. Bromley a very, very short, I don't know what it is, rebuttal/comment. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a very brief comment. If the Minister proposes to put non-renewable resource revenue into the Heritage Fund, I would support that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I will take that as a comment. Next on my list is Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just reflecting on what I said last year, I was very concerned that they weren't putting money into our economy. That's something I am very concerned with. Although we are doing well here in the southern part of our territory, up in the northern part, the Mackenzie Delta, we are struggling. There isn't very much for economic projects up there right now. I am very glad we are putting some funds forward to meet our priorities; for example, the fibre optic link. As I mentioned last time, we did put money towards the Inuvik-Tuk highway and I'm glad to see that in the budget this year.

Also, investments in mental health and addiction prevention, on-the-land programs, as you all know the Gwich'in have a facility up in the Mackenzie

Delta that we need to make use of. We had a lot of programs that were held last year and a lot of people in the region would like to see that progress further.

It's very good to see that things have picked up in the Sahtu region. Our employment rates right now are roughly at 68 percent, but we could make it better once we begin our economic projects in the territory.

A good example my colleagues brought up here last week were the prices in Yellowknife. They are very concerned that they are paying \$1.38 per litre of gas, but yet in the Mackenzie Delta, where there is not very much for economics, we are paying \$1.80. Yet there seems to be no problem with that.

Madam Chair, I really appreciate that we're putting \$250,000 to focus on youth. There are a lot of projects that are being taken in the communities right now. A lot of these communities, like the smaller communities, don't have youth facilities or youth centres that youth can gather, just communicate and keep busy. That way they're not led astray.

Also, I appreciate that we are investing in long-term facilities here in the southern part of the region. Even though the territory, a good example about a month back is here in town. There was somebody in the mall there that was speaking about health care in the territory. They are really impressed the way we take care of our elders here in the territory. That is our tradition. We need to expand what we are doing right now. Right now we are basically focusing on regional centres, but we talk about decentralization. Well, let's look at the larger centres, larger communities, not only the regional centres. I think that's something this government could do in the future.

I also appreciate that we are putting funds towards the fibre optic link. I am really excited to see these projects progress further.

And also tourism. We did get an increase in tourism. We can always do a lot more. We have a lot of opportunity here in the Northwest Territories for tourism. Although we are putting a lot into marketing, we need to work with the small businesses to create a lot more businesses, especially in tourism, whether it's boat tours. It doesn't have to be big game hunting, although big game hunting is doing well. There are all different types that we can do.

Also, with the Deh Cho Bridge, I hope there are a lot more tourism initiatives with that as a highlight.

With that, that's all I have right now, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's

comments. As we get into the detail with those program areas that I know the Member has referenced on-the-land programs and some of the other work that has to be done, we will be able to have those discussions when the Ministers come to the table.

I appreciate his support for the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line as well as, of course, the work that we are trying to do on the Inuvik-Tuk highway. Part of our commitment to try to spread the wealth around the Northwest Territories as much as possible, and these are, I think, in the long run, very positive projects. I thank the Member for his comments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are some good comments on the floor this afternoon. As a new Member, 16 months into the Assembly and going through our first budget process, and everything was thrown at us as a new Member, it was a really big learning curve. I feel that over the 16 months, working with the committees that I've had the opportunity to work with, working with governments and also taking a good stance with specifically our Social Programs committee and all the work we've been doing and working with other NGOs and other service providers in the Northwest Territories and being able to work and trying to get some of these initiatives and some of the program dollars that they need to run the programs successfully or more efficiently, I think has been pretty successful.

Going back to this specific budget, back in September we had a lot of really good discussion in the committee rooms to get to where we are today, and proving these department by department over the next five weeks. I do share comments made by some other colleagues in terms of where we had expressed some interest to try to get more dollars for better programs and services for people of the Northwest Territories.

I was excited to come into the budget session for these six weeks. Although we did get some things addressed, we felt that in some areas the dollars could have been spent more efficiently and could have been spent in areas of better programs and services, but also getting a few more dollars to make sure that the dollars that we are spending this year are going to be effective in the regions, specifically the Midwifery Program. We are going to be going to a consultant, possibly for the territory. I feel that we do have the reports, we do have the information out there, that we need to hit the ground running, and start providing these services to these expecting families and mothers in the communities so that they can stay at home, have healthy pregnancies without the undue stress of having to be away from home and away from their family,

friends and loved ones over the amount of years. There was a midwifery report that gave a lot of recommendations. We based our discussions around that midwifery report and made our recommendations to government. What we saw out of that I guess it was a little unsatisfactory on some of our parts.

Another area that we really wanted to focus on and we had a really good presentation from NWT Tourism. They did an excellent job in Ottawa during NWT days. They did a great job with the marketing strategy with the amount of dollars that they do have right now, which is very minimal. I believe it is the second lowest budget in all of Canada. In fact, they are competing with other jurisdictions for marketing time and space on TV for programs that are here in the Northwest Territories.

I feel that we need to support our tourism industry so that we can start getting a return on investment for dollars that are put out there. Not only that, this group does an excellent job. They have a great expanded marketing program, a lot of very good measurable outcomes, goals and objectives. It is written on paper already and it is actually on the ITI website as one of their, I think it was their 2012-13 budget, and here we are in '13-14 still fighting for dollars for them. It is good to see the \$600,000 increase that was mentioned earlier in the budget address and the ongoing \$1.2 million here afterwards. I feel the sooner we get them into expanded marketing, into expanded markets, we're going to see a benefit to the Northwest Territories and to small business and other groups in the NWT that do business up here in the Northwest Territories.

Another big project that I was very happy to see in here, that I do know some of our other Members do have concerns about and have criticized, is the Inuvik-Tuk highway and our look in putting money into that. With the Inuvik-Tuk highway, we have had these discussions over and over. With the decrease in the Arctic sea ice, the Northwest Passage is going to be open. It connects us sea to sea to sea. It creates sovereignty within the North. It is a project that has been on the books since the 1970s and the feds have committed some dollars to it. It's something that I feel that, from the short time that I've been in government, it has been a big practice of theirs.

Just from the reports that we have seen, it is going to create a lot of jobs in Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk and that whole region for the next four years. If you recall, I think in June or whenever we went through the last business plans, you can see it in the main estimates, and that's an increase in the income support that we critically see right now in the Beaufort-Delta. We don't have a lot of economic stability and a lot of economic development going on in the region, so that there's going to be a

continued increase into the income support that we're providing to our families, as well as looking at other areas of rental subsidies for people that aren't in the workforce and need government to look into that. In fact, I've see it in my office. I've had people come who have had jobs their whole lives and find themselves on tough times, and are actually going in to get their rent paid for them, as well as going on income support, and it's a hard pill to swallow for them to take that route when they've worked their whole lives. So when we work in our regions and our ridings and we see this on a daily basis, it's hard to look at the debates that we are going to have, but at the same time we've got to understand that when we make decisions territorially that it's not only for our region. Even though we do represent our regions, we've got to look at what's the best interest for all people of the Northwest Territories, and the Inuvik-Tuk highway is one project that's going to assist with that.

As well as the fibre optic link. It's going to be an opportunity to collect data from our region and all of the world that other groups are going to want to come and participate in and buy that data, as well as create a fibre optic link down the Mackenzie Valley. It's going to create better infrastructure for all these communities down the valley, to better education, better health and social services. I'm glad to see that on there, because the sooner we start investing in these kinds of projects, the sooner our people will start to benefit. Just like what we did with the early childhood development funding that we got last year when we had to take a big stance on this side of the House and defer a certain budget to make sure that we got that in there. It's this government working as a consensus government to say that we do care about our people and we do want to invest in them.

There was a lot of other really good things that I really did see in the budget address that we're going to see over these main estimates over the next five weeks. Obviously, early childhood development, and a big push always on the mental health and addictions, and that's another area of where we saw that we could take a big stance. It is our biggest cost-driver in the Department of Health and Social Services. If you combine it with the Department of Justice and the health system, you just need to see where we can start focusing those dollars to better serve our people that are battling those types of addictions.

Another big item that was addressed was the energy initiatives to look into liquid natural gas for Inuvik and finding solutions. Obviously, that's been a big concern, and there was something in the newspaper today about the fuel that's being provided right now, the synthetic gas and the energy costs in Inuvik specifically. It's going to be hard not only on our residents but our business, our small business, and I'm glad to see that there are

some dollars in there. I would like to see a little bit more, to see how we can find solutions so that it does decrease the cost of living for people that I represent in Inuvik, and finding solutions that not only will work for Inuvik, but can be also a building block and a roadmap for other communities that might be going through the same problem, such as Norman Wells.

Although we didn't get everything that we had asked for during our budget dialogue, I commend the Minister for taking the budget out on the road. In that sense, I just want to see what type of a commitment the Minister made. He did mention that some of what he heard was in line with some of the priorities of the 17th Legislative Assembly. I want to see the impact that our people in the communities actually had on this budget as we move forward. I'll be sure to make good connections with not only the leaders in Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta region but my constituency and my riding in the community of Inuvik to see what was said, and work with the budget report as well as the main estimates as we go through them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you very much, Mr. Moses. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for his comments. This budget-making is an issue and it's a process of making choices, of looking at a long list of demands with a finite amount of resources, and we've done that again this year. We've been on this budget now for about six months collectively, and we've tried to capture as much as we can with the funds that are available, and we're here to have the discussion now about the pieces, the final pieces maybe that need work or that possibly need adjusting.

I appreciate the Member's comments about the support for the projects. The liquid natural gas in Inuvik, there is work being done and we are hoping to be able to show some success here in the next number of weeks if all pans out, which we'd be coming to the committee with as we do the work, and work that has potential not only for Inuvik, once we get it up and running, but if in fact it proves out it will be a benefit to other thermal communities as well. So we're hard at work on that one.

We will look forward to the discussion once again on things like the midwifery and all the other program areas where there are concerns being raised, keeping in mind the agreements we have to manage our fiscal realities, so that next year we'll start with an additional \$50 million into capital. When we are successful with devolution, we'll also be reworking as we meet with the Members to discuss the impact that will have on our operations as well. But in the meantime, this budget is based on the money we have on the table and I look

forward to the discussion with Members as we carry on here over the next five weeks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Next I have for general comments, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think most of the information or concerns that I have will come out in the details of each department, but I think my biggest concerns today that I'd like to express is the continuing increasing size of our budget. Our expenditures continue to get larger and larger, even though the Minister and the Cabinet keep indicating to us that we're on fiscal restraint and we want to keep our expenditures down as much as possible, but we continue to grow the size of our budget every year. Phenomenal numbers for the population of 43,000 people.

I think one of the biggest concerns that I see in the budget is the creation of an additional 56 new positions in the GNWT. We're hitting over 5,000 employees. Those are phenomenal numbers, I think. They're huge numbers. We're obviously the main employer in the Northwest Territories. That doesn't include numbers of NGOs and associations that the government funds. So how much of our economy is basically driven on the back of the GNWT. Our budget is astronomic.

Along the lines of those employment numbers, one of the priorities in this Assembly is to do decentralization. Granted, I'm appreciative of the fact that my community is seeing some of that decentralization, but when you look at the numbers, a creation of 56 new jobs continues to be anywhere from 25 to 26 positions of those are created in Yellowknife. So I mean, we're still keeping 50 percent to the capital and 50 percent to the other regions spread out throughout the Territories. The department and the budget indicated 18 decentralization positions. Well, that's not a very big number. When you say in one budget they're creating 56 new jobs, that's a very small number. So how much are we committed to decentralization as a government? I have a big concern with that.

Like I said, if we're creating 56 and we've only decentralized 18 of them, it's a very small number. It's an astronomically small number. So are we really committed to decentralization or are we just doing it lip service to the Members that are out in the regions in trying to fulfill this priority of our Assembly?

I think people talk about the fact that we have a surplus, but we know that surplus is being expensed on financing of infrastructure projects. So I think we're not in a bad position but, I mean, I am concerned with the growth of our budget in the last 10 years. I've said it in this House before that our budgets have grown astronomically, our PY positions have grown astronomically since division. Everything's doubled, if not more. We need

somehow to put a rein on some of these expenditures.

I know there's a group in our public that want to see us do more, but there's also a group that are doing business out there and saying how can we continue to afford this. We're doing it with no increased taxes. Eventually that wall is going to come down where we basically have to flood people with a bunch of additional taxes to pay for some of these costs. I know devolution is coming, and I know the federal government is going to be kicking... We're going to get more money from them on our resource sharing, but a lot of that is dependent on diamonds. If our diamonds go away, what does that do to our economy?

I think we need a better hold on growth of the size of the budget, growth the size of the public sector. We need to do more creating jobs in other ways. I am happy to see that we're putting money into tourism. I agree that it's not the amount that we wanted to see originally, but I think we're going to get there. Maybe the phased-in approach is probably the most effective way to do that.

I guess those are my initial concerns with the budget, the fact that it's just continuing to grow. It's a growing monster, and we need to rein it in somehow.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think there is a shared concern about the growth of government. We've squeezed government back from the days of annual 6 percent plus growth down to 2, down to next year we're going to be aiming to 1.5 percent.

As you've heard around the table already, there is a concern and demand that we spend more money on program areas at the same time as we try to manage our money. We agree that the size of the public service is very large. As we try to control our growth going forward, one of the things that we are looking at is controlling position growth, unless it's tied to a legal or mandatory responsibility. Any other requests would have to be reallocation of internal resources.

I mentioned that next year we're looking at being able to take advantage of some of the fruits of our labour of the last two years. That \$50 million that I talked about is in addition to the Tuk-Inuvik highway, Stanton, and the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line. We will be able to address other issues such as the red flag list.

We are committed to decentralization. At this point we've talked about it, and we're planning it with devolution. We've done an initial phase 1 of taking existing low-hanging fruit, as it's been described, for decentralization. But on a go-forward basis, we're going to have to prove to this House what it means

with the other jobs coming to us, especially the jobs coming from Ottawa. The commitment is there.

The surplus that we referred to is an operational surplus. We're about \$580 million in debt or thereabouts. Operational surpluses are savings during the year, one time, which we put towards infrastructure. I just want to make sure the folks listening don't think that we've got a separate bank account where we saved all this money, because we have the ongoing debt which we have to manage.

I agree with the Member, and this Legislature has agreed, with the fiscal plan that we've laid out. We have to control our expenditures. We don't want to count on taxation. It's counterproductive at this point. It's not so much a revenue issue at this point as it's still an expenditure one. There are still additional revenues coming here which are not reflected in this budget because we haven't inked the deal. When we get devolution, we'll be coming back with a reworked fiscal framework.

MR. BOUCHARD: I guess it's those decentralization positions that I have some concern about. Devolution is a discussion of, there's also opportunity for that area as well. One of the biggest concerns that I have with that is the Minister has indicated that they're committed to decentralization and getting those devolution positions eventually out to the regions, but I haven't seen a lot of activity or a lot of planning discussion on them making sure that communities are prepared for it.

I know in Yellowknife they're building a new office building here that there's probably going to be some available space. But in the communities, there's very little planning being seen from my side of them preparing for any commitment to put jobs out into the regions. Some of my colleagues can correct me here, but I don't see them out in the smaller communities and saying let's see what office space is available so we can put jobs into Aklavik or Providence. Is there a commitment by this government? That's my concern as well as the decentralization positions.

Like I said, 18 is a small number when we create 56 in one year. I've got statistics that we've created 80 in the last two years. Some of the numbers are indicating that probably 75 percent of those are created in Yellowknife or the North Slave area. What kind of decentralization commitment are we doing over the last couple of years? Those numbers are astronomical. The amount of creation we're creating, we're increasing the operating costs of this government plus we're putting it all into one centre. I mean, we've seen some of the difficulties that happened in Yukon where Whitehorse is the centre of Yukon and there's not too much activity anywhere else. It's astronomical some of the numbers that are coming out.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Member's addressed that we've had some discussion about the issue of how committed are we to decentralization. It's been a long running concern and interest of, I think, every Member outside of Yellowknife. The Chair and myself have been here the longest, and we've had some modest success over the years but not a lot. So this is probably the most political support there's been for decentralization tied to devolution.

I know the Member for Hay River North would appreciate a little bit of background of back in 1967 when the plane came north with the Commissioner for the first time and how long we've been working towards this. We are committed. There's a significant number of small community MLAs on Cabinet, and we are all serving at the pleasure of this august body. It is something I know as Finance Minister I'm definitely interested in, and we will be having to demonstrate that to you as we go forward here once we sign the Devolution Agreement.

We can't just go willy-nilly. The work has been done initially. There have been community surveys. There are some communities that are decentralization ready: Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Smith – probably in that order – Simpson to a lesser degree. Work has to be done in other larger centres like Norman Wells. The smaller communities, we're looking at other opportunities to put government jobs in there, like those government service officers, where we can put positions on the ground to assist people. We're trying to pay attention to all the communities, recognizing that the centre does seem to grow.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. For general comments, next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a number of comments, and they're not in any particular order. I mentioned some of them in my statement today. I want to say off the top to the Minister and to the House, and I mentioned it in my statement, that I support and I did support and I do support the fiscal strategy that we have put in place, at least for the first two years and presumably for the next two years as we finish this Assembly.

I mentioned the electricity subsidy in my statement, so I don't need to mention it again. But we need to look ahead to what we're going to do when we come to the end of the rate increases and we can no longer continue putting money into electricity rates. I haven't yet understood quite what we're going to do when we come to the end of rising rates and there's no subsidy.

One of the things that I am disappointed about that isn't mentioned in the budget, that the 16th Assembly spent a great deal of time on, and that's the Child and Family Services Act review. There

were 75-some recommendations in that report. There was a commitment to child and family service committees in, I think, one or two budgets ago. I don't see any reference to that in this particular budget. I also don't see any reference to implementing any of the recommendations in the Child and Family Services Act review, particularly legislation which was recommended. There doesn't seem to be any suggestion that any changes are coming forward any time soon.

I am disappointed that there's no new revenue source in this budget, and I'll speak a little bit more about that tomorrow.

The midwifery expansion I'm very pleased to see there, but I think the way the money is earmarked is not the right way to go. I think we ought to be putting the money into actual midwives on the ground as opposed to putting it into headquarters for planning.

The Minister of Health and Social Services confirmed to me the other day that we will have money in the budget for the day shelter here in Yellowknife. That's very good news. It's a very positive program. Were it to stop, I think it would be felt by both businesses and residents of Yellowknife but also by residents in other communities because, as I mentioned in my statement, many of the people using that shelter are not from Yellowknife.

The energy initiatives that are mentioned in the budget, some of them I have great difficulty with. I don't think they're initiatives. I think they're more activities as opposed to initiatives. I regret that we are not in this Assembly taking the same approach to electricity initiatives that we did in the 16th, which was \$60 million over a four-year period. There's some \$5 million identified by the Minister in this budget for electricity initiatives, but some of them, I think it was pointed out by Mr. Bromley, was to put high-efficiency boilers into public housing. I hardly see that as an energy initiative.

In terms of mental health and addictions, there are many concerns here. There should be a focus on prevention and promotion, and the government says there is. I don't believe that the activities that have been identified in the budget as prevention and promotion are adequately labelled, I guess, for lack of a better way of putting it. I think many of the activities that the government says are prevention and promotion are not. I think they've just sort of put them into this list and labelled them as that in order to make things look good, so to speak.

There is no mention of a treatment centre. There is a mention of detox beds, but there's no mention of a treatment centre. I believe the Minister of Health has referenced an analysis of Nats'ejee K'eh, but there needs to be a treatment centre in the largest city in our territory.

I am somewhat disappointed and concerned, I guess, that there's no mention in terms of funding to replace the declining federal funding for housing. CMHC funding is declining continually. We've heard discussions over the last year or so that there is a plan for that. I don't see any mention of that in the budget, and that is a huge concern. Housing is a really big issue for us, and how we are going to continue to fund our public housing over the next 10 years is largely unknown at this point.

Another thing that is not mentioned in the budget – I should say it is mentioned. The Family Violence Action Plan is mentioned, but it's a continuation of funding from the previous year. The Family Violence Action Plan has many, many recommendations which have not yet been instituted. I don't see any new money in the budget for advancing the Family Violence Action Plan activities.

The Minister mentioned that we have to focus on increasing employment opportunities. I had to wonder how. I don't know what he means by that. Yes, we need to increase our employment opportunities, but it's my understanding that a program which was initiated not so long ago, the Small Community Employment Program, it's my understanding that that program is not going to be continuing in the next budget year. I really wonder how we're going to increase employment opportunities if we're taking a known program off the books.

I mentioned in my statement the early childhood development. The funding that's being put into that is really a good-news story. I cannot stress enough that if we put money into zero to three, zero to four, preschool-aged children and families that it will have a huge impact on all of our residents, and over time, another 10 or 20 years, we will see great advances and very positive advances in how we are as a people. It will have an impact on our spending and it will reduce our spending for income support or many of our programs and services. We need to continue that focus on early childhood development.

Lastly, I mentioned in my statement, as well, the Anti-Poverty Strategy. I'm really glad that's coming to fruition. I look forward to seeing the report that's coming in a few months' time. I am particularly pleased that there seems to be a bit of a change in government thinking, and in the thinking of Ministers from departmental silos and everybody out for their own to recognizing that, in order to make advances for us as a territory and for our people, we have to involve all departments when we do certain things. The early childhood development was one. There was a discussion, as well, about the Anti-Poverty Strategy and how much it relies on all departments working together. I was pleased to see that in the budget.

So that's it, Mr. Chair. I don't have any other comments at this point. I will have questions for the various Ministers when we come to it. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When the electricity subsidy that we have budgeted for to soften the rate shock is concluded, then we will transition to that significant rate increase, but over time as opposed to an increase that was initially potentially going to happen all in one year or two years and be very, very high.

I make note that the Minister of Health and Social Services is here about the Child and Family Services Act review and he will be in a position to speak to that. In fact, we do have a new revenue source that we're working on, looking at. Of course, it's tied initially to devolution, and that revenue source is the Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement that is part and parcel of that Devolution Agreement. In the longer term, it will also be the levers and opportunities that allows us to create and manage land, water and resource development as a territory.

We will look forward to the debate on midwifery again. There is a stabilizer program in Fort Smith, Hay River scheduled for next year. The year after that, I believe the plan is for some type of midwifery presence in Inuvik. I will look forward, as well, to the Member's specific references where she thinks addictions and prevention has been mislabelled in her opinion to make it look like we are doing things...(inaudible)...

There is slightly over a million dollars in the budget to offset some of the declining CMHC funding. In addition to that, we are also looking at the possible divestment of some of the older units, as well, and a number of other things in terms of efficiencies and trying to cut our costs in terms of operation. It is a challenge.

Once again, we share the agreement on a continued focus on early childhood development as well as, as the Member has indicated, we'll see what the Anti-Poverty Strategy tells us. We are prepared to respond when that's done. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next on my list I have Member Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The Minister has the much touted "hold the line" budget. One of the things that the hold the line budget does is, when you start concentrating on big ticket projects, it impacts the delivery of projects to the smaller regions and communities. But I just want to say upfront, high on my agenda would be the highways, particularly Highway No. 7, Trout Lake school.

However, I wanted to discuss a little bit about new and emerging issues, and that's the oil and gas development that's happening up in the Sahtu. It definitely impacts my region. I also feel that despite success with NWT Days, we lost an opportunity to lobby government in saying that impact funding is needed for this region and my region. There's much to be done. We're allocating, I think the Minister said, \$1.2 million to assist the Sahtu. But what the federal government has done with other regions such as Voisey's Bay, Churchill Falls is they've actually contributed with the impact and training of those regions. With a great lobbying effort, we could double, triple or even quadruple funding that we have to assist with the development there, most particularly the infrastructure.

There's a huge opportunity for the Mackenzie Valley Highway starting north of Wrigley. I've always said some other regions get their special projects and I think it's about time we started looking at the Mackenzie Valley. It doesn't mean we have to take away from other regions. It just means that we just have to continue focusing, and with the investment from the federal government, we can certainly look at developing a Mackenzie Valley Highway.

I know that project descriptions are almost done from Wrigley right up to even Good Hope, I believe. So we've got a lot of the work done, so we can certainly make a business case. We should continue our lobbying efforts in Ottawa. In fact, we are working with Mr. Yakeleya. We will be working together over the next couple of weeks advancing this idea forward and, I believe, it should also be a priority of our government, only because it's a new and emerging issue. Nothing we could have foreseen a couple of years ago.

The cost of living continues to be pressing in my smaller communities. Most particularly during my last tour, we were talking about the cost of fuel. The government controls the price of fuels in the small and remote communities. They are asking me, how can you approach government. What's the best way you can reduce the cost of living when it comes to fuel? I guess one of the ideas that I had is that somehow, if we subsidize the cost of delivery, that would go a long way. I don't know if that can be done right away, but I think we should work on that. We often say that devolution and extra funding is going to help a lot of different program areas, so I think if we can recover the cost of deliveries to the small communities, then the fuel will be almost \$2 per litre. It's only because in the smaller communities, these people use it on a day-to-day basis. They are out on the land, out in the boat, out on their skidoos. They need this gas to sustain themselves.

I want to focus on the health centre replacement for Fort Simpson. A planning study is coming up this

fiscal year and I've already heard that when we replaced the health care centre in Fort Simpson, we are going to reduce long-term care beds again. So I'm looking at my colleague Mr. Bouchard who, right from day one, has said we've lost 10 long-term care beds in this new health facility and, potentially, I hope I don't. I've been asking the appropriate Minister for more information on the planning studies, because I don't want to lose these long-term health care beds. In today's questioning, I think the Minister told Mr. Bouchard that we've got spaces for them, but if you are reducing, potentially, up to 20 beds, where are all these people going? Are you going to build a long-term care facility somewhere? I would like to know where all these long-term care beds are going.

I think the point of power is in the moment, Mr. Chair. If you are planning these health care facilities, just spend that little bit of extra money and continue with long-term care beds in the community. Hay River is an example now. They have to go through the capital planning process and somehow add 10 more long-term care beds to their facilities. I'm not too sure about government's infinite wisdom on planning. Everybody knows that statistically we've got an aging population and we've got to plan for seniors.

While I'm on health, and during my last tour as well, Mr. Chair, community wellness plans are being developed by all my smaller communities. They are really well done. The community works hard on it. I know that the departments have worked hard in developing the community wellness plans, but they are saying it's good to have a plan, but let's resource them. I think, for example, the community of Trout Lake is saying, I think we had \$18,000 in the past to deliver community wellness. I keep saying that at least 30 or 40 percent of those costs are for travel. Trout Lake is a fly-in-only community and you are using a lot of your money for travel expenses, getting people in there. That's what they're saying. We have this great plan; well, you have to resource us.

I know that we increased the Health and Social Services budget in prevention and promotion. I'd like to ensure that these programming dollars get to the communities. It has been said in the media and in this House, we have great programming, but let's make sure we spend the dollars and get them out to the communities. I think we often see we will develop a nice big program, but then we'll create a job, often in Yellowknife. Out of a \$400,000 program, you are creating a \$160,000 job position in Yellowknife and then you cut your potential programming dollars right down to 60 percent almost. We have to deliver our programs, spend the programming dollars in the communities.

Finally, in conclusion, I mentioned devolution as well. As we continue our planning with devolution

and continue our discussion, we have to create infrastructure in the regions and in the communities so that we can continue on with decentralization. I am a firm believer in it and we can do it. I know in the past, like in the community of Fort Simpson, departments have actually said, well, we wanted to give you a couple more jobs but there is no housing or office space there, we have to start planning for that, we have to build another office space in Yellowknife. That's going to be their argument: there is no office space in Simpson, but we have lots in Yellowknife. Those are the things we have to be aware of and pay attention to. I would like to see that continued to be involved in devolution and planning for decentralization. I won't be doing my job as MLA if I'm not trying to get resources out to the communities, decentralization and jobs out to the communities. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Next year, as we expand the capital plan, there will be money for highways like Highway No. 7 on an ongoing basis. Once we ink the devolution deal and we have that nailed down, the fiscal framework will change somewhat. As well, we still have to manage our money and control the growth, the size of government and all these good things. We have collectively agreed that we need to focus on infrastructure that we are spending roughly \$1.6 billion on programs and services, and barely less than 10 percent of our money goes into trying to do the infrastructure needs, and replacements and maintenance we need.

Sahtu oil and gas, if it proves up, we will be in a significantly stronger position going forward in terms of approaching the federal government, in doing business and planning. If we know for certain that there is going to be a major... If it is going to move from exploration into development and implementation, then that will be a game changer.

Right now we are still in the very early days where we're putting money and resources in there to try and make sure we can respond to the demand by the ramped up exploration, but the big next step is going to be to see what it tells us.

We agree that road north from Wrigley to Norman Wells is a logical next step for the Mackenzie Highway. Once again, if the Sahtu oil and gas play proves out, then there's going to be a powerful economic driver to have that road put in.

The issue of trying to lower the cost of living in communities is something we are always interested in. Is it subsidizing the cost of delivery of fuel? I think that's a discussion we need to look at. As I indicated, one of my earlier comments, just on liquid natural gas alone, if we can in fact lower the cost of energy generation in communities, we will be better off and that will lower the cost of living.

The discussion on the resources for community wellness plans and getting the money to communities, we agree. We want to get the money to where it's targeted, but that is a discussion you will be able to have with the Minister of Health when he is at the table.

Once we have devolution and we get the money to the A base, we will be responsible for delivering all of those programs or services currently provided by the federal government. Then we will have the time to plan. We've already started the planning on devolution and some places that need beefing up. There will be an opportunity to look at what those are. I have indicated some of the communities are more ready than others; Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Smith. There are challenges in other communities, but we are committed to looking at those. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Could I ask the indulgence of the Chair for two minutes? I need some break time.

---Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. With that, we will just take a quick recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Welcome back to the committee. We are going to continue on with general comments. Next on my list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This budget, when you gotta go, you gotta go.

---Laughter

It is the learning process of doing this budget here over the last nine years. The Minister has been quite steady and has been quite consistent with the message from government. I do want to, on a serious note, offer my condolences to him and his family. That is part of business in the government and continuing on doing what we have to do.

The process that we have entered into is doing our committee work, doing our consultation with the Minister, but the Minister also... I want to hear more about the Minister's public consultation on the communities with the demonstration of the legal blocks, and the efficiency and effectiveness and if we in our constituency... This is a good measurement if we're doing our work right, by having the Minister do a public consultation on how the money could be spent, and what we've been telling them over there, that we've been meeting with the Minister in committee meetings to look at some of the wish lists of our ridings here. I want to see if we've got value for our dollar through that consultation process.

Mr. Chair, the wish list comes up every year, and we go through an exercise called the business planning session. I do want to give my thanks to the

Minister and to the Cabinet Ministers for responding to some of the needs in the Sahtu in regard to the proving up of resources that are happening right now in the Sahtu with regard to the oil and gas exploration, the record 11 parcels that have been taken up by the five major oil companies to expend over \$630 million for five years, with an extension of their licences to be renewed for another three or four more years.

The people in the Sahtu could see that we're going to need the help of the government to deal with the increased activity in all sectors and all fronts of the territorial government. Even with the RCMP in Tulita, we thank you. I've been getting calls from Tulita saying that the increase of activity, because of alcohol and other issues that deal with the laws, there's a high number of criminal activity happening in all the Sahtu communities. So we have some support there, also with ENR and ITI and Education. We want to thank the government for responding to the needs.

There's probably going to be another request as the activities continue, once the oil companies look at the area they're working on, and more looking needs to be done in that area to have a business case go forward to look at a different type of development in that area. So I do want to say thank you to the government for responding in this area for us.

The process that we go through is very tedious. It's long. We have many meetings. We look at the other big projects that are going on with regard to devolution, decentralization, governments, infrastructure, programs and services, and we try our best to respond to some of these needs in our communities.

We also have to deal with the fiscal realities, as the Minister states, of what's on the table right now. That's what we have to deal with. Some of them seem more beneficial to the whole of the North, and some of the communities that I serve continue to push for basic essential services for the well-being of the people, such as the communities without RCMP stations or health nurse stations in our communities. There are communities today that are not served by those basic essential services. We need to look at some of those and start adjusting our priorities to say that, in this government, we're going to make sure that we start filling those communities with RCMP officers or nurses or the quality of our educational schools or the so-called schools. It's a very tough juggling priority we look at, but that's what we are here for. We're here for those things. There are many issues that I see in the budget that we can work on.

My colleague talked about the cost of living. It's something this government can work with us, with Nutritious North Canada and look at the entry points of Nutritious North programs coming to the

North. It might be cheaper for them to have an entry point in Norman Wells, Inuvik, Simpson, Hay River, so that we could take advantage of, once they are in Norman Wells, we could fly them to the Sahtu communities which would reduce the cost of food in our communities.

I talked to Minister Ramsay in our exchange the other day about providing some flexible, strong opportunities to have northern fish, bottled water, those types of things come into our community. I'm looking forward to some flexibility with this budget. I look at some of the things that we could embark on, such as the Voisey's Bay model that Mr. Menicoche talked about, and see if that would fit the scenario with the Sahtu.

Some of our communities continue to suffer high employment, into the 42 percent, and somehow small employment opportunities, a program that was fought for and approved through this government, is a question that we need to think about. Some regions have and some regions have not. I want to look at the employment of our small communities and look at the small employment opportunities program that we had going.

I also want to look at decentralization through the percentage of positions in our region that are hired by the GNWT in the North Slave, South Slave, Tlicho, Sahtu, Beaufort-Delta. I want to see how we can get those numbers that Mr. Bouchard talked about, so that we can start preparing our regions for these decentralization positions, because what is there now for us to go on? Where are these positions coming? Which region is going to benefit in the millions once these positions are signed over to the GNWT? Where are they going to go? We have to have a hard look at these numbers, a sobering look and say, the matter of the fact, Jack, \$20 million is going to come to Yellowknife and \$100,000 or \$2 million is going to come to the Sahtu or the Delta regions. We have to have that discussion. That's why we're here. Those kinds of things I want to look at.

The last thing I want to say is, we have to look at empowering our people. They have the answers. The Minister and the Cabinet, I want to thank you for the budget. It is a good budget, but we still have a lot of work to do. Let's not sleep now. We have a couple of more years to work before we go back out and ask for our jobs again. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's comments. I will look at his last comment first where he talked about how we have to empower the people. That was one of the goals, I think, of the public consultation process, to take the time to go to each regional centre. Next year we want to improve on that process, but to talk to the people as

Northerners about how we manage the money we have, living within our means, the challenges we face, the discussions we have here. Did we get value for money was the question that the Member asked. I would suggest to you that yes, we did, that it gave us some specific suggestions. It provided a broader confirmation that as a Legislature we are in touch with the people we represent. A lot of concerns that they've talked about we have been trying to address for some time.

The prevention piece, do a better job. More money for infrastructure. Look for efficiencies. Avoid red tape. Put more money into infrastructure. Take advantage of economic opportunities in an environmentally sustainable way. Those are all things that as a government we're committed to try to do, and we're going to... Some things we didn't address in this budget but we're going to go back again next year, next fall, and we will pick up some of the pieces.

One of the things that came up, for example I was asked about by the press, was there was a significant arts and crafts representation in the budget dialogues here in Yellowknife and we, in this budget, didn't manage to address the concerns that they raised, so that will remain on the table in the coming year as we look at the next budget.

The key in the Sahtu, as we've talked about already, is should the Sahtu oil play prove up, the world as we know it will change. We appreciate the need for essential basic services in communities, and we're going to continue to do the work that we're doing. But once again, in the Sahtu if there is going to be that massive influx, a big oil play, lots of money, employment opportunities, then it's going to be a matter of how to manage that success. We'll be there.

We will have the discussion on decentralization, as we've committed to other Members. Over the long term, once we've signed the devolution deal and the money's in our base, we don't have to rush to do stuff right away. We have to take the time to think about it because once it's done, as the Member said, it will be hard to undo.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Moving on with questions, general comments, I have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just some comments from a territorial view in terms of where things are at with the Deh Cho, the riding I represent. For the most part, I think this budget is a status quo budget. There's nothing really extraordinary about the budget, but it's a responsible one in that we're still experiencing a downturn in the economy so we have to really watch in terms of balancing our revenues and expenditures. For the most part, it's a responsible budget, and at the same time, we have to give the Minister credit for leading a team on this effort to

come up with a budget that's workable, of course. He's been at it for some time so I would like to give him at least credit for that.

In saying that, there are some concerns that I have in terms of how it is that we're trying to maintain the budget. That one area that was highlighted just briefly is in terms of the personnel that we have or the workforce that has become the GNWT. We seem to have lots of people that we hire and we maintain the operations, obviously, in Yellowknife. If we identify an issue or concern that we would like to have addressed in the community, for the most part, I'm not saying that it happens all the time, but generally what our approach is to identifying issues, maybe create a position, and then, unfortunately, the obvious decision is to house the position here in Yellowknife. There is another option. The other option is to consider at least some discussions at the community level, and look at the approach of trying to build capacity at the local level and ensuring that locally, people understand how systems operate so at least we build the capacity to ensure that at least we give the option of communities preparing themselves for eventually becoming more responsible in terms of delivering the governance responsibilities to their residents. I would like to at least be constructive and bring that forward and see if that could be realized within this fiscal year to ensure that we meet communities to try and ensure that we build up to capacities.

There are some good things that have become of this budget and, of course, it's ongoing. There's the fibre optic opportunity that would be extended right down the Mackenzie Valley. There are some good energy projects, as well, that have been initiated, like efforts made to take advantage of the biomass initiative. I'm hoping that it won't wane. We need to ensure the sustainability of this operation, that it's not just a one-time thing. A program initiative like that, I think, periodically we need to step back and try to fine tune it so that at least it's delivering not only the needs of addressing energy options but at the same time making it sustainable so that they can be initiatives that perhaps we can carry out for a long stretch and ensure that we maximize the opportunities for it.

Briefly too, in terms of some of the other concerns, there are some initiatives. One of them is from one end we have the Economic Development Strategy that we're developing. I look forward to that. Of course, the Mineral Development Strategy that we're developing. We need to try to balance the social needs in terms of some of the real challenges that we have at the community level. We have rates of social issues that we need to contend with at the same time. There are some very fundamental challenges such as the rate of education and training of our people.

There are standing socio-economic agreements at the mines that have to be honoured not only from industry but from governments. The governments, at the same time, really need to extol and encourage our people to advance education as an opportunity to at least elevate them out of the circumstances that sometimes beleaguer them and withhold them from going beyond some of the challenges that people find themselves in.

Briefly, if there's anything that I kind of look forward to is the communities that I represent and looking at their aspirations. I think there's an interest to see at some point, maybe it could be next year or it could be within this period, in terms of providing programs and services and looking at the needs of the public in terms of safety. I think there's an initiative in terms of trying to enhance the volunteer fire departments at the local level to ensure they are prepared fully to be on the offensive if a matter arises on the highway and they have to mobilize the crew to go out into the highway and help the public in terms of, perhaps, a vehicle fire. They need to be in a very ready and poised position to respond to that. I feel that we could be doing more in terms of preparing local fire departments, which are for the most part in the communities I represent volunteer fire departments.

Of course, there are other initiatives that I feel that, perhaps, will come down the road within another year or so and that's recreational infrastructure. Looking at addressing at least the needs of our youth, I think sport and recreation is a very positive thing. It's strong. We need to try to meet the interests of our youth to ensure we have facilities wherever we can. I know in some communities, like the community I come from is at least examining the idea of trying to enhance the use of the arena, the recreation complex, and that's going to require some cooperation and a level of discussion with the community levels.

There are other initiatives, too, like with communities to try to undertake more with less. The key thing is that we're trying to build capacity and prepare our communities to deliver these services to the residents and at the same time trying to live within the means of the budget. Sometimes we don't have a lot, but we really have to go that extra mile to carry at least limited funds.

For the most part those are just some of the comments. I understand we're going to have more opportunity down the road. Generally, for the time being those are the comments that I have.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate, as well, Mr. Nadli's comments and recognition of the hard work that the folks have put in to try to build this budget. His concerns are very consistent in terms of some of

the outside-of-Yellowknife issues: size of the bureaucracy, centralization versus decentralization.

The biomass project in his riding is being designed for the long term to be sustainable. We're working on forest management agreements. The proponent has worked very hard to build up a business relationship with the communities and the Aboriginal governments, has signed agreements, looked into the employment opportunities, the partnership arrangements that are there, and it should stand the territory in good stead for many, many years to come, both in terms of the energy and the employment opportunities it's going to provide.

As the Member indicated, there will be significant opportunity over the next five weeks with the other Ministers to discuss a lot of the detail that the Member has raised in areas like recreation facilities and employment opportunities and those type of things on a going forward basis and some of his suggestions for the future.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Moving on with questions, I have Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't spend a lot of time, although I could probably talk well beyond 10 minutes. I just have a few things I want to pick up where I commented the other day and was unable to sort of highlight my thoughts on the budget because of the restriction on the Member's statement.

I wish to applaud the government's focus on the early childhood development, although I caution the government in the sense that I worry about where the money may be coming from or be filtered through and what departmental programs through education school boards will be suffering for that. I'm grateful the money is emerging, but where is it coming from? In some respects, when we're looking at programming, it's certainly necessary. We have to look at things like inclusive schooling. Inclusive schooling, as we all know, is a very intense type of service offered within our education system and it comes at a great range. Some students only need a little help; others need a full-time assistant. I could be correct or even mistaken when I say I think I've even heard of one situation that they needed more than one person to help them. It is such an important role that we play within that and, of course, we see government finding new ways to do business and I just fear that it would come at the cost of our education system where they're trying to provide the best services and opportunities for those who want to participate and need to participate.

The discussion about detox options and model provided by the Minister of Health the other day were quite interesting, and he did talk about two bed opportunities in Inuvik and two in Yellowknife. I

mean, that's certainly a great step forward and I cannot ignore the fact that I wish to thank him for that and how important that is, but the next phase really is to now talk about a treatment centre and how we build that into our continuum of care for offering people good and clear options. I, like other Members, found that budget discussion or dialogue very interesting. I think it ran around \$40,000. In some ways, in discussion with the Minister, it's difficult to put a price on good consultation and building relationships, but what I would say, though, is what type of duplication are we looking at and how is it getting into the system and being recognized. In some ways, I wonder that the same messages that were delivered by constituents at the Lego building exercises are some of the same messages delivered by MLAs and I often worry, and I stress this, that our message is being drowned out because we're MLAs or is the government only taking us serious when they need our three votes or are they taking those Lego exercises by the public more serious than our message that we try to deal with here today. So the frustration of potential duplication and the fact is sometimes I wonder that is our role being appreciated. Not everyone has the benefit of sitting on this side of the House or realizing how challenging it is to run these issues up the flag pole. It becomes quite frustrating at times when you articulate a message but somebody walks in with a piece of Lego and they seem to make more sense, which is frustrating.

I would like to say that I do appreciate the concerns, and they are certainly not lost on me by my community colleagues. I understand and I'm not a stranger to the reality that options can be few and far between, whether they're employment options, housing options and the list could go on well longer than my 10 minute allotment of time.

At the same time, we've always got to be cautious. The word Yellowknife was really only mentioned once, if I read it correctly, in 12 pages of the Minister's budget speech, where I think he just mentioned the Inuvik-Tuk highway alone six or seven times. This isn't a criticism of the Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project, but I worry more in a broader scale of things, almost 50 percent of your population in the centre. I realize we have synergies that should never be ignored, but by the same token, we can't ignore the needs of the larger centre because the larger centre does have different needs. What we do need, though, in the longer haul is a philosophy in strategy in how we ensure what is considered an equitable support system throughout our community regions and I do support the development of them. Just so people know, Yellowknife is not such a bad place, folks. I wish you wouldn't beat us up for being the community we are.

That said, I understand in the glaring, if not immeasurable, needs that some of the community regions need. At times, some are so obvious to support when we support them, we wonder where has government been for years and never touched upon.

When I consider just one more issue at this particular time because I think I got through most of the initial concerns, though I could probably go on at length, the decentralized position issue is certainly an issue for everybody. Those who want the jobs, by all means, those who need the jobs in our communities, you know the fact of trying to get some type of employment dollars in those communities is very critical. Those micro economies have to be developed and, certainly, strengthened. The only concern I have here while we are doing the budget process, I don't recall that many particular positions being highlighted as simple as it is in the budget speech. That said, I wonder if that glazed over was never in our budget development process in our budget plans. I wonder if it never really got the deal that was required. That said, of course, I've asked some of my colleagues and someone will say, of course, we've heard those numbers. I don't remember hearing those specific numbers ever in our particular discussion.

We were made known, near the end there would be some jobs being moved in a particular department. That said, I worry, have we done enough to consider new opportunities and new focus. It's an easy sell for me by saying if we want to establish a new service, we should look outside of Yellowknife. It doesn't pay me to say if we were establishing something new, we should always look outside the region to see if we could make it fit and, certainly, make it flow. But it does cause concern when we operate a particular area within government, regardless if we were moving from a small centre to a larger one, not necessarily Yellowknife, but the change in the community and the dynamics, certainly the change of the employees and how they feel, it does seem in a microcosm of not being very sensitive to that.

I do appreciate the fact that the challenges to get those jobs out there are great. It's easy to say let's just do something and it's difficult to actually do. I understand that. I can appreciate that decisions have to be made. Like the old proverbial you can take the band-aid off slow or you can just rip it off and do it, I can only imagine these are tough decisions to make by anyone, whether it's a department Minister, director or managers when they are trying to find positions to go.

The only question I would have for the Minister is back to the decentralization points. Perhaps you could put on the record exactly which positions are being decentralized from that number that has now been refined a little. What kind of notice to

employees have we provided and what type of program evaluation have we considered? Not all decentralized positions need to go, say, to Hay River, when we have Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Inuvik. How did we come about saying one should go to a particular area over another in the sense of the economics and making sure that they do work and are supported?

I think my colleague Mr. Menicoche's point earlier was very well made, which is it's great to talk the great line about saying let's farm positions out, but housing availability and options are a true challenge. In the same token, I think he's right. As well, I think Mr. Bouchard had made this point about building space and future availability about future building space, I think that needs to be part of the bigger program, because if we want these options to succeed, we have to start off with the philosophy of ensuring that they do have the best chance. So the likelihood of them succeeding all comes down to the evaluation and consideration. It's great to say they need to be there or there, but by the same token, at what type of evaluation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess a couple of the key issues the Member raises are what type of duplication does going out consulting cause with the role of the MLAs. The MLAs are elected officials. We gather here. Our job is to run the government, it's to pass the laws, it's to listen to the feedback we get from the people. Some Members say and we pride ourselves on consultation and empowering the people and being able to get feedback from them, that we could all benefit from that. There should be no sense of somehow feeling threatened by going to the communities that we're not going to listen to the MLAs. The MLAs collectively vote and pass budgets and the bills. So to reassure the Member, those roles should be very complementary and there is, no doubt, the final say the MLAs have in this whole process.

The Member mentioned that Yellowknife was only mentioned once in the budget address. If I were to hazard a guess, the last five years Yellowknife was probably mentioned numerous times, repeatedly in this House and in the budget as we worked through that major project. So now we have a major project that has a focus and a location outside of Yellowknife. That does not detract from the fact that a big chunk of the budget comes to Yellowknife. This is the seat of the government. Half of the positions, as Mr. Bouchard pointed out, that have been created have been coming to Yellowknife. So Yellowknife is very present even though it's not named repeatedly.

The issue of decentralization, in my opinion, unequivocally I can tell you that the jobs that are moved can be easily done outside of Yellowknife. There is not some special something in the air, something in the location that makes the fact that jobs can only be done in Yellowknife. We've created a bit of a myth that you need to be here, that you have to be five feet away from the deputy, or people won't want to live in Hay River, they don't want to live in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Smith and so, therefore, you can't fill them and so we will just fill them in Yellowknife. The challenge is we have about 180 jobs we can fill in Yellowknife as well, as well as 180 we are trying to fill outside of Yellowknife. So it's a challenge across the board, but there's enormous centrifugal force that attracts things to the centre. The challenge for this august body is to try to counteract that to a certain modest extent. We've made a commitment with devolution that we are going to look at new positions and look at relocating them outside of Yellowknife. We're going to take the time to work with communities, and there is going to be a trickle-down effect and we are going to look at small communities as well.

There is no doubt that communities outside of Yellowknife are more than mature enough to handle decentralization. They just have to be given the opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Next on my list I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. I wasn't going to make general comments, but after hearing my colleague from Yellowknife Centre, I guess I do need to talk about the budget here a little bit.

Yellowknife only got mentioned once in the budget address? Like please. This government has got to look outside of Yellowknife. I mean, Yellowknife might as well be on a different planet when you get out into the other communities. It's not even in the same league, and how for these few jobs that are being decentralized after, for my case, 18 years of begging in this House? I know beggars can't be choosers, but we are definitely beggars when it comes to getting government jobs.

Finally, this government and this Cabinet have responded with a few jobs for communities outside and we have to worry about whether we are being sensitive to the employees that are being moved.

We live in Hay River. We live in Fort Smith. We live in Norman Wells. We live in Fort Simpson. There's nothing wrong with these communities. Whether there will be infrastructure, the minute the word goes out in a community like Hay River that there is potential for needing privately invested office space or infrastructure, whatever is needed, it's just that nobody can afford to build it on speculation and hope that maybe something is going to come there.

We can't build it and let it sit there empty while the government decides if they are going to send something. But there would be lots of capacity, I would suggest, in communities outside of Yellowknife, and particularly if there was a little bit of heads-up and a little bit of notice that there was some economy coming.

It's not good out there. I come to Yellowknife after being back in Hay River for a few weeks. I'm driving down Old Airport Road and there are new buildings that have sprung up while I was gone over the summer. It's great for Yellowknife. Is there anything wrong with Yellowknife? Absolutely not. We should just all move to Yellowknife; that would solve the big problem, wouldn't it? We aren't going to do that. We want to have viable, sustainable communities outside of the centre.

I am very happy that this government has finally seen fit to move a few jobs. Yes, the government continues to grow. I am sorry; I guess I am to the right when it comes to fiscally conservative. I don't want to see government grow for the sake of growing. I don't want to see the government and the public service growing on itself. Industry will decide where they want to go.

We don't have a lot of control over that as a government, but where we do have control over government offices that can be away from exactly where the programs and services are delivered, we have an obligation as a government to be fair and live up to our stated commitment for sustainable and viable communities across the Northwest Territories wherever that's possible. I personally would support that going out to... One or two jobs in some of our smaller communities would be a big thing.

In Hay River, on the few that we are getting is a big thing. There is so much buzz in Hay River about these few jobs, decentralization, these new positions, our phones were ringing off the hook after the budget address. What is Hay River getting?

In Inuvik I know it's the same thing. Times are not great there. We struck a program review office here to look at government programs. The big prize finding that came out of it is that we should build a \$40 million office building in Yellowknife downtown to relieve the pent up demand -- I just love that term -- that pent up demand for office space and infrastructure in downtown Yellowknife. Of course, I know the argument will all come back that it was to save money and everything, but it just put more infrastructure into the centre. We know devolution is coming. We have to be prepared for that.

I am happy with what we have. Thank you to the government. It is a start. As it was described to us, it's the beginning. It is the easier things to identify. But our Cabinet represents the whole territory. I do thank them for finally seeing the plight of some of

these communities outside. It's quiet. It's quiet in Inuvik. It's quiet in Hay River. It's quiet in Fort Smith. We can't make industry appear with jobs. But where our government can make sensible, efficient, effective, viable transfer of positions and programs and services, I think we need to do it. But like I said, I've been preaching that for a long time. I am really excited that finally there are a few things happening. It has a ways to go; it is a beginning.

I just had to respond to my colleague from Yellowknife Centre. It is great that Yellowknife is doing as well as it is, but we have to be fair and we have to look beyond.

I don't even know what else I had to say about the budget. We will get through it in great detail in the days, the five weeks that lie ahead.

Just back to the point, though, for a moment about being fiscally conservative and not getting ourselves as a jurisdiction into difficult financial times, as the Finance Minister alluded to earlier. I still think there is lots of room within the money that we do have and the way we do spend money, to spend it more wisely, to spend it smarter. That's, I think, where we have to focus a lot of attention, because it isn't like for a jurisdiction of 42,000 or 43,000 people and we don't have a fair amount of financial resources. We do. But to get the most results from those financial resources, I still think there is a lot we can be looking at. We have the room. We have the capacity to look at how we do spend our money and to respond to needs with the right kind of spending. With that, I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, the Member's impassioned commentary on decentralization stands on its own merit. It needs no response from me. Being from Fort Smith, it resonates, I think, very clearly with most of the folks that are from outside of Yellowknife.

The comment about spending smarter, if I could just speak to the budget dialogue again, I think that's one of the themes that the people tell us as well. They don't have all the answers, but they tell us to be efficient, avoid duplication, spend it smarter. The people who are charged with doing that, of course, are us. So that's the discussion that we have to have as we go forward for the next budget as well.

It comes to hard decisions. If I could point to just to the debate over when we moved money for early childhood and we moved some money out of inclusive schooling. It is achieving that consensus on how to be spending it smarter will challenge us, but I think it's something that we can't shirk from or shrink from. It is one of the things we have to do as government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. General comments. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure why Mrs. Groenewegen would say there we go or here we go. I think it is very short-sighted and very narrow to thinking what I'm going to...(inaudible)... Actually, I don't disagree with some of the things she said. My issue was more about the planning and evaluation of what they did. Minister Miltenberger didn't answer that question, which was, when we look at those jobs, which jobs exactly were they? What type of evaluation? And maybe we can hear about where they're going. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, I'll get Mr. Aumond. He has the list of the positions. We'll just take a second to go through the list. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Department of Executive is creating three single-window service officer positions in Tsiigehtchic, Wrigley and Fort Resolution. The Department of Finance is creating a communications officer position with the liquor licencing and enforcement division in Hay River. The Department of Human Resources will be creating a functional recruitment officer in Inuvik. Industry, Tourism and Investment will be decentralizing the Business Incentive Policy monitoring office. There are four positions there into Hay River. Municipal and Community Affairs is going to re-profile the existing funding that they had for Mackenzie Gas Pipeline positions and create five assistant regional superintendent positions in all regions. They will be located in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Behchoko, Fort Simpson and Fort Smith. They are also going to be creating a youth officer position for the North Slave region. Health and Social Services will fund two community wellness coordinators, one each in Fort Smith and Inuvik. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thanks very much. I think in large it speaks to what I am talking about, which is we have an opportunity to expand.

I guess I'll lead into the next area of saying, let's start with first, can I get a copy of the list, or all Members, that is, so we can have it in front of us? What type of evaluation or discussion did the department have with the BIP office? Discussion and evaluation of the BIP office, to decentralize it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would, of course, share that list with the Members and if they need a briefing on rationale, we could do that as well. I must confess, I didn't quite catch the question on the BIP office. Is the Member asking what their thought was about being decentralized? I didn't quite understand that. If I could get clarification, please.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. We'll go back to the Member for clarification. Member Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I guess I'm getting at the fact that what type of discussion and evaluation was considered in the BIP office to move?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The Premier and Cabinet provided direction to the government from two departments to go back to their organizations and look at what could possibly be decentralized, and in a meaningful way that cohesive units or positions that would make sense that could easily function outside of Yellowknife. The BIP office was one of the suggestions brought forward. Some of the other departments were holding off pending the outcome of decentralization, for example. ENR and ITI, for example, are heavily caught up in that they go over land and water and resource development. So those will be looked at later. So it was brought forward at the direction of Cabinet and the Premier to come forward, and based on a list of principles that we laid out, which we'd be happy to share with the Members, the rationale about why we did it and what things we were looking for. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Are all four employees accepting a transfer? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The deputy reminded me that we've already shared those principles in the rationale for the decentralization with committee, but we'd be happy to share it again. No, none of the existing incumbents will be moving. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Sorry. For some reason I couldn't hear that. It must be the ventilation or whatnot. But maybe if the Minister could repeat his answer on that. Are all four transferring to Hay River or what's happening to the four bodies? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'll get clarification from the Minister. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are three that are staffed, one is vacant. So there's four total. Three staffed, one vacant and none of the incumbents have indicated they're prepared to move; therefore, they will go on to the government's Affected Employee Program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister, for clarification. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: That's fine for now. I wanted to know what they did. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. General comments. I see there are no more general comments. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I want to thank our witnesses here today, Mr. Kalgutkar and Mr. Aumond, and if I could get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort them out of the Chamber for today. With this, committee, I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Do I have a seconder? Mr. Bromley.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Legislative Assembly Board of Management at the rise of the House today in Committee Room A.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 12, 2013, 1:30 p.m.:

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

12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 1, Ticho Statutes Amendment Act
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 12th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

