



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

4th Session

Day 15

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Pages 2197 – 2254

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Minister of Justice

Minister of Human Resources

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister responsible for the

Public Utilities Board

Hon. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister responsible for

Persons with Disabilities

Minister responsible for Seniors

Ms. Wendy Bisaro

(Frame Lake)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Robert Bouchard

(Hay River North)

Mr. Bob Bromley

(Weledeh)

Mr. Daryl Dolynny

(Range Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Minister responsible for the Workers'

Safety and Compensation

Commission

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of Executive

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and

Intergovernmental Relations

Minister responsible for the

Status of Women

Hon. Robert C. McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Municipal and

Community Affairs

Minister responsible for the

NWT Housing Corporation

Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Kevin Menicoche

(Nahendeh)

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Government House Leader

Minister of Finance

Minister of Environment and Natural

Resources

Minister responsible for the

NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Hon. David Ramsay

(Kam Lake)

Minister of Industry, Tourism

and Investment

Minister of Transportation

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

**Principal Clerk
of Committees**

Ms. Jennifer Knowlan

**Principal Clerk,
Operations**

Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Ms. Malinda Kellett

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	2197
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	2197
27-17(4) – Bullying Prevention (Lafferty)	2197
28-17(4) – NWT Tourism 2013-2014 Marketing Plan (Ramsay)	2197
29-17(4) – Reservist Leave for Public Service Employees (Abernethy)	2198
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	2199
Measuring the Effects of Bullying (Dolynny)	2199
Bullying in the Workplace (Bisaro)	2199
Bullying at School (Menicoche)	2200
Effects of Bullying Behaviour (Nadli)	2200
Family Support for Bullying Victims (Groenewegen)	2200
Abuse and Bullying of Elders (Moses)	2201
Anti-Bullying Day (Yakeleya)	2201
Dredging of the Hay River (Bouchard)	2201
GNWT Departmental Travel (Bromley)	2202
Residency of Northern Workers (Hawkins)	2202
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	2203
ORAL QUESTIONS	2204
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	2215
RETURNS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS	2215
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	2215
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	2216
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	2253
ORDERS OF THE DAY	2253

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 27, 2013****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, 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. Members, I would like to thank the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, the Honourable Jackson Lafferty, for providing us with pink carnations, marking our support to end bullying in schools and the workplace, on the Internet and, indeed, in every walk of life. I want to thank Members for wearing these pink carnations today as a symbol of our commitment to do our part to do away with bullying.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 27-17(4):
BULLYING PREVENTION

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, today is the official Anti-Bullying Day, a day celebrated during the last Wednesday of February of each year. I am pleased we are wearing pink carnations today, marking a day of protest against bullying. This action was started by two brave young men in Nova Scotia, David Shepherd and Travis Price, who gave away 50 pink shirts after a Grade 9 student was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school.

These two young men raised national awareness of a significant societal problem that does not just exist in our schools but is all too common in our society generally. It is a cancer that has spread far and wide and it is up to all of us, not just our teachers in schools, to put a stop to it. Parents, community leaders, co-workers and politicians must stand up for those who get harassed relentlessly, day in and out, for who they are, often just because they are different than the guy next door.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the society Canada is aspiring to be. In fact, Canada is well known for its tolerance and diversity, but if we don't all protect it, do our part to change attitudes, set clear standards in policy and legislation that bullying is not

acceptable and won't be tolerated, then we will lose what many before us have fought so hard for and, unfortunately, many have lost their lives over.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud that our government, with the encouragement of Members across the floor, has begun the work of developing a comprehensive bullying prevention strategy with the assistance of the best expert this country has to offer and the wise counsel of residents and professionals in our communities. The comprehensive plan will be ready for review in a few weeks and I hope it is the start of a new beginning in our schools, which will provide safe places of learning for all of our children and teachers. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 28-17(4):
NWT TOURISM 2013-2014 MARKETING PLAN

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, tourism is a vital industry here in the Northwest Territories. It is our largest renewable industry and attracted close to 70,000 visitors and over \$100 million in new spending last year. Of all sectors, tourism presents the greatest likelihood of creating economic opportunities in each region, especially in the smaller communities.

Because of the importance and the potential of our tourism industry, it is critical that we develop effective plans to market the NWT's outstanding range of tourism products.

Mr. Speaker, with that goal in mind, I am extremely pleased with NWT Tourism's 2013-14 Marketing Plan, which will be tabled in the House later today.

Partnerships are a cornerstone of our tourism marketing efforts and I would like to thank the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee for their guidance and leadership. This committee has representatives from the tourism industry and the GNWT, and provides strategic direction to NWT Tourism each year in the development of this plan.

I would like to thank the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee and the board of directors of the NWT Tourism Association for their direction and advice in shaping this plan.

We have a lot to offer the world when it comes to tourism experiences. Our territory is known for its world-class sport fishing, aurora viewing, road touring, outdoor activities and hunting. As the marketing plan points out, the NWT is increasingly seen as a unique location for hosting small and medium-sized meetings and conventions.

We are also seeing increasing demand for Aboriginal cultural tourism products, a demand that we can satisfy through our strong cultures and natural hospitality of our people.

However, the tourism industry is extremely competitive and we need to continually position ourselves as a travel destination of choice. The NWT Tourism Plan will use the power of our iconic attractions to attract potential travellers to the NWT. The Aurora, our lakes and rivers, our parks and wilderness, our people and culture and our northern realities such as ice roads, and ice pilots all play a central role in the marketing plan.

The core marketing efforts will leverage interest in these attractions in key target markets in Europe, namely Germany; and the Asia-Pacific, namely Japan. Other parts of Canada will also be a major focus – Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan – as well as some areas identified in the United States. Also identified in the plan is the possibility of reaching into emerging markets such as Mexico, Australia and, as Premier McLeod proved last September during his visit to China, casting a wider net is important to help our tourism industry grow.

We are currently proposing to significantly increase the resources allotted to NWT Tourism to market the NWT as a travel destination. Subject to Legislative Assembly approval of additional resources for marketing in the amount of \$600,000 for 2013-14, I will be asking NWT Tourism to amend their 2013-14 marketing plan to reach deeper into established markets and broaden the means in which they reach out to these markets. We will also be proposing a further additional \$600,000 in marketing funding for 2014-15, which will allow NWT Tourism to expand their advertising promotions, attend more trade events, and increase media promotions in these markets.

Mr. Speaker, a prosperous tourism industry builds on what the NWT has to offer in abundance: a beautiful landscape, rich cultures and a willingness to share these with the world. The 2013-14 Tourism Marketing Plan continues to focus on and support NWT tourism development. Marketing the spectacular range of tourism products and experiences in our territory helps to ensure a diversified and healthy economy that provides all regions and communities with opportunities and choices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Abernethy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 29-17(4):
RESERVIST LEAVE FOR
PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that the Government of the Northwest Territories' new Reservist Leave Policy allows public service employees to take unpaid time off to serve with the Canada Reserve Force, part of the Canadian Forces.

The Canadian Reserve Force is made up of volunteers who serve with the Canadian military while maintaining civilian jobs or studies. Reservists have made substantial contributions to Canada's domestic and international operations and the number of reservists in service has grown significantly across the country. The number of NWT reservists has increased almost ten-fold since the C Company, the primary army reserve unit in Yellowknife, was established in 2008.

Northerners have had a long association with the Reserves, particularly through the Canadian Rangers. Easily recognized by their red sweatshirts and caps, the Canadian Rangers have played an important role since 1947. They assist with sovereignty and surveillance patrols, search and rescue operations, responses to emergencies, and advancing public recognition of the North's First Nations, Inuit and Metis people.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the valuable skills that Reservist employees bring to the public service. Their military training provides them with unique experience in leadership, planning, management and in specialized technical fields. Public service employees who volunteer with the Reserves are able to take up to 15 days of unpaid leave for training with the military, and longer periods as required for domestic and international deployments. These entitlements are consistent with those provided to private sector employees through amendments to the Employment Standards Act made during the 16th Legislative Assembly.

Our government will support members of the public service to serve with the Canadian Forces. I would like to thank our Reservists for their contributions to the public service, to our communities and to Northern Canada. 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 MEASURING THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the science of measuring bullying? Actually, I scoured the Internet, I Googled medical reports and I used Wikipedia for everything out there and there isn't a science name for measuring bullying.

So today I have the luxury of presenting the newest term in the English language for the science that measures bullying, and that name is "bullyology." I have an audition later today with the CBC's *Dragon's Den*.

---Laughter

There have been almost two decades of data on bullyology on our children. Even last week, the JAMA published findings that are most definitive in establishing long-term psychological effects of bullying. The analysis of these recent findings took into account a sample of 1,420 children from North Carolina. The kids were nine, 11 and 13 years of age.

The objective of the study was to test whether bullying or being bullied in childhood predicts psychiatric problems in young adolescents. The children, their parents and caregivers were interviewed each year until the youngster turned 16, and then periodically thereafter.

The findings clearly show that those who have been bullied, plus those who were both victims and aggressors, were at higher risk of psychiatric disorders compared to those with no history of being bullied. The ones identified solely as victims had a higher level of depression disorders, anxiety disorders, generalized anxiety, panic disorders and agoraphobia.

These bullyology results should be of no surprise to anyone, and it is clear that the psychological damage doesn't go away as you mature, as the effects of being bullied are direct and long lasting.

Today is one day we give victims of bullying our attention, but it should be noted we should give every day to these victims and it will only happen through community support and future legislation.

Let me say again, legislation will only be one tool in our anti-bullying tool belt. Together, parents, educators and communities will still need to stay active and take an active stand on our kids' behaviour at school, at play and on social networks.

Mr. Speaker, I have said this now a number of times in this House, but it is worth repeating. It won't be easy, but together we must change behaviour and together we must. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can see from the pink glow in the Chamber today that it's Pink Shirt Day here and across Canada. For the second year in a row, NWT MLAs are acknowledging the importance of this initiative and, for the second year in a row, we're not alone. Last year we were joined by Ms. Carrie Heldman and her Grade 5 class from N.J. Macpherson School. Ms. Heldman is back with the entire N.J. Macpherson Grade 4 to 6 student population to join us today and to highlight anti-bullying awareness along with the MLAs.

Since last year, the Anti-Bullying Campaign has gathered momentum across North America and across the NWT. NWT students, educators and education councils have developed and implemented strategies, awareness and resources to deal with the issue of bullying in our schools.

It's tempting to put all the responsibility for addressing bullying onto the schools and educators, but we must accept that bullying takes place in all kinds of environments and all kinds of situations, not just schools. Bullying has to be considered in the larger context, the bigger picture. We cannot ignore the importance of addressing bullying in our society as a whole.

One area not spoken about where bullying does occur is in the workplace. Research tells us that at least 40 percent of all employees are affected by workplace bullying. According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, "Many places of work, consciously or unconsciously, endorse, perhaps even encourage bullying behaviour. In fact, workplace bullies frequently get promoted or they are not dealt with directly as the workplace culture does not know how to address such behaviour."

Three key actions that could stop bullying are recognizing bullying behaviour, speak out at the time that you encounter bullying, and stand by those who are being bullied and support them. Over the last couple of years we have spoken a lot about bullying of our young people at school or in cyberspace, but much needs to be done to highlight and profile workplace bullying as well. Strategies that work well in schools can be transferred to the workplace. To mention two possibilities: one, create a policy that allows employees to file a complaint about any workplace bullying that they are either experiencing or witnessing; two, create an anti-bullying program to teach employees how to recognize bullying behaviour and teach them about what their rights are under the new policy. By implementing an anti-bullying or safe workplace policy the GNWT can lead by example. In doing so,

we will improve not only our own workplaces but all workplaces in the NWT.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BULLYING AT SCHOOL

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to speak on bullying or, as Mr. Dolynny's new word, bullyology. I would like to say a special welcome to all the students in the gallery here today. I just want to say that I, too, have a phrase or words as well. I like to call it Bully No More. This is the cry from this Legislature today and it's supported by all our MLAs, Ministers, students and all our constituents.

I would agree that this is a people's movement or constituents' movement to have safe schools and safe students. As I speak to parents in my constituency of Fort Simpson and the small communities about bullying, they feel that nothing, or hardly anything is being done and there is no punishment for the offender.

For example, recently, within the past two days I was contacted by a parent who was very upset because there was a boy in her daughter's class who poked her in the eye with a pencil. I'm so happy there was no physical damage done at all. The mother advised her daughter that the next time that happens to yell loudly, stop bullying, but her daughter said, but we're not allowed to yell in school. The mother replied, I don't mind you breaking a school rule as long as you stand up for yourself and stand up for other people. I'll give you that permission, she said. This same boy bullies other girls in that school and only gets a few recesses taken away. Bullying has to be dealt with.

Also, some parents have advised me that they actually keep their kids at home for home schooling so that their children are safe. We need schools that are safe for our children to learn freely. We as MLAs have to come up with solutions by working to find ways to make sure that people are not allowed to hurt others in school. That is not acceptable to behave as a bully. Those days are long gone. I say, bully no more.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EFFECTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bullying and its behaviour are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. There are deep root causes of bullying and its effects on the education system. Therefore, I want to highlight bullying in my language to encourage parents to be aware of bullying behaviour and its effects.

[English translation not provided.]

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FAMILY SUPPORT FOR BULLYING VICTIMS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to use my Member's statement today to talk about bullying. First of all let me say how happy I am that this much attention is being drawn to this very important topic. It occurs, as Ms. Bisaro said, in many forms and in many places. We most often think of it in the context of children, though, because hopefully, you know, we think that when people grow up they might stop acting out in a way that's inappropriate. But on that matter, we, as legislators, have to do our part to put in place policies and regulations and legislation to back up the anti-bullying efforts of our constituents to ensure that the seriousness of bullying and its effects receives the attention that it deserves and, as Mr. Dolynny so aptly shared with us today, some of the long-term effects that bullying can have on people, and I have absolutely no doubt that those findings that he cited were absolutely true.

Very importantly, parents and family have a very strong role to play in not only stopping bullying but supporting a member of their family, a child in their family who is being bullied. I think that a lot of times parents have come to me as an MLA in utter frustration and despair over their children being bullied and not knowing how far they should go to intervene because they don't want the situation to get worse. I know it's very, very difficult for teachers too. It's difficult for everybody, but we do have to take action. We cannot stand by and allow it to continue.

Strong families, a place where a child and an individual knows that they have unconditional acceptance and love goes a long ways to diminish the effect of what the schoolyard bullies and the classroom bullies do. I believe that and I certainly found that to be true in our family. It's like the old adage, you know, siblings fight amongst themselves but when somebody is bullying your brother or your sister, well, then you're all right there together. That family protection and sanctuary and closeness is something that I think parents need to be aware of. Also, I think that when I've heard parents sharing their frustration, I really feel for them. It is a very difficult thing to deal with when your child is being bullied. But I think that parents need to take the opportunity, as well, to make some extra time and become the friend, maybe, that their child needs at that time.

I'd like to pay my respects to this group here. This is the generation that will change our society's attitude towards bullying. Congratulations to them.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABUSE AND BULLYING OF ELDERS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say today that I'm very honoured to be wearing my pink shirt on Pink Shirt Day. I would also like to thank Minister Lafferty for providing us with this pink carnation for Anti-Bullying Day. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the children and their educators for coming out today and showing their support, creating awareness in bringing this very hot topic to the forefront of Members here in this House as well as residents of the Northwest Territories. You should be very happy and very proud of what you did today.

Last night, when we were done here at the House, I went home and I did do my homework. I did the homework that was given to us by Member Dolynny. That homework was watching the You Tube video To This Day. After watching the video, I was very impressed with what I saw. It was very well done, very well documented.

I continued on watching other videos that dealt with bullying. There are a lot of very educational videos out there that not only tell you what bullying is, how to stop it, how to speak up, but there are a lot of personal stories out there that also are very effective in trying to get the message through to people on why we should be creating policies, why we should be creating legislation, why we should be protecting our people in the workforce.

While watching those videos, I came across this one quote. The quote stated, "The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing." The children in here, they look on and they are doing something. Members here in the House are looking on and we are starting to do something. We are discussing this type of legislation and creating these policies.

My message today is for people to speak up and let people know what they're dealing with on a daily basis.

I know my time is running out, but I really wanted to get into the elder abuse. I have been getting a lot of e-mails and concerns of elders in my community and surrounding communities who are dealing with elder abuse, whether it is financial, physical, verbal, or emotional. It is not fair to the elders later on in their lives not being able to live a healthy, independent lifestyle. When these elders pass away, a lot of people who turn their ear, who turn an eye, decide not to listen. When they pass away they always say at least they are not going to be suffering any more. Now it's time to speak up to

allow our elders, our seniors, to live a good end of their life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ANTI-BULLYING DAY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning was a beautiful day outside, and when I took my little son to school I said, look at the day, it's Pink Day today.

It is beautiful today, even in our gallery. Thank you very much for the teachers and the parents and the children for being here. I, too, did my homework last night and early this morning. I was looking for the magic pill for, as my friend would say, bullyology. I looked through the old school of reading and listening to what the elders have that talked to me about, and I think I have the magic pill. The pill is free. It is be nice and be respectful, and that's free.

We don't wear pink to make a statement. We don't wear pink to be different. We don't wear pink to say we are here. We wear pink because we value who we are as people.

We live in a value system of life. We were taught throughout life how to deal with life, which means bullying at times. We carry these experiences throughout our life. Bullying comes in many different shapes and sizes. It comes in various forms. It comes very simply to very complex words and actions. Yet, the common denominator to bullying is the same: It hurts. It hurts people.

Have we not yet learned to accept others as we would like to be accepted, to acknowledge and respect our differences and make our mark in our life by saying thank you?

We won't be bullied in life. Just as nature has its own laws of the land, we learn by nature. But bullying is a teacher. It teaches us to be different. It teaches us to stand up. It teaches us to say to the world, bully no more, accept us. We want to stop this bullying now.

I want to say thank you to the children, for you are our teachers by reminding us how important the value of standing up for ourselves is, and it's not easy at times. Surely the teachers are our children and you have come to make a difference at the highest level of government in the Northwest Territories, by having us wearing pink. Real men wear pink. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DREDGING OF THE HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleague indicated, today is a beautiful day. It's

nice and pink out there, but I'd also like to talk about the days getting longer and spring is around the corner.

Often in the North that's an exciting time, but one of the difficulties that we have in Hay River is this brings on the discussion of breakup. One of the issues that we have in Hay River is an annual breakup and the Hay River has been filling in, getting silted up and for years now, since the late '80s, early '90s, they've quit doing the dredging in the Hay River area.

I've brought to this House, a few times, the dredging issue. In the springtime the residents of Hay River, often the ones that live in Vale Island, are very concerned and very nervous. They have to consider what they're going to do come late April when the river breaks up and the potential for a flood happens.

The residents there have to consider whether they want to stay there or are they going to move. I know some that move away for two weeks with their families into the higher areas of the community. Every year this is an issue and we need to do something about the dredging.

Today I will have some questions for the Minister of Transportation on dredging. We've talked about some of the issues, now we need to put some dollars to this great difficulty in Hay River.

I will keep bringing this issue to this House for the residents that live in the Hay River area. As well, I will keep bringing this issue to this House for the industry, for the fishing industry, for transportation. Dredging is required in Hay River. The Hay River is blocking off and our residents and our industry are being affected. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT DEPARTMENTAL TRAVEL

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to see all these students out here today in pink, and for those of us who caught the flash mob, we realize we're in the presence of a bunch of great dancers, both students and teachers. Mahsi.

---Applause

During this budget review, I've been examining the startling figures for travel by GNWT departmental employees. For example, Aboriginal Affairs will spend over \$13,000 per employee for travel in '13-14, or \$520,000, over half a million for 39 workers. MACA anticipates \$18,000 per employee, over \$2 million for 115 employees. ENR projects \$2.5 million in travel costs, or \$8,000 per employee – a big department – ITI, \$7,000. In fact, the cost per employee for all 2,500 GNWT workers is \$7,000, totalling \$17.3 million. Note that these projections

do not include travel for the 2,300 other employees of our boards and agencies who travel under separate budget.

Travel is a crucial element of many departments' duties. Circuit court and prisoner movements, for example, are surely a big chunk of Justice's annual \$2.9 million in travel costs. Some face-to-face meetings are indispensable. Our public servants need professional development, which may be in the provinces, and deputy ministers are to be vigilant reviewing all requests for southern travel. Still, with these numbers I have to wonder whether the technological alternatives to travel are even being considered before the costly last resort of travel and person is chosen.

Human Resources spends the least on travel, about \$2,000 for each of its 189 workers, and the PWS, Public Works and Services, comes in modestly at under \$3,000 per employee. I'm assuming these departments achieve this partly by relying on doing staffing interviews by telephone and contract management by electronic contract.

The often wasteful practices of full costs and first-class travel, expensive ticket changes, repeated trips to Ottawa for two-hour meetings and trips to distant destinations, not unusually overseas or in the deep south, are well known. The public is aware, travel agencies are aware, and many are disgusted at such waste of taxpayer dollars.

I have no problem with necessary travel adding to an employee's travel point collection, but how are we sure a travel decision...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley, your time for Member's statements has expired.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: I have no problem with necessary travel adding to an employee's travel point collection, but how are we sure a travel decision isn't influenced by travel points rewards?

Perhaps there are lessons here for all departments. Video conferences and teleconferences are not the same as meetings in person, but at \$7,000 in travel per employee across the entire government, I know that every travel authorization is not being critically reviewed before signing off. I will have questions for the Minister of Finance.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RESIDENCY OF NORTHERN WORKERS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I too wish to acknowledge our fantastic

students that are here in the gallery today. I was very impressed with their flash mob as well. It was clearly a statement that this generation is standing up to bullying and they're certainly saying, in their own way, bully no more. I want to thank them for that.

I'd like to follow up on some concerns I expressed last week about the northern workforce at our mines. The Government of the Northwest Territories has negotiated and signed a total of five socio-economic agreements with industry over the last 17 years and this progress, in the sense of negotiation for Northerners, is a good thing.

Oil and gas exploration and new mineral development strategies are opening up the North, and there will be increased opportunities and developments and, potentially, jobs for Northerners. There is one particular problem. The only one out there who knows if these are Northerners working in the North is Revenue Canada because they're the only ones empowered to audit the residency. Are we supporting paper Northerners or, as they are they commonly known, ghost Northerners?

I'm calling for more accountability and reliability on this particular reporting these mines must do. We've all heard the story about someone cashing in and getting that great job at the mine and then moving south. It's time to deal with myth and fact. What is the reality before us? How many Northerners are truly northern hires and how many of the Northerners they're reporting are true residents of the Northwest Territories? How many maintain a post office box and only check it here once every two weeks when they fly into the North to go to work and then they fly south to go live? Do we have a senate problem here in the Northwest Territories? Let's get some health care cards, driver's licences and tax information. Let's prove it once and for all. True accountability for these jobs that are being reported. This is not about putting the spotlight on good behaviour, this is about emphasizing bad behaviour.

Several years ago the mining workforce was surveyed on residency issues but we need more solid information, clear reporting, consistent reporting, honest reporting, and perhaps maybe the only way to do it and make sure it's done right is to get third-party reporting to ensure the mines are living up to their contractual agreements that they signed with the people of the Northwest Territories, not just the Government of the Northwest Territories but the people of the Northwest Territories.

I'll be asking Minister Dave Ramsay, does he stand with Northerners or does he stand comfortably in the good arms of industry? Is he protecting their interests or is he protecting northern jobs that belong to northern people?

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the public gallery today of our National Management Team from the National Francophone Economic Development Network, RDEE, and the CDETNO.

The National Francophone Economic Development Network is the sole national organization working to promote and coordinate economic development for Francophone and Acadian communities in Canada. They are holding meetings in Yellowknife this week. Ms. Andreanne Laporte, Rita Couture, Catheline D'Auteuil, Francis Essebou, Suzanne Druwe, Chantal Nadeau, Raymond Arsenault, Nancy Rousselle, Caroline Leblanc, Tanis Anctil, Genevieve Doyon, Batiste Foisy, Francois Fortin and Julie Gagne. Welcome to the gallery here today.

Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

I'd just like to welcome the N.J. Macpherson students that are here, all the students that are wearing pink. It's a great day to wear pink. And all the supporters who are here with us in the gallery as well, mahsi cho for coming.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I represent the riding of Kam Lake in this Legislative Assembly and it's a great riding full of great people, but it certainly has two great schools and one of those schools is well represented here in the gallery today, and that's N.J. Macpherson. I just wanted to thank all the students, staff and parents that are up there for coming out here today to support Anti-Bullying Day.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my constituency assistant, Ms. Leah Ipana, who is here chaperoning a couple of young ladies from Inuvik who are working as Pages, Ms. Chantal Grey and Ms. Lauren Cockney. I want to thank them and all the other Pages for the work that they do on our behalf.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my great pleasure to welcome the students from N.J. Macpherson here and I want to thank all of you for the flash mob. It was awesome. You guys did a

grand job. I'd also like to thank you for your very good behaviour here in the House; you are very impressive. You could teach a few other students in Yellowknife a few things. Thank you for that. I know that all of you here represent all of the ridings in Yellowknife. My riding is Frame Lake. I know there are some Frame Lakers up there. Welcome to you students from Frame Lake.

I would like to specifically recognize representatives from the Public Service Alliance of Canada who are here. I can't quite see them all but I believe they are all here. Julie Docherty, Sandra Lockhart, Bob Haywood, Leon Nason, Lynn Simmons, and I would like to specifically recognize Lorraine Hewlett and her son Christopher Coomber. Lorraine is president of the UNW Local 1.

I cannot recognize a former colleague – I was going to say old but he's not that old, our relationship is old – Mr. Roger Windle, who teaches at N.J.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to recognize in the gallery my sister, Janet. We both lead extremely busy lives. We seldom get to visit each other but she's up in the North for a whole week and she's going to join me in Hay River this weekend for the Kamba Carnival and then back up here to fly out of Yellowknife next Wednesday. A whole week with my sister. I'd like to welcome her.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you, you did mention some members here from the RDEE Canada, which is the... [English translation not provided.]... Again, he did a great job pronouncing those French words. We did have one person here who we should note is the executive director of the RDEE, who is Jean Leger.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I want to take a moment to recognize our N.J. Macpherson students here. Ms. Bisaro is quite correct; it's quite impressive, both their flash mob dancing as well as their behaviour here in the House. She's quite correct that the way we're seeing our students behave here today is so impressive, I agree with her that many people could learn quite a few things from the students. That said, this is the generation that is standing up to bullying and I thank them for that, because the line needs to be drawn and they're certainly showing their support with their pink shirts.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to recognize Ms. Stella Nadia, the deputy mayor of the Village of Fort Simpson, up in the gallery here today. I just want to say that she is a champion of the new pool in Fort Simpson as well as a tireless volunteer in Fort Simpson. Welcome and enjoy the proceedings this afternoon.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is also my pleasure to recognize all the students here today and their teachers. I especially welcome those who are residents of Weledeh, which includes Ndilo, Detah and Old Town, Niven Lake, that area. Welcome.

I also would like to give special recognition to the representatives from the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and Lorraine Hewlett, who often stands up for the public interest.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Leon Nason, a resident of Hay River, and Lorraine Hewlett from a long time ago when she used to live in Hay River. I'd also like to welcome all the children from the schools as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. I'd like to welcome all our visitors in the public gallery here today, especially all our youth. Watching you earlier this morning, you guys did an awesome job. Keep doing what you're doing. I'd also like to thank all the public for taking an interest in our proceedings here today.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 154-17(4): BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Human Resources. I mentioned in my statement about workplace bullying. I'd like to ask the Minister what we in the GNWT have to deal with workplace bullying. My first question to the Minister is whether or not the GNWT has a policy that addresses bullying in our workplace.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT is committed to providing a workplace where all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. We do have a

Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy, which replaced our old Workplace Conflict Resolution Policy, which came into effect in 2011. One of the reasons we modified the program and went with the new Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy was to reflect the current emerging jurisprudence in the area of personal harassment, which is, basically, bullying, and to reflect current GNWT structures and practices in applying the policy. Short answer, yes, we have a policy in place.

MS. BISARO: I'm really glad to hear that. I'd like to know from the Minister what encompasses the policy, what is in the policy. What things will it prohibit our employees from doing in terms of harassing or bullying their fellow employees?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are a number of categories of harassing behaviour covered under this policy and they include harassment, personal harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority. The policy also has an accompanying guide to apply to the policy which reflects current practices and processes for informal and formal complaint resolutions, demonstrates management, encouragement of prevention and resolution of conflict through frank communication, speaks to management and employees about roles and responsibilities in creating and maintaining respectful workplaces, and helps identify the manager's role with respect to resolving issues before formal complaints are required.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. One of the concerns that I have with workplace bullying is overt bullying is readily seen. It's recognized, and it's probably relatively easy to deal with, but there's something which I was thinking about in the last few days that could be considered soft workplace bullying, and it tends to be more sort of the implied threat or suggestion that if you do such, this is going to happen to you or have such and such implications.

I'd like to know from the Minister, if I, as an employee, feel that I have been "soft bullied," does the system that we have in place allow for me to lay a complaint, and to feel safe in laying that complaint and know that something is going to be done about it?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I feel that it does. It addresses harassment in the workplace as well as abuse of authority, whether it's overt, implied or suggested. The program is available, staff are aware of it, we continue to provide training to departments as they request it so that they can be prepared to assist employees when these types of situations arise.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I guess I would like to know – since he mentioned training, that's where I was going with my last question – what does the training encompass. I know he said departments request it. I would hope he would consider making it mandatory for all employees, but does it tell the employees what bullying is and help them to recognize it, help them to understand their rights under bullying or harassment? If he could answer that question. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The training is more focused on the program itself and what the program can cover and can't cover. It's not necessarily an awareness campaign about bullying. I think that's what the Member is referring to, but it's more specific to the program itself, how it applies, who can utilize it, how to access it, and the steps the individuals would have to go through to utilize the process.

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

QUESTION 155-17(4):
DREDGING OF THE HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my statement, I have dredged up some more issues in Hay River, as normal. I just have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Has the Department of Transportation begun to solve the department this year through their budget of dredging?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue with dredging the port of Hay River is certainly a big issue. The port hasn't been dredged in close to 20 years. The Member is correct; there is a lot of silt being built up there and the navigation channel is being blocked. We do have to find some substantial capital dollars, however, to have a dredging program there, that's why it's important that we continue the dialogue with the federal government in hopes that they will rekindle the dredging program that they ran prior to 1994.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next question is: Does the department have any money in this year's budget to assess the needs of Hay River's dredging and what exactly is it going to entail and do, maybe, some cost estimates to bring to the federal government so we have something to bring to the table other than our hands out looking for money?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: All we have allotted in this year's budget would be \$60,000. It would cost \$3 million or \$4 million to take a good run at a program to start with in the port of Hay River. It's something that currently is the responsibility of the federal

government. Again, we need to continue that dialogue. I know we've met in the past with Minister Lebel, and more recently with the parliamentary secretary, Mr. Steven Fletcher. We have to continue to impress upon the federal government the importance of dredging here in the Northwest Territories and, specifically for the Member's point today, the port of Hay River.

MR. BOUCHARD: I'm wondering if the Minister can use that money to assess Hay River's needs and make some sort of plan so that we have a plan to bring to the federal government. We know in the past when they've had infrastructure dollars come forward, often it comes quickly, and we need to have some sort of plan in place. Will the Minister commit to doing that type of assessment and having that type of plan in place?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I think, working with the folks in Hay River, we could come up with a plan. I will commit to the Member today that I'll go back to the department and discuss this option with them and, hopefully, we can formulate a plan on next steps when it comes to a dredging program for the port of Hay River.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: My last question is: Will the Minister ensure that this plan gets completed this year so that I can stop raising this issue in this House, hat we have a plan in place and we just need to go to the federal government? I'm willing to go with the Minister to discuss this issue if that's what we need, or if we need to do lobbying to get the federal government to do this. But we need a plan in place. Can I get commitment from the Minister that this will be completed this year?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We have invited Minister Lebel north. Hopefully, he has some time this summer to journey to the Northwest Territories. Failing that, we're trying to line up some more meetings in Ottawa with Minister Lebel and other Ministers. Certainly, if we can make a plan here before next fall and the timing is right, if the Member would like to accompany me to a meeting to talk about dredging and a program to dredge the port of Hay River with Minister Lebel, we can certainly look at that. We do need millions and millions of dollars to accomplish this. It's not something that's in the financial means of this government today, or the responsibility of this government, but we have to continue that dialogue with the federal government and we will do just that.

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

QUESTION 156-17(4):
EMERGENCY SERVICES
ON HIGHWAY SYSTEMS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask some questions on emergency services with the Minister of MACA. I know, recently in this House, several Members spoke up about ambulatory and ambulance services on our highway system, given the unfortunate accident on Highway No. 1. When I was in Fort Liard doing my tour, I asked about ambulance services. They actually don't have any there. I would like to ask the Minister of MACA, how are we addressing the emergency services on our highway systems, especially with communities without ambulances.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work with the communities. We had the ground ambulance and highway rescue money that some communities had taken us up on. As I stated the other day, once they realized that there was a liability because they weren't qualified as first responders, then many of them quit taking us up on the money. We've kind of re-profiled and are hoping to use that money for more training for people in the communities. That way they would be qualified as first responders and then the community would be able to probably get some emergency vehicles and do these types of rescues.

The first thing to do is we need to get them training so they will be qualified first responders. I think the rest of it will work in place pretty well.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I know that in past Assemblies we were working on, I think it was the ambulance committee. Maybe the Minister can clarify exactly what committee that was. I thought we had some discussions about actually reactivating that committee. I think it was Health and Social Services, MACA and one other department. Anyway, can the Minister identify that committee again, and see if it will be activated for this Assembly, because we really have to address those gaps in our highway systems and saving people's lives.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have an internal deputy ministers committee. Ourselves along with I believe it's Transportation, Justice and Health and Social Services are looking at this particular issue. They're looking at cost and many other things that might come into play on this. The last we heard, I think, to implement a territorial-wide highway and ground ambulance rescue would be in the neighbourhood of \$6 million. They're continuing to do their work and we're looking forward to some of the recommendations that they might bring forward

to the Ministers and we will share that with committee.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: For example, I spoke of the community of Fort Liard that has no ambulance service. In fact, they don't even have an ambulance. They're willing to invest into that capital of buying an ambulance; however, they don't have the financial support, they can't cover the O and M costs and training is very expensive. Are those the issues that this committee is looking at?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: It would be some of the issues. I mean, they'd cover all the bases as far as trying to help the communities implement this. We do know some communities have expressed an interest in purchasing some highway and ground ambulance type vehicles. We had one community that had purchased it, realized that they didn't have trained people for it, and I believe they sold the equipment. We're looking at, through the School of Community Government and MACA, offering some type of training to all residents or all communities across the Northwest Territories so we'd have qualified first responders in the communities. That would be the first step.

Then the second step, once they're qualified then the communities have the option of looking at purchasing ambulance-type equipment. Once they do that, we're always looking at the overall O and M budget of our department and how we fund the communities, and this may be another factor that comes into play.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just one final, short question. Given the tragedy and the accident on Highway No. 1 last week, the Member for Deh Cho actually said it was a Health and Social Services van that went out there and took the injured person back to Fort Providence.

Does this kind of incident highlight the importance of a ground ambulance support system throughout the Northwest Territories with the Minister and this government? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. It was even before this incident that we were looking at how we can improve our ambulance, especially between the communities, and with more and more of the communities being linked by ice roads or highways, it was an important issue. Unfortunately, some of these incidents that happen highlight more and more the importance of the issue. I can assure the Member, and all Members, that through our internal working committee we are trying to find ways that we can find something that works for all communities in the Northwest Territories, especially those that are on the highway system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 157-17(4):
SOCIO-ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS
WITH MINES AND
RESIDENCY OF NORTHERN WORKERS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I was raising the issue of some of these ghost Northerners, or sometimes even commonly called paper Northerners, who get these northern jobs, and as soon as they get them, they move south, but the mining industry will put them on their socio-economic agreements and tick them off in the "have you hired or do you have a Northerner working for you" and they tick off yes.

The issue is, simply, this: How do the mines account and, furthermore, validate that these are a true northern workforce, and how do they officially report this to the GNWT to ensure the information they are reporting is valid and honest? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The three mines were before the Member's committee last fall. I mentioned to the Member earlier this week that I would be more than happy to set up a meeting between him and his committee, myself and the three mines. We can go over any questions the Member or his committee has. Those questions can be raised and answered by the mining companies. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I am simply asking the question how does the government monitor, manage and validate the numbers presented as what we define as a northern working force. In the socio-economic agreements, it is a very specific description that says the mines must live up to a certain amount of workforce. That said, is the government taking it on blind faith or do they validate this? If they validate this, how do they report it? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, it is monitored. It is reported and tabled in this House. As to how they validate the numbers, I'd have to go back to the department and try to get a better understanding of exactly how they monitor and whether or not they follow each and every employee away from work and find out where they go and whether or not they have a NWT driver's licence or health care card. That I'm not 100 percent sure of, but I will find out. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate if the Minister would stop saying they go to my committee. It's the Assembly's committee, first of

all. Second of all, I think this is an issue that the Minister should be concerned about, not just some of the committee members.

What can the Minister do under the context of monitoring in the sense of do we have a definition of what a Northerner is? We don't know if these people have health care cards, whether they have a post office box or even if they file their taxes here in the Northwest Territories, so we must have some rules to govern this by rather than just wading into this and saying, how do you validate this. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we do have to work together. I mentioned this, again, in response to some earlier questions on the same matter. We have to continue the dialogue with industry. We have to continue the dialogue with Members. I think instead of just complaining about it, offering up solutions on what could happen, and that is going to happen by that dialogue continuing.

There are reasons that I work with the Minister of Health and Social Services, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It is a much bigger issue than mines not hitting employment targets. There's a lot of underlying issues here that we have to work on collectively.

Again, I know it's a committee of this House. The mines were in front of that committee late last year. I'd like to get them back in front of that committee at the earliest opportunity so that we can come forward with recommendations and suggestions on how we can improve things and do things better. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, my job is to... One of the things is to compliment good work, but at the same time, my job is to point out problems in the system and provide solutions, which I keep providing them but they seem to fall on deaf ears.

So here is one more – and I'm not saying just this Minister; I'm saying many Ministers – would this Minister consider the option of taking a third-party monitoring system by appointing someone to review these so-called Northerners, because he may find that some comply perfectly, which should be supported, and some don't comply at all. We should be celebrating the good work and certainly pointing out the bad work. Would the Minister be willing to consider a third-party monitoring service to ensure we get the facts on the table? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I know that the mines do pay a northern allowance to employees, and certainly they would do the due diligence on their own employees to recognize whether or not they're entitled to a northern allowance by where they live. So that would happen. As to whether or not we get in a third party, no, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 158-17(4):
GNWT DEPARTMENTAL TRAVEL POLICY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions follow up on my Member's statement earlier today with questions to the Minister of Finance. Obviously, not every employee travels. The \$7,000 per person is an average travel cost across the entire government, but for every employee who never travels, there is another average employee spending double that, or \$14,000, and every one of them has a boss who is signing a travel authorization.

Does the process for putting forward an approval request for travel include the requirement to demonstrate that alternatives to travel have been considered and found impractical? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That review is implicit in the work the managers do. It is not built into the form, but as part of managing their respective budgets – the Ministers, department managers – they have to make that determination. They have to look at the budgets. They have to look at the need for travel. We place a very, very heavy emphasis in the North on community travel, on consultation, on working across the Territories with the Aboriginal governments, with NGOs. It's a very time-consuming, expensive process, but that's implicit in jobs that managers do. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister. I have no problem with that. The Duty Travel Policy of the FAA manual says that all travel is to be completed by the most economical and practical means available, but that only refers to ensuring best value once the decision to travel has been made. We have policy guidelines requiring senior management approval for travel to southern Canada with the advances in virtual travel through technology.

Will the Minister ask his officials to examine what controls could be put in place in the travel authorization process to ensure alternative communication means are shown to be impractical before personal travel can be requested? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Member that that would make a topic of discussion at the Refocusing Government committee, that I am chair of, could take a look at it. The answer would be we will look at how we do this. As we move into another budget cycle, we are keeping the financial discipline on government through this coming year, a 2 percent cap on growth. We are being frugal already, but we can

never be too careful. We will have that matter reviewed at our next Refocusing Government meeting. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, thanks again to the Minister's commitment. I appreciate that. I do note that this year's travel budget projections are slightly down from last year's, in line with what the Minister was saying. The Minister will acknowledge that \$17 million in annual travel costs is a big bill for half of our civil service. Even an efficiency of 10 percent would free up major dollars for other needs. Some departments seem to have extraordinarily high travel costs, in comparison to others, with no obvious explanation. We need a challenge and verification method for ensuring travel is being prudently purchased.

How does the Minister responsible for the FAA ensure this is taking place, and what would be the process for a critical review? And I think the Minister has started on that. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. This is a big territory, 1.3 million square miles. A lot of it is not connected by road. We have enormous costs to do the jobs necessary. We've also made a commitment in this House to support all the communities. We've made a commitment in this House and this government to support consultation, community visits, getting the government out of Yellowknife to the people.

We appreciate the need for using technology like telehealth and those types of things. The Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line, we believe, will improve the efficiencies of the health system, it will improve and enable us to do the things that the Member is talking about, things like videoconferencing without any concern about bandwidth, that type of thing.

We are starting a budget process again. We're going to take this to refocusing of that commitment, and if there's a concern by the Member's office or through the respective committees to review travel, of course, we are fully committed to working with committees, as well, to identify areas of concern. If travel is one of them, then we will work with committee and try to sort those out. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister has made a solid commitment there and I'll look forward to working with him. We don't have an internal auditor general, obviously, but a functional audit of a category of expenditures across government might be a wise move, especially given the potential savings involved. But the Minister has committed to come to committee to discuss the possibility of improving travel policy safeguards. So will the Minister hear from committee and include their perspectives on what

should be included in that review? I appreciate the Minister's commitments again. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. The commitment was, of course, that if the committee identifies an issue and they want myself, as Finance Minister, or other Ministers to appear before them and discuss a particular issue, of course we are there to work with committees as with all or any issues. If travel is one of them, we'll do that, keeping in mind a lot of the conditions, but we can have that full and frank discussion with committee about the type of travel, the amount of travel, the cost of travel, the reason for travel and all those types of things. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 159-17(4):

ADDRESSING OBESITY RATES IN THE NWT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the news today I read, in the most recent study, that obesity rates are at historic levels in Canada. So that kind of got me going, especially after discussions yesterday with the Department of Health and Social Services. Then, upon further research, I saw in the Stats Canada 2004 report, there were red flags that were showing that over the past 25 years, since 2004, there was a dramatic increase in obesity rates. Now, nine years later, the Northwest Territories and the Maritimes are recognized in this report as having the highest rates of obesity and they're at historic levels. Now, if those red flags weren't addressed in 2004, they've surely got to be addressed now. So my questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, based on this new report that came out and the new findings of the new studies, what is this Minister doing to address the historic rates of obesity here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Health and Social Services leads a Healthy Choices Framework, since 2003-04 approximately, when those stats came out. It's a partnership between ourselves, Education, MACA, Department of Justice and Department of Transportation, and it is to coordinate several of the GNWT's programs and services related to health, safety and active living. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. That report that gave us the red flag came out about 2004. We do have the Healthy Choices Framework to try to address it, but where are we at right now in the Northwest Territories? We're at historic rates and I'd like to

ask the Minister, what is this Minister doing to work with his federal counterparts to address these historic rates so that we can start taking care of our residents as obesity leads to a lot of chronic disease. As I mentioned yesterday, 70 percent of all deaths are related to chronic disease. What is the Minister of Health and Social Services doing to work with his federal counterparts to address these issues? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. It is a national issue, no question about it. As a territorial government and as a territory we do participate with the other provincial and also the federal Department of Health in the healthy weight work throughout the territory. Right now the next Healthy Weights Conference is in Newfoundland. We had requested that the Healthy Weights Conference be brought to Yellowknife. I had recently discussed that possibility with the Minister and there's an indication that we would get in line like everyone else and that we might be next after Newfoundland, but Newfoundland was decided a couple of years ago. So we will be going to the conference to discuss healthy weights of Canadians across the country with other jurisdictions. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. I look forward to getting feedback and comments on that meeting because, as you know, health, fitness, and active living are all part of my campaign. I just want to know if the Minister will be looking at developing a specific program, much like the Department of Justice has with the Not Us! campaign, to create awareness, education and to help defer some of our criminal practices in the communities. Would the Minister look at creating some type of similar program to address obesity, specifically promoting active living, getting people active in the communities and put some funding dollars towards that that would decrease some of those findings? Would he look at the possibility of developing some type of program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Colleagues, before we go on today, the preamble on the questioning is a little bit too long. I know you are trying to make your point and that, but shorten it up. Members' statements, that's what your Member's statement is for. So questioning on your oral questions to Ministers. Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the coordination of that framework activity does look at physical activity, mental wellness, exercise and healthy eating, all of the various areas. We work with the Department of Education in trying to promote healthy foods in the schools, we have Drop the Pop and so on. So those are some of the activities that I can run through quickly. In general, what we're asking people, as we

discuss, is to eat healthy, exercise, drink responsibly and don't smoke. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He did mention working with Education. Our Minister of Education has mentioned trying to bring elders into the schools. Would the Minister of Health and Social Services look at the options of possibly bringing fitness instructors into the schools to create some type of fitness programs that can be done during lunch times, before school or after school? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. I think that is something that we can certainly discuss with the Department of Education, but in this framework, MACA has afterschool physical activity programs. They work with the NWT Recreation and Parks Association for making people active. They have the youth sports events, programs, and they have the High Performance Athlete Grant. So all of those, trying to introduce activity into the schools and working within this Healthy Choices Framework. A lot of the activity responsibilities have been given to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

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

QUESTION 160-17(4):
ABORIGINAL CONTENT IN
SCHOOL CURRICULUM

MR. YAKELEYA: My questions are to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I did a Member's statement, as other Members talked about, on the Anti-Bullying Campaign. I want to ask the Minister of Education, what percentage of Aboriginal cultural content is in our education system.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about the Education system in the Northwest Territories, it covers everyone in the Northwest Territories. The Aboriginal content the Member is referring to, I need to get the detailed stats on that. I don't have it in front of me but I can provide it to Members.

MR. YAKELEYA: Certainly, the Minister is right that it covers everybody; however, in our small Aboriginal communities, about 90, close to 100 percent of the education is geared to Aboriginal students. I want to ask the Minister, when he does his research, can he look at how many, what type of Aboriginal contexts are in there that would be related to the people in that specific area or school.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Part of the education renewal I talked about in particular in this House, there are six different pillars. One of the pillars is the small schools, how we can provide further enhancing the programming into the schools and the funding formula attached to that. Obviously, there will be numerous discussions pertaining to that Aboriginal content. The smallest communities, when we talk about capital and programming and so forth, it's all based on enrolment. I have instructed my department to look thoroughly about how we can improve that programming. We will be focusing on the small community schools. That is one of our pillars as we move forward.

MR. YAKELEYA: I, again, look forward to some of the information that the Minister is going to bring forward to us. I want to talk about the Aboriginal culture and building the bridge for the new type of academic western type of learning. I want to know how that bridge is being formed in our small communities, and that the Aboriginal culture is certainly at the foremost and at the base of our education in our schools.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I have given specific directive to the school boards on Aboriginal programming. The funding that we provide, we want specifically for on-the-land programs to deal with cultural and language preservation. Those are areas that we continue to monitor. We work closely with the school boards as well. Part of the residential school curriculum that we've developed has been very positive to date. It is very preliminary right now. We just wrote it out in October 2012. We're getting a lot of positive feedback. That is reflecting on the northern perspective. There is also a social studies program that we've developed through engagement with the communities, the schools, and that also has a northern reflective, as well, in the new texts.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Aboriginal context or Aboriginal culture in our schools starts with our elders. I've been at this job for close to nine years and I want to ask the Minister, in the nine years that we've been working – and he actually worked on this side with me – when will we see the elders in our schools. It's been promised before and I want to ask again, when can we see elders in our schools?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This particular area has been a key point of our discussion. It took a bit of time to get here. We want to have somewhat of a perfect system where elders are in the schools, and how we can get around where they're being penalized if we pay them and they get the clawback from their federal pension, federal old age security and so forth. That's what we've been trying to work out. I'm happy to say that we've finalized that area

and we want to deliver elders in schools as part of our team within the schools starting this fall school year. That's our target date. I want to see the elders. Obviously, we're going to start small. Not every school will have elders but we have to start with possibly one per region, and eventually I would like to see elders in all schools as a long-term strategy.

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

QUESTION 161-17(4):

MEDICAL RESCUE AND TRAVEL PROTOCOLS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, once again, to shine a light on my Member's statement and oral questions from Monday, February 25, 2013, on the subject of air ambulance protocol for highway emergencies and the role of medical travel. Admittedly, I am fully aware of an ongoing RCMP review of last week's highway accident and I will refrain from asking specifics to this file.

Upon review of the responses of the Minister of Health and Social Services, it bears to ask, once again, some questions. The Minister of Health and Social Services indicated, as per Hansard, "I'm not familiar with the protocols for getting people on the highways." He also states, "All calls for medical travel, whether it be medevacs or medical travel, are made by physicians." So the Minister has had a few days now to familiarize himself with protocols. Therefore, can the Minister of Health and Social Services explain what protocol does a medical travel physician use when aborting an air ambulance extraction versus a more lengthy ground transport option?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The protocol, as I understand it, does not specifically speak to air rescue services by a chopper or by a float plane. I wasn't advised officially by anyone that a chopper was originally called in and asked not to go to the site. I checked into that to see if there was anything within medical travel, within medevac, to see if there was something in there on how we pay for rescue with choppers. In that category it indicated that anything outside of the communities where there would be a requirement for a float plane or a chopper there was nothing in the policy that spoke to that.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thanks to the Minister. If there is no protocol or policy, my question is quite simple. What is being used by the physician who works for medical travel to make such decisions?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: In extreme circumstances, working between the Department of Health and

Social Services, the health and social services authorities, RCMP, military, they may elect to use one of those modes to rescue, to assist people who are injured, but these are made strictly on a case-by-case basis by the parties involved. During the time there is an incident and the key people are brought together, the call is made on a case-by-case basis and not within the policy. It's on a case-by-case basis.

MR. DOLYNNY: We're finally getting to the meat of the matter here. We've heard from the Minister today that it's a case-by-case basis, and a call is made, but we don't know by whom. It seems we are at an impasse on sharing with the residents of the NWT a clear pathway and roadmap of medical travel, especially on our road and highway air ambulance situations.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services provide all these protocols and table this information for the public to see?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: There are no clear protocols. I indicated that. It would be difficult for me to provide protocols around this when there are no clear protocols. I think that the system, the government recognizes this as a gap in the system, when we're trying to determine how we're going to perform rescue on a place like a highway, as an example.

With that in mind, we had put together the Interagency Working Group that is led by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs working with the Department of Transportation and ourselves, Health and Social Services, so that we could develop a system that would allow us to use ground ambulance, that's one of the things that we're looking at. With that, we had to ensure that we removed some of the barriers. Some of the barriers were the fact that emergency medical service responders may not be insured to be handling injured people on the highway. So the first thing we have to do is give those people the comfort by developing a legislation that will allow them to get insurance so they can assist people on the highway. We can't have people who are not insured, not covered, handling injured people on the highway. So we need to put some of these things in place before we proceed any further.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Mr. Dollynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've heard today, finally, that there are no clear protocols or policies and we've heard from the Minister directly that there are gaps in the system. This leads to my final question.

It's clear that we need a forensic review of medical travel and the fact that this should have been completed years ago as promised to the Auditor General of Canada, Ms. Sheila Fraser. So I'm rising

here again today and raising awareness of this requirement. When will this Minister complete the review of medical travel, medevac operations and protocols, and table this with committee?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As the Members know, and I've been saying, we are working on revising medical travel or trying to make medical travel a better program that addresses the issues and needs of the people of the Northwest Territories. I do believe the review is complete. It's a matter now of putting together what information we have in order to revise medical travel to make medical travel better. I'm only recalling this because I have the information here but no time to pull it out for that specific question. I believe the review is done and that we are now moving to areas that need to be addressed. We know there are many areas. This is one area. There are areas on how we handle seniors, on how we handle persons with disabilities and so on within that travel policy, the whole thing about medical escorts, non-medical escorts and so on. The whole review is complete, but now it's a matter of taking that policy and developing something that is an improvement to what we have now.

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

QUESTION 162-17(4): WORKPLACE HARASSMENT POLICIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask a few more questions to the Minister of Human Resources following up on my questions from before about policies the GNWT has with regard to harassment and bullying in the workplace. My first question to the Minister is, he spoke about training and that it sounds to me as though the training simply explains the program or policy to employees so that they can understand what they may or may not do. My belief is that we need to educate our employees. We need to let them know what bullying is so that they can recognize it and then report it so that we can change attitudes. I'd like to know from the Minister if that is something, if I have misunderstood, is the education and awareness and training aspect of it something that I misunderstood or is that something that we can do.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of for Human Resources, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my response earlier to the Member's previous questions, I made reference to the training that is provided. In that training we're mostly explaining the policy of the program and how it's outlined with some reference to the types of things that are covered, which would be the harassment that the Member is talking about.

I did have an opportunity earlier today to meet with the Northwest Territories area council for PSAC, and we did talk about our Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy. They did indicate that they have looked at the policy, and although it's great to have this policy in place, they did indicate that our policy tends to be, or appears to be, more reactive than proactive. I've agreed to look at the policy and meet with the Department of Education, who is doing some work on anti-bullying policies in the Northwest Territories, to learn some best practices and look at what we're providing in the Northwest Territories public service with respect to prevention and promotion. I have and I will continue to work on that, and I will be happy to bring any of our findings to the Committee on Government Operations in hopes that we can improve the programs that we have in place to create this environment of fairness, dignity and respect.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. That's good to hear. I have been given to understand that from an employee's perspective, our policy really isn't all that helpful, so I'm glad that the Minister has heard that from union people.

I'd like to know from the Minister if, at this point, if I'm in a workplace and I see that bullying is being experienced by a fellow worker, does the policy that exists allow me to report the bullying that I see that's not being perpetrated on me but that I see somebody else doing to a third person.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Before I answer the second part of the question, I'd just like to indicate that the policy does work when it comes to reporting individuals who have experienced harassment issues. We feel the policy actually works quite well. We've had a number of investigations. We've had a lot of mediations and other resolutions as a result of this policy, so it is helping our employees. But I do feel that the Member is correct. There are some challenges with getting more information out there and helping with prevention and promotion rather than just being responsive, so we will continue to work on that.

MS. BISARO: I didn't really hear an answer to my question whether or not I can report bullying that is not happening to me, myself, but whether I can report bullying that is happening to another party.

I would like to know from the Minister if he feels that the policy that we have guarantees anonymity to somebody who is reporting harassment or bullying.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I didn't answer the question because I, quite frankly, forgot it halfway through my response, so I missed it.

Right now, the policy is set up so that an individual who is being harassed or has experienced harassment can report that and go through the process. It isn't set up so that somebody who witnesses something or thinks they've witnessed

something can report it, but we do encourage employees to speak with their manager or supervisor on all issues and any issue related to harassment in the workplace, so it isn't specific to that. As a result, with anonymity, if an individual is bringing forward a complaint and it's going to be investigated, because it's between two people and often we end up in mediation, the person isn't necessarily kept out of it if they are filing a formal complaint. They have to be part of the solution.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate anonymity. If I am reporting someone, I can't keep my name out of it. We've heard a lot in the statements today and I think it's recognized now that in order to stop bullying, we have to, as an onlooker, speak about it, we have to stop it and we have to take some action. I'd like to say to the Minister that I really hope we are seriously looking at changing the policy so that third party reporting can happen, and if that does happen, we need to guarantee anonymity. I'd like to just ask the Minister if he would agree with me that this is the change that we need to make.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy has steps that we go through including mediation, counselling and all those types of things. I'm not sure that what the Member is suggesting would exactly work within the policy, although I do recognize that there is some value to that. Rather than committing to putting it in the policy, I will work with committee, I will work with Members, I will with Education, Culture and Employment. I'm interested to hear what PSAC and the UNW have to say on how we can actually address this issue. It may or may not be appropriate in this policy, so I won't commit to putting it in there, but I will agree to do some work on this issue and share my work, and work and continue to work with committee.

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

QUESTION 163-17(4):
SUPPORT FOR A REGIONAL OFFICE
IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, the departments of Municipal and Community Affairs, Justice, Education, Culture and Employment, ITI, ENR and the Housing Corporation all function as stand-alone regional units in the Sahtu. We have some control in the region. We have devolution. However, we learned yesterday that the Department of Public Works and Services does not have that yet. Public Works still works out of Inuvik. I want to ask the Minister if there is anything in his plans to have the Public Works office be relocated to have regional

authorities like the other previous departments I just named off.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, there are Public Works and Services staff in the Sahtu region.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just as we have staff in the other communities, I'm asking for the regional authority to be moved to the Sahtu. Right now, the decisions are made in Inuvik. When will the regional authority be devolved into our region? As the Minister of Finance would say, we want control of our destiny. When will that happen?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This government is committed to getting positions outside of the headquarters into some of the regions. I'm not completely sure how taking positions out of one region and putting them in the other would be good for employment in that region. It may affect some of our staff. But I will commit to continuing to push this issue to find out what types of positions we can locate out of Public Works and Services in the Sahtu, if any. As new positions come forward, we will certainly consider the Sahtu as a location for positions.

We have been talking about devolution and those types of things and about locating positions outside of Yellowknife. The Executive is taking the lead on that, and HR and Public Works and Services and all the departments will be participating in some of those discussions.

Although I won't commit to moving what are considered regional functions to the Sahtu at this point, I understand the Member's point and I will continue to work with the Member, I will continue to work with Cabinet and Members to make sure that, where possible, we are moving positions to regions, as appropriate.

MR. YAKELEYA: It's no different than for us when we're going to Ottawa and asking for a devolution deal to bring the decision-making closer to the region and to the people. That's what I'm asking the Minister, the Minister of Transportation and other departments. We want the same type of request that we're making to Ottawa. I want to ask the Minister, would he closely work with his colleagues and bring forward a discussion paper where we want to bring in decision-making power closer to the people in the Sahtu. Will the Minister commit to that within the life of this government?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I understand the importance of regional autonomy and I completely get what the Member is saying. I will commit to doing the work. I will commit to working with my colleagues and try to identify positions that may be appropriate to move.

I do express caution. We don't want to necessarily rip positions out of one community and effect their employment rates in that community just to stick them in another community. We have to look at positions that are coming on line, positions that are maybe new to the Government of the Northwest Territories to make sure that we have a solid balance. But to the Member, I will commit to continuing to do that work with the goal of regional autonomy and responsibility.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Colleagues, before we continue, it's my pleasure to welcome a former Member of this House, a former Government Leader, a former Minister and our current Senator for the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Nick Sibbeston. Welcome back to the House, Senator Sibbeston.

Final, short supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could let the Minister of Public Works know that we have a process such as the devolution process now. We don't want to get the jobs out of Ottawa and bring them into Yellowknife. I think the basic process that he has a path. I want to ask the Minister, within the life of this government, to serve the people the best that they need. As the Minister of Finance has always said, we want to control their own destiny. We want that in the Sahtu.

Will the Minister again commit to a discussion paper, a paper that would make sense, similar to the devolution deal that we did with Ottawa, to have one for the Sahtu? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is, obviously, a bigger question than one department can respond to. It's going to take all the departments looking at their operations, figuring out what responsibilities exist, what responsibilities would be appropriate to decentralizing or moving to communities. We also have devolution coming, which is going to bring a significant number of positions into the public service.

We have already committed, as a government, to working with our colleagues, working with communities, to get some of these new positions to the Government of the Northwest Territories outside of the capital, outside of the centre here and into some of the communities. So we will commit to doing that.

I believe all the departments have been working hard to identify positions within their organization right now within their individual departments that might be appropriate to move out to the communities. In this budget, we have identified a

number of positions to move, and we're also creating a number of positions.

I clearly hear the Member. I understand and I support the concept of some regional responsibility and some regional accountability. We will continue to do that work. The Executive is the lead, but all the departments are providing input and guidance. We will continue to work with the Member and committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 8, written questions. Mr. Bromley.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 18-17(4): GNWT DEPARTMENTAL TRAVEL EXPENDITURES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance.

1. What factors are taken into account in managerial review for approval of travel requests to ensure managers determine with certainty that travel is required and that business cannot be carried out by alternative means before travel is approved?
2. On the basis of a thorough analysis including a review of controls used in other jurisdictions, what policy and procedural improvements could be introduced to ensure that travel is approved only after verification that other communication means have been considered and determined to be impractical?
3. On the basis of a random sample of several hundred travel claims from across departments:
 - a) What is the proportion of full fare versus excursion fare tickets?
 - b) What is the frequency of ticket changes incurring additional costs?

Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 9, returns to written questions. Mr. Clerk.

Returns to Written Questions

RETURN TO WRITTEN QUESTION 1-17(4): K-12 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to written question asked by Ms. Bisaro on February 6, 2013, regarding K-12 school infrastructure.

As the Members are aware, all departments follow the government-established capital planning process. This process supports the development of the capital estimates presented to the Legislative Assembly for consideration each fall.

The capital estimates list the planned projects to be undertaken during a fiscal period. The proposed budget for these projects is not published. The budget detail is presented at the department and activity level only.

This process was first adopted with the 2009-10 Capital Estimates and is done to avoid influencing the results of individual project tenders. Similarly, other internal planning information prepared during the development of the capital estimates is not made public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 31-17(4): WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY PROGRAM 2011-2012 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled Waste Reduction and Recovery Program, 2011-2012 Annual Report. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 32-17(4): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MARKETING PLAN 2013-2014

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled Northwest Territories Marketing Plan 2013-2014. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 33-17(4): LETTER FROM PSAC NORTH NWT AREA COUNCIL TITLED "WORKPLACE BULLYING"

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a document, a letter from the PSAC Northwest Territories Area Council, entitled Workplace Bullying. It is addressed to the Honourable Glen Abernethy. It is from Mr. David Bob, president of PSAC North, NWT Area Council. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 34-17(4): ANTI-BULLYING CONTRACT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, today is stop a bully day and all Members

have received a copy of this little petition or, sorry, I should say contract. It says, Stop a Bully, Safe and Anonymous. It's an anti-bullying contract. I would like to table mine, also with a pledge. I promise not to bully Cabinet for the rest of the day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 35-17(4):
PAPER ON BOOSTING THE
NORTHERN ECONOMY THROUGH
SMALL-SCALE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the document here that is very timely and addresses some of the aspects of our exercise underway in developing a Sustainable Economic Development Strategy. This work is put forward by Senator Nick Sibbeston, who is in the House with us today. It's entitled, Plugging into the Future, Executive Summary. It describes some of the real success stories that science and technology have or might soon provide to northern communities and includes a vision of where we might go from here. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014; Public Works and Services, Education, Culture and Employment.

By the authority given to me as Speaker, by Motion 1-17(4), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider the business before the House, with Mr. Dolynny in the chair.

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have before us Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014; and Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Committee would like to consider Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, with the continuation of Public Works and Services and as well as Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Agreed. We will commence after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Abernethy, would you care to introduce your witnesses to the Chamber?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me today are Paul Guy, who is the deputy minister of Public Works and Services, and Laurie Gault, who is the director of the Technology Service Centre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Gault and Mr. Guy. Welcome back to the House. Committee, we're on page 7-13 on directorate, and with questions I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just building off and continuing with the discussion before we concluded last night, Mr. Hawkins was asking a question about subcontractors and, actually, last night I had my iPad open to some specific e-mails that I was getting from some of the northern subcontractors that were listed under southern contractors bills for proposals in terms of getting some of those BIP points. In fact I had some e-mails from subcontractors who were saying that they didn't get to see the proposal upon initial verbal agreements, seeing the proposal before it went in for the request. Just some concerns. This was after I'd made a Member's statement in the House sometime last year.

One of the suggestions that were brought forward from a subcontractor, because he didn't get utilized, could be the way they were described in the contracts with the general contractor, and they wanted to know if the government does have a policy or something in place that would get the subcontractors' feedback and not just the general contractor. I do understand that the department and government work with the primary contractor, but can this government start developing a practice where they get information, feedback and reporting from the subcontractor to ensure that the primary contractor actually uses them specifically for the jobs that had won them the contract and had given them the extra Business Incentive Policy points outlined in the proposal? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're continually looking for ways to improve our processes and practice in the Government of the Northwest Territories, in particular in Public Works and Services. To that end, I've set up regular meetings with the Architects and Construction Association as well as the chambers of commerce, in order to get continual feedback and input from

them on different processes in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

With respect to input from some of the subs that may be utilized in contracts, we'd be open to hearing anything they have to say. We do deal with the primary, but just for the record, when it comes to large projects as well as small projects, where there's a commitment to use local vendors that have been included by name in the request for proposals, we do require the primaries to provide us with statistics and information on the usage of the individuals they've identified.

For instance, on East Three School we have a pretty good reconciliation from the primary on the number of local hires they made, the number of people they hired in the Inuvik area, the number of hours that were put in by local individuals. So in short, we're always open to hearing from the vendors. They can deal with our Public Works staff in each of the regions who are managing the individual files to provide the input and, as always, we are open to thoughts and suggestions to help us improve our processes as we move forward as a government and a department.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. In regard to hearing from our vendors and the subcontractors, what would be the right way of getting that input from our subcontractors? Is there a complaints process or is there a process for concern, either on the webpage or a file or application that they would have to submit to government? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. That's assuming that there are complaints. This isn't just about complaints, this is about learning best practices and getting the information that will help us improve processes. I would encourage any subcontractor that's got any issue with a particular file to talk to the contract authority for that file. Each file is administered by different people in Public Works and Services. So I would encourage them to identify the appropriate contract authority and have a conversation with them.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a drilldown on some of these problems here a little further. Would the Minister provide his definition, or I should say his department's definition of using a bond versus a deposit? So maybe if he could divide the two, explain what they are and why you would use one over the other.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For a specific definition of those two I will go to the deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Contract regulations in the contract documents will call for different types of security that can be provided with a contract, one that's entered into by the contractor and that can take the form of a bond, it can take the form of a letter of credit, it can take the form of a cash deposit, in some cases we can also take it in the form of an increased amount of holdback on the contractor, it depends on the size of the contract, the type of the contract, and the terms and conditions. So a bond is something that the contractor would purchase from a bonding agency that would provide the security to cover the terms and conditions and the delivery of the contract. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the application of these issuance of bonds or deposits, is there a difference between the percentage or value we would hold back in these circumstances, and maybe if they can provide some examples why you would use what percentage where or what low percentage or high percentage depending on the case. Thank you.

MR. GUY: Thank you. In some smaller contracts the bonds may not make sense for a contractor to purchase a bond. So he may offer to provide cash security and we may ask for more cash security to cover the risks. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: In some cases do we require more in the context of the value of a bond versus a cash deposit and, if so, what are the circumstances contrived around that situation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. For that we'll go to Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will go to the deputy for some specifics, but just a reminder to committee that we deal with a huge range of contracts from small capital to larger capital to, sort of, more administrative contracts. So everyone would be slightly different. We'd use the same policies and procedures, but for specifics I'll go to the deputy.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The bond would cover labour and materials, those types of things. Again, the contractor would purchase the bond, the bonding company would do its due diligence on the contractor to ensure that they have the ability to lead the work, the ability to pay the subcontractors, the ability to deliver the project, and they're in a sense guaranteeing to the government that the work will be performed even in the event that the

contractor fails to deliver, the bonding company is responsible to fund the completion of the work. So in those cases we would look for a bond that covers the value of the work.

In cases where we don't have a bond and we want cash security or we want to retain a holdback, we would want to ensure that we have enough funding in place in securities, through either cash or a letter of credit, that would allow us to ensure that the contract is completed and that the subcontractors are paid. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Do we have any policy that focuses in on northern versus southern type of contractor, whereas by way of an example we have an expectation that a Northerner can use either a deposit or a bond, but southern contractors with zero investment here in the North must go by bond?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's not specific to that. It really depends on the size of the contract, the magnitude of the contract, the cost of the contract, not where a vendor happens to be located.

MR. HAWKINS: Why on large contracts – and I'm not going to try to be too specific or we'd be here all day – do we have a policy that it's only bond versus deposit?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I don't believe that is the case, but for specifics we'll go to the deputy.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Generally on large contracts we would require a bond but there can be situations where a bond would not be required and that would be looked at on case-by-case basis. If there was an alternative security required, we would have to refer to the contract regs to see what was applicable.

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

MR. HAWKINS: What is the typical deposit range asked for when someone cannot get a bonding, that is a southern contractor? Also, the same question, if they are a northern contractor what is the range?

MR. GUY: I would need more information about the type of contract and the type of work, and I would have to go back and refer to what's allowable through the contract regulations or any particular type of contract. We do a number of different contracts. It could be for goods or services, it could

be for janitorial work, it could be for the construction of a building. I would need more detail.

MR. HAWKINS: Okay, well, in a construction-type contract where we're building, say, a warehouse, by way of example, just to make life simple, and the warehouse is \$2 million – perhaps not unlike the one that's proposed in Tuktoyaktuk, \$1 million planning, \$1 million in construction fees, or something like that. A \$2 million project on a warehouse. If a southern company won this bid, what would their deposit be if they couldn't get bonding, and if a local company out of Tuktoyaktuk wanted to do this project and they couldn't get bonding, what type of deposit would be in that range?

MR. GUY: I would have to look at the specific tender documents for that contract to see what is specified before I could respond to that.

MR. HAWKINS: Would the Minister be willing to get me some information on how the application and some examples of both the bond and deposits are put on our capital works projects, as well as specifically break out northern versus southern contractors?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can provide that information to committee for Public Works and Services managed and administered contracts.

MR. HAWKINS: I'll thank him for that. The next question I would have is: Do we have a policy on our projects that we implement or contract or sign on where they must pay their northern suppliers or their workforce or their subs within a certain amount of time?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I would suggest that payment schedules are negotiated between our primary and their subcontractors. We don't have a position on that subcontract.

MR. HAWKINS: Is there any reason why we wouldn't have a position noting the circumstance for an obvious dispute? That's an easy one to say if there were disputes it may not be easy to fulfill, say within three weeks. Why wouldn't the Government of the Northwest Territories have a policy to say that the general must pay a contractor within, say, 30 days of fulfilling their obligations met within the contract unless there is a dispute to ensure northern contractors get paid in a timely way?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Some of that would be dealt with by the bonding companies but also negotiations between the primary and the sub based on the accounting practices and operations of the primary as well as the sub. The accountability and liability in those contracts lie between the primary and the sub and not between the GNWT

and the sub. So it would be a responsibility of the primary to do that.

MR. HAWKINS: Would it not be in our interests to flex our muscles in that regard? Because if we're paying the general contractor their money and they're withholding payment to the subcontractors, who could be northern contractors, would it not be in our interest to suggest that we put that type of downward pressure by good policy to demonstrate our northern subcontractors are just as much of value as whoever the general contractor is?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: When situations like that arise, and if they arise, we are always happy to look at our contract to see what provisions exist with respect to payments to ensure that work is done in a timely fashion. If work is not done we are happy to hold back payment.

MR. HAWKINS: Would the Minister be able to describe the holdback scheme, how it's applied to northern contractors and southern contractors, how it's applied to projects in large communities such as Yellowknife, Inuvik, or Hay River, and furthermore, how would it be proscribed in a manner that it would be in Fort Good Hope or Wekweeti or Lutselk'e? Can you explain the dynamics of that situation?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Details of payments and holdbacks would be proscribed in the contract itself and there would be no difference necessarily between southern and northern contractors. It's a negotiation of contract that is done between the primary and the Department of Public Works and Services. For some additional information I will go to the deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister is correct, the terms and conditions for holdback and retention of holdback and payment of holdback or release of holdback are detailed in the contract documents between the general contractor and the Government of the Northwest Territories. There is really no difference. All the bidders are aware of that information that forms part of the tender document so a southern bidder or a northern bidder are all treated the same when it comes to the contract document. For specific details we would be able to provide a typical sample contract and how we would do that calculation as part of our commitment to the earlier response.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. Hawkins, your time is up but we have no one on the list. Actually, no, sorry. I do have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a couple of questions here with regard to the shared procurement services. I think from the Minister's opening remarks this is coming yet. I'd like confirmation of when that's happening or if it is

in the works and when it will be completed. My concern goes to the fact that contracts and fees are let throughout the government through various different departments and various divisions of departments. My experience has been that we don't get the same standard of letting of contracts across the government. With shared procurement is that likely to help that problem?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Absolutely.

MS. BISARO: He's only got half a memory. When will we be done?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We've already done a significant amount of work. We're going to be doing a significant amount of work through 2013-2014. We hope to have a design ready for the 2014-2015 business plan so we can implement in that fiscal year.

MS. BISARO: I am teasing you, Mr. Minister, I hope you realize that. You do have a full memory. Okay. I'm glad to hear that we're going to get there. I guess, in the meantime, I do have some concerns with sort of the lack of standards of letting of contracts and RFPs in various and sundry departments. What does the Department of Public Works and Services, what can they do, what's in their arsenal to try and, I don't want to say force other departments, but what is there that you can do to assist them to be better in their letting of contracts? I know the departments often say we're doing it, leave us alone, let us do it, but that doesn't always work out to be the best situation for the people that are applying on contracts. What is it that PWS can do? Is there anything that you can do?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The departments have been working together on trying to solve some of these issues and having some consistency across the government. The shared procurement services is obviously going to help a significant amount with the exact concerns that the Member and vendors in the public have brought forward. We do have a procurement procedures committee that has been put in place that has members from Public Works and Services, Finance, and other departments that are trying to come up with some of the challenges that are out there. There is also the comptroller general who is working on this as well. There is standardized training that is available across the government in this area. For some specifics on those types of things I will go to the deputy minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Definitely we see that as one of the benefits of procurement insured services is to increase the consistency for

how procurement is carried out across government, provide vendors with a uniform experience when they're dealing with government, and get standardized response formats, submission formats. We see that as one of the benefits of the procurement insured services initiative. We have done a lot of work. We talked a little bit about, yesterday, some of the changes we made in the organization to prepare for that within Public Works and Services. We're doing some of that background work now. As the Minister said, we intend to come forward through the business plan process with the work that we've been doing with the other departments across government on moving forward with procurement services.

In terms of the things we're doing right now, we have developed a fairly strong system of courses we provide. Not just in Yellowknife, but we do travel to the regional centres and regional areas to provide training and procurement and how to go about using proper procedures, show some lessons learned where procurement has not gone as well as possible, use real life examples that we see from the work that we do in reviewing procurements. We also make ourselves available. Although our role is only to provide procurement to Public Works and Services, right now we offer that service and will provide technical support and assistance to any department that asks for help with an RFP process or guidance or even to complete the procurement on their behalf wherever possible. Obviously, we are sometimes limited by resources but we try very hard to not turn any requests away.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister and Mr. Guy. One last comment. There's not really a question here. In the absence of shared procurement, my experience is that usually problems arise when you have people who have a lack of experience in letting of contracts and managing of contracts. My experience also suggests that most of the problems occur within not necessarily departments but arm's-length organizations like health authorities and education authorities and so on.

I guess I do have a question. My question is whether or not PWS will be taking procurement for arm's-length organizations like education and health authorities under their wing when you get to the end point of shared services.

MR. GUY: At this point we're really focused on just the government departments. We're not looking at authorities. I understand, though, that the Department of Health and Social Services is looking at their health-specific procurement needs and they're looking at a similar type model and we're working closely with them on that. We also do provide our training and procurement expertise and we will assist, and also when we run these courses

in the regional centres or in Yellowknife, we often have people from the authorities or boards that come in and do sit in and learn procurement process from our staff.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to Mr. Guy. I guess I would just like to suggest to the Minister that if it is at all possible to force that sort of training on people who are doing procurement, whether they happen to be in a department or an authority, if there is an authority in the government to force people to get that training and to have a certain level of expertise, that would be a good thing. That's all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I will go to Mr. Abernethy for the final comment.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Force is a strong word. We certainly strongly encourage boards and agencies to partake in the training that we offer.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Pages 7-13, Public Works and Services, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$8.988 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Page 7-14, Public Works and Services, information item, directorate, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Being none. Thank you. Page 7-16 and 7-17, Public Works and Services. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a very important division. Asset management looks after all our building infrastructure and so on. It looks after maintenance. We're currently doing some good work and making some serious gains there. It's also where Public Works and Services focuses on helping the GNWT achieve their government-wide energy efficiencies and greenhouse gas reductions, reductions of fossil fuel consumption, et cetera. I would just like to get on that topic generally.

I believe there's a new Model National Energy Code for buildings. Can I just get where we're at with respect to that new code and how it relates to the most recent old one? Also, how our good building practice for northern facilities relates to that.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There have been a number of questions brought up about this exact topic in the past. Previous to the new regulations coming in, we were meeting and exceeding, and often beating the national code. New codes have come in, and we're still in that

area, but for specifics on numbers and some of the specific details, I will go to the deputy minister.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct that the Model National Energy Code was recently updated. In the previous version, our target and good building practices was 25 percent better than the Model National Energy Code. We went back and did an evaluation of the updated code and compared it to the old code and how our good building practice was performed, and now our benchmark shows that good building practices still puts us about 10 percent in front of the new Model National Energy Code. We're very pleased to see that we're still out in front of what is on the energy code standard that is looking to be adopted across Canada. The code committee that's working on the National Building Code in Canada is looking across all jurisdictions...(inaudible)...it through the next round of National Building Code updates, which I believe is in 2015. At that time, should the Model National Energy Code be incorporated into the National Building Code, then it would become part of the code when it's adopted here. We're watching that. We participate in the working group on that through some of our technical staff. That is my understanding of where that is headed.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that information. I recognize that this division and department are really our hope for energy issues, and it's very, very important work that they do. If I can drill down on that, so that means that, I believe we say as a government, our residents, any building has to meet the National Energy Building Code, and I believe I'm hearing from the deputy minister that right now there are no new energy standards for those buildings. We choose to go for the highest calibre within GNWT buildings, but in terms of other buildings that businesses or residents build, they don't have that standard. Is that correct?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: People building buildings, offices, houses and whatnot would still have to meet National Building Codes when they're building their buildings. We as a government have made a choice to meet and exceed, and we're exceeding by about 10 percent as the deputy minister indicated.

MR. BROMLEY: I'll leave that for now, but I believe there is a difference between a National Building Code and a National Energy Code.

I'd like to just ask what role Public Works and Services has played in establishing a new market for wood pellet energy in thermal communities

where they didn't exist before, through the establishment of territorial infrastructure that demands wood pellet energy. Are there any cases that we can point to where we have achieved that? I know the work we do in switching here has been very important in that respect, but I'd like to know what communities that didn't have that access now have it because of our work.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: If you go back into the history of wood pellets in use by the Government of the Northwest Territories, we've tended to respond to where a market is already started. If you look at how we got involved in pellets in the first place, it was with the correctional facilities here in Yellowknife where a vendor came to us and made a suggestion to have them put in the boilers and be the, I guess, administrators of the heating system.

From there, once we've seen success and we know we have a supply, we've been able to expand to where supply exists. We, I wouldn't say are leading the drive for pellets in other communities, but we are taking advantage of where a market has started to show.

I would say our most recent push is Norman Wells. A local company has started to provide pellets to the residents of Norman Wells. We see a significant opportunity to get in there and actually make some improvements to some major infrastructure in Norman Wells. We're looking at the school, we're looking at the airport and we're also looking at the new health centre/long-term care facility. We have, to some degree, been encouraging industry to move in front of us slightly on that and then working with them to enhance and support.

MR. BROMLEY: That's good. Obviously, I disagree with waiting for that. There are many, many examples – the Minister is familiar with them – where the GNWT plays a key role in establishing a new practice in a community in all kinds of areas, and that enables that community to enjoy and spread the benefits. I think we should be doing that here as well.

I guess I'm wondering, what has been the trend? In opening comments we heard a lot about the reductions in greenhouse gas, 25,000 tonnes I believe it was, and so on, savings in dollars and fossil fuel. Would the Minister have at hand, or could he provide what has been the annual savings in greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel consumption over the past five years from the work of Public Works and Services so that I can determine what the trend is and our achievements there?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I mean, I completely understand my colleague's point about spreading the benefits and trying to be a leader. To some degree, I mean, we wait for where we know we can get supplied before we go in, because we're not a supplier of pellets but we want to support the

industry. We will go in where there is limited use of pellets, but at least some supply, and us being there, having additional demand, demonstrates that this technology works here in the Northwest Territories and that others can certainly build upon it. Example: We are putting biomass in some of the schools and some of the other places in the Northwest Territories like Fort Providence where there may not be as large a distribution, but once we get in there and demonstrate that they have real, positive attributes and that there are savings to be had, and there's also a greater degree of actual product available for others to take advantage of, we are seeing other businesses and residents taking advantages of these opportunities.

Where we wait for at least an acknowledgement that we will be able to get supplied before we put in them, once that supply is there, we'll jump on it, and we go in and we do as much as we can where money is available. Some of the money is coming from the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund, which we think is a fantastic program and it's given us lots of money to roll back into some of these things. We want to hit some of the areas where we know we're going to get larger returns so we can grow the funds, so we can get more benefits and hit more people. I think we are spreading the benefits and we are working with communities, and we're working with anybody that's interested. If somebody from a community were to come to us and say we can get supply into a community where there isn't, we would love to have that conversation. We think there would be significant opportunity to do that.

Now, with my rant, I completely forget the other question you had.

The second part of the question was around actual usage and savings and bigger-picture numbers rather than just the \$25,000. We have some numbers. I'm not sure it's exactly what the Member is looking for. We can probably dig out those numbers. But I'll go to the deputy minister right now who has some specifics. I don't believe it's exactly what you're looking for, but we will work to get you some of those bigger numbers as well. For some details on what we've seen as success, I'll go to the deputy.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you look at some of the trends that we have with our Biomass Initiative, currently we have 21 facilities connected to biomass boilers and those are producing savings right now. We have another six that are essentially under construction or are funded and moving forward right now. Then we have three more that are planned.

If you look at where we were at in 2011, about 16 percent of our total heating load of our managed assets were heated by biomass. Right now, at the

end of this fiscal year, and we're just updating our numbers now, so we'll really have something more as we get into business planning and we have our year-end numbers, but right now in '12-13, we're looking at about 23.5 to 24 percent of our total heating load. Then if you look at all the projects that we have underway, under construction and planned, we'll be close to 30 percent of our total heating load of the buildings that PWS manages that are heated by biomass.

You can see the trend is increasing in biomass and consumption of fossil fuels is going down. Also, we have our CARF projects, as well, that contribute to the savings, and we're in the process of updating those numbers as well.

We've had a lot of envelope upgrades. We did the electric boiler conversion in Fort Smith. We've had a significant number of projects this year that are going to produce some updated numbers at the end of this fiscal year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. Bromley, your time is up. If you have any more questions, let me know here. Moving on with questions I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have one question here, and I think it was in the Minister's opening remarks. He talked about settlement maintainers and apprentices that, I think, sort of continuing to use them and employ them. I hear the same thing from the NWT Housing Corporation, so I just wondered, in terms of hiring settlement maintainers and in terms of hiring apprentices, is there any kind of coordination between the Housing Corporation and PWS to make the best use of people within the communities to provide the greatest service to our buildings and to the Housing Corp buildings in a community?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have conversations. We talk about co-located facilities and things that we could do, and we certainly are involved. I'm not sure whether the Member is getting at hiring or having one position shared between. I'm not sure that that's what she's getting to. Can I get a little bit more clarity from the Member?

MS. BISARO: Sure you can. I can try. As I understand it, we have buildings. PWS has assets that need to be maintained and need to be serviced. The Housing Corporation has buildings and has assets that they also need to maintain and service. I know that the Housing Corp hires apprentices and, obviously, PWS does as well, so it would seem to me that there could be a benefit to ensure that we have a settlement maintainer in every community. Maybe we don't need a full PY settlement maintainer for just PWS, and maybe it's

a job share or whatever, but I'm just wondering if in hiring a certain apprentice are we going to end up with two apprentices in the same trade in a community, which I don't imagine we would need, certainly, in a small community. That's the kind of coordination that I'm talking about. It may not be necessary but it would seem to me that there could be an advantage to talking about what kind of services are required, what kind of trades are required, what kind of maintenance is required, and combine the work to maybe provide better service.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There may be some opportunities for some cooperation here, but there are a couple things that we have to remember. Many of the buildings that Public Works and Services manages tend to be larger; schools, jails, office buildings; larger facilities that would require a different skill set than, say, a home, which the Housing Corp may be administering. I'm certainly willing to have that conversation with the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation to see if there are any advantages, but it may not be as cut and dried as that. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: That's all I have.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to pursue this a little bit further. I appreciate the good information here. That was useful.

I guess I'm also looking at it for rate. For example, new litres of fossil fuel saved and the new greenhouse gas reductions by year for the past five years, so that I can see how much of the low-hanging fruit or whatever it is. Ultimately, the cost-benefit return probably starts to shrink a little bit. I would appreciate that to help me assess that, which brings me to the question.

What do we see as our biggest remaining opportunities? I'd say we are close to achieving, soon, 30 percent in our total heat load. That's pretty good. Hopefully we can go more. What are our next big opportunities?

Another aspect of it is, we really need to reduce our fossil fuel consumption, i.e., greenhouse gas emissions, to some degree, regardless of savings. But we have to be able to afford to do it. That is still a practical indication.

What is the guideline for the department? Are we still stuck in the, maybe not stuck, but I assume we have lots of opportunity yet that would be economic as well as lead to these savings and reductions? Does our guideline allow us to reduce fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions regardless of cost, or maybe not regardless but without a big cost gain? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I would say that there is still a significant opportunity to get financial return on this, which will help us save money. The Capital Asset Retrofit Fund, there is lots of opportunity out there to continue to use technology. It's not just heating technology; it's lighting technology, it's distribution of air, it's all these types of things that can help reduce our costs. We may eventually hit a point where there may not be as much economic return on some of these, but we will continue to move forward with the savings that we do have.

An example of a community where the savings aren't going to be financial savings, aren't going to be as significant as other locations, is Norman Wells with the biomass that we're putting in, the health centre, the school and the airport. Just the additional cost of getting the product there takes away some of our savings, but it is still worth doing. It is, at this point, still providing us a savings.

As we push out in some of these other communities where we can get supply to, I imagine some of the smaller communities are going to give us less of a return, but we are not just building it for return. There are multiple reasons why we're doing these types of things. It's about controlling costs. It's about greenhouse gas emissions. It's about better product, better opportunities. So we will continue to move forward.

As far as when we'll hit that threshold, I can't say. I don't know. I would say that we're still a ways away from that, and there's still much we can do in the Government of the Northwest Territories before I think we actually hit that threshold the Member is talking about.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for those comments. I know I have seen lots of individual projects where it was sometimes 30 or 40 years return, so I recognize the department has been doing some of that because of some other significant gains.

Would it be possible to get the same sort of information, essentially the 30 percent on heat demand, for our power demand? What is our proportion of power load that is met through renewable energy of whatever source, hydro, thermal and so on? That would be great. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Public Works and Services obviously has some responsibility in paying bills and tracking those types of things, but for some more detail on where our power load is coming from, I will go to the deputy minister.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do track that. A couple of things. Back about two years ago, I think we're into our third year now where we've

consolidated maintenance and utilities, so we have now pretty close to three solid years of utility data on all the government assets that we manage. We have that broken down by assets, we have it broken down by fuel type. So the types of information, whether it's electricity in a hydro community or electricity in a thermal community, we have that information now.

We produce an annual energy report for the department and we tabulate and provide that breakdown, as well, how our energy is consumed, whether it's electricity in a thermal community or electricity in a hydro community, where it comes from, renewables, and we also do that with our space heating as well. Our intention, as we do our next annual report, is to provide some more of that information in there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. We'll go back to Minister Abernethy for comment.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll certainly provide that information to the Member and committee. Just following up on that and a comment that we made yesterday, Public Works and Services undertakes the following energy management activities, and I believe this question was asked yesterday, but we do energy consumption analysis and benchmarking, we do detailed energy audits and we do inspections of electrical and mechanical systems that are under our responsibility as part of our energy management on existing facilities. So all that type of stuff is out there, as well, but with respect to the numbers, we will get those to the Member and committee.

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

MR. BROMLEY: That's all I have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Committee, we're on 7-17, Public Works and Services, activity summary, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$92.341 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: There's a question I want to ask the Minister in regard to the small communities and the Public Works garage and maintenance of those buildings. Has the department been in discussion with the other departments or corporations that work in our small communities to combine a one-stop shop? It seems that would make sense in the smaller communities than have three different garages. If we just had one building, Housing, Public Works and community municipality workers can work together. It would save costs, and save energy and fuel. It just makes sense to have them under one roof in the smaller communities. I know the community of Deline has been pushing this concept. Is Public Works in discussion right now or

are there plans to be coming forward to have this type of discussion? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we'd be interested in having those discussions and see what opportunities exist between our departments, Housing Corp and other organizations, where appropriate. We'd be interested in having those conversations.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I look forward to being in contact with the people in Deline because they'll be happy to hear what the Minister has said. I will relay the message to them. Of course, I will ask the Minister's guidance as to how we kick off this type of discussion. I know Deline has been quite anxious to begin this discussion and look at this concept. Where do we begin? Where should we begin? Letter writing? Phone calls? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It would probably be a great idea to have the community get in touch with Public Works and Services directly. I would say, remember that we do have a capital planning process and all projects would have to go through that process, but it doesn't hurt to start having some of those discussions now for planning purposes in the future. I would encourage the Member to have his communities get in touch with us, where appropriate, and we'd be happy to have that dialogue.

MR. YAKELEYA: I will be talking to Deline shortly and let them know. Thank you, Minister, for some guidance as to how we start out this discussion recognizing there is a capital infrastructure planning process. We need to look at other issues so at least we can start the discussions. So I'll leave it at that.

The Minister is also responsible for granular material planning, and certainly our small communities look at that issue to help with the granular material for housing or any type of other buildings that are going up in the community. Is this the Minister I should be talking to about gravel, and sand and material for the communities, or is that Transportation? Who do you talk to? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. This is an interdepartmental responsibility; Public Works and Services, Transportation, MACA and communities also have an opportunity to work together to coordinate their gravel needs. We would be identifying our gravel needs for buildings and infrastructure that we are responsible for. DOT would do the same and those change from year to year depending on the needs of communities, DOT, Public Works and Services. We have worked together with communities and we have worked together with other departments to coordinate the

delivery of granular supply where required. So it's a cooperation, it's a team effort.

MR. YAKELEYA: Okay, that's great. My next question is on the safe drinking water initiative. Some communities have some questions on their source of water. Has the department been, in the past, willing to support communities who want to look at other sources of water initiatives? I'm talking about Fort Good Hope where there is an issue on their water source, and that Fort Good Hope wants to look at other alternative water intakes to calm the concerns of the people in that community. They are looking at another source, but that costs quite a bit to get that going. So is there support within the department to help the community look at safe drinking water initiatives?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Just going back to the previous question, just for the record, Public Works and Services actually chairs that interdepartmental committee with respect to granular supply, but it is absolutely a partnership.

With respect to the Fort Good Hope water supply, I've had the opportunity to travel into Fort Good Hope with the Member and meet with the leadership there, and that was certainly a question that was brought up. I believe that work is being done on that with the community on behalf of MACA and, as with anybody in the Northwest Territories, we're absolutely happy and willing to give technical advice and some best practices that we've experienced over the years.

You'll probably need to confirm this with the Department of MACA, but I believe the Fort Good Hope work is going to be... The plant is scheduled to go into the community by winter road this year. So I assume that means some of the work is going to occur in the summertime. So I believe it's happening now.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. My final question to the Minister. The Minister of MACA, myself, along with the leadership of Colville Lake have met recently and the issue was their newly installed water treatment plant. There have been problems with the installation and the piping had broken. We had a good meeting, it's just that when we have companies coming into our small communities, there's no type of guarantees. We try to say that this is the problem now, we have broken pipes that we can't use the water treatment facility. It actually fills up, and some other issues there.

So I guess my question is twofold. One is how are we keeping track of people or companies putting in these facilities in our small northern communities? The issue we had with the Minister of MACA is that the companies did not take the advice of the traditional knowledge of the people saying that this is not the place to, however, because of the engineering degrees or whatever professions they study under said no, we know what we're doing, it

invalidated the traditional knowledge of the people in that area.

It's no blame here. Just we need to know that if the government is going to work on the Traditional Knowledge Policy and it goes throughout the government, we need to know that contractors and ...(inaudible)...that this is a policy that we like to follow and have some discussions with the people in that area. They may be right but they may be wrong and that's something that we need to honour. As I said, we had a good discussion with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

My second question was: What type of work do we do to allow outside contractors to spend some quality time with the people in that area to say this is what we're going to do when we come in the following months to put up a water treatment plant, sewer plant, whatever, under the auspices of Public Works and Services. I do want to say that I appreciate the Minister coming into the Sahtu region. It was a good visit. He did good up there. Those are my questions.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: With respect to the Colville water plant, I understand that MACA is fully engaged on that file and is working with the community. I don't really have too much to add on that, but I hear the Member's point about community knowledge when we're involved in any sort of infrastructure support.

Going back to the water, we are obviously providing technical support to MACA and the community as they work forward. I hear the Member's comments about getting knowledge from the community and I think we try to do that. Maybe we need to continue to get a little bit more information there. We do have Public Works and Services staff in many of the communities. I know we have somebody in Colville Lake that's doing some work there and we're always open to hearing from them and the community. We hear the Member.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Yakeleya, your time is up. Moving on with questions I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A quick question on contract services. I see it's up about 30 percent this year. Am I right in thinking that might be related to building demolitions or is there any explanation that the Minister can provide for that leap in contract service expenditures?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As indicated in my opening comments, we are taking over health leases in the Northwest Territories. It's a significant amount of lease space and responsibility.

MR. BROMLEY: So that's where this would appear. I appreciate that. What proportion of this would that constitute?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'll go to the deputy minister as he's got the information right in front of him.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister is correct. There are really two things in there that were mentioned in the opening remarks to have accounted for that increase in contract services. One is the one-time funding for the demolition of Sir Alexander Mackenzie School. The second is the transfer of responsibility of the leases. Without getting into too much detail to provide what the budget for the demolition is, because we prefer not to disclose that, I would say, roughly, it's 50/50 split, so to speak.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Page 7-17, Public Works and Services, activity summary, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$92.341 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under asset management we have done some consolidating on the payment of the energy bills in coordination, and at one time the philosophy used to be that departments should be farmed out and be responsible for their own things like, for example, their power bill or their fuel bill and they best would know how to manage these things and coordinate these things. Since the last couple of years, Public Works and Services has taken this back. I'm curious as to how the monitoring and management of this program now has been working out. Has there been cost savings? Better organization? Better payment on time? More efficiencies? What works well and what could work better?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've talked previously already about some of the things that we do under here that we can do as a central point as opposed to being done by the departments to give a complete sense of utilization within the Government of the Northwest Territories. Things like the energy consumption analysis and benchmarking, detailed energy audits, inspections of electrical and mechanical systems that are under our responsibility. I think we have been able to get a better sense of our usage of energy and I think we've had an opportunity, through things like CARF, to address some of our challenges out there to help us reduce and control costs. There are some specifics I'd like to go to the deputy for.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Going on the response the Minister has made, now that we have responsibility for the utility bills it has been put in the budgets of the maintenance departments and maintenance staff that provide the maintenance on the buildings. They are monitoring the bills as they come in. They are operating the buildings. They can see where they have irregularities in the billing. If the bill goes up for one month for no specific reason, they can go and check the operation of the building. There's a feedback mechanism built in now through our tracking system and through the payment system where we have much better access to information on how the building is performing. The energy bill is a good indicator, as we know, through our benchmarking of how well the building is performing. It's not just the construction of the building that contributes the energy savings but it's also how you maintain and operate the building. If the building controls aren't working properly or if there's a damper that's not closing when it should or an occupancy sensor that's not working, it can have a significant spike in the bills. Now that we've consolidated that, we do have the ability to monitor and we do monitor it. We do call in technical staff to look at specific issues with buildings when it's raised by the maintenance staff.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Who is responsible for these specific bills on these energy costs? Which departmental budget do they come from that cover the actual payments?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's in the budget of Public Works and Services.

MR. HAWKINS: Is there a chargeback in any way to the individual departments?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: No, we manage and operate the buildings and cover the costs.

MR. HAWKINS: So if consumption increases then process therefore would increase. I haven't seen any energy bills get cheaper to use. Who is responsible for any spike in usage? I guess it's around stewardship. If Public Works and Services has become the department that picks up the bills but say Education runs all their buildings lights on, whatever, it seems like the responsibility is out of touch with those who, they're not connecting. How do you manage that problem?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We're responsible for the lifecycle, the maintenance, the ongoing

monitoring of the buildings. We do the maintenance on boilers and whatnot where the buildings are our responsibility. We're responsible for the general upkeep on the buildings that we own. We can track and monitor that stuff. If we've noticed a spike, we would certainly explore that and try to determine what was the cause of the spike, whether it was a system-related spike or whether it was an operations-related spike. If there's an operations-related spike we could certainly talk to a department to figure out what's going on to cause a spike. Some of them may be required. Some of them may be operational. So we would pay those bills.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm just trying to provide probably not the perfect example but say everyone decides that they want to start leaving the lights on at the Lahm Ridge Tower every night and that's not a Public Works and Services building. They're located somewhere else. I think it's by and large a Transportation and Education type building. More of a directorate-level style as opposed to an operation. If people started leaving lights on late at night, not turning off computers, who becomes responsible? I'm trying to get the link between some responsibility for stewardship of the cost of the power versus those who end up picking up the tab regardless of what it is.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It may not be the best example because that is a leased building not an owned and operated building. If the property manager or the owner of the building were to come to us indicating that the power bills were going up, we would certainly deal with that through property management and talk to the department to get a sense of why the cost is so high. I think normally that's how we would deal with that situation.

For owned and operated buildings we would have those discussions with the department. Many of our buildings have controls on them so that we can actually turn off lights at certain hours and make sure everything is shut down. We've also got other contracts with people doing cleaning and whatnot who will go around and turn off the lights before they leave the building. Lots of mechanisms to deal with some of those things.

MR. HAWKINS: Staying away from dollar value because it doesn't really work on power bills or, for example, oil bills. It's rather to start on a consumption level analysis, that way you know what is considered a baseline of fairness, because those other things change. They fluctuate. Does Public Works and Services set any communication tools up based on consumption levels based of these types of consumables that Public Works and Services at the end of the day picks up the bill for and the responsibilities held within the department has actually been taken away? Does Public Works

and Services have any type of communication framework that does this?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Maybe if I can get the Member to explain that a little more clearly. I'm not sure I fully understand what he's asking.

MR. HAWKINS: By way of example, if a school uses more than – I know they use more than 1,000 kilowatts, by the way, if a school used 1,000 kilowatts a month and all of a sudden they're using 1,200 kilowatts a month, and we all know this is a ridiculous example in the sense of scale, but the point is, what is considered the stewardship and relationship built on consumption? If I said their power bill went up to \$1,000 and it's now \$1,200, well, that could be because the power rate has changed, but the consumption may have stayed the same. It's not fair to tackle the dollar amount but it's consistent to challenge the consumption rate.

Back to the consumption, if they use 1,000 kilowatts a month typically on average and all of a sudden they're starting to use 1,200 kilowatts, what type of link is built in their communication strategy and what type of tools do we have to get the school to say wait a minute, we have to figure out how we're using power and why we're using power? There may be a perfectly valid reason, but at the same time, someone has to be responsible for usage. It's bread and butter economics or, I often say, kitchen table economics.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As indicated previously, we now have three years of baseline data on the facilities that we're responsible for. This information didn't exist previously so if there had been a spike in a school, the school may not necessarily know what caused that spike or why that was occurring. We can now monitor buildings on a constant and regular basis and if we see a spike, we see it early and we can get into the building to try and figure out what is actually causing the spike.

By way of an example, using the school as an example, it could be a faulty fan or a faulty motor that's running all the time when it's supposed to shut down on a regular basis resulting in a spike in the cost. We can get in there and find it and fix it. If it's purely a usage issue, we would certainly have conversations with the department who is responsible for that building to find out why their usage has gone up. If it's justifiable or if it's some operational thing, we would end up having to pay those operational costs, but we have a pretty good sense of usage of power in buildings and can give you pretty good ideas of what buildings use at different times of year. Schools in the summertime are lower than they are in the wintertime when there are no students in there. We would keep the department responsible, informed if it isn't something mechanical and something we can fix.

MR. HAWKINS: What type of authority do we have to provide direction on this particular one? The reason I say that is because if Public Works actually has to pick up the cost and there's a shortfall, it looks like it's Public Works' fault as opposed to whoever is creating the overconsumption, or I'll call it poor management of our assets and utilities. That said, it looks like Public Works has to be the mop-up, but what authority do they have to lean back into the departments?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I think I get the point that the Member's trying to make as who is ultimately responsible for usage, and because we have the responsibility for running and managing the buildings and paying the bills, we ultimately have responsibility for paying those bills. We would have conversations with departments when usage is identified as one of the driving increases on costs. But this is not something that's actually been a problem for us.

I mean, we monitor billings. We have a pretty good baseline of what the costs are going to be and the usage is going to be, and when we see a spike we, as I've indicated, determine whether it's a mechanical or a system problem as opposed to a use problem by the client department. Where it's been a client issue hasn't really popped up. We've had a couple situations where we've had spikes due to mechanical, but not due to unexpected usage. If it did, we would certainly have a conversation with the department and talk about usage.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Hawkins, your time is up but I have no one left on the clock so I will put you back on.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not much more. I think the Minister is seeing where I've been building the issue. When Public Works picked up responsibility and I couldn't remember, so I'm glad he said it was three years ago. I do remember it was a few years ago. Was full financial responsibility transferred over, and so by way of means, was full resources transferred over or was there an expectation when FMB came up with this great reorg, or who's now the money and who's going to be responsible for it, did they transfer, what I'll call, in a parallel manner? So our budgets were this much, so let's move it all over to the new line in Public Works, or did they sort of calculate it and say, because you're a department, you probably can carry this so you get 80 percent of the budget?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That occurred in the previous Assembly, and I think as an MLA I remember having some discussions about that exact topic. If I remember correctly, the response at that time was that they made an effort to do an assessment of usage and costs, and transfer over the full amount. Can we say we got the full amount?

In reality, hard to say, but they indicated they were going to do a full assessment to try to determine the costs and transfer over what was required to continue to pay the bills moving forward.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm just trying to get a sense here is Public Works being stuck with a responsibility where the users of the system, in the sense that the users of the power who are consuming the power are not responsible, and yet Public Works gets to wear the dirty laundry and make up the shortfall. In the last three years this particular area would have been budgeted with the department. How has the consistency been for the department to be able to pay these bills without having to require to move money from other program areas, et cetera, in order to make up any particular shortfall? And if they have had shortfalls, what type of shortfalls? If we could actually speak real dollars.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We track utilities separately and we've been able to cover our utility costs on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories with the budget provided. Talking to the deputy, we think we're going to be tight this year, but other years we've been fine and we will continue to work to control those costs and find ways to reduce our costs through things like the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund in order to make sure that the budget we have continues to be suitable and adequate to cover our costs.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm hopeful this is the last question, probably as hopeful as you guys are. Does this also apply to, say, fuel, so our heating fuel? And the same question as the last one applies. If it does, maybe they could provide some clearer details if fuel is covered by this department. In other words, you pay all the bills and explain if there have been shortfalls over the last three years, and if there have been, how much money and where it has come from.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This utilities line covers electricity, fuel, water, garbage, sewage. I think that's it. So far, like I said, in previous years we've had enough money to cover that. This year is going to be tight. We know with the spike in electricity costs that we'll be pushing it and we will be coming to committee with a request for additional money to help us support the spike in electricity costs.

MR. HAWKINS: I don't really have a question but I have more of a statement which is, I would hope that if the department sends their information to committee, I would hope that they would be based on, as I said earlier, it's better and easier to gauge consumption levels than it is to, say, price levels. Because, as we know, the power bills increase but perhaps consumption has been contiguous, which demonstrates that that's the problem. It's not necessarily the technical money sense, although money is obviously the issue, but at least it

demonstrates stewardship under these principles. If you're short because the power bills have increased by whatever percent, I mean, and you're trying to work off the same budget, obviously your same budget does not extend far enough. More of an observation and a comment, but I'm hopeful that whatever information, if this request actually does show up, it does have that type of information as applied and where necessary.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This information is going to be available in the public report. It will be by consumption, but also by price, so that both of those pieces of information are there. The Member is right. I mean, consumption is one thing but prices vary, as we've seen with electricity here in the Northwest Territories as of late. That information will be in the public report for committee and for the public to review at large.

MR. HAWKINS: Yes. Sorry. I ran out of time the last time and I think the deputy minister had offered some holdback information on contracts and I didn't get a clear commitment that they would forward that to committee.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, we will provide that to the Member and committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Page 7-17. I have next on my list, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to ask the Minister about the infrastructure requirements or needs in our smaller communities. For example, our schools or Aurora College. Is there infrastructure information that we could look at in terms of a 10, 20 year, sort of, down the road? For example, my colleague from Nahendeh talked about the schools in his riding. They're no different than the schools that we have in Colville Lake and we still expect our children to obtain a level of educational standards that is pretty difficult to beat at times. I appreciate the work that you've done in the last summer to get some of the modern facilities in our schools. Does the Department of Public Works have that type of information for some of the infrastructure needs that are going to be needed in our communities?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Much of that information that I think the Member is looking for is within each department and their capital needs assessments. We provide technical advice, and when a build is required, we facilitate the build using the policies, procedures and the practices that exist within Public Works and Services. But for the actual plan, you'd probably need to get the specifics from each department.

MR. YAKELEYA: If I'm correct, at one time Colville Lake was a target for a new school and then,

somehow, that fell off the Capital Infrastructure Plan. Is that information readily available to see if that was the case? Was there enough work there to say if Colville Lake did receive the funding, this is the type of school that they would need? That's what I'm asking.

Nahendeh, Trout Lake, or Nahanni, if they are in a temporary school, I'm not too sure. Our definition in government is as temporary, but that school is in a temporary waiting stage, and they're not in a, as we would think, a proper facility, education facility. Does that go to education to you guys? Or you guys have some information that this is what you could do a type of school with a number of students in that school? I'm just looking for some information. I know Education is coming up next, so I will probably want to ask the same question and try to get some information for the education estimates.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, we provide technical advice to departments on building status, building condition, which is part of figuring out what the deferred maintenance is and figuring out what work needs to be done on a regular basis.

But the priorities come from the departments themselves on what items are going to fall into the capital plan. Once an item is in the capital plan, there's often a planning study that's required. We participate in those planning studies, but the needs of the department come from the department in a sense, and then we help with operational plans and functional design and schematic design and those types of things. We will then facilitate the build through contracts. As far as where a project fits within the capital plan, the department is FMB.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Committee, we are on 7-17, Public Works and Services, activity summary, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$92.341 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. 7-18, Public Works and Services, information item, asset management, active positions. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Pages 7-20 and 7-21. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to just ask a little bit about our TSC services for authorities. I noticed that this division provides services to the Deh Cho, Sahtu, and Stanton Territorial Health Authorities. First of all, how long have we provided that service to them? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Stanton is new. We are just taking over Stanton now. The other authorities we've had for a couple of years, five years, at least five years.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that information. What happens when we take it over in terms of costs? Do we just bill them? Does TSC just bill them as they do other departments?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, chargeback rates have been established in the Government of the Northwest Territories by the TSC and we use those chargeback rates for the authority.

MR. BROMLEY: Presumably they used to cover that from their own funds and they did their own thing. Are the chargebacks, do we know, covering these new costs as we take them over, or are we having to fill in a bit? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We believe that it is going to work out, but we are in a pilot for three months. That will give us a better sense of the actual costs, but we believe what they are spending and what we charge is going to balance out. [Microphone turned off.]

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks. Just quickly for clarity, I assume the Minister is talking about Stanton, not Deh Cho and Sahtu which we have longer experience with. Is there anything to add on those? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I have indicated, we've been doing the other two authorities for five years or more, and they fit pretty much exactly in a similar capacity to the other departments that we are responsible for as well.

MR. BROMLEY: I didn't hear the timing of the three months' work that's happening now or the future, but I think the committee would be interested in how that pilot goes. What is the schedule? I think we heard in the Department of Health that the plan is to incorporate all of the health authorities. Is that true for all authorities in Education and so on? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: March 31st is basically the end of the three months, so we will have a better sense within a month. With respect to are we planning to take on any additional health or education boards, I will go to Ms. Gault.

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

MS. GAULT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's currently something we are in discussion with the Department of Health. They are looking at this and have asked for input to help them make that assessment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that information. I would say Health is very keen, based on our discussions in Health. It is understandable. If we could standardize so many things across our authorities, it would clearly help out this government in many ways. I hope that is possible.

My next question was: What is the schedule for bringing them on side? I guess we're not at that point yet. I guess I would encourage the Minister to give that support. I am sure he can see the opportunities for efficiencies that standardization brings. We clearly have the capacity or the capability to take that on. That's all I had. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Moving on with questions on this page I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask the Minister, in light of what we are discussing on another front, the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line and what we see here for the Technology Service Centre.

In our small communities, we have different departments that belong to us and different authorities and health and education boards. Everybody is using different systems. It costs us quite a bit of money in those small communities. Is there a system now being looked at where everybody will be using that will cut down costs for some of the innovative concepts and ideas that are being discussed, like the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic line and the Technical Service Centre would be taking advantage of these new types of technology that are coming on line here?

I know in one of my communities, I have noticed a high number of invoices and money that is costing the Government of the Northwest Territories in order to have this type of service in our education, our health centres and municipal governments. It is draining our budget fairly good here. I'm looking forward to seeing some of these cost-saving measures in this area that will be helping us out quite a bit here. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, the lead on the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link is actually the Department of Finance. We see ourselves as being a potential client. Right now, actually it was late in the life of the 16th Assembly, early in the life of the 17th Assembly, the department managed to obtain an agreement on a more formal and greater degree of bandwidth, which I think has helped a lot of the GNWT programs and services. Different

departments have different requirements for bandwidth based on the programming they have in place. We have all heard about the challenges the health system is facing with respect to bandwidth for some of the medical health records and medical tools that are available.

We would be a client just like everybody else. It's when we see opportunity here to increase bandwidth speed and efficiency of our programs that it will give us opportunities to have greater degrees of teleconferencing and other tools that are available. We are with you. We are a client on this one as well. We see much opportunity should this and when this goes ahead.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you for clarification, Mr. Minister. As a client, what does it cost for a community of Deline to be clients that will now operate with the bandwidth? What is it costing our government now to have that service in that community to deliver our programs and services such as telehealth or Education? Do you have some kind of number?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Some of that falls into other departments, like Education, Culture and Employment has some agreements for bandwidth so that they can run some of their school programs, and Health and Social Services is often in the same boat. With respect to the Technology Service Centre and offices that we're responsible for, I don't have that specific detail in front of me, but I will look to see if we can break it down to that degree. I'm not actually 100 percent sure that we can break it down to that degree because we're buying bandwidth in a fairly large scale, but I will attempt to get that detail for the Member and committee.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Committee, we're on page 7-21, Public Works and Services, activity summary, Technology Service Centre, operations expenditure summary, \$1.282 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Pages 7-22 and 7-23, Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, \$1.894 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Well, I would like to ask a question and I'd hate to think we're stifling public debate and democracy here, and shame on those who groan if we ask some questions. The petroleum products division, would they be able to talk about what resources they have here, what resources they use in human capital and certainly in the context of financial resources they spread out and to what communities? As of recently, I've clearly been raising the issue of gas regulation and I've likened it to some of the work we do under petroleum products division already. So I'm curious on the

human capital we have invested and working for us, as well, and where they're located. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Give me a second here and I'll get the breakdown of positions. As we're looking for the actual specifics, we've got a number of petroleum products division staff. We've got a couple located here in Yellowknife, including the director, but the vast majority of the staff in the petroleum products division is located in Fort Simpson, in the Deh Cho. We're still looking for the exact numbers. Once we get that, we'd be happy to provide that to you.

As Members know, when it comes to the petroleum products division, we work on a cost-recovery basis, not a profit basis where the price of fuel in each of the communities is determined by what we're able to purchase it for and we're always looking for the lowest price, what it costs to ship it to whichever community it happens to be going into – we provide it in 16 communities – applicable taxes, some evaporation rates, which are quite small, and then there is a little bit of an operations cost that we put on to provide money to provide to a community vendor who is providing the distribution of the fuel, whether it's home heating diesel or whether it's fuel for vehicles in the community. So we work completely on a cost recovery.

We do have some prices here, if the Members are interested in that, on what it actually costs us in each community. Those prices usually change once a year based on the price of fuel when we bring it in. So we do have all the price information, I'm happy to share with the Member, as well, but as far as staff, a few of them are here in Yellowknife, the vast majority are in Simpson. Sorry, I don't have the exact information. I will get the exact information on number of employees and where they're located to the Members.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. And at the same time if he'd provide the breakdown of the pricing information, he doesn't have to read it here today, but if he could attach that information and I'll look forward to him saying that he will do that.

At the same time, what does Public Works and Services do for fuel stabilization to avoid rate shock? What is the program or policy that we have? Do we build a bit of – I hate to use the word profit – but do we build a bit of a profit scheme into it to balance that out?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, we will provide the rates in every community to the Member and committee. We will provide the list of employees in PPD. I do have the numbers in front of me now. We've got five PPD positions in Yellowknife, seven in Fort Simpson and three in Inuvik.

With respect to rate shock, as I've indicated previously, we work on a cost-recovery basis. Everybody knows when we bring the fuel in. It's pretty obvious, depending on the community. Some of it's barge haul in the summer, depending on the location of the community. Others we do by winter road. We've got a number of communities where we're currently hauling fuel in. Once it's in and we can determine the actual cost plus the markup for the local vendor, then we're able to determine the costs. We'll be there soon. By the end of the winter road season we'll have a sense of what the price will be in those communities.

As always, we're looking for ways to keep those costs as low as possible, and we will provide the current rate in the 16 communities we're responsible for to Members and committee. We've got the information, but we'll give the Members and committee a paper copy. We've worked really hard to keep those rates as low as we can. Because we only provide fuel once a year, basically it doesn't change over the year. We only bring it in once.

MR. HAWKINS: How does the department determine the markup rate for local vendors to supply that? What is it based on? Is it based on a percentage of usage? Is it a flat rate? Could they explain it and perhaps provide some ranges? I don't know if it's proprietary information or if it's negotiated. Maybe he could answer and explain how they get to these rates and where is it publicly disclosed.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In the 16 communities where we're responsible for fuel, we own the tanks, facilities and fuel itself. As far as the delivery agent, the person in the community who is going to deliver it for us, we do a request for proposal and have community representatives and people from the North submit proposals on the price that they feel they can be the distributor of this product using our facilities for it. It's basically coming from an RFP open, competitive, public process.

MR. HAWKINS: So it's determined by the winning vendor in a competitive process. Okay. Is that publicly disclosed in some manner or form?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The end results and commissions are, yes.

MR. HAWKINS: I think my last question, assuming it's a favourable answer obviously, is, can I get a copy of this detail?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, I will get that information to the committee and the Member.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think I'd done a Member's statement on fuel delivery to the communities and trying to

evaluate the best way to lower the cost of living. Because that's one of the biggest single factors in the communities, is people depend on the heating fuel and the gasoline and the mode of diesel as well.

So I did ask some written questions, as well, and I'm kind of waiting on those responses. I'm just wondering if this department looked at alternative ways of getting fuel to the communities. I was kind of leaning towards exploring a subsidy so that the cost of the fuel is lower in the communities. I'd just like to know if the department has explored alternative ways of delivering and even lowering the cost of delivering fuel to the communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're always looking for ways to reduce the cost of fuel in the communities. We're always looking for the lowest priced vendor. We're open to exploring options for delivery. For some of our communities, we do a fuel barge. We're always looking for creative solutions to reduce our costs, be it where the fuel comes from might help us reduce the costs.

As far as subsidies, some concerns about that because if we put in a subsidy within PPD itself, the difference would have to come out of the revolving fund. If we start taking money out of the revolving fund in one area, it could end up, and possibly would end up, with some getting lower but the prices in other areas being jacked up at the same time. We have to make sure that we have a fair process that isn't putting any additional burden on any community.

We want to keep the prices low. We're always open. If the Member has some suggestions, we're willing to hear them. If communities have suggestions, we're willing to hear them.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Of course one, of the ways that we could explore other ways of doing it is... Because I know that each community has a different rate for the fuel that's delivered to the community, which is kind of like the experience we had with NWT Power Corporation where we had specific community-based rates.

Is there a way to spread this cost out over all the communities where we have economies of scale so that the delivery costs are spread out throughout the whole remote communities that we serve?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Just by way of example, automotive gasoline in our 16 communities ranges right now, based on our current pricing structure in place, from \$1.48 per litre up to and including \$1.80 per litre. If we were to attempt to do some levelling there, we would see some communities go up noticeably. We would see other communities go down significantly. With our

revolving fund to cover those types of differences to level things out, we would start to eat through our revolving fund, which is dangerous. We have to make sure we keep a certain amount in that revolving fund to cover our costs as costs change.

There are market conditions that affect us as well. We do buy our fuel and try to get it from the lowest vendor. I hear what the Member is saying about trying to find ways to keep the costs down, but some communities, including communities in the Deh Cho, would likely go up with levelling, not down. The Deh Cho has some of the lowest prices in the Northwest Territories for the 16 communities that we are responsible for.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Like I said, I had done a Member's statement and had provided written questions to the House and upon receipt of the information as well as the commitment to share whatever information I had to my colleague Mr. Hawkins. I look forward to these details and trying to come up with some ideas of how to do things differently in order to achieve one of the priorities of our Assembly, which is to lower the cost of living in all our communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We'll take that as a comment. Moving on with questions on this page I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I notice that environmental management is part of the responsibility of the division and I'm wondering what sort of costs we encounter. Or do we have a few years of information on the sorts of costs that we encounter for environmental management? I assume that would include things like proper storage of fossil fuels, cleanup of fossil fuels, transportation. Let's start with that one.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As far as costs on that, I don't have the specific details right in front of me, but I can promise to get that to the Member. We could also, because we know what the transportation costs are, and we know what the purchasing costs are, and we know what the criteria are for the communities, we can get the detail on the specific communities as far as what it's costing us to get the fuel there, which is part of the information we use to determine the price of fuel per community. We can get that information for the Member and committee.

MR. BROMLEY: I'm not really asking for transportation costs unless there's an environmental management aspect to that. The rest of it, in terms of meeting the standards for fossil fuel storage and what cleanup costs we have, what is our cost to replace the proper storage equipment for fossil fuel storage and so on? I appreciate the Minister's commitment there, I just don't want him

to do more work than I'm asking for necessarily. Liabilities, what are our current and anticipated environmental liabilities within this division?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We'll go to Mr. Guy for some specifics on that and the criterion conditions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have a process in place where we do regular environmental site assessments of all of our PPD facilities. We regularly update those so we have a systematic plan where we go through, do an environmental assessment, and then we'll do a phase 2, if we need to, and get detailed estimates of what any of the liabilities are. Then we book those through the general Environmental Liabilities Fund with the Department of Finance.

So we would have to go back and get the total that's in there broken out. Then, of course, if there's any work that needs to be done, we have access to funding through the Environmental Liabilities Fund to do that. I think we did some cleanup in the last few years of some of our PPD sites, so we've been making some progress on that. I would have to get back with the current total of known environmental liabilities for PPD.

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

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that information and commitment. I think the Minister and deputy minister have got where I'm coming from and I'd appreciate that information. What's the Environmental Liabilities Fund? I'm afraid I'm ignorant of that. Is it just within this department or is it a government-wide fund? Where does it lodge itself? How much is it?

MR. GUY: That resides with the Department of Finance.

MR. BROMLEY: I think that's it. I will look forward to that information, and I will be prepared to ask questions on the Environmental Liabilities Fund when the Department of Finance comes up.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Page 7-23, Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, \$1.894 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-24, Public Works and Services, information item, lease commitments - infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-26, Public Works and Services, information item, Technology Service Centre (chargeback). Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in the context of full-cost accounting, and if I may call it an obvious technicality that I'm seeing, why do we charge back on TSC services but we don't charge back on costs for utilities?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For some specifics on that I will go to the deputy. With respect to the Technology Service Centre, we are providing a service to departments whereas with utilities we have management responsibility of the asset. There are some slight differences in the two.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I would agree with the Minister's assessment on that. When we look at utilities, it's a cost associated with operating the building or maintaining the building. That falls under our mandate to operate and maintain the buildings.

The Technology Service Centre is a service we provide to other departments on really a consumption basis. The utilities, for example, of the TSC are in Public Works and Services' budget. They are not charged back in that way. But the service that we provide for desktop support and computers, hardware, access to Internet, digital communications network are charged back based on consumption.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Is there a clear distinction as to why we would just not bother with the chargeback at all and just get FMB to fund, for example, Public Works an additional \$20 million and avoid the additional, sort of, paperwork and the flow to each individual department and the accountability on that sense?

Because in some respects, I heard the Minister's point. I realize it, which is it's just a direct flow-through of payment schedule when it comes to, say, the power bill or the fuel bill. But in this one, what about maintenance? The department, say, maintains, I'll say a school. That might not be the best example, but it is an example. But we don't do a chargeback for that. Public Works is expected to absorb that cost as part of their mandate.

Wouldn't one then be able to derive that providing technical services through our system – outside of maybe hardware, that is, because each individual department can prescribe or demand their own services as necessary – wouldn't it then seem logical that we would do a consistent pattern with computer services?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The difference, as the deputy minister indicated, is in one situation the TSC, we are providing a service to a client department, as opposed to with the buildings we have the mandate to operate and maintain those facilities. They happen to have a client department in them. In some of our buildings we've got multiple departments, and it would be very difficult to start identifying who's responsible for what percentage of power. We operate and maintain those buildings. We, therefore, like any landlord, would be responsible for making sure that the juice was on and that the fluids were flowing.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm not sure that I agree with the distinction. I mean, I would say that building maintenance, operation maintenance is somewhat identical to this and it's split per usage, so based on percentage. If you have mixed usage, it would be based on mixed usage. Other governments do this. The federal government does this. Any organization using common area space would do this. You ask anybody in a condominium, they pay per square footage on their condo fees on common usage space.

I'm just curious why we wouldn't do this on one but yet on TSE we do a direct chargeback. To me, it's a paradox. As well as the other question, which seems to be, what is the actual cost to run this division? I see we have \$12 million for other operations, and I'm just wondering, is that dedicated to the actual cost of running the TSE.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I get the Member's point. I think we're going to have to agree to disagree. I think there are some fundamental differences. With respect to the utilities, the way it's working now, we've got the budget. We're able to track. We're able to provide reports, and we provide quality maintenance to buildings and monitoring of this particular situation.

With respect to the \$12.211 million, the Member did ask some questions on this last year that were well pointed, and he indicated the title that is now recoveries used to be revenue. There was some confusion about that, and the Member suggested some changes. So we've changed that to recoveries rather than revenue because this is basically a direct chargeback.

The \$12.211 million is actual for things such as \$179,000 for travel, \$72,000 for materials and supplies, \$231,000 for purchased services, \$11,000 for utilities, \$1.036 million for contract services, \$7,000 for fees and payments, \$8,000 for controllable assets, and \$10.667 million for computer hardware and software. We will provide that detail to committee.

MR. HAWKINS: I do hear his point about agreeing to disagree. I would maybe leave this point with asking what type of analysis would be required to maybe revisit this subject, which is, in essence, just blobbing the money together. Public Works' budget is further bolstered with an additional \$20 million, and we treat it in a similar manner as the operations, as noted earlier.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We believe things are working quite well with the assets management with respect to utilities. We're able to provide real great reporting. We can show usage. We can do all the tracking, and we've got the budget to cover it. I don't believe it's causing any undue stress or problems with departments, but if committee wants to direct us to do that analysis, we're happy to consider it.

I missed the other part of the question.

MR. HAWKINS: I guess I'm just after continuous, sort of, similarities there in the sense of continuous play. If we do this, it is one thing. But, no, I think I have enough information on this area, so no need to probe any further. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Moving on with questions on this page I do have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a quick one on the recoveries. I noticed '13-14 for other public agencies is roughly triple of the previous year. Is that associated with the taking on of Stanton, or is there another explanation for that?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member nailed it. That's Stanton.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Committee, we are on page 7-26, Public Works and Services, information item, Technology Service Centre (chargeback). Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-27, Public Works and Services, information item, Technology Service Centre (chargeback). Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-28, Public Works and Services, information item, Public Stores Revolving Fund. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 7-30, Public Works and Services, information item, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-31, Public Works and Services, information item, Petroleum

Products Revolving Fund, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-32, Public Works and Services, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Being none, 7-33, Public Works and Services, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Committee, if I can get you to return to department summary, 7-7. Public Works and Services, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$104.505 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agree.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Public Works and Services is completed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. I'd like to thank Minister Abernethy, Ms. Gault and Mr. Guy. Thank you for joining us tonight. If I can get the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

Members, if I can get you to turn your attention to Education. We're going to ask Minister Lafferty if he has any opening comments.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I am pleased to present the 2013-14 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The department's operations expense summary proposes an overall ECE budget of \$299.611 million, an increase of 3.6 percent over the 2012-13 Main Estimates. Of this amount, about \$213 million will be paid out in contributions for the delivery of a range of programs. This includes over \$183 million to support the operation of our NWT school and college education systems and another \$15.5 million to account for the amortization of department facilities and other assets.

Education and Culture

I would like to now highlight some of the important programs and key initiatives that will be supported by the department's 2013-14 Main Estimates.

Culture and Heritage

Arts and culture not only provide Northerners with a foundation for learning and growth, but cultural and heritage-related activities diversify our economy and add to our GDP. In 2013-14, we plan to spend close to \$7 million on culture and heritage programs and services.

Under the Arts Strategy, ECE and Industry, Tourism and Investment are working with the NWT Professional Media Association to strengthen ties between the film and media industry and government agencies.

The department has negotiated a new four-year agreement for the care and storage of the Government of Nunavut museum and archive collection that provides just over \$1 million in annual revenue to our government. The funding will compensate the GNWT for the costs associated with housing the Nunavut collection. This arrangement is intended to be temporary to allow Nunavut to build the needed infrastructure to ensure the collection, which is a Canadian treasure, is safely stored.

Official Languages

To speak one's own language provides a sense of identity and belonging. Language activities assist communities to promote and revitalize their culture and language and, in so doing, these language activities contribute to community economic and social well-being.

In 2013-14, the department plans to spend over \$15 million to support Aboriginal language programs and services. Approximately \$13 million of this amount will be paid out in contributions to support Aboriginal language and cultural programs offered in early childhood centres, in schools, at Aurora College and in communities across the NWT. The 2013-14 Main Estimates also include close to \$2.7 million for French language programs and services managed under the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

The department will continue to lead the implementation of the GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services working with all GNWT departments and agencies.

For Aboriginal languages, work is underway to enhance organizational support for languages and revitalization activities, and ensure that Aboriginal Languages Plan implementation continues. In 2013-14, the department plans to add three new regional Aboriginal language coordinator positions to be located in Fort McPherson, Fort Providence and Deline.

Early Childhood

Early childhood development programs promote healthy child growth and readiness to learn, reducing the burden on the health, education and justice systems over time. Early childhood programs also help parents become or stay employed, thus increasing economic opportunities for many northern families.

In 2013-14, the department plans to spend \$7.7 million on early childhood development programs,

about \$1.4 million more than budgeted in the 2012-13 Main Estimates.

Work by ECE and Health and Social Services on the renewal of the Early Childhood Development Framework will result in completion of a renewed framework in the spring of 2013. The renewed framework will build on public input and will include new research and best practices, to ensure that all our investment decisions are evidence-based.

The two departments are also continuing work on a number of early childhood initiatives, including expansion of the Healthy Families program, early childhood promotion and development of community wellness plans. Other activities also underway include an early childhood development public awareness campaign, distribution of age appropriate baby bags and child and family resources centre pilots.

The two child and family resources centre pilot sites in Tulita and Ndilo are focusing on capacity building as well as the provision of parenting sessions and resources, training and making connections with community members to promote greater awareness of early childhood development and the development of community support systems.

ECE is also completing the actions outlined in the Child Daycare Inspection and Licensing Process Action Plan to monitor compliance with the Northwest Territories Child Daycare Act and Regulations. The 2013-14 Main Estimates include a new child daycare inspection coordinator position to ensure inspections are conducted in an efficient and timely manner.

K-12 Education and Libraries

Ensuring the success of all students in the NWT kindergarten to Grade 12 education system is key to building a strong, sustainable future for our territory. In 2013-14, this government will spend over \$166 million on school and library programs. Most of this amount will go to education authorities for the delivery of K-12 education.

To improve student performance, the department has initiated a broad-based review of the NWT education system toward developing a comprehensive territory-wide action plan as recommended by the Auditor General of Canada.

The department will continue to work with our partners to build on the four pillars of the Aboriginal Student Achievement plan. Future actions will include research on best practices and recommendations on how to make better use of existing educational resources.

Elders are the keepers of traditions, languages and stories and offer an invaluable contribution to education in NWT schools. I am very happy to announce that beginning this upcoming 2013-14 school year, we will be launching a NWT Elders in

Schools Program to ensure that elder involvement in NWT schools is increased and strengthened. The department will develop an Elders in Schools Handbook modeled on the Nunavut program. This work will be done in consultation with the education authorities for completion by June 2013.

The department is working with education authorities to improve the delivery of student supports provided under the Inclusive Schooling program. ECE staff have provided training to five regions within the last year on the development and implementation of individual education plans and student support plans. ECE is also developing a new data collection system that will provide detailed information on the programming received and required for students in the NWT. It will be operational in the fall of 2013. This work, along with the review of Inclusive Schooling taking place as part of the education renewal initiative, will help us build a more effective evidence-based program.

In 2013-14, in response to concerns heard from Members, the department will implement, and provide supports for, a territorial Safe Schools Plan along with anti-bullying legislation.

Advanced Education

Post-secondary, training and employment programs help NWT adults acquire the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to access current and future economic opportunities, and to contribute to building a strong future for our territory. In 2013-14, the department plans to spend close to \$49 million on advanced education and employment programs.

Through regional training partnerships, ECE continues to work closely with Aboriginal and community governments, as well as with Aurora College and other partners under the NWT Labour Force Development Framework to ensure Northerners have the education, training and skills to positively contribute to their communities and the wider society. In 2013, the department will renegotiate our Canada/NWT Labour Force Development Agreement.

In 2013-14, the department will action recommendations from the Adult Literacy and Basic Education review, and work with Aurora College to deliver new initiatives under the federal Northern Adult and Basic Education Strategy. The Adult Recognition Model process will be revised based on feedback from the pilot program.

As committed in its response to the Office of the Auditor General's Review of Education in the NWT, the department will introduce an Accountability Framework for the Education and Training of Adults in the NWT, including performance measures for ongoing monitoring and tracking of results in the fall of 2013. The framework will allow for better evaluation, planning, decision-making and public

reporting on adult post-secondary and training programs.

ECE will work with other departments to respond to increased oil and gas exploration and anticipated development in the Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta. Two new positions are planned for the Sahtu to help prepare for, and support residents to take advantage of, new opportunities.

In 2012-13, the department worked with Public Works and Services, PWS, and Aurora College to begin moving students attending education programs in Inuvik and their families from older college housing units into leased accommodation. The family housing units were beyond economic repair and there were growing concerns about the condition of the units. The relocation process is underway and will be completed before the start of the next academic year. Savings realized by PWS from closing the existing units will be used to fund \$469,000 of the \$898,000 increase to the department's 2013-14 Main Estimates.

Income Security

Income security programs exist to assist people to meet their basic needs and achieve greater self-reliance at a time when they are most vulnerable. In 2013-14, the department plans to spend close to \$42 million on income security programs, which provide a range of supports to NWT residents in need of assistance.

In 2013-14, the department will continue to promote client participation in productive choices by linking income assistance clients with career counseling and other support services they may require. The department is also participating in developing the GNWT Anti-Poverty Strategy, and will be implementing an action plan in response to the recommendations from the Student Financial Assistance Program review.

On September 1, 2012, the Child Care User Subsidy Program was rolled into the Income Assistance Program to reduce red tape, and rates were increased to provide greater benefits for low-income parents in need of child care. In the first four months of new delivery under income assistance, the number of families accessing Child Care User Subsidy benefits monthly rose substantially. Beginning in spring 2013, the department will be implementing a new income assistance benefit to pay pardon fees, which may enable clients with a historical criminal record greater access to the workforce.

I have clearly heard Members' concerns that students struggle to make ends meet and I am pleased to advise that the 2013-14 Main Estimates include over \$1.1 million to fund increased student benefits. Starting in 2013, our post-secondary students will receive an extra \$150 per month living allowance. In addition, the annual allowance for

disabled students will increase from \$8,000 to \$10,000. Other actions based on the review of the Student Financial Assistance program are also planned, including the provision of tuition and book assistance to incarcerated individuals, as well as incentives for students in a veterinary medicine program.

The 2013-14 Main Estimates also include \$768,000 to fund benefits for more NWT post-secondary students as the number of students accessing student financial assistance has increased in line with the rising number of Grade 12 graduates, a 12 percent increase from 2005 to 2011.

In Summary

The department's job is to support residents in reaching their education, training and employment goals, and in making positive choices for themselves and their family. In this way, residents are encouraged to be as self-reliant as possible and to develop a strong identity based on their culture and heritage. Determining the levels of support that help Northerners meet their needs is a challenge that requires constant review. Based on this Assembly's vision and goals, we believe we are making the best investments, for the most people, within our fiscal reality.

I would be pleased to answer any questions that Members may have at this time. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Do you have witnesses you would like to bring into the House?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, you can bring the witnesses into the House.

Minister Lafferty, if you'd like to introduce your witnesses to the House.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I have with me to my left, Gabriela Eggenhofer, my deputy minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment; Paul Devitt, director of strategic business; and also Dana Heide, the new associate deputy minister in ECE. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Heide, Mr. Devitt, Ms. Eggenhofer, welcome to the House. What we're going to be doing here, committee, is we will be opening up with general comments and then we'll allow the Minister to reply after we're done. General comments. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I welcome the Minister and his colleagues and his staff to the House today. As I have done earlier with other

departments, I just want to highlight some of the concerns that came out of the Beaufort-Delta Regional Council meeting where our Minister's staff was in attendance.

First of all, just the high school in Sachs Harbour. The leadership of the region was concerned and wanted to see how we can get graduates in Sachs Harbour right out of Grade 12, rather than having to send them to Inuvik to a boarding school. It is the same with Paulatuk. They want to try to increase some of the education programs, and include some type of adult education and utilize the school to get some of those programs. I just want to get that on the record. That came out of the Beaufort-Delta regional leadership meeting that was held last January.

I am also interested to hear some of the comments that the Minister stated in here. It looks pretty good. Like I said, I will try to keep my comments short. When we get into detail, we will get into some of the specifics.

In the opening comments I didn't hear anything in regard to the e-learning program, long distance learning program. I know there's a pilot project that is going on out of Inuvik right now. They have been pretty successful in terms of the succession rates of students that are passing their advanced courses. Actually, it's really upping the statistics for some of our smaller communities that have always had low passing grades. I just wanted to mention that and see what the plans are in the future for this e-learning program. Just even talking along those lines, the Minister did state with the official languages, some of the money going into there, but even with the e-learning program in the small communities, we do have some of our well-known language speakers that would be able to speak, say in coming out of Fort McPherson, they might be able to teach other people in Aklavik, Inuvik or Tsiigehtchic with this e-learning. That is an opportunity as well.

Under heritage, I'm not sure if the Minister and staff might have heard earlier this week – it might have even been yesterday – when I asked the Minister of Justice about creating some type of museum or some type of heritage structure for the RCMP "G" Division. They have played a big role in contributing to the North. They have a big role in what the North is and who we are. There is a lot of history there and it would be great to celebrate that, to acknowledge that, and to educate our residents on the history of the RCMP in the Northwest Territories.

Just one last little note here before we get into the real detail, and that is just in terms of income assistance. I know in the past year, and last year, actually, I even noted it in some comments and suggestions, and possibly even questions in the House here, about the increase of income support

and income assistance in the Beaufort-Delta region. I think we're starting to see that now. With the slow economic activity that is happening there, we are getting more and more people that are starting to rely on government and applying for the income assistance. It is costing government a lot more money now. I'm not sure if that is reflected in the detail. When we get to those budget line items, we will see how much money was appropriated for that program itself.

Just some things that I didn't see in the Minister's opening comments. When we will get into detail I think we will be having a few more questions in this department. I commend the work that's recently been done in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and I look forward to getting into detail with this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of comments in no particular order. I will kind of go through the Minister's opening remarks.

Initially, in the first page, I am pleased to see that we are working to increase the opportunities, I guess, for film within the NWT. We are starting to have quite a strong industry here. I think, along with Industry, Tourism and Investment, ECE has to recognize that we need to change the assistance we give to our film industry. I think that thought is there, but I don't see anything in the Minister's remarks in terms of money or a different way of assisting filmmakers to entice them to come to the NWT and to make movies here. I think it's an area where we need to change our policy. I believe there is some thought being given to it, but I don't see any evidence from either ITI or ECE that that is coming.

Under official languages, I am disappointed that there is no reference to any upcoming legislation in and around the Official Languages Act. There was a review of the Official Languages Act in the 16th Assembly and there were recommendations to make some changes to legislation to collapse the two boards into one. That recommendation has been sitting there for quite some time. I have yet to see any indication that the legislation is being worked on to make the Aboriginal languages boards more efficient. I think at this point we're wasting money and I don't think we have any money to waste.

There is a mention in the Minister's remarks about it says 1.4 dollars more. I suspect that is supposed to be \$1.4 million. However, we are spending \$7.7 million on early childhood development programs and that's about \$1.4 million more than was budgeted for 2012-13, not to the revised estimates but to the budgeted estimates. I do believe that from the budgeted 2012-13 estimates, we added approximately \$1 million at the request of

committee. That means we have an increase in this budget of about \$.4 million, \$400,000. If that's the case, that's not a heck of a lot. In terms of what committee is looking for, I don't think it will do the trick in what we think we need to have to increase early childhood development.

Under the K to 12 education and libraries, there is a mention of a broad-based review of the NWT education system. I look forward to asking some questions of the Minister as to what that review is and what is anticipated to be accomplished with that.

I know, to the bottom of that page, there is some discussion about inclusive schooling programs. The department is working with education authorities to improve the delivery of student supports. I couldn't agree more that that is something that is absolutely necessary, but I'm not so sure that just improving the supports is what we need. We need to provide a different method of providing those supports to our education districts and our education authorities. The way that we are currently funding inclusive schooling is not equitable. It's not providing funds to the boards that have students with greater needs. The broad brush 18 percent across-the-board approach is not allowing boards to provide the supports that are needed to those students who have great needs.

I noted it talks about building a more effective evidence-based program and I totally agree with that philosophy. I think that is absolutely the way we have to go, but I think it's going to require a very comprehensive and research-based look at how we currently fund our inclusive schooling across the board. If we don't rely on evidence, and some of that evidence would be those students who require far greater support than others. There are some that just simply require about half an hour of extra instruction and there are others that require a full-time aide all day, and sometimes some of them require two aides all day, but schools are not funded based on the needs of the students and they should be.

Advanced education, the department will action recommendations from the Adult Literacy and Basic Education review. It's good to see that we're going to move forward on that. That review was done some time ago. I will have some questions as to what that means when we come to that section of the budget.

With income support I have concerns, as does my colleague Mr. Moses. We spend a huge amount of money on income support and I don't think that we look seriously at our policies around income support, our policies around housing, our policies around all our other subsidy programs. I don't think we look at those policies with a view as to whether they are complementary or whether they are contradictory for the clients that are getting income

support. I think we end up with policies that create barriers for our income support clients.

I think the other problem with income support is there is not a lot of flexibility on the part of the income assistance officers to be a little flexible in their assessments. I get the impression that we provide the officers with a computer program, they plug in a bunch of numbers or a situation, and out comes an answer and that's it. There's no if's, and's or but's. There's no variation. There's no flexibility on the part of the officer to provide a bit of a different funding model for a particular client. I think that that's something which we need to look at.

If my information is correct, the last time there was a fairly comprehensive review of the income support or Income Assistance Program, it was almost six years ago. I think it was 2007. I think that's something we should probably seriously consider doing. Times have changed and computers are great, but computers don't look at the human need. Computers look at numbers and specifics, and we have to look at what the humans need.

I am really pleased to see that we have an increase in the numbers of families accessing Child Care User Subsidy benefits. That's been a program which really wasn't working very well, and whatever change has been made, usage has increased substantially, so I'm really glad to see that.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, with regard to technology for our schools, we are somewhat hampered at this point because we don't have access to high speed Internet in many places. With the coming of the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link, which looks like we may have something in two and a half or three years' time, I will have some questions to the Minister and the department about how we are going to use that new technology that we will have access to, and how we will change our education program based on the new technology, and the faster speeds, and the access to more things worldwide. That's it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, before we continue on with general comments, we are just going to take a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Committee, we will come back to order. We are on general comments, Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Menicoche.

Mr. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to highlight some of the issues I have been challenged with, with regard to Education, Culture and Employment one more time, I guess.

One of the big issues this term, as MLA for Nahendeh, is to champion the small schools in our small communities, most particularly creating a new Trout Lake school. If anything, if the Minister could respond to general comments to what kind of plan he has moving forward, that would be great. I have the documentation for 2018, et cetera, but that's not something that the leadership and myself want to hear. We'd really like to work towards getting this moved up in the capital planning for a stand-alone school for the community of Trout Lake.

Another issue that I want to address is library services in the community of Fort Simpson as opposed to a resource centre. I am still moving forward with that and will hopefully get some solution on that. I know they're working on a bit of a strategy. I'd like to see where the department is on that right now.

I am pleased to see the opening statement reflect the need for increased resources in the Sahtu; however, I have been making the case, as well, that the development is impacting my region as well, the communities of Fort Simpson and Wrigley, so if we could also dedicate some resources to those communities on a go-forward basis as we move forward.

This is a new and emerging thing. We didn't see the impacts. Initially, we just thought it would be the Sahtu and it's a bigger impact than we anticipated, and should it be fully developed, we'll see probably a fourfold, fivefold increase in traffic and impacting all our resources, people, the trading needed, facilities in the community of Wrigley, dumps, just a whole myriad of impacts on the communities.

As well, another issue that I see time and time again as I travel to my communities is elders in the Fuel Subsidy Program. I've raised this in the House many times, as have many MLAs, and I'd like to see how the department is going to address this. I know they have checks in place, but often it's not the elder's fault that they want somebody to stay with them. When that somebody is staying with them, the income is low or minimal. So I thought about it over and over how to best address it, and the way to handle it is almost heading to a universal fuel subsidy despite the circumstances, that elders should get the fuel.

I know why the rules are there. It's to prevent abuse, somebody that is actually working making good money and living off our elders. But in many, many cases people come to me and are appealing the fact that I'm here to care for my mother, she's being impacted. I'm taking time off work to be here with her, and sometimes the family members, be it the children or nephews, they are often taking time off work to live with the elder.

You know, part of our focus, too, is to try to keep our elders in their homes as long as we can. It's not in our nature to be sending our seniors off to

seniors facilities, and often they're in another community than they reside in. I'd like to ask the Minister in his response, as well, and general comments, what kind of strategy, what kind of thinking has the department given this. Is there a better way to do it?

With that, those are my general comments. Once we get through specific departments I'll ask questions as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next on the list is Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have some general comments and I will base them on the Minister's introductory remarks so it will be easy, hopefully, to follow along.

I do appreciate the work that the department does in the area of culture and heritage, and I'm particularly pleased that our staff have managed to negotiate the \$1 million-plus revenue from Nunavut to help with the storage costs for Nunavut-based artifacts. Those are important artifacts. They need to be stored properly and there is a real cost, so I appreciate the department figuring out how to get those covered.

I also appreciate the three new regional Aboriginal language coordinator positions, Fort McPherson, Providence and Deline. Certainly, I know Gwich'in is a language under threat, so these are areas that I'm happy to see some work happening in. I know the Minister is well aware of the language issues in my riding and I'm sure that we're whittling away on those.

The \$7.7 million on early childhood, the Minister knows, again, I fully, 120 percent, support that; \$1.4 million more than budgeted in the '12-13 Main Estimates. I presume that's the final budget that we passed that we're talking about there and that this is not the same addition from last year. If that's so, I think this does meet the Minister's commitment from last year to recognize that increasing funding in early childhood development will be needed for future years, so I appreciate that completion of his commitment.

Early childhood, you know, there are lots of things to comment on and specifics of what is happening there. I see the distribution of age-appropriate baby bags. I hope that's not a duplication, because I know there are other agencies distributing those. The child and family resource centre pilots, again, I was very unhappy, and I see this happening with other things, as well, with the timing. We're leaving these things until the very end of the fiscal year to get going and, of course, then they're rushed and not effectively done. The Minister did commit with those two child and family resource centres that there would be a PY filled by a fully qualified ECD, so I will be interested in whether that has been

achieved as per the Minister's commitment for a full-time coordinator.

The bottom of page 3 has included a new child daycare inspection coordinator position. I'm wondering if we need a full-time position on that. Does this require it? How many daycare centres do we have? Is this position actually going to do the inspections or is it to ensure that the inspections are done, in which case I would expect we wouldn't need a full-time. It's very critical work but do we need a full-time position there?

Again, looking at the territorial-wide action plan from a broad-based review of the education system, again, I support that. I think there is overwhelming evidence of how early childhood development, which is not necessarily part of the education system but needs to be integrated with it, and some of those features carried on through the early years in our educational system are important to pay attention to in that refocusing. I appreciate the Minister getting started on this broad-based review. The importance of play, for example, and the less importance on homework in those early years. Moving away from a fear-based education system to one that's clearly focused on the well-being of the child, helping the child to know themselves and discover what their talents and interests are, and helping them to develop those. I'm hoping that we're going to take advantage of lessons learned in that work.

The Elders in Schools Program. We have heard this before and it didn't happen. I still am kind of excited to hear it again, so I'm hoping the Minister will, indeed, come through here. I know the Minister, with Health, carried out a lot of consultation on ECD which involved elders, and it seemed like there was a certain amount of wisdom coming out of that. There might be some skill bases that could be tapped into there by the various school authorities. I don't know what role the Minister might have there but it doesn't hurt to help contribute that information.

Certainly, there is a great need, as seen by many of my colleagues as well as myself, on the need to improve the delivery of the Inclusive Schooling and how we do that. I am disappointed that we're just now developing a new data collection system, but on the other hand, I'm glad to see it going ahead and I will be very happy to see that in place this coming fall.

The accountability framework for the education and training of adults in the NWT, again another Auditor General recommendation and discussed quite a bit in our program review office work, so I'll be happy to see that. Is that ready to put in place? Is it developed and in place, in fact, when we say we'll introduce it are we talking about spending the year developing it, and maybe at the last few weeks we'll introduce it to actually put it to work.

Two new positions for the Sahtu. In recognition of what's happening there, I appreciate the Minister being progressive on that front.

Just flipping through my notes here, I notice on Child Care User Subsidy the number of families accessing the Child Care User Subsidy benefits monthly rose substantially and I know that there were changes made, so I'm wondering what this actually reflects. If I can get that put in plain English. Does this mean that the demand is up, that the need is up, or is that they've just recognized that this is a valuable resource they can tap into, sort of, belatedly, and now they're doing that? If I can get some clarity on that one.

Again, I'm glad to see these new reports, the Student Financial Assistance review and whatnot are coming, and are going to be put on the website, accessible Adult Basic Education review, so I'll look forward to that. I'm very happy to see the incentives for students in a veterinarian medicine program. I worked closely with the Minister on that for several years and that sounds good to me.

That's it, Madam Chair. I just do note that the department is increasing 3.6 percent. It's more than average across departments, but on the other hand, this department, I think, is recognized to be so important that if there is a department that goes over, this is one of them that I think we would generally support. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We are on general comments, Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've just got some comments, in terms of the department. I understand the department is the second biggest department in terms of its operational budget. I have some interest in terms of trying to at least understand – from my perspective in representing Fort Providence, Kakisa, the reserve, and Enterprise – the rates of success in terms of graduation in terms of high school, university, and whether there is more we can do in terms of encouraging kids to stay in school, and at the same time, ensure they have a value-added educational approach where we are trying to concentrate on academics at the same time trying to balance it off with at least trying to promote youth to understand their culture. I think it's trying to balance the two.

In some respects, perhaps there are plans when we need to concentrate on academics, ensuring that the kids that graduate are able to make the jump into college or else a vocation where they take on a technical trade or else they advance themselves to the university level of education. It is important at this time in the North that we have successful rates. I would like to see, in terms of the advancement and the progress that the department has been making, I would like to ensure that... I understand

some of the initiatives that might be undertaken to reach those goals in the course of this year.

I have some concerns. One of them, of course, is the Senior Fuel Subsidy. There's a high cost of living that we experience up here in the North, more so for elders because they are on a fixed income. Sometimes, some elders, it's just the circumstance, they have to either live by themselves or else, if they have children that they feel that they need to be close to and make a decision to have someone live with them, sometimes they have a hard time trying to ensure that they at least meet the minimum requirements to be eligible for the seniors fuel subsidy. Sometimes they are deemed ineligible. I know the department is trying to apply an initiative that is fair. At the same time, it is resourceful in terms of its efficiency in terms of operating, ensuring that we also meet the needs of elders. I understand it's a challenge, but perhaps we need to try to at least focus the initiatives. It is there as an existing program to assist elders.

The other area is income support. In some communities we have a high rate of income support in terms of people that are unemployed and don't have the opportunities in the larger centres and regions where industry has a presence and job opportunities are more abundant in those centres. At the community level, it is a challenge for people to get by and make a living. Income support, I think, has to be delivered in a way that is respectful and that people don't feel that they're being downtrodden again in the circumstance of trying to at least make a living that is dignified. I know that is challenging, perhaps, for some families that have to live on income support, but we don't need to make it disrespectful. We need to ensure that the program is delivered in a very dignified and respectful manner for recipients of income support.

There are some areas I'm interested in. One of them is the youth centre in looking to see if there are ways of trying to collaborate and co-ordinate on the few resources that we might have at the community level to ensure that we develop programs that are fairly efficient, at the same time create at least a forum for youth to come together and work together and experience leadership, at the same time a community service. But sometimes they just don't have a place that they could hang out. I know there are restraints in terms of capital dollars for building new centres, but perhaps maybe we can begin laying the seeds for perhaps some eventual centres in some of the communities and see if perhaps we can work on that.

Another instance is the idea of a trade centre, perhaps in my home community of Fort Providence. It has been raised and it's been discussed. At some point I think there could be an opportunity to meet with departmental officials and community leadership. I look forward to that opportunity and to

work with the officials to realize an opportunity to try and establish a trade centre.

Of course, I also have some interest and we have been working on the Early Childhood Development Initiative for some time. There have been some very successful Aboriginal historic programs in some communities, including Fort Providence. I would like to understand what the relationship is that exists now, if there is one. What kind of co-operation? What kind of co-ordination is being done so that we build from people that have worked in the fields, to try to learn from their experience and make successful programs delivered?

I have an interest in history, too. For one, to see if there could be some initiatives to perhaps undertake community history projects so that you have a group of people at least do some research, perhaps in the end have a document that can be shared among all the governments and departments including the communities. I have a particular interest in that.

Languages, of course, I have always believed in my language and to see if there is a way that we can maybe make the link between language and radio. I know there are some very successful and established radio stations across the North, especially small communities. They become a very accepted medium within communities where it is relied upon right from morning until the evening, and not just only for bingos. It is there to give information out. I think it's undervalued and it could be used to perhaps advance language initiatives. I know there have been some projects that have been successful, but I feel that we perhaps could do more.

With those comments, in closing, I think the school in Fort Providence, under the leadership of our principal Lois, has done some great things. It has been very successful. I look forward to the next year in terms of trying to work with them and do as much as we can. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Next on the list is Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I welcome the Minister and delegation here today. In fact, it's nice to see fresh faces. It's nice to see smiling faces. I see a lot of pink out there too. That is also nice to see. Thank you again to the department for their kind, generous offer today with the carnations. I think carnations are a real nice touch. On behalf of the Assembly, thank you for your thoughtfulness.

With all this newness that we have in the department, I am very optimistic what I'm hearing from the Minister. I see a lot of good things in the opening comments. I am very optimistic that we should have a very good and dynamic year. I will say that for the record.

I also would like to comment on the opening address, picking out certain key things that jumped out of the page when I read, and also indicate certain things of caution in the wind in terms of maybe we need to slow down and look at some things. Please keep that in mind as I'm going through the opening address here.

With culture and heritage, I'm going to focus on the film and media industry here. I had the privilege and pleasure to sit down with the national film producers not that long ago. I clearly asked them what are their needs. What do they need from us to make it better, more efficient, more effective so that they will continue to invest in the North? I think these are the stewards of film and media. I think we have to listen to the requests here. They said they would like to see cultural consultants, a program developed through our college and where they can actually be a part of the process. They would be more than happy to help be part of the on-the-ground training for these cultural consultants. They said they would even look at bringing these students down to Vancouver and Toronto to work with the film industry and teach them the ropes.

The advantage of that, Madam Chair, is the fact that now we've got these cultural consultants that can actually depict the proper cultural sensitivity when these exact film producers come back up north. So it's reciprocal. It's something they can provide to us in terms of the means of advancing a career. On the flip side, we are going to be able to provide them the right cultural capacity so when they are doing their film, their national/international films, they are depicting the right cultural sensitivity. So I think it's a win/win here and I'm really hoping that with that, we can find a winning solution.

With the official languages, I'm pleased to see that we're spending \$15 million to support Aboriginal languages and programs. However, I'm also concerned that language use for Aboriginal language is in serious decline. We've seen the statistics. We were with you there toe to toe. We're concerned. We have five of the NWT Aboriginal languages that have less than 500 speakers. That's significant. So when we're spending this type of money, I caution the department to always keep that in consideration. Are there other ways to use that money more wisely so we can get a bigger impact? You just heard from Member Nadli, radio. How much emphasis do we put on radio? It sounds like it's a great opportunity to look at that in our communities. So I challenge the department. We've got a brand new team here. Let's think outside the box. Let's not just keep throwing money in the same direction that we have. We've got a languages board, we've got a revitalization board, we've got a lot of tools out there to help with languages, but I'm gravely concerned that just throwing money at existing programs is not going to bring languages back. So I challenge this brand

new team with the Minister to come up with better ways.

Early childhood development, I am very pleased with where this is going with the department and I continue to support them on their quest. I sat with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Health when we were doing our family resource centre talks with the community. I'm glad to see that we've got two pilot buildings, or two pilot sites to lead in Ndilo, but I'm also challenging the department, don't just rest your laurels on that. I'm sure if you went back and looked at all the comments from all the participants, they are very, very supportive. The community is ready and willing, so if we are able to get these pilots off the ground this year, let's push the agenda. Let's get these out there. They want to build capacity, there is a lot of building capacity we can do in this area, so I challenge the department to push that agenda. Don't wait until the last year of our Assembly to make these big announcements. Let's use time on our side while we're here.

I'm also pleased, Madam Chair, that they are completing all the actions outlined in the Child Daycare Inspection. Of course, this is a direct result of the Auditor General of Canada, and I'm pleased to see that this is part of your opening address and your commitment to that. I challenge you to continue.

K to 12, we know that school enrollments are on the decline in the Northwest Territories. That's a challenge. So I also say in the same breath as I said how we preserve our languages, I also say let's be very, very careful and conscientious how we're spending \$166 million, please. When you have a decline and you're still throwing money in the same way, we've got to think outside the box. I'm going to challenge your department in the details of this budget but throughout the next fiscal year as well.

Launching NWT Elders in Schools, all I can say is top notch. That is an incredible leap and I encourage you to continue down that way.

Inclusive Schooling program, the Minister and department are very much aware that there have been a lot of comments in the House. Many Members have made reference to the concern that we've removed some of those funds and we have to put them back. But I'm saying if we are going to put them back, let's be smart about it. We need to redefine the distribution of money and we have to base it on the needs of the students and not by a formula assessment which we did before. I say that again, the needs of the students and not by formula assessment. The money has to follow the students, not the school boards. I want you to make sure that that's emphasized, if possible, in the next year.

Advanced education, the Minister and I had an opportunity to be a participant with Skills Canada. I really encourage you to continue with that program.

It's not mentioned in your opening address, but I think it should be. I think it may have been a miss. I'm hoping the department and the Minister is equally committed with Skills Canada in terms of its ongoing ability to entice and flush out all these students that we could put to work and give them the tools. More so, the Minister is very much aware of my passion, and the only time you get excited is when you go down there and see these kids yourself and watch our students do incredible things and compete on a national stage and win, not bronze, not silver, but gold. So we've got to be pretty proud of what those kids have achieved for the NWT.

More so, the Minister and I looked at the opportunity down in areas where they've had their national competitions, and it was called Try a Trade. The Try a Trade program we can't offer here because it involves bringing that skill set to the Northwest Territories, but the Try a Trade program allowed students to try trades that they would never ever see. I encourage that we put some money towards Skills Canada to not only bring our regional winners but bring those students that show, by investing some time and energy, show them trades that they have never seen before. Let's open up their eyes. If anything else, they are a booster squad to our regional winners and it's okay to have cheerleaders down there, as I found out. The more noise you make, the better I feel, and I encourage you to do that.

Again, I appreciate the commitment and response to the Auditor General's review to education and the accountability framework. Again, anything to do with the Auditor General, you will get 100 percent from this Member here.

Last but not last, the Student Financial Assistance, I am very pleased to see there is more money to go into supporting students and, also, with living allowances. That's definitely on the right track. The only thing I brought up a number of times, and it still doesn't seem to be resonating on the radar, is our appeals process for SFA is in dire need of an overhaul. So I'm challenging this new crop, this new group of senior people here with education, to put that on the radar for this next fiscal year.

In summary, Madam Chair, it comes down to two key areas to which I'm hoping the department – again this is on my perspective and observation, not only as a member but also as an academic – there's two striking features that I think we have to focus on if we are going to truly have a direct impact with our kids. One, without a doubt, is increasing our graduation rates. That is a true key indicator, a performance indicator, and I think everything we do as educators, everything we do as a department needs to focus around graduation rates. We have to push that number up and be on par with our provincial counterparts.

Number two in my books, in terms of the best measurable possible, is keeping kids in the classroom. One statistic that drove me, and I was just stunned by, is that for every six years of education, there are a number of students that miss one year. So by the time they graduate, out of K to 12, they would have missed two years of education. Now, that is a statistic that is incredible. It doesn't matter how much money you put in there, we have to keep these kids in their seats. How do we do that? That's the challenge I have for you. At the end of the day, that involves your graduation rates and then we deal with things like functional grade level. You can't get functional grade level if you miss two years of school by the time you get to Grade 12.

So I want to put a lens on those two areas of statistics. I challenge the department to always have that under their hat when they're dealing with issues. Does it meet the means test? Everything you do. Graduation rates and keeping these kids in the classroom. I think if we can do those two, we are well on our way, Madam Chair. Thank you very much for your time.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Probably a lot of my comments are similar to my colleagues here. I am definitely happy to see the 3.6 percent increase in the budget. I think this is a department of great potential for this territory. Education is very important to the development of us. Obviously, the activity in Early Childhood Development is very proactive of us to be involved in that. I am definitely happy to see the Student Financial Assistance enhancements, as well as some of my colleagues have indicated that getting money back into the Inclusive Schooling would be a definite asset to us.

Some of the areas of concern in this department that I have is we're dealing with budget, we're dealing with budgets from, from my perspective it's from the community of Hay River, but they're dealing with the South Slave Divisional Board's budget. So some of the areas of concern in that area is the flexibility of funding from the board's perspective and from the DEA's perspective. A lot of the funding is provided to them in columns. These are what the funds are used for and if they're not used for that then they have to be returned. We're having some difficulties in communities like Hay River with some of the funding not being allocated and spent when there's dollars that are being overspent, let's say for busing, where we spend a lot of money in busing because the community of Hay River is spread out all over the place. Other communities don't even do busing and still get busing funding. So I think flexibility in funding, and we've seen some of the same issues with Health and some of the other departments

where a lot of the funds are given in columns. It would be nice to have flexibility in the funding.

My colleagues have discussed some of the official languages and the numbers. Some languages are doing really well, very strong, but some are very, very weak. I think we have to look at that and the way we fund those, and look at different ways that we can build those very weak ones and see if there's a way to do more with the little bit of money that we're spending there. I think there's potential to keep some of those languages on the go, but it's very difficult when there are very few people speaking those languages. So we have to be very creative. I challenge the department to find ways to do that.

One of the other areas that I'm happy to see the department working on is some of the education that's going to be happening with all the development throughout the Northwest Territories. The excitement in the Sahtu area and even the potential in the Beau-Del area as far as educating people and where some of the work potential is going to be... If we ever do that Tuk to Inuvik highway, there's going to be training requirements. Obviously, the Sahtu work, there's all kinds of educating people and having skilled people so that we can keep Northerners working in the North.

So I think it's a very exciting department, a very big budget. I think those are my general comments and I'll have more specific questions as we go along. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thanks, Mr. Bouchard. Next on the list is Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've looked at this department and I'd like to make comments. First of all, I'm glad the department is responding to the oil and gas activity by the planting of two positions in the budget so they can come and work with the people in the Sahtu to handle the increase of oil and gas activity. As to their role in the community, I'll probably ask the Minister later as to what type of work they're going to be doing to get the people in the Sahtu ready for the oil and gas activity.

As you're well aware, we also have the new hospital and long-term care facilities. So there's some activity happening there. So I wanted to really nail down and specifically focus on the training programs for oil and gas, construction, health care and also for providing some access training programs for teachers from our small communities that want to enter into the profession of teaching.

So we're ready to move in the Sahtu and I think the spark for us was the number of oil companies that are investing into our region. It's a God-given signal that we're finally going to get some attention after many years of not having much activity.

So I'm going to focus on the investment and this has been an overall highlight of the introductions to this department; investment and where do we invest, how much do we invest and what type of investments will get the best return on the dollars that we're going to spend in the North and in the Sahtu.

As my colleague Mr. Bromley has said, I'm glad that the Minister has written down something that he said a year and a half ago about putting elders into the school. I have to wait on this one here with that old face. I will believe it when I see it. I want to see how this program is going to be enrolled. I've been at it for a long, long time so I'm not too excited until I see a program, which we've talked about for a long, long time. I have difficulty understanding why it took so long. We've been at it for a long, long time and I don't know what sparked the Minister to say, well, this is it. So I'll wait and see, take a wait and see approach. I've been stunned once, so I have to watch the second time.

I've looked at the budget, and the Minister is embarking on some of the development that we're going to have in the Northwest Territories. The most important development I see now in the Sahtu is the development of the young minds in our education system. I, like my colleague from Nahendeh, think our school is the most important piece of educational infrastructure in our communities. That's where we develop the young minds of our students and this shows when we have graduations that our students are not graduating with the quality of a diploma. That really concerns me and it concerns a lot of people in the Sahtu. When we graduate our students, it's not the same type of quality of diploma as in the larger centres. That's where we have the haves and have-nots of our education. I think that the Minister needs to go to the federal government and ask the federal government if it's owning up to its fiduciary responsibility obligations in educating our children and the funding that should be under that responsibility by the federal government. Too many of our students are going back to school and it's become somewhat of a joke in our communities that if you graduate, you can just go back to Aurora College or are you going to go upgrading or are you going to work, because their diploma is not where they think it's going to go in terms of post-secondary education institutions.

Mr. Dolynny talked about Skills Canada. Some of our schools don't even have those types of services and programs in our schools to have our students go to Skills Canada. So we need to look at some of those things. If we're going to be on equal par in having our students reach their fullest potential, then I think the Minister and his new team should really look at how do we really shake up the education system. So if I had my children going back into the Sahtu and when they finish they could

be just as good as the students in Yellowknife, Hay River or Inuvik in their education, that's what I want, I want the fullest potential. Maybe we have to do things so differently in our smaller communities because we cannot compete with the larger centres. We just do not have the chemistry or biology or science program in Colville Lake. We've got to look at that. We can't have a cookie cutter. I applaud the students in these larger centres. They're doing good. But we're one or two or three grades. We hang them. We're not reaching their fullest potential. I think we need to shift our education almost into a charter-type of school, because the public education right now with the passing requirement or the social passing is not doing us any good. We can only fool ourselves, and someone's got to save the empire. The emperor has no clothes on, and that's what we're telling our students. I hope that we can have some discussion on that. I believe that the staff could help us here. How do we reach the fullest potential of our students and get our parents in the Sahtu communities saying yes, my student finished Grade 12, and that's a Grade 12. That's not a Grade 12 with two more years of upgrading to get into a college or to get into a university.

Students in the Sahtu want to go to university, they want to go to college. Some of them want to be trappers and hunters. With the oil and gas coming into the Sahtu, and if we give the green light to do the new technology called fracking, then we need to prepare them to take that training. It's very scientific. It requires a lot of training and a lot of educating. I think that we've got to look at many ways to help our parents help the kids to reach their fullest potential.

Sometimes it's not all education. Henry Ford had what, less than three months of schooling? He became the richest man in the world. Thomas Edison didn't even reach high school and he became one of the world's greatest inventors. We could have that in the Northwest Territories. It's how you look at education. It's the mind, it's the way people think. Right now I think the education is to collect information and memorize it and stamp it. We've got to develop that type of thinking with our education system. That's what I'm talking about. We did not survive as Aboriginal people for thousands of years by... We had to be really smart to survive. That's what I'm saying.

We've got to tap into that potential, and that's why I am somewhat cautious as to the Minister's announcement on elders. That's who our true teachers are. That's the Aboriginal way of having these teachers recognized as teachers, and not just coming in for prayer and singing and say a few words. Is there a certificate program? I don't know. I'll have to wait and see.

I think that our contribution to the North and to the Sahtu has to be recognized. The Minister has talked about some things in his opening comments that I'm going to go through when we go from detail to detail, but the Minister has a big department, a big responsibility, and we've got to do our best to support him and the staff to do this.

I say these words because I've been sitting here close to nine years. I've been going through the budgets and hoping and hoping. I say this because I care about the people and I care about the work that we're doing, and I see it in the regions with our elders, with our school kids, our language and culture, social assistance, things that we need to prepare for what's happening in the Sahtu. There is lots of oil and gas activity happening. We have to get our plan ready for educating and training. I hope to see a Sahtu trades centre there. Mr. Ramsay says, well, when the oil and gas are proven up, we need to look at some of those things. If that's proven up, then that should qualify for a Sahtu trades centre.

I have much more to say but I wanted to tell the Minister that I will work with you and I will work on some of these things, but I need to see some things that are going to make a difference. You have made some, don't get me all wrong here, but I'll go through the department on a line-by-line. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Committee, we are on general comments. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Where I'll start today is maybe on the topic of bullying. It seems like a timely subject to bring up today and, of course, now that we have the Minister and the officials before us.

I would say, I, too, would like to give compliments to the Minister, and certainly the staff that brought forward the initiative of the corsages. It was kind of a neat little touch and that went well for us to help support the youth, so I want to thank the Minister and the department for that. I think that was a nice thing. And, you know, those little things go a long way, you know, oddly enough, and it's the little things that count.

The reason I'm bringing up bullying is because the issue of bullying legislation, and certainly, in some form, regulations, is how that will roll out one day. We look forward to hearing those details. I'd like to hear some details on where that initiative is going. One of the critical components, as we all know, is that this has to be done not in isolation but in partnership with our teaching organizations and our teachers, because they will be a fundamental component to the success of this type of program. I mean, we can make all the laws in the world we want but, I mean, they're useless if they're not enforced or are not supported. That said, it has to

be done in a manner that works with them, not against them.

I don't see the teachers, in my view, if I may say humbly, as the enforcement, like the police of bullying. What we need to do is help give them tools that we can help support these types of initiatives. That may not be everything that needs to be said today on that topic, but it's about tools and helping them and supporting them. We saw the outcry today. I mean, the Minister had his eyes wide open, the same as everyone else that is, in the manner of seeing how many young people were here today. It was very touching, deeply touching.

I can even tell you as a parent, as well as I know many people here in our Assembly here today are parents, and you hear your kids come home and talk about bullying and also you hear the voice of hopelessness when they talk about it. I can say even for myself, I heard my own son, the youngest one, say the other day how he didn't want to go to school because of bullies. It's not about my kid. It's about everybody's kid. I mean, how many parents like to hear that story?

School is supposed to be an exciting place to go. Maybe not on test day or, in my case, test result day or report card day as well. That said, school is supposed to be a wonderful time and it's supposed to be embraced with great memories as we look back and say that was a happy, safe time, and that I want all students to look back and say those are memories that when times are tough they always look back, and I want those to be the memories that they remember and make them smile.

Another area I'd like to touch base on, again, briefly. It's funny how 10 minutes goes by so fast. To no surprise, the Minister will hear me bring this topic up, which is Aurora College. Aurora College, I realize, is a capital project, but the planning starts with the seeds within the department and its initiatives. The ground breaking begins with the first pen hitting a piece of paper as a plan that develops an initiative that finds partners. I continue to raise this subject, and I wish we'd get to talk about how we get there. I know we don't have the capital budget before us. That's no illusion to me. I know we don't have the, whether it's 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 million, dollars to just say here's the new campus, but it all begins with the first piece of paper. I mean, it starts with the initiative of drawing up a plan, bringing the discussion to the table, creating a roundtable. I mean, the Minister could do this if he really wanted to. It would be very groundbreaking to start this type of process off.

The fact that Aurora College needs an independent campus in Yellowknife can no longer be ignored. I believe we're punishing the students in some form or fashion, maybe not formally when we think of the word punishment of the old strict ruler against the hand form, but more so in the sense of we're

denying them educational opportunities here. We're denying all Northerners educational opportunities by the constrictive sense of the building it's in. It's a good building. The building was built for a great purpose. It still serves a fantastic purpose of helping people.

But by the same token, the obligations of a government to think beyond its present circumstances is critical, and it needs to look beyond today and say where can we bring education in five years. They should be asking themselves why do we not have more southern students coming north to get educated. We have great programs we can offer. Why don't we have student housing that has an excellent mix? And we could be doing all these things. Maybe not today, maybe it's a five- or 10-year plan, but those plans have to start with the first pen to paper.

My colleagues, people like Mr. Dolynny, spoke well on film, and I won't speak any further other than to say the industry tells me they are looking for grants and resources. Grants are more useful than tax breaks. Tax breaks only help if you make money. So it's critical in that view.

As I mentioned, the other thing I would like to talk about is community employment initiatives created by the department. What I think is small community initiatives, employment initiatives are key to keep people healthy. We need people working, but they also have to be tied to education. I'm well aware that the federal government has recently allocated I think \$8.6 million to education programs for adult eds who did not graduate. Yet here I continue some days joyfully, but on the other hand sometimes painfully.

I rail against the Minister of ITI about not living up to what I feel are true expectations or fulfilling the socio-economic agreements. I'm going to say he's also correct: it is an adult education problem too. I didn't even look up when I said he was correct. So I do give him credit for the fact that he is right, that it's a component of the issue.

But we're not here to talk about socio-economic agreements. Education is a critical component. I think enough has been said about inclusive education. I share the concerns that have been raised.

One thing that was mentioned, but I think was also overlooked, was there was discussion by you, I believe, Madam Chair, about the Languages Commissioner and the boards or the two boards that come together. It was my understanding that at one time it was suggested that the Languages Commissioner's role be phased out. There was a package delivered to my office sometime late last year, sometime in November or into December, where it seems as if the Languages Commissioner is taking on the role of what the department should actually do. Although it's done with good

stewardship and good intent, I feel the direction of it is...The Languages Commissioner is not doing what the commissioner's job is directed to do by legislation. So although it's recognized as important work to be done, I feel the role isn't being properly fulfilled. That said, maybe the Languages Commissioner's role either needs to be expanded, or needs to be examined at the very least.

To continue on language, the issue was spoken very well by other colleagues, but one of the things that I continue to see as an obvious problem – and I have yet to hear how the department is going to challenge this – is how is the department building partnerships with regional languages and regional governments. We put such importance upon language, we should be building fundamental partnerships with these Aboriginal groups who have Aboriginal governments. What better way to rebuild a language than building a partnership with these folks? It is in their very best interest to ensure the languages continue, and I certainly support that.

The GNWT cannot go it alone. We can't be the only people trying to worry about these things. Yet we hear very little about the partnership other than us giving them the money. To support that, I support mechanisms that strive to keep these things alive because they are fundamental to culture. I recognize that as very significant.

I think I mentioned inclusive school, but if I didn't, it's important, and that hasn't changed.

One of the things and another area I was kind of looking to hear more about was skill and training development. I think Mr. Dolynny mentioned trades. But when you speak to industry, they actually talk about wanting more skills and trades development done in the North to draw down on those critical skills. Ironically, I say more in the sense of surprise, because you are going against the old stereotypes where they are saying they'd rather have the women in trades because women do a better job. They are more reliable than the men, and I think it's a demonstration that stereotypes need to be put away. It's the women that show up to work, the women who do the work, and I think that's great. That's a great thing.

What I would like to see is more trade development. I come from a family that's a blue collar background, and we were always taught about how important trades are. Here it is 25 years later from when I was finishing high school, and trades were almost an embarrassing thing to get into. Here it is 25 years later, and they are one of the most critical components where we're lacking skills in that area.

The last thing I would like to say, and I know my time has come to the end here, but obesity rates in children continue to significantly rise. There are more reports in the news that continues to demonstrate this as fact. What I'll leave as my last thought on this particular issue is that there needs

to be more programming to get kids active. The sad thing of today is the old Huckleberry Finn lifestyle of getting out and having adventures is long gone. It's replaced by fast skidoos or Internet. It's a real shame. Our kids have lost the joy of playing or lost the joy of activity or sports, and it's a real challenge getting them out there. I wouldn't mind hearing some thoughts on how we are going to get kids active and fight those obesity rates.

Madam Chair, my time is over, but I will have more questions and comments on specific pages. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Are we agreed general comments are concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): I will go to the Minister for a response, if he chooses.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Chair. I would just like to thank the Members for their comments. There are a lot of important comments pertaining to this budget and a lot of areas for long-term strategies as well.

First of all, there was a discussion on Sachs Harbour boarding and so forth. I believe part of the discussion that we had regarding e-learning is that is the way to go now. There's been a question whether there will be an investment in eLearning and why we didn't see it in the budget. This is a brand new area that we are exploring. I'd like to see us invest in those areas the next business planning cycle. It may not be here now, but this is an area I am interested in, and it's the way to go.

Part of the heritage, the structure, I realize the Justice department is working on that as well. Part of my portfolio is heritage, so I will definitely work closely with the Member and also with the Justice Minister, because it's been addressed in this House already. We want to be involved in that, as well, because it's part of our heritage and history. So we're looking forward to our continued discussion in this area, Madam Chair.

Increases in income support/income assistance in the Beaufort-Delta due to potential low activity happening at this point, we are monitoring that. We are doing what we can to provide more opportunities, like training. We talk about labour market development agreements for individuals that don't qualify for EI. We addressed that earlier in the House as well. We need to maximize the programs we have in our department, along with others.

In the Beaufort-Delta, as you know, there's going to be activity that will be happening, and we need to prepare our people for that, whether it's on a contract basis through ITI, whether it be qualified, skilled individuals. We heard "skilled individuals" on numerous occasions, so we will be working on that.

Part of our goal is to have a decrease in income assistance throughout the Northwest Territories. Every time I meet with my department, I always stress that. We need to decrease that number.

Increase in film, this is an area that ITI and my department... My department deals directly with arts and crafts, ITI deals with the film industry, but we are working hand in hand and we are getting involved even further. We've had some requests in the past, as well just recently, and we are working towards that. So I'm sure you'll see some increase in the funding as we continue our discussion for next year's business planning cycle. I believe there's more than one individual organization that has been requesting. Then there have been several meetings with Minister Ramsay, as well, through these groups.

Official Languages Act, there's been talks on numerous occasions on more efficient operations, compiling all of the information, the resources. I think we're working towards that. As you know, there's going to be a symposium that's going to be happening on Aboriginal languages in the next couple weeks, and we want to seek input and ideas on the second phase of our approach, the Aboriginal Languages Secretariat, how it's going to look, and part of the whole organizational structure is to amalgamate and also compile all the resources that we have within our department. I've stated before, we have over \$14 million within our department and we want to have that available to the communities. So we're doing what we can to be efficient and effective in that area, and that's part of the reason why we're establishing this Aboriginal Languages Secretariat.

Early childhood development, the renewal. The framework itself is very complex. We've had a lot of good discussions, very positive. We had some elders, over 80 elders came in, in the last couple weeks, along with stakeholders. There have been three of the most powerful speakers that came out, as well, experts in the field. So we had a lot of input and now we're getting ready to start developing a plan towards that, their recommendations, their discussions. Out of that you'll see a lot of great opportunities that we need to move forward on. Obviously, that would be the next business planning cycle. This business planning cycle was initiated last fall. So, obviously, this is an area that my department is totally focused on. It's one of the first priorities. So we will be coming back to this House with a package in the spring session to table a document. That's our target.

The student support, working with the various school boards, I understand that we need to make some changes and we need to have different methods where inclusive schooling has been brought up on numerous occasions. We currently provide funding to school boards based on a

formula, but we've been told that it's not really working. We're just handing out the funds to the school boards and there's no results base in return. So this is an area that I'm seriously looking at as part of our education renewal. We want to make some changes. As Mr. Dolynny alluded to, potentially the funding should follow those students, not directly to the school boards. Those are areas that we need to discuss. We do have some time to do that now and we want to get ready for next year. It's going to be very complex, but at the same time, we're investing into our kids and we want to find the most efficient ways of doing that, the most effective way as well. So we are diligently working towards that within my department. That's another priority area for us. We talk about the research on evidence based across the board.

There has been an adult education review, as you know, that has been undertaken. We are working closely with the college on this particular piece of work. The question was, is it ready to go out yet, and that's a discussion that we've been having with the college. I want to present to the standing committee on the status on that, and when the time comes on our business plan, we can talk in detail on that.

There's been discussion on income support that we should focus on the needs of the individuals as opposed to whether it be computer-driven or a policy. This is an area that I've instructed my department to seriously look at, potentially in some areas where there could be some flexibility. It's been brought to my attention on numerous occasions. So I've already instructed my department to look in those areas, how we can work with that. So once the information is available, I will be sharing it with the standing committee. Any changes that we foresee making, then I'll definitely be before standing committee.

As you know, with modern technology, it's always changing. The fibre optic, we had a presentation this morning. It looks like it's going forward within the next couple of years. Obviously, our school boards, our school system, education system will take full advantage of that, whether it be on-line programs and all those digital and various features that will be available to us, we're just anxiously waiting for that. So we're very excited, and it sounds like it is moving forward and there's going to be a lot of discussion. The federal government is a partner in this as well. We've already invested in the fibre optic through this government as well. So we can't wait until it's up and running.

The small schools, whether it be Trout Lake or Colville, is an area that we've been discussing as part of our capital planning process, although we're not talking about capital here today. This is an area that I've also instructed my department to look seriously at how we make that a priority in the small

communities. Part of that is also education renewal. As you know, one of the pillars talks about the small community schools. So it does capture the small communities and, based on that, I would like to see some changes. The capital infrastructure, we go through that on an annual basis and we've put those requests forward, but there are other pressing needs and so forth. But definitely the small community schools, the two schools that have been addressed in this House on numerous occasions, we will be working with that. I've instructed my department to look at it seriously.

Library services, there's been some increase in funding over the years and Mr. Menicoche has raised that issue on numerous occasions in this House. I still seriously want to work with him on that and how we can get around that. We've been working with the town council the last time we initiated our discussion, but I'll definitely get the latest status on this particular subject and maybe we can continue with our discussion on the next step, how we can go about this.

Economic development, new resources similar to the Sahtu region. The Member referenced that and that's an area that we have to keep a watchful eye. Again, we will be working closely with ITI, the economic arm. If there's a need such as the Sahtu, a similar approach, then we will be developing those positions based on the needs of the community. So we will be keeping the Members posted on that particular area.

Senior Fuel Subsidy is an area that I've instructed my new associate deputy minister to tackle. We've heard it not only here, but even outside visiting in the communities. An elder will come up to us, their kids are looking after them, and I'm fully aware of that. At the same time, there are some individuals that do take advantage of the system, but I'm sure there's a way we can get around it. So that's a challenge that I've given to one of my senior staff. We will come back with a plan; we are developing a plan of action.

There has been an increase in the \$10,000 threshold a couple years ago, I believe. So those are areas that we can still play with, but at the same time, we're going to come back with a plan.

The language is an area where... We need to focus in those key areas where we're losing our language, such as the Gwich'in and other official Aboriginal languages. We've provided some funds towards that and we are working closely with the federal government, as well, to increase our funding. As you know, we only get \$1.9 million a year for Aboriginal languages. The French language also gets \$1.9 million. So that's an area that we've been stressing with the federal government to increase that funding. Within our own existing fund we have just over \$14 million in different pots that we continue to invest into the

communities to revive our languages. There is a languages symposium that's coming up and we're investing in that, hoping that we'll get some returns out of that.

Child and Family Resource Centre, that's an area that we felt was needed so we put that forward for two communities, Tulita and Ndilo. The funding was supposed to have been rolled out this past fall. We've been working with the local bands to make that a reality. At this point, we are, again, continuing to work closely with the organizations to make it a success. Even though it's a pilot project, I believe we'll be seeing these types of projects into the communities on a long-term basis, because I believe it's needed. But at the same time, we are going through a developing framework. How is that going to play out? How is it going to look at the end of the day? Is the family resource centre still a priority within the framework? If it is, then we'll continue to move that forward.

There's a question on a child daycare inspector, whether it should be full time or part time. That's an area that we work closely with various organizations, especially the daycare organizations. They provide us feedback, and based on that, this position came up. We can discuss it further when we're in detail.

The Elders in Schools has been in the works for some time. I've addressed it in the House, as well, just recently. We are moving forward, and this fall, I've committed in this House, that there will be elders programming into our schools. We may not capture all 49 schools, but at least we'll capture some of them. That's an area that we are focusing on right now. That's the target date, for the '13-14 school year in the fall. So we are moving forward and I am very excited about this. It has taken some time, but at the same time, we want to have a product where there are no mistakes. There's been a lot of confusion and lot of miscommunication in how we can deal with the payments and so forth, but I think we're finally getting around that.

The graduation rates and getting kids ready for school are also priorities within our department, especially in the small, isolated communities. Again, I have to commend the Beaufort-Delta for undertaking e-learning. That's an area that's been successful to date, even though they just started recently. That's an area that we want to introduce into other regions as well. Especially small communities that cannot deliver Chemistry 30 or Biology 30, so those schools can take advantage of e-learning. My department is working closely with a program, with the Beaufort-Delta and others that are taking on that offer.

We want to increase the graduation rates, of course, and have those students ready for post-secondary, instead of them upgrading over and over again.

Another one that has been addressed is income support. Unemployment is high, and delivery in a respectful way, I totally agree with the Member. We have professional staff who deal with the clientele and they provide productive choices. If there's a training requirement that should be provided to them, as well, through the various programs we have within our department. So we will definitely follow through if there is an issue there with professionalism. I have even stated in this House, I believe it was a couple months ago, that there was training that was being undertaken for CSOs, client service officers, to deal with clientele. So I can provide more detailed information on that, Madam Chair.

The youth centre is a collaboration with other departments as well. Not only my department, but MACA and the Health department. Again, it's come down to capital infrastructure, but at the same time, what kind of program can we offer now today? That's an area that we can deal with interdepartmentally. Members are here; Ministers are keen listeners and they're taking notes, so we'll definitely work towards that.

The community learning centre has been addressed on a couple of occasions in the Sahtu region, and now it's been addressed in other regions, as well, such as Deh Cho. This is an area that we need to work closely with ITI, as well, and with the community organizations. What are the needs of the community? What kind of training is required? With the facility itself, can we use the existing facility? Going into communities, usually there are facilities that could be available such as community learning centres. The college will have to be involved as well. We need to take full advantage of our community learning centres that are in our communities. We will commit to working toward establishing programming into the communities.

There was another one on the potential of doing research, possibly producing books and documentation. I believe we have started that already and we will continue to enhance that. There has been some language programming and language documentation with CDs and DVDs, but this is an area that I'd like to further look into with the Member that raised that issue.

Language and broadcasting. We currently sponsor broadcasting in the North. Obviously, there's always an outcry for additional funding. We continue to monitor that and we feel that broadcasting is an effective way of communicating to the communities. In the Northwest Territories they only listen to CKLB and CBC. Right now, the federal government does contribute, but I believe there have been some debates over that. We continue with our existing funding to those organizations.

I did meet with my department to find out where we're at and how we can increase in those areas, whether it be the resources. We talk about nine Aboriginal languages and French and English, 11 official languages. Most of the languages are spoken on the radio, so this is an area that I'm very interested in how we can work with that. We have been working closely with CKLB. CBC has its own funding allocation directly from the feds, but we will continue to work with them.

The decline in K to 12, again, I have touched on that already. The need to better spend efficiently, I totally agree with that. I believe this whole education renewal, part of that is Inclusive Schooling. We need to highlight and also capture the system's accountability. That is one of the pillars with the small schools especially. The small schools are always left out, whether it be educational value, as Member Yakeleya alluded to, and I want to capture all of that within the renewal. Also, how we invest into our kids, into our schools, the school boards most effectively, efficiently. Within the renewal I would like to see that captured and make some changes towards that. Again, I will be going back to the standing committee with those changes.

Skills Canada, I was there with Member Dolynny. It was very exciting to see our own kids, our own Northwest Territories kids performing very well. We won some medals there. The Try a Trade, we saw them in action. We would like to see them here in the Northwest Territories, the venue. It would probably have to be in Yellowknife because there is so much equipment and so many people that will be coming for part of the project, I guess. Industries will definitely be involved and our department and ITI and various organizations, MACA and so forth, and other Aboriginal organizations I am sure will get on board. This is an area that the Member raised with me. I would like to further explore if there is any interest from potential partners and then I will update the Members on this particular piece of work. We will continue to sponsor on an annual basis to Skills Canada. I have already committed to that over the last few years. We see a real success in this programming, in Skills Canada. So we will continue to make that investment.

The SFA appeals process has been brought up next fiscal year. I would like to seriously look at this as well within my department. We just went through an SFA review and there have been some several recommendations towards the SFA appeals process. It has been brought up in the past. I definitely would like my department to look further into that and see if it can be brought forward.

Part of the discussion that took place was keeping kids in the classroom. Obviously, this will take the whole community to be part of. It won't be just the teachers or the school boards or the leaders, but

the parents and community members. Part of the renewal, obviously, will cover to some degree in that area of small community schools. How can we improve in those areas? Through the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, when we had undertaken that, we assessed them. We have developed some recommendations in that area. Keeping kids in school was one of the priorities of that initiative. We have provided some funding towards that as an incentive. It has worked out well, but I think we need to do more because we have 49 schools we have to deal with. This is an area that will be part of the discussion of educational renewal.

There has been a discussion about the flexibility of funding. We currently provide funding based on enrolment to school boards. The Member indicated that there should be some form of flexibility for a community. I can address that with the school boards and raise the same issue with the school boards on how we can get around that. The Member indicated that funds given out in columns such as if there is bus service, everybody gets the same but not every community has a bus service. I realize where the Member is coming from, so I will be addressing that with the school board chairs.

The two positions in the Sahtu region, the Member is asking what kind of work that is. We will be getting to further detail when it comes to that. It does highlight what kind of positions, career development and others. This was based on the activity that will be happening in the Sahtu region. We feel that it is a worthwhile investment such as with other departments that are investing in this area too.

The TEP program that the Member also discussed, he was saying that they are ready for it. This is an area that we have initiated with other regions. We are ready to head into another region so that could be the Sahtu region. We will be meeting with the school board to discuss further.

In concluding, the federal government, we were asked how come they are not contributing towards the school. Their policy states that they don't provide infrastructure funding towards educational facilities. We have approached them and we will continue to do so. I think we found an area that we can probably tackle in another venue with the federal government, so we will continue to push that forward.

Educational shake-up, I totally believe that is going to happen with education renewal. That is coming before the Assembly Members here.

The anti-bullying legislation, as you know, the NWTTA is actively involved. We're not doing this in isolation. We continue to work closely with them. How it's going to look is a debate we are going to be having. We're doing a comprehensive plan right now. There is legislation that we have been tasked

to look into from this Assembly. At the same time, we are doing a comprehensive plan to deal with what we currently have within the schools across the Northwest Territories to deal with bullying. That is an area that we will be coming back to this House with this spring. That is within the 18 months.

Aurora College, as you know, is part of the capital discussion, but I have also instructed my department to look further into this where we have initiated some option papers in the past. I want them to look at the options paper again. When we come to that, I can discuss in further detail. Some Members are familiar with the option paper I am referring to.

The Languages Commissioner and the partnership with the community groups, those are key points that we will be having with the language symposium and also the Aboriginal Languages Secretariat that will be established. They will be dealing with the roles and responsibilities or the compiling of all the resources that we have within our department, and they will be working closely with the Aboriginal groups. I think we are on the right path. It will take some time, but we will get there eventually.

There has been talk about a skilled and trades workforce. We need to continuously work closely with Mine Training Society, Aurora College, Aboriginal organizations, and industries. ITI is part of that as well. I believe we need to be prepared for any activity that is happening within our communities.

Last but not least, obesity is on the rise. Again, my department, through schools, will be working closely with the Department of Health and Social Services. Mahsi, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. We are on page 10-7. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister. Thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The seconder is Mr. Abernethy.

---Carried

MR. HAWKINS: ...(inaudible)...

MR. SPEAKER: Hey, Mr. Hawkins!

---Laughter

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

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 28, 2013, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 5-17(4), Extended Adjournment of the House to March 4, 2013
 - Motion 6-17(4), Gasoline Pricing Regulations
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014
 - Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.
Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until
Thursday, February 28th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:22 p.m.