



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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## **HANSARD**

**Tuesday, June 4, 2013**

Pages 2793 – 2826

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Nunakput)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, June 4, 2013****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 66-17(4):  
MINERAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY –  
ADVISORY PANEL REPORT**

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, mining has a long and rich history in the NWT. For more than 60 years, our vast resources have made us a land of great potential, and we need to make the most of that potential. One of the main priorities of this government is to have an economy that is strong and diversified, and we identified the need for a comprehensive, environmentally sustainable Mineral Development Strategy.

Later today, at the appropriate time, I will table the Mineral Development Strategy Panel's report, titled "Pathways to Mineral Development." This report represents stakeholders' opinions and offers a number of recommendations based on their input as well as the panel's own extensive experience. The recommendations in this report will play a key role in shaping the final Mineral Development Strategy.

The panel held over 40 meetings, where they heard from more than 120 individuals representing 65 different organizations. This consultative approach will ensure that any strategy created by the GNWT is a true reflection of what is needed to attract new investment, supports those in the industry who are involved in mineral development projects in the territory, and upholds our commitment to environmental sustainability.

The majority of participants in the process supported development of the NWT's mineral resources. They expect the Mineral Development Strategy to identify initiatives and pathways for balanced mineral development that will protect the environment, respect Aboriginal cultures and

lifestyles, and leave Northerners with a lasting and positive legacy.

In order to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities, the panel has identified five areas of action. First, we need to create a competitive edge. This includes enhancing geoscience, incentives to promote exploration, marketing of the potential of the NWT as a place to explore and mine, and investments in infrastructure. As well, we need to create a new NWT regulatory environment.

Our work must include engagement with Aboriginal groups and communities to build capacity and have more effective consultation. It must be sustainable. We need to continue our efforts into workforce development and public awareness, including funding for training programs, increasing awareness of career opportunities, and improving public understanding of the mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, our government has a vision of a territory in which a strong economy provides jobs and opportunities for our people and their communities. We need to make progress on not just economic priorities but also social and environmental priorities to achieve this vision. That includes plans and strategies like the Mineral Development Strategy, a complementary Economic Opportunities Strategy, and other linked initiatives such as the Land Use and Sustainability Framework and a Northwest Territories Anti-Poverty Strategy.

It will also be closely integrated with the NWT Energy Plan, as both energy and mineral development sectors face the key challenge of lack of territorial infrastructure. With the release of today's recommendations report, a final Mineral Development Strategy is well underway. A strong economy creates sustainable, vibrant communities. It provides jobs and opportunities so people can avoid poverty, while government investments in education and training help ensure our residents can take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

At this time I would like to acknowledge the Members of the Advisory Panel who are present in the gallery this afternoon. The work they have put in so far will ensure the Strategy is comprehensive, balanced and reflects the needs of industry,

residents and NWT businesses. As well, I would like to thank the NWT/Nunavut Chamber of Mines – our partner in this endeavour – for their support and input during this process. Their advice and experience has been invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer a special thanks to the Members of this Assembly who contributed their time and feedback through the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure, as well as individually, to this process. We are happy to have this support now and moving into the future when the Mineral Development Strategy becomes a reality.

Before I conclude, I would like to invite all Members to an event I am hosting in the media room after question period during our afternoon break. The NWT/Nunavut Chamber of Mines, along with the Mineral Development Strategy Panel will attend. Panel chair, Mr. Angus Robertson, will give a short presentation highlighting the findings from the recommendations report. I ask you to join me and the Members of the Advisory Panel as we move one step closer to our goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to talk about an NGO in Hay River. It is the Hay River Council for Persons with Disabilities.

I would like to take my hat off to this organization, who has been faced with many challenges and yet continues to persist in their efforts to assist the people in our community who have disabilities. They do this in spite of not very much help from this government. As a matter of fact, I would say this government discouraged their efforts.

This small group of people gets \$35,000 from this government. For that, they employ a half-time person, but what they also do is they look for funds from other sources and they have leveraged up to \$455,000 to do programs in the community to help Hay River people who have disabilities and they have done so much on their own initiative.

Mr. Speaker, they do employment programs, housing programs, handivan, they teach life skills. They have a little program called Rags to Riches, where you can take clothing or articles to them. They will cut them up and they will make them into things they can sell and they will turn rags into a little bit of money.

They have done everything. They have held bake sales. They've held garage sales. They get \$35,000 from this government and a whole lot of hassle to go with it.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you a few things that have recently been said by members of the public service. We won't name them because that's not the appropriate thing to do, but who have gone to meet with the Council for Persons with Disabilities in Hay River.

They sat down across the desk from these hardworking volunteers – one of them is on salary, the rest are volunteers – and have said to them, "You just have to learn to say no. You shouldn't be doing all these things for these clients. You just need to learn to say no. You shouldn't be doing all this. And when they still come to you with these problems, you need to refer them to other places in the community where they can go for help." Hey! News flash! There is no other place. If there was, they wouldn't have to be taking on this role.

This organization has had to move seven times in the last few years, going from pillar to post to try and have a roof over their head. Kindly, Minister Miltenberger came down there one time and he actually said, you know, here is some government office space, under the health authority. They did move there, but it turned out it ended up costing them more money because they had to pay for their own Internet, but they were in a government office. But these people come down from Yellowknife, where the funding goes here in spades, okay? The infrastructure here is pretty wonderful in Yellowknife. But they come down to a little organization like this in Hay River and they tell them that the space that they have, it's gloomy. There are cracks in the floor. They're trying to take a sow's ear and turn it into a silk purse to have something for these people with disabilities, and they get, basically, discouraged by the people who are supposed to oversee this program who work for the government who are from Yellowknife.

I'd like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** At a recent exchange between some members who represent departments who came down to Hay River to speak to these people who were saying you need to learn to say no, you need to refer these people to other places, you need to hold more fundraisers, in that same conversation they dared to mention that your Ministers have been down here and they have seen the hard work we're doing, and they're seeing what we're doing and they're supporting it. The response they got – and I want to put this on the public record, and this is referring to Mr. Lafferty and referring to Mr. Beaulieu – your Ministers have big hearts. They say things like that, but they don't

control the budget of the departments that we work for. I want that on the public record, and we had better start showing some respect for these people in communities who are now looking at helping Fort Providence, Fort Resolution and Fort Simpson get programs going for people with disabilities. This is not coming from a government department. This is from volunteers in Hay River, and I want them to get some support and some respect.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
(NGO) STABILIZATION FUND

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, do a lot of important work in our communities. Some receive GNWT funding to deliver critical services such as shelters for the homeless, mental health and addictions services, services for disabled people, friendship centres, daycare and youth centres and women's shelters. Put another way, these groups are doing vital social service work that the government would have to do if they weren't there, and doing it better.

The NGO Stabilization Fund was established in 2009 to help these groups stabilize and develop the capacity to manage programs and services. It covers costs that aren't core funded, like board and staff development, strategic planning, community outreach or transition costs. But the fund only has a budget of \$350,000, and it's been stuck at that amount for the last four years. It's only open for NGOs, not to community or Aboriginal governments, land claim organizations or schools, and it's only open to groups that already receive some level of funding from the GNWT to deliver critical service, but it cuts out new groups that might want to start offering a service in, say, Fort Providence or Enterprise. There isn't even enough money to cover the need of all the groups that do qualify under the policy.

In 2012-13, 11 out of 27 applicants were approved, but several of the approved groups didn't get the full amount requested. Even though many of the groups will receive funding that are based in Yellowknife, they do serve people from my constituency and we're grateful for their work. I support raising the budget of the NGO Stabilization Fund to at least \$500,000 each year.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
LEVEL AND CRITERIA OF  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
(NGO) FUNDING

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also speak on NGOs. I'd like to thank the members of the Government Operations for bringing this mini theme day forward. It is a very important issue, especially out in the communities.

We are very concerned about the level of funding that's being provided. As my colleague indicated, one of the community groups in Hay River definitely would want to receive some funding, but have limited success getting funding from the territorial government.

There are many organizations out in the communities that need this type of funding. Some of them are new organizations. Some of them are organizations that just feel defeated. The committee has given us information on how many people applied and how many people were eligible, and half the people that applied were not eligible. Whatever the criteria, they were eliminated from the process. The money that they do get, you have to fit a round hole in a square peg type of thing. That's the problem. There is a difficulty there.

We hate to sit here and criticize Yellowknife and our colleagues here, but the majority of the funding goes to these centres. Some of them are Yellowknife funds, but some of them are territorial groups, territorial groups that say they are territorial groups, but we are having difficulties in the fact that some of the funding is not getting out to those regions. Some of the funding is burnt up on O and M and operation costs of running these organizations. I know they are trying their best. I know they are trying hard, but it is frustrating when some of these organizations are supposed to be representing the Territories and the funding doesn't ever get out to the regions at all. There have been several communities or organizations that I've talked to that said, we don't get any assistance, or we get a small amount of assistance to do a special event, I think. We definitely need to increase the funding. We definitely need to look at the criteria that fit this program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
STABILIZATION FUND

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, support the improvement of the Non-Government Organizations Stabilization Fund as a vital tool for mobilizing the energies and effectiveness of our partners in civil society.

As I pointed out before, three pillars support the functioning of a healthy society, government and the market represented by business have their role to play, but they must act in partnership with civil society, both individual citizens and their representative groups of non-government organizations.

The NGO Stabilization Fund has made a valuable contribution to assisting a subset of those public partners, but limited to only those NGOs providing critical government services according to their definition. The fund's effectiveness and impact is also limited by being ineligible to a broad band of social and environmental and other organizations. As a result, we are failing to mobilize the full range of civil efforts.

Obviously, government is responsible for operating a wide range of services, but it cannot provide for all public interests, and it has challenges funding those programs, programs it does provide. That is where our civil partners have an essential role through the motivation to act where there is need, and to do so effectively with very modest support and to attract other sources of support.

The fact the government doesn't offer a service is no yardstick of whether it is critically needed: food banks, food rescue, children's sports and environmental organizations, a myriad of community organizations, really. We could all give a list of examples of critical programs being provided by NGOs, specifically because government does not provide them.

The research abounds on the leverage of huge multipliers and value achieved by resourcing NGOs with their access to volunteer and in-time services. Our NGOs are community-based and grassroots, providing targeted services sensitively designed.

Pulled from our \$1.6 billion budget and growing, we need to identify significant and meaningful dollars beyond the current \$350,000 to help our NGOs meet these needs that go beyond the stabilization criteria of the NGO fund. We should also look to providing a mechanism that goes beyond a one-time annual process. In many cases, our NGOs step forward immediately in response to new and emerging needs, and even crises. We need to be equally flexible and responsive when our NGOs step up to confront urgent new demands.

Let's recognize the work of our amazing volunteer community and the service to society that they provide. I will be working with my colleagues through committee for an overhaul and expansion of the NGO Stabilization Fund program. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SERVICE PROVIDED BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also stand here in the House and use my Member's statement to talk about the NGO Stabilization Fund.

In my work in doing a lot of volunteering, working on committees, past government work, working in actually offering some of these programs through some of the departments that I have worked for, we have a lot of really great NGOs out in the Territories who are doing excellent work. Coming into the government, I see the process of how long it takes to get a budget passed to support some of these organizations that we put policies in place that prevent them from actually accessing some of the dollars that are in there.

For instance, our youth centres are great organizations doing a lot of great work. Our MACA department does offer half a million dollars for these organizations to do their work, but that is not enough. This past year I think they averaged out somewhere in the amount of \$14,700. Then if you go back a couple of weeks in the news report, a lot of the Aboriginal kids that have been in foster care are due to neglect.

A lot of times these kids are the ones that access the programs at the youth centres and friendship centres. These youth centres burn out their staff and they also don't have enough dollars to run specific programs.

Looking at the website earlier, it talks about how this NGO Stabilization Fund supports NGOs that deliver critical GNWT-funded programs critical to NWT residents. It also talks about how it recognizes that a lot of these NGOs provide essential services that follow under GNWT policy objectives. Those should say that we have to support them even more, or fight for dollars to get the programs up in place.

You have a lot of organizations doing a lot of great work right now and we really need to support them by upping the NGO Stabilization Fund, making it a little easier for these non-government organizations to access funding so that they can provide these critical services, essential services that are needed in the Northwest Territories. All we have to do is look at the reports, discussions that we have with governments and all these indicators that should be red flagged that need to be adjusted.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I will have some questions later for the Minister of Health and Social Services on some of those prevention and promotion dollars that we did fight for during the last budget session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
REPRESENTATIVE GNWT WORKFORCE

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has had an Affirmative Action Policy since 1989. The goal of the policy is that public service is representative of the people it serves. The population of the Northwest Territories is 51 percent Aboriginal and 39 percent of the workforce is Aboriginal. In 2011, the latest year available, indigenous Aboriginal employees made up only 32 percent of the public service. That is the same figure as the year before and pretty close to where it has been for the last 10 years.

The policy is not working, Mr. Speaker. Meanwhile, my constituents, mostly indigenous Aboriginal people, are having a tough time getting government jobs. When they apply on competitions, a lot of them don't make it to the interview stage; they get screened out. The excuse is that the person hasn't shown on paper that they have relevant education and experience. Even when they do get interviews, some positions are not appealable and often, as such, a potential employee is not allowed to see their test results or get a copy of them. They feel that this is unfair and that when they fail these screening tests, they cannot even challenge them. Many positions call for much more formal education and experience than a person really needs to do the job well.

The 2009 Statistics Canada indicates that 30 percent of adult Aboriginals with high school and no diplomas are unemployed. If an Aboriginal person does get an interview, sometimes they lose out for cultural reasons and values. Many Aboriginal people believe it is childish to blow your own horn and talk about yourself, but that is exactly what you are supposed to do in the job interview. Also, when they feel that they are the best person and they don't get the job, they don't like to appeal and cause trouble.

Our system does not value traditional knowledge, values and northern experiences nearly enough in the selection process. Devolution is almost upon us. We are told there will be many new jobs, but how many will be filled by Aboriginal people?

I think we need a system to review how and why Aboriginal residents are not being attracted, screened in and hired. The government must find better ways to fill its shop now and in the future, for Aboriginal Northerners over the long term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
POLICIES GOVERNING ACCESS TO  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
STABILIZATION FUND

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleagues, I too will speak about NGOs and the NGO Stabilization Fund today. To be clear, I fully support the concept of the NGO Stabilization Fund, but I have concerns with the current purpose and value of the fund.

NGOs are so very important in the Northwest Territories. They provide vital programs and services to our residents, services not offered by GNWT departments. NGOs work tirelessly to improve the lives of Northerners and this government gives them little financial support. I want to say emphatically that I find no fault with the staff who manage the fund's applications and awards. My concerns are with the fund itself, specifically with the policy that guides the fund.

Firstly, the value of the NGO Stabilization Fund has remained constant, \$350,000 per year since the fund was first implemented in 2009. Over the last four years, our NWT NGOs have grown both in number and in the activities and services they provide. Not so the dollars in the Stabilization Fund. For the past two years, the annual total amount requested by eligible applicants to the fund has exceeded \$800,000. The amount requested by prioritized eligible applicants has exceeded \$480,000.

The funding available through this program is, clearly, inadequate in relation to the needs in our territory. It needs to be increased to at least \$500,000, an amount which would then at least meet the needs of the prioritized applicants from last year.

I'm also concerned that the assessment factors used to evaluate applications to the fund place a higher priority on management, governance and organization development than for extraordinary operations costs. It is the extraordinary costs which can easily destabilize an NGO, yet we do not accept them as valid criteria for purposes of this fund.

I'm also somewhat dumfounded to see the fund criteria, which state that new projects take precedence over those supported in previous years for the same NGO. If the goal of this fund is stabilization, I would think ongoing support for an initiative would provide greater stability to the organization than one-year, one-time funding for a project.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. BISARO:** The last concern for today is the lack of financial assistance for emerging NGOs, those NGOs who are developing valuable civil society and volunteer bases. These new guys on the block do not currently receive GNWT funds and so they do not qualify for any of the dollars in the NGO Stabilization Fund. A separate fund is needed to assist these emerging NGOs as they get started and find their feet.

The NGO Stabilization Fund has been a welcome addition to the financial assistance given by the GNWT to NGOs providing important services for NWT residents on behalf of this government. It's an invaluable program and must be continued, but in the future it must undergo a thorough, consultative review, be broadened and expanded with a view to improving the fund to better benefit Northerners served by our NGOs. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SUPPORT FOR NEW  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
ASSISTING ELDERS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we are talking about the NGO Stabilization Fund that was established back in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly to help out the organizations that are doing a lot of good work in the Northwest Territories, and it's not easy to make ends meet for these organizations. A lot of people welcomed the NGO Stabilization Fund when it was first established, but in our small communities, and especially for our elders, it has been a disappointment. Elders in Yellowknife are very fortunate to have Aven Manor and all the programs that go with it. I know our elders in the Sahtu would really appreciate having programs like that.

In our smaller communities, we do not have these facilities, the organizations, the corporate donors or enough volunteers to make programs like what Yellowknife has had, without a lot of government support and funding. How are we supposed to get started?

The NGO fund only helps NGOs that are already there. It doesn't help any new NGOs to get going, even if your organization is registered properly. Small communities without NGOs are out of luck. The government stands back and waits for applications to come in, knowing that most of them come from Yellowknife. There's about 350-some-odd NGOs in Yellowknife, only 33 in the Sahtu where there's lots of NGOs that are not easily paired off in terms of the ratio number. That's not good enough.

Our elders in the smaller communities deserve better. I would like to see this government either

change the NGO Stabilization Fund or come up with new funding that would also allow small communities like Colville Lake and Tulita to start some programming for elders.

Our elders are precious to us and we want to give them the best quality of life and keep them in our communities as long as possible. We need the government to work with us to make that happen, not hide behind the complicated funding policies that hardly anybody or no one understands.

I'll have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:  
A CALL FOR HELP

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Imagine a world free of hunger. Imagine a world free from poverty, or imagine a world free from sickness. This does sound too good to be true, but in reality, we all know that this is utopian thinking, and for the practical person in all of us, we know that the world is not free at all but suffers from quite the opposite.

To combat this reality, we count on the benevolence and stewardship of non-governmental agencies to fill the gaps where public services leave off. In essence, many NGOs are the lifeblood that complement or fulfill the delivery of care, food and wellness needed by many of our residents. A world without NGOs is like a world without oxygen. You cannot live without the other.

It strikes me as odd that today many of us here have to stand before this House and somehow play on the purse strings of the Department of Executive to urge them to change their tune. Why, you may ask? Well, for starters, as you heard from many of my colleagues, the demand for services does exceed the supply of funding. A mere \$350,000 is doled out annually for a handful of lucky recipients, only to be used to soothe the pain. This funding is not for lavish, expensive sports cars. This funding is not for posh office furniture, and I can guarantee you that this funding is not for expensive executive travel to faraway lands. No, Mr. Speaker, this money is for the lights, the heat and the power, if you're lucky.

I know we need to be stewards of the public purse, and I for one am very conscientious of our spending dollars. Yet, it pains me to see waste going on in our government, duplication of services, ivory towers of self-preservation, and yet we allow our NGOs to somehow manage with nothing. Moreover, we ask them to do the job we don't or, in many cases, won't.

This is not only unfair, it is not even human for us to expect such. Yet, we've allowed this to go on for

too many years, and this must stop. There is a solution, and that solution is we have the ability to change minds. We have the ability to change hearts, and we certainly have the ability to change lives.

This change has to come from the top down. It has to come from our Premier, and it has to be supported by Cabinet. Let's do the right thing and increase our funding for NGO stabilization, and let's open up the doors to funding for emerging NGOs who need our support at their critical junctures.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMITTEE ON RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Despite all that is said about small communities in this House, I doubt most residents understand the situation across our territory. When I see our budget, sometimes I wonder if our government really wants to improve the situation.

Here are a few key facts: Eight communities have no nurses; ten communities have no police; many communities lack high school education; we have employment rates as low as 34 percent in our small communities, compared to 80 percent here in Yellowknife; 38 percent of homes are in core need, comparable to 9 percent here in Yellowknife. I could go on and on, but I will just throw out one more fact: More than 10 percent of NWT households experience food insecurity.

In the last Assembly, the Committee on Sustainability of Rural and Remote Communities was set up. It put together an investment strategy to address small community needs. Over two years, \$5.1 million was included in the budget for some very good initiatives, including one-window access to government programs and assistance, more early childhood programs, the Small Community Employment Program, programs to support youth, training for court workers to help reduce crimes, and new settlement maintainer positions in six communities.

This good work was supported by the government. It was supported by MLAs, and the budgets reflect that today.

It is another story under this current government. The Rural and Remote Communities has accomplished very little. There is no money in the budget. Committee members can make all the recommendations we like, but we have to scramble for a few dollars after the fact, and the money might have to be pulled from some other programs.

We are not trying to get more cuts to inclusive schooling. We want to make a difference for the

people in the small communities and the whole territory.

I will be asking the Premier some questions about the lack of attention to the needs of rural and remote communities later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCOME SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S SPORTS, ARTS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hockey teams, dance classes and even fiddle camps are a few examples of out-of-school programs and activities that are fun for kids, but not for all kids. You need to find a way to encourage the development of these qualities that people learn from physical education, and the type of self-esteem they get by being involved in these particular programs.

It's a real shame that many children in the NWT are left out of these very precious opportunities. These experiences are left out. Why? Because many parents cannot afford the equipment or even the fees. If you are on income support, I can tell you right now, it doesn't make it any easier. To be fair, income support does provide some money for some school-related things like bus passes – how fun is that? – or even gym shoes so they can play, but there are no allowances for outside activities, as I said earlier.

In this day and age, when schools are chopping away their budgets and Education Ministers continue to claw back money from what is the fun stuff, such as physical education, enrichment programs such as arts and music, these programs fall by the side. Isn't the development of our young minds an occasion to develop these special things as well?

There is a real opportunity being missed. Surely government can find some way to help afford these things. We could provide some allowances for children to be involved in these very important programs. Don't let financial burdens of poverty slip through the opportunity of developing and enriching these young minds that so readily deserve these chances.

Could the next Leela Gilday, Brendan Green, or even Shirley Firth somewhere be nestled between opportunity and poverty, with no way to break free for these opportunities that kids deserve? Allowances could be organized so we could pay directly to the organizations.

I know the Minister will complain and whine and grind and grope and moan and talk about the cost

of social programs. Yes, he is right, but investment is more than just infrastructure. It is about the investment of the bricks and mortar we call our children that we are building for tomorrow. We must do all we can to help build these bricks and mortar enrich the lives of our young people. We must find ways to show them that we care. Do not put up barriers. We will find new ways to open doors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to recognize in the gallery our Advisory Panel on the Mineral Development Strategy. I will start with the chair, Mr. Angus Robertson. Next to him is Dr. Murray Duke and we also have, from Yellowknife, Mr. Rod Brown. I would also like to recognize Allan Twissell from Northways Consulting, who helped pull it all together, and the folks from the NWT Nunavut Chamber of Mines, Ms. Cathie Bolstad and Mr. Tom Hoefer. Thank you very much for all your help. Also in the gallery is our director of minerals, oil and gas, Mr. Tim Coleman. Welcome, Tim. Thanks, and welcome to everybody else too. Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the president of Aurora College, Ms. Jane Arychuk, who is on annual leave to spend time with her family that are coming from the South. I would like to recognize her sister and brother-in-law, Karen and Kim Clouter, who are visiting from Ontario. Welcome to the Assembly.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a constituent from Hay River South, Mr. Tim Coleman, in the gallery today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, maybe for sake of brevity, I will recognize the whole opportunities panel as one group. Thank you very much for your hard work. I'd like to recognize a constituent, Kevin Campbell, and if I had seen him earlier, I would have gotten the names of his visiting friends, so I will only assume it is family from the South. That said, welcome to everyone in the gallery today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome Ms. Jane Arychuk, a former resident of Fort Providence, also a former principal and teacher. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Cathie Bolstad, a resident of Weledeh and well known by everybody, I am sure. Also, Elizabeth Portland with Ecology North and Natural History Group and other roles, and any other residents of Weledeh. Mahsi.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize not only a constituent but a member from Hay River, Tim Coleman, who travels quite a bit back and forth, and also the Mineral Strategy Group, thank you for coming today, especially Cathie Bolstad, who travels to Hay River regularly, annually for a golf tournament. It is good to see their support for Hay River as well. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Today I would like to welcome in the gallery Mr. Gerrand, our Conflict of Interest Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Welcome, Mr. Gerrand. I would like to welcome everybody here. My sister Mary is in the gallery today. It is always good to have family.

Item 6, acknowledgements, Mr. Yakeleya.

### Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4-17(4):  
BEVERLY MASUZUMI –  
EDUCATION HALL OF FAME 2013

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my congratulations to Ms. Beverly Masuzumi from Fort Good Hope on receiving her Education Hall of Fame on May 30, 2013. Beverly is known for her true leadership in the past and her passion for educating the students in the Sahtu. She spent 10 years working to improve educational opportunities for our students by being part of the local education authority board and the Sahtu District Education Council, and was chair of the district education council for those six years.

On behalf of the Sahtu region, I would like to again congratulate Ms. Masuzumi on her strong belief in our education system, our students and our communities. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 297-17(4):  
GNWT SUPPORT FOR  
HAY RIVER COUNCIL FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not sure who to ask my questions to and I am not even sure what to ask at this stage. You can tell I am a little frustrated with the lack of support for some very valuable NGOs. I don't think we have really quantified the value that NGOs bring to a situation. If we as a government had to pay for the work that they do, we probably wouldn't realize the same results and we probably couldn't afford it.

The council that I refer to in Hay River is the Council for Persons with Disabilities. They teach literacy counselling; they fundraised \$50,000 in the community to operate a handivan; they offer their food and shelter program; they have healthy food initiatives; they do a Community Gardening Program; they do PC training with clients that are in Hay River.

We have a facility in Hay River, an assisted living facility for persons with disabilities, as well, and we really appreciate having it there. Don't get me wrong, but that facility costs this government about \$4 million a year to operate and there are 10 clients there. If you do the math quickly, with all the overhead and everything, that is about \$400,000 per client, and yet we have an NGO in Hay River that is out there working with people with disabilities in the community, in which they get from this government \$35,000 per year. If that NGO were not doing this work, who would be doing it? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot of the work that that particular NGO does now, I think, was done because there was a lack of services in that area in Hay River, so it would be difficult to say how they would be able to obtain those types of services if it wasn't for that particular NGO group.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Could I get the Minister to concur that this NGO does do good and valuable work in our community, and the value of their work far exceeds the \$35,000 a year which they get from this government and our given grief that goes along with it? Can the Minister concur this is valuable work worth far more than what they receive from this government? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I've had the opportunity to meet with this group and I do agree that the work they do is very valuable. I had an opportunity to speak to the people that were in the office at the time taking a course. I personally knew all of them

in there and spoke with them, and they were very pleased to be given an opportunity to learn what they were learning there in working with this particular society. Thank you.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** I would like to thank Minister Beaulieu for his visit to Hay River, for taking time out of his busy schedule, for going there and seeing the facility these folks were in, for listening to them, for hearing what their challenges were and what they were offering the community, and he did express great support. I have to say that and I want to thank him for that.

How can we translate that, as Mr. Beaulieu heads up the Department of Health and Social Services, how can that commitment and support for an NGO translate down to the people who actually deliver that support within the public service? How can that be communicated so they understand that's the goal and that's the opinion of this government? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We are going to be able to have that discussion with the senior management at the department. We're also dealing with the local authority, and between ourselves and the authority, we recognize that we do fund each of these non-government organizations and this particular organization does receive some funding from the department, but the majority of their funding does come from outside of the government. So I will make sure that the department understands that these guys could use some support when they're leveraging this kind of funding in the community.

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

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** As a result of the things that I've shared here today, and my colleagues have shared here today, I would like to see this government come out with a statement saying that they recognize and appreciate the valued work of NGOs in our territory, and that those NGOs go towards making this territory and the lives of many people better than they would be, and that this government cannot do everything alone, and that we support, encourage and thank those NGOs who do this work for us. Can this government send a message like that out? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The government is moving more and more into multi-year funding with the organization. We continuously have discussions with these organizations, trying to develop some wage parity with these organizations. So the government is recognizing that these organizations are valuable and we're trying to step up to the plate. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 298-17(4):  
SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND  
REMOTE COMMUNITIES

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, my questions will be directed to the Premier. During the last Assembly, \$5 million was allocated over two years specifically to meet crucial needs of small communities. Why is that not continued under this government? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last Assembly we were operating under a very severe fiscal situation and at that time the government of the day foresaw that there was going to be a very severe economic downturn. So when the Assembly started, the government of the day decided that we would cut programs, so that we could take that money that we obtained by cutting programs. I think we had a target of about \$132 million and that money, in turn, was used to make funding available to a number of different committees. I think we were about to cut about \$65 million in programs and that's where the \$5 million came from to make available to the community and sustainable and rural communities.

This government, the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, decided that we were not going to cut programs, that we were going to maintain programs, although we had a very tight fiscal situation. We managed our way through the fiscal situation, and I should point out that we have a number of committees and none of the committees have any funding allocated to them to dispense. The committee that you reference is there to provide advice to the government and Cabinet on very unique conditions that small and rural communities face.

**MR. BLAKE:** The public probably does not understand how spending recommendations made by the Rural and Remote Communities would be handled by the government. Will the Premier describe the process for us?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We have a committee made up of a combination of Cabinet Ministers and MLAs. We have three Cabinet Ministers and five MLAs on the Committee on Sustainability of Rural and Remote Communities. The terms of reference provide that it would provide advice to Cabinet.

The way I would see it is that this committee, we would have to work it so that it can tie into the budget process so that their recommendations can be provided on a timely basis, in time that they could be considered when we do capital planning and our main estimates.

**MR. BLAKE:** What are the government's key priorities for improving services and infrastructure in rural and remote communities?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Obviously, we want communities in the rural and small communities to have a similar quality of life to other communities in the Northwest Territories. I've always said that one shouldn't be penalized because of where they live, so we would endeavour to try to work in that regard.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Premier when he first began saying the past government was facing a little financial difficulty, like most of the country. In the small communities, not much has changed since then.

When will the communities see more programs being offered, and will this government continue that \$5 million in this government?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We would have to work with all Members of this Assembly to try to address that decision. At this point in time, we are just starting our main estimates process, and there are tremendous demands for fiscal resources, and if the Legislative Assembly feels that that's the direction we should go in, obviously we look at all of these parameters when we do our main estimates.

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

QUESTION 299-17(4):  
REPRESENTATIVE GNWT WORKFORCE

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I detailed in my Member's statement about the difficulties of Aboriginal people gaining employment. Well, the ones that remain unemployed. Getting employment with our Government of the Northwest Territories, I'd like to ask the Minister of Human Resources questions in this regard.

Firstly, what is the department currently doing to meet the Government of the Northwest Territories' commitment of a public service that is representative of 51 percent of our population that is Aboriginal?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT is committed to developing a competent public service representative of the population it serves. There are a number of things that we are doing. We do have the Affirmative Action Policy that we apply to all staffing actions. But we've also put in things like the Associate Director/Superintendent Program and a few other programs. We also have the Aboriginal Employees Advisory Committee, which has been put together to provide some guidance and direction to myself and Cabinet on how to improve representation of Aboriginal peoples within our public service.

In the Member's statement, he mentioned how difficult it is, or some of the frustrations that individuals who are going through the competition process have identified. One of the things we are doing to help address that is we put together How to Apply on a Government Job, which is a workshop, and there are some materials for reading as well. It is going to be made available throughout the Northwest Territories. I have shared the brochure with my colleagues.

I have indicated that we will be going out to all the regional centres and hopefully communities, as well, to provide this workshop to help individuals better understand the competition process in the Northwest Territories and what they can do to help strengthen their opportunities or chances of obtaining employment in those communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** The Minister is right; people are really frustrated about their chance of trying to get employment. As I detailed, a lot of them get screened out and don't know why.

Can the Minister undertake a process to review the human resource hiring process to ensure Aboriginal candidates are continually engaged and involved and encouraged if they are not the successful candidate? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that is already being done. That is one of the things that the Aboriginal Employees Advisory Committee is looking at. They are looking at all of the processes that exist out there today and are trying to identify what some of the gaps might be, what some of the things that are occurring that might limit some of these candidates from actually taking the next step.

As I have indicated, we are doing the How to Apply on a Government Job, which we hope will help individuals understand the process better and what things they can do with their resumes and during interviews that will help strengthen their application and their bid for positions within the Government of the Northwest Territories. By way of review, that is one of the things that we are hoping to get advice and recommendations on from the advisory committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister truly understands the situation. I would like to know if this practice is currently being done right now. I have constituents that are screened out. They are hiding the test results from them, not showing them, not encouraging about how to better themselves for the next applications if they continue that.

I would like to know if this current practice that the Minister is talking about is being used by our front-line human resource and the departments that people are applying on. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say yes. It is something that I have made clear to the deputy minister that I would like in the regional centres and Yellowknife, everywhere there is staff in action, for our staff to take that additional step in helping individuals understand why they are screened out. It doesn't happen in every case, I can't say that, but I will continue to encourage the deputy and his staff within the department to provide that extra step to help individuals understand why they may have been screened out and what they can do better.

I would encourage all the Members to encourage their residents and their constituents to please take the How to Apply on Government Jobs. It will help people understand some of the intricacies of our process and will hopefully help them make it through to the next step and get the jobs that they are qualified to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of it is changing the processes too. One of the biggest issues is the inability of people that apply to appeal a job. I know that short-term positions are not appealable. Sometimes if they are an outside applicant, then they cannot appeal those jobs. I would like to know if they are going to improve that process too. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Member and I should sit down and just follow up, because I'm not sure I fully get that question.

There are appeal rights. All Aboriginal candidates have appeal rights for GNWT jobs, with the exception of casual jobs. There are no appeal rights on casual jobs. Any time that an individual applies on a term or an indeterminate position and they are Aboriginal or P2, they have the right to appeal that competition. If they are an existing employee and they have applied on a job and they are screened out, regardless of their affirmative action, they have a right to appeal that position. The appeal rights are there. Some people choose not to use them, but they should be notified of their appeal rights by the screening committee or the staffing officer responsible for that file.

I would be happy to sit down with the Member and have some more discussions around that so I better understand where the Member is coming from. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 300-17(4):  
REVIEW OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATIONS STABILIZATION FUND

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about the NGO

Stabilization Fund. Through the process, there was a review and there were no changes at that time.

I want to ask the Premier, in regard to this fund, will the department again look at reviewing this NGO Stabilization Fund in light of what he is hearing today, to ensure that some of these programs, some of these fundings can get to some of the critical services that some of our people are delivering now on a voluntary basis in our communities?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; we reviewed the NGO Stabilization Fund to clarify which types of NGOs were eligible to apply and also to respond faster, to process the applications faster and flow the money out on a much faster basis. We were able to do that. This year we have had 14 applications. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Certainly, the Premier is correct on the NGOs delivering essential services in our communities that support the government's objectives of healthy, strong communities and also developing capacities, and to manage programs and services.

I want to ask the Minister, in regard to the review, the society sometimes needs to be in good standing or needs to be registered within the Northwest Territories are created under a federal statute. I want to ask if the Minister can look at the flexibility of this eligibility of NGOs to include groups like land claims or other groups that also do essential services because of a lack of volunteers or people to fulfill those critical services to our people. Would the Minister continue looking at, seeing if this is a possibility in some of the small communities?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Essentially what our government wants to do is we want to help NGOs that have no other access to funding. I would think land claims organizations negotiate land claims agreements with other governments and they have access to resources. I would think skidoo clubs were the same; they could access resources. We don't want to lose sight of the fact that funding the NGO Stabilization Fund is focused on those NGOs that provide essential services to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Under the land claims, not all the land claims have a golden pot waiting for them to fund certain programs. There are permitted activities in the land claim that would also allow them to service some of the activities in the communities such as programs and school programs and such, so they don't have the ready, available funds at times. That is why I am asking the Premier if he would look at this review again to

see if it makes sense within the communities in the land claims that help the people through these activities that are allowed in the land claim chapters.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** It sounds like the Member is focusing only on the NGO Stabilization Fund when the NGO Stabilization Fund is just a fund to top up funding to NGOs that provide essential services for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We have a third-party accountability framework, which is called Excellence Through Partnerships, and I think that is more appropriate to the line of questioning that you are taking. We have three categories of NGOs and I am sure that when we review it, if we get more specifics as to how or why you think land claims organizations should be funded by this government as an NGO, to see if they fit into any one of those three categories. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** My focus is because these are probably one of the most efficient and effective operations that give NGOs support in our communities and the land claims is one of the biggest ones here.

I want to ask the Minister, would he also look at the eligible NGOs policy where it says if in Yellowknife you receive \$50,000 or more in funding from the GNWT annually, so that's an automatic \$50,000 that goes to Yellowknife if you're a Yellowknife NGO. So is that somewhere else where the regions can also get that type of funding automatically on an annual basis if we can make out a policy that's equally shared across the Territories?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I want to clarify that the NGO Stabilization Fund is just a top-up fund. There are three other categories of funding that are providing funding to NGOs from all different departments. So I'm sure that if you clarify what it is that you want for land claims, we can see if it fits into one of those categories. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 301-17(4):  
ENHANCING NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATIONS STABILIZATION FUND

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In respect to the NGO Stabilization Fund that we've made a priority here today, there are real needs at the community level. For example, in my riding there is a real need for youth programs in terms of ensuring that there's funding for programs and resources. At the same time, we're contending with real social issues like homelessness. For those reasons, this fund is relied upon from the community organizations outside of Yellowknife.

For the Premier, as Minister of the Department of Executive, is the Premier willing to consider enhancing the NGO Stabilization Fund for 2014-2015 to at least a minimum of \$500,000? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We would like to fund all of the requests, but we have a finite level of resources and we are going to the main estimates process. We will also be rolling out a number of strategies that pertain to social programs, such as the Early Childhood Development Framework, the Northwest Territories Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Minister's Forum on Addictions and Mental Health recommendations, Economic Opportunities Strategy, Mineral Development Strategy, the Land Use and Sustainability Framework. So we'll be rolling out all of those frameworks as well.

So I can commit to the Member that as we go through the main estimate process and that as we go through developing action plans for all of these strategies, which I'm sure will impact positively on the communities that need assistance, at that time we will look at all of the requests. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** I'd like to thank the Premier for making that commitment. Some NGOs are currently delivering critical services, but without GNWT funding they don't qualify for the Stabilization Fund. What capacity building support is available from the GNWT for such NGOs? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We have a third-party accountability framework and it has three categories. The categories that provide services to the Government of the Northwest Territories, we can provide multi-year funding agreements, and depending on the type of service and the kind of NGO, and if they get funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories, there are different categories of reporting that are required. So if you're not providing essential services, then your reporting requirement is not as complicated as for the NGOs that provide essential services. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 302-17(4):  
GROWING FORWARD  
COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAM

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of ITI. I've spoken critically of ITI's controlling, non-inclusive and delayed approach, not always intentional, I know, in delivering the Growing Forward Program at the community level, and its failure to germinate

citizens' enthusiasm and capacity to carry projects forward.

Yesterday I learned of one more example. Rather than turn granted money over to a YKDFN community garden for supplies, ITI made the purchases on the basis of the YKDFN supplied list. This stuff arrived and it's the wrong stuff. Yet again the garden is put back further in starting at this critical planting date.

What's up, Mr. Speaker? The wrong stuff is bought because the department simply is not knowledgeable in this area. The result is there's another loss of project control for the gardeners; they lose the opportunity to develop purchasing and ordering skills.

Why are we persisting in this approach rather than an enabling an approach that grows real experience and capacity?

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm familiar with the community garden in Ndilo. I had the opportunity a couple weeks back to have a tour of the garden itself and get into K'alemi Dene School. Talking to one of the contractors down there, she had mentioned that there was some work required on that community garden. This is the first I've heard of wrong supplies being ordered, but we will certainly look into what transpired in this case and make sure that the necessary goods arrive in Ndilo so that the garden can proceed.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for that commitment from the Minister. I will note that in two weeks from now the days start getting shorter. Unfortunately, there's more. As of today, well into our brief but intensive growing season, YKDFN is still waiting for approval on the basic supplies. No word back on buying seedlings, seeds and equipment. Surely ITI wouldn't have placed the first order if it weren't going to approve the remainder. It's June 4<sup>th</sup> and the season is running on.

Will the Minister commit today to blowing out this log-jam and getting this garden project approved now? This community can't afford another growing day lost.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** There is obviously a need to get this work done, and I will give the Member the commitment that I will go back to the department and try to find out exactly what is happening and how we can continue to move the community garden project forward in Ndilo, without hesitation.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I very much appreciate the Minister's commitment there. Part of the problem here is that nature does not run on a fiscal year basis. I've talked to the Minister about this. We're

delivering a \$6 million agricultural support program on a bureaucratic cycle that won't consider applications until months after the seed orders should have been placed.

This program has five years of dedicated funds we know are guaranteed. Applicants say they will have their plans for next year by January 1<sup>st</sup>. They plan ahead. Why can we not adjust this application contribution agreement process with the standard qualifier clauses stating contingency of funds of being available, and tune this program up for delivery on a growing year rather than the fiscal year cycle?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** That is certainly something I believe the department will be looking at. It makes perfect sense to allow the funding to flow when it's needed, and not on a financial calendar or a bureaucratic calendar, but instead with the true growing season in mind so that we can make the most out of the money that we have. The good news is we are going to be spending another \$6 million in the area of agriculture over the next five years, and that's some good news.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister again. I know this Minister is interested and supportive of the gardening and food security issues. Many of the issues gardeners face relate to the lack of understanding and agricultural knowledge of ITI staff that gardeners must apply to or expect support from. As a consequence, highly qualified and experienced public gardeners and NGOs are stepping into the lurch only to be undermined by a lack of equally sound and knowledgeable support from government.

What will the Minister do to ensure this timely and quality support is available from ITI now and in future growing seasons?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, we have competent staff in the regions. We have competent staff here at headquarters. If the Member has some examples of, as he mentioned, staff not giving other folks the right type of information, I would be more than happy to have the Member write to me or write to the deputy minister and advise us of such occurrences. We have a big program to deliver and the staff that we have are trying their best to deliver the programs that we have. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 303-17(4):  
INCOME SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S  
SPORTS, ARTS AND OTHER  
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I would like to formally acknowledge and admit my error. I recognized the Mineral Development Strategy Advisory Group as the opportunities group. In all fairness, we've been receiving panels, advice for strategies, frameworks and many other things. They can have my apologies. They're all blended together. Thank you for your fine work.

My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Does the Minister of Education recognize that there is a serious problem here for opportunity for those people who live in an impoverished situation? There's an unfairness that many of the children won't ever be able to participate in music programs, arts programs and even some extracurricular sports programs.

What does the Minister recognize in this impoverished situation, and furthermore and more importantly, what is he willing to do once he recognizes this particular issue? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I do believe there were three or four questions in there; I can only answer one. With the distance that has been brought to our attention through the poverty strategy that we have engaged with the public, NGOs, it is important for us to be part of that as income support. We have made some changes over the years, even major changes in 2007 that reflect on communities' needs. Along the way we have been making changes. We are glad we are part of the Anti-Poverty Strategy that is coming forward in this Assembly, along with other strategies as well. It is important for us to be part of the process. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** One good thing, the Minister clearly can count because he said there were a couple of questions in there, maybe three, but since 2007 he has proven he can't answer one of those three or number of questions highlighting those changes.

There have been no changes. I pulled out the regs. There are zero changes providing these opportunities for kids for poverty.

What does the Minister really recognize and what is he willing to do about this situation that children who are part of families on income support cannot participate in music, extracurricular arts or even extracurricular sports? There is a fairness and equity here. We are missing a huge opportunity to do something. I would like to hear it.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, we are doing something. I am answering his questions as well. Part of the curriculum that we deliver, K to 12 and beyond that, we provide a music program. We provide various other programs in the school as well. We will continue to enhance our programs. These are areas that we are very interested and also we are working closely with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to deliver those programs, even after-school programs. We are involving the parents. We are trying to make a difference. We are making programs deliverable, even working closely with the college and different agencies to deliver these additional programs beyond K to 12. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, I pulled the regulations. There is nothing that talks about this. If the Minister wants to talk about funding education through K to 12, let's talk about that, but K to 12 funding doesn't support the initiatives I'm talking about. I'm talking about income support. Welcome to the file. Please. My goodness. Under income support there is nothing that supports music, arts and extracurricular sports.

What is the Minister willing to do on that? Will he launch on this opportunity to say, let's investigate this and let's do something to ensure that these children have the same opportunity as other children deserve? Let's do something and we can do it today. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, we do provide basic fundamental funding to the clientele that we service, the income support clientele. The funding that we provide is shelter, food and clothing.

Again, we are working through various programs such as Municipal and Community Affairs have numbers of programming through NGOs such as we do.

As the Education, Culture and Employment department, we provide almost \$7 million in various NGO funding that consists in a breakdown in the communities of various funding that is accessible by the parents, by the children, by the community members. Continuously we have been providing that to the communities and we will continue to strengthen our programming into the communities even more. Mahsi.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Clearly, the Minister doesn't get it. When we start talking about the communities, the fact is this: income support provides food and shelter, yes, that is a given, we all know that. But why do the children in those situations... They don't ask to be on income support. The families are there because of various reasons. We are not here to debate that.

The question I am asking is this: We need to be opening up doors. The Minister has the power that is in this directive; let's start doing something today. Even if it starts with \$500 per head, per child, to get them into music, sports, arts, let's give them the same opportunities other families certainly give their kids, and these kids deserve them equally. If he is saying no to this, he is saying they are worth less, and I take exception to that.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, we are not saying no. We are saying we are providing these opportunities for these children.

In the Northwest Territories Anti-Poverty Strategy, there will be a targeted action plan coming forward. This consists of all these departments sitting here. We are very serious, we want to make changes and it will reflect those changes as well. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Member for Inuvik-Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 304-17(4):  
ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR  
PREVENTION AND PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up from my Members statement, I actually wanted to get this question in yesterday, but I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services with regard to the funding this government worked on getting for prevention and promotion through our most recent budget session on operations.

Has all of the funding been allocated for what we fought for in terms of prevention and promotion activities? Has that funding been allocated, and if not, what is the exact number of dollars that still has to be allocated in this fiscal year for prevention and promotion programming? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mahsi Cho Mr. Speaker. That money has not been allocated; however, we are close to determining exactly where that money will go. We are going to wait for the completion of both the 10-year framework on early childhood development and the Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness to determine where we feel the best places to allocate this money. The money, the majority of it will be going into those to action plans and also some of it will be going directly to NGOs. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Yesterday the Minister made a Minister's statement, and he does say that he's waiting for the Early Childhood Development and Anti-Poverty strategies to come forward, but he says, "I will not wait until that response is finalized to take action." So the sooner the better. We can't wait to start providing programs.

You have heard a lot of really good options, a lot of good suggestions on this side of the House, what's happening in Hay River, what's happening in rural and remote communities. I'd like to ask the Minister, would he look at creating an application-based program with the funding dollars, which I am not sure how much that is. I did ask that question. Would the Minister look at creating an action-based program with some of these dollars that have not been allocated for some NGOs, so that they can start doing some of these programs like introduction and promotion and education and awareness? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The Department of Health and Social Services and the health and social service authorities jointly fund about 50 NGOs to the tune of about \$14 million. In that, about 30 to 35 of those could be working in the healing and prevention field, like, where it funds some youth organizations, some healing organizations and community governments. So within that we are capable of moving some of this prevention money directly into those organizations, whether they be NGOs that specifically do healing, or youth, or community governments that could do that as part of their functions. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Just for clarity, I'd like to ask the Minister how he is going to fund those organizations, NGOs. Specifically, is it going to be an application-based program, is it going to be something new, or is it going to be something that's built on something like the Health Promotion Fund? Can he be more specific on how these organizations can apply for this extra funding, and if he can still answer part of my first question, which was how much of these dollars have not been allocated for this fiscal year yet that we still have on the budget? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Currently, specific to that additional \$1.6 million that was allocated, none of that money is allocated. Although it's targeted, it has not been allocated to any specific project. The majority of the money that will flow, in addition to the money that is already flowing, will probably be added to the NGO contribution policy. Thank you.

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

**MR. MOSES:** One million six hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money for our NGOs and our small communities. Would the Minister, going back to I think it was my second question, look at creating an application-based program specific? We have a lot of application templates out there. Would he create something new where we can start funding things like kids sport, friendship centres, youth centres, or hamlet organizations? Would he look at creating something new in the amount of, say, maybe \$25,000 application so that

communities can actually get a little extra dollars to run some great programs and services?

As I mentioned in my Member's statement, the majority of our foster kids, the reason they're in foster care is due to neglect, which is something that I feel this government needs to address very strongly. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Certainly, we fund the NWT Foster Parents Coalition. We fund the various foster parents coalitions across the territory, as one example.

Yes, I think that application-based may be a good method of flowing money out and creating small contribution agreements within organizations. I think within the frameworks that we have and within the organizations that we already deal with, the majority of this money can flow, including to some of our own organizations like Healthy Families. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 305-17(4):  
CHANGES TO THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL  
ORGANIZATIONS STABILIZATION FUND

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Executive and the Premier. For the Standing Committee on Government Operations, we've heard from many Members today, and the NGO Stabilization Fund has been a priority for that committee, and the committee has corresponded with the Minister over the last year several times about the NGO Stabilization Fund. We've provided input and we've been dismayed to be told by the Minister that a review of the fund found no reason to make any changes to the criteria. Unfortunately, that view is supported by the Social Envelope Committee of Cabinet as well.

There were some changes, though, that were made about a year ago. In my view, they were all administrative, non-substantive and process oriented. They clarified things and sped up the awarding of funds, but nothing more than that.

My question to the Minister is if he could explain to this House what those changes were that were made to the NGO Stabilization Fund. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The changes that we made were we clarified who was eligible to apply. We were getting all kinds of applications from organizations and groups that were applying that didn't provide any services to the Government of the Northwest Territories. We also tightened up the program so that we could get the request for applications out soon and that we would

process the applications on a timely basis and flow the money out promptly.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that response. I have to agree that those changes were positive. They definitely allowed the staff to process applications much faster than the previous year, and awards came within months of the start of the fiscal year, not near the end of the fiscal year as was happening previously.

In spite of this large improvement, I'd like to know from the Minister what the rationale is for the criteria within the NGO Stabilization Fund which puts new projects above projects from a previous year. I have to ask the Minister how that helps to stabilize an organization.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think the answer speaks for itself. It's a stabilization fund. It's to help organizations that provide essential services to the Government of the Northwest Territories. It's to help them to provide more structure and improve their capacity. It's not continuous core funding. I would expect that over a period of time these organizations would develop capacity that they can function without additional funding from the NGO Stabilization Fund.

**MS. BISARO:** I guess I can't agree with the Minister's assessment of that. Giving an organization money in one year and then pulling it in the next year because we funded you for that project, now we're only going to fund a new project, in my mind, is destabilizing, not stabilizing.

We have a \$1.6 billion budget within this government, and a twofold increase doubling the value of the NGO Stabilization Fund amounts to a 0.02 percent increase to our expenditures bottom line.

I'd like to ask the Premier if he could provide a rationale for the rejection by the Cabinet, by the Minister, his rejection of the committee's request for an increase to the dollars in the NGO Stabilization Fund.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think that request seems very simplistic, and if you multiply that a thousand-fold, we still wouldn't have enough money. I think we have to be focused.

I also talked about the third-party accountability framework. The NGO Stabilization Fund is just a top-up. There are three categories of NGO funding that are provided for by all departments. That's what the framework is for, is to categorize the level of reporting for the funding that is received by NGOs. Not all NGOs provide essential services to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier, I understand that Cabinet and the

government sees this as a top-up, but it's obvious that the NGOs need more funding. A request for over a million dollars from all NGOs who applied last year is certainly an indication that \$350,000 is not enough.

The Premier has heard many suggestions and ideas here today, and I believe would hear a great many suggestions on how to change the criteria for this fund from NGOs and for making improvements to the fund.

I'd like to ask the Premier and the Minister of the Executive if he will commit to a thorough consultative review of the NGO stabilization policy prior to the end of this fiscal year.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We do have a process and we have a main estimates process, and I also listed off a number of strategies and frameworks that will affect the social programs and NGOs. As we go forward, we have finite resources. We will develop action plans for all those strategies, and as part of that, this request will be part of that mix.

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

QUESTION 306-17(4):  
ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN  
DEVELOPING COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other day I had the pleasure of reading one of our local publications, and I came across the face of what I like to refer as emergency preparedness. That face was none other the Minister R.C. McLeod. And it was a dapper face, Mr. Speaker, a very, very dapper face.

My questions today are with respect to emergency preparedness or, more importantly, community action plans.

According to the Civil Emergency Measures Act, municipal authorities are responsible for the development and implementation of emergency plans to protect the general public. What role does the Minister and the Department of MACA play to fulfill this prophecy so that we have properly executed community action plans across Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We put on emergency preparedness workshops that some of the communities take part in. To date, I think we had nine communities take part in a two-day workshop that we put on. As a result of that, they have updated their community plan. I believe we have another six workshops that we are planning for 2013-14. As a result, that many

more communities will be updating their community emergency plans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I am excited to hear that. We do have these programs being offered to communities to update their plans, which then leads to my second question.

We do know that our GNWT emergency plan is responsible for providing assistance to local authorities during emergencies when our government is called upon. Can the Minister indicate at this time maybe some numbers of communities that are updated, that have been approved by this government in the last two years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, to date, as of April 2013, we have 17 communities that have updated their plans. We have 14 communities that need updating and sometimes that could be just validating their emergency plans from an exercise. Their plans could be updated and considered validated once they go through an exercise. We still have two communities without emergency plans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, the numbers that the Minister is giving to us are indeed promising, but yet, having asked this question numerous times in this House, we are just not quite there yet, which then leads to asking my third question.

What does it take to emphasize the importance to the communities to have 100 percent active plans? As the Minister said, 17 out of 33, that is just over 51 percent, are validated. What does the Minister do to propose to get all 33 of these communities with validated plans so that when we are deployed to assist, we indeed can have the resources in place and to make sure that taxpayers' dollars are spent wisely? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are 17 that were updated and 14 that need updating, so that when you look at it, we have 31 of the 33 communities that have updated plans. With the 14, they just need to be considered validated once they do an exercise. The plans could be up to date and we just need to validate them through an exercise.

We continue to work with those communities. A lot of them recognize the importance of having a good emergency plan in place. Once they go through an exercise, they will be considered validated. We are going in the right direction. Thank you.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again encouraging and, again, I'm not denouncing the Minister's math. It is as accurate as mine. The question really, at the end of this, is that it sounds like we are very close. It sounds like there are really

only two communities that don't have a plan in place, when math is accurate.

Can the Minister give some assurances to the House and Members here that by the end of fall of 2013, all 33 communities will have a validated emergency action plan? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with those two communities and point out the importance of having an emergency plan in place. The other communities, the 14 that we need to work on, again, they do have emergency committees in those communities. Once we go through the exercise, then their plans will be validated. We will do what we can to stress to them the importance of validating their emergency plans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 307-17(4):  
CHANGES TO INCOME SUPPORT  
TO BENEFIT CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to continue with my questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Although a different department, if a child is under foster care, the foster home is provided with support for extracurricular activities. Clearly, there is a disparity when you start considering the standard of care for children. Under income support, if the family has any extra money or goes out to make extra money, it is clawed back and, finally, if somebody pays for a kid to go to hockey, if they are on it, if that family is on income support, that money is clawed back. If they don't declare it, it is breach and they are treated like criminals for gosh sakes.

My question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is: Since 2007, when he assumed office, what changes has he made to income support as Minister by his direction, to improve the lives of children whose families are on income support? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Since I came to office in 2007, we have made some changes not only to income support but other programs as well. As you know, Education, Culture and Employment has a variety of programs under us, even under income support that can provide... There have been some additions; there have been some changes. I can provide that detailed list to the Member. Mahsi.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Although I am keenly interested in what those changes may have been, once again into the breach, I ask the question, what changes

specifically have you made in income support that has helped families who are on income support, to help them support their children? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Through various stages we make changes; we improve our programming; we change policies. In Student Financial Assistance or some other income support program, there have been numerous changes as well. Even in 2007, even though I may not have been the Minister, still the department was making changes. Even when I depart there will be another Minister making changes. So all in all, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides funding to all these children, either in school, after school, through various venues whether it be agencies or NGOs that we work closely with.

Again, I think there is up to four or five different strategies. Action plans will be oriented and part of the process, as well, part of the solution. We are looking forward to that. It is very exciting times. We want to make some changes and leave a legacy behind. Mahsi.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'll put it back to the Minister and say, I have heard four or five answers but not one to the question I asked. So, seeing how the Minister is convinced he can make changes, seeing as how the Minister is convinced he has made changes, what does the Minister believe can be made on this file by way of example, providing an opportunity for children who fall under the Income Support Program by giving them access to a pot of funding, be it as small as \$500 per year to allow these children to take things like music, involved in the arts, or even get into extracurricular sports? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The Member is referring to music or other sports. Some of these programs, their fees are waived. We know that some certain students cannot afford to be part of the program, so we work with, whether it be...(inaudible)...program, that is a federal program that allocates funding for these students that cannot afford certain sports programs. There are soccer programs, volleyball programs, there are all these different programs that the fees are waived as well.

Working closely with Municipal and Community Affairs, we are making this happen. We will continue to work with different agencies to continue to involve those students, less fortunate students, to be actively involved in sports, after-school programs and even during school programs. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can talk about federal programs and we can talk about other programs that aren't income support, so let's

get down to the facts, let's get down to the brass tacks. Let's say this right now. Is the Minister willing to, is he prepared to go back to his officials and instruct them to find a way to create a program that extends income support benefits that provides these opportunities that enrich children's lives that they well deserve? We could do it today and we could help a lot of families that deserve these opportunities. Will the Minister be willing to do that, yes or no? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, we are part of the strategy for anti-poverty. We will continue to provide our resources through that strategy as well. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I'm going to call a 15-minute break.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Mr. Nadli.

## Reports of Standing and Special Committees

### COMMITTEE REPORT 4-17(4): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2011-2012 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Introduction

The Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to report on its review of the 2011-12 Public Accounts of the Northwest Territories. An internal review took place on March 14, and the public review took place on March 15, 2013. The committee would like to thank Assistant Auditor General Terry DeJong and Guy LeGras, principal, both of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, for assisting in the review. Members would also like to thank Northwest Territories comptroller general Warren St. Germaine and his staff, assistant comptroller general Louise Lavoie and Chervahun Emilien, manager of reporting and collections, for their appearance before the committee at the public review.

This is the standing committee's first report of a review of the public accounts in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and the first such report in approximately nine years.

#### Preparation of the Committee for Review of the Public Accounts

As there were no standing committee reviews of the public accounts during the previous two Assemblies, and most of the present members are new to the committee, none had previous

experience in reviewing the public accounts. The committee, therefore, considered that some preparation for this type of review would be helpful.

Mr. Daryl Dolynny, member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, attended the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees (CCPAC) annual conference, held August 19 to 21, 2012, in Iqaluit, Nunavut, on behalf of the standing committee. Mr. Dolynny shared the extensive materials provided to conference attendees on his return. Members understand the CCPAC conference to be a valuable training and networking experience. The committee hopes to send a larger delegation to the conference this year.

It also appears that the Northwest Territories is not the only jurisdiction with an interest in developing greater skills and expertise in reviewing the public accounts. The CCPAC is considering a half-day session at this summer's conference to discuss capacity development issues and training needs distinct to small Legislatures in the North, with representatives of committees from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon; and staff of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada and the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation.

In the meantime, the standing committee was able to meet with staff from the Office of the Auditor General and staff from the Office of the Comptroller General on December 6 and 7, 2012, to get a thorough introduction to the public accounts, their history in the Northwest Territories, and the process of preparation and auditing. Members reviewed sample public accounts documents and asked many questions. This introduction was very helpful, and the committee thanks staff from both offices for their assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now hand the floor over to Ms. Bisaro. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Nadli.

### **Timeliness of the Public Accounts**

The Financial Administration Act Section 74 states that, "unless the Legislative Assembly otherwise fixes a date, the public accounts for the fiscal year must be laid before the Legislative Assembly on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> following the end of the fiscal year or, if the Legislative Assembly is not then in session, not later than 15 days after the commencement of the next session of the Legislative Assembly."

The present committee reviewed the practice of previous governments and Legislative Assembly committees with regard to the public accounts, going back to 1987. Members found that external factors, most commonly changes in national public

sector accounting standards, have made timely submission and review of the public accounts a challenge, in spite of repeated committee requests, government commitments and statutory requirements.

Prior to division of the Northwest Territories, the public accounts were sometimes submitted as late as 15 months after the end of the fiscal year. Post-division, in 2001, the committee tasked with reviewing the public accounts requested that the deadline be moved up to August 31<sup>st</sup>, to permit examination of the public accounts before business plans. For a time, the government was able to comply with this request.

However, the GNWT bases its accounting standards on recommendations of the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB). The PSAB changed their guidelines so that, as of April 1, 2005, a government's "reporting entity" included all the entities that are controlled by the government. This change meant that, for the first time, the 2005-2006 Public Accounts of the Northwest Territories had to be consolidated to include boards and agencies as well as departments.

The Office of the Comptroller General in the Department of Finance is responsible for overseeing the preparation of the public accounts. In accordance with the federal Northwest Territories Act, Section 30(1), the Auditor General of Canada audits the accounts and financial transactions of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Office of the Auditor General also audits some of the larger agencies consolidated in the public accounts: the NWT Housing Corporation; the NWT Hydro Corporation including its subsidiary, the NWT Power Corporation; the NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation; and Aurora College. Components of these entities must also be audited, though not by the Auditor General of Canada, including health and social services authorities, education councils, and local housing associations.

The requirement for consolidation had a major impact on the government's ability to submit the public accounts in a timely manner.

The final public accounts section one now contains a consolidation of the financial statements of 22 public agencies. The financial statements of three of these 22 are a further consolidation of 29 organizations. Many of these organizations have statutory reporting requirements that require their audited financial statements to be completed between July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> of each year, rather than by the March 31<sup>st</sup> government fiscal year end. Accounting standards and classifications differ for some of these bodies. It is not unusual, moreover, for some organizations to complete their audits past these deadlines.

The 2006-07 Public Accounts were signed off by the standing committee's preferred August 31<sup>st</sup> deadline, but at that time the government was still allowed to use draft financial statements from boards and agencies in the consolidation. After that year, completed audits were required for all the entities included in the consolidation. The 2007-08 Public Accounts were not signed off until December 5, 2008, and the 2008-09 document not until December 7, 2009. The final audited public accounts for these years were tabled early in the February sitting of the Assembly, in accordance with the statutory deadline, but far from the earlier standing committee deadline of August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Then, the 2009-10 Public Accounts were tabled more than a year after the end of the fiscal year to which they applied, on May 10, 2011. Implementation of the government's new financial software, the SAM system, contributed to the very late submission; as well, the NWT Housing Corporation audit was not complete until May 2011. Timeliness improved somewhat the following year, with the 2010-11 Public Accounts signed off on February 13, 2012, with tabling only a few days later, on February 16, 2012.

This year's sign-off date of November 30, 2012, for the 2011-12 Public Accounts represents commendable improvement, with a consistent effort to get audits completed earlier and reduce the number of errors that cause delays. The final public accounts for 2011-12 were tabled in February 18, 2013. The Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased with the Comptroller General's renewed efforts to table the public accounts in accordance with the statutory deadline, and acknowledges receipt of an embargoed copy of the public accounts before tabling.

However, Rule 85 (3) (d) (i) of the Legislative Assembly provides that, "In the event that the Assembly is not in session, the Speaker may provide the Auditor General's report and the Minister of Finance may provide the public accounts to the committee for review, which may include public hearings, in advance of tabling."

While the Standing Committee on Government Operations would prefer to return to the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly's pre-business plans deadline for the public accounts, members recognize that an August deadline for the final document may not be practically achievable. As a step in the right direction, the committee would like to receive the final public accounts on sign-off, prior to tabling, with the option of conducting a public review as permitted under the rules. This would permit committee review and reporting to be completed within one year of the fiscal year dealt with in the public accounts.

Further, the Comptroller General indicated during the review that the government may be able to

provide the interim public accounts before September 30. The committee considers that it would be useful to have this document prior to the annual review of departmental business plans.

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Comptroller General include a list of agencies included in the consolidated public accounts which did not meet the deadline for completion of their audits, as part of the standard reporting process.

#### **Recommendation 2**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Minister of Finance provide the committee with the final public accounts immediately upon sign-off, with the understanding that the committee may conduct a public review before the document is tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

#### **Recommendation 3**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Minister of Finance provide the committee with the interim public accounts by August 31, in time for committee review of the government's business plans.

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Finance continue to work with the Auditor General of Canada and GNWT departments, boards and agencies toward the completion of both the interim and final public accounts at the earliest possible date each year.

Mr. Speaker I would like to pass the reading of the report over to my colleague Mr. Dolynny. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Ms. Bisaro.

### **Review of the GNWT Public Accounts for 2012-13**

#### **Contents of the Public Accounts**

As comptroller general, Warren St. Germaine stated in his opening comments on March 15, the public accounts represent one of the key accountability mechanisms of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Office of the Comptroller General, a branch of the Department of Finance, superintends the preparation of the consolidated public accounts.

The volume under review, titled Section One: Consolidated Financial Statements and

Government Indicators, presents the financial position of the consolidated government reporting entity as at March 31, 2012, and the results of operations for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2012. The "government reporting entity" includes the GNWT, the Business Development and Investment Corporation (BDIC), the NWT Housing Corporation, education boards and councils, Aurora College, health and social services authorities, the NWT Opportunities Fund, the NWT Human Rights Commission, the NWT Status of Women Council, and the Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation and its subsidiary, the NWT Power Corporation. It does not include the operations of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. The document also provides a wealth of information in notes and schedules. All of this information is audited by the Auditor General of Canada, and the auditor's report is included in the document. The public accounts section one also includes an unaudited narrative of key indicators of the financial health of the GNWT.

A second volume of the public accounts, titled Section Two: Non-Consolidated Financial Statements, presents the financial position and operating results of GNWT departments and the Legislative Assembly. It does not include the boards and agencies consolidated in section one, and the information is unaudited. Section two is prepared earlier than section one, and is tabled earlier as the interim public accounts. The interim public accounts for 2011-12 were tabled on October 18, 2012. The committee referred to but did not review this volume in full.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations is very pleased that the Department of Finance has now posted 2011 and 2012 audited financial statements for GNWT boards and agencies, education councils, and health authorities on its website on its public accounts page, titled Section Three. Financial statements for local housing authorities are not yet available on the website. The committee will pursue further improvements to publicly available information with the Department of Finance.

#### **Highlights of the Review of the 2011-12 Public Accounts Section One**

##### **1. Independent Auditor's Report: A "Clean" Opinion**

The standing committee examined, first, the independent auditor's report provided by the Auditor General of Canada.

Members were pleased to see that the Auditor General's opinion on the public accounts was "clean;" that is, it contained no qualifications. The Auditor General's opinion was that the consolidated statements present fairly the financial position of the GNWT as at 31 March 2012, and the results of its operations, changes in its net debt, and its cash

flows for the year, in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. The Auditor General, as required by the Northwest Territories Act, also reported that Canadian public sector accounting standards were applied on a consistent basis year over year, and proper books of account have been kept by the GNWT.

While the consolidated government entity received an unqualified opinion, one of its components did not. In discussion with the Auditor General's staff, the committee learned that the NWT Housing Corporation did not submit its 2011-12 annual report to the Minister before the statutory deadline under the Financial Administration Act, which allows submission up to 150 days after the end of the fiscal year. The corporation tabled its annual report on March 14, 2013.

As well, a lack of internal controls over inventory costing did not allow the auditor to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence about the value of Housing Corporation inventories as of April 1, 2010. This 2010-11 issue carried over into the 2011-12 audit report, by affecting the comparability of information year over year. When the Housing Corporation's 2012-13 Annual Report is tabled, the standing committee will review the audit report for assurance that the inventory costing issue has been corrected.

The committee is aware that the Housing Corporation has had a great deal of catching up to do in terms of reporting over the last few years. Submitting its annual report before the end of the succeeding fiscal year in fact represents progress for this agency. The committee encourages the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to continue to improve the timeliness of its reporting.

#### **Recommendation 5**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the NWT Housing Corporation submit its 2012-13 Annual Report within 150 days of the fiscal year end. If this does not prove to be possible, the NWTHC should provide the House with reasons.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to turn over the floor to Mr. Moses.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

##### **2. GNWT Consolidated Statement of Financial Position as at March 31, 2012**

The statement of financial position is the government's "balance sheet." Four key figures describe the financial position of the GNWT: cash resources, net debt position, non-financial assets, and the accumulated surplus.

###### **a. Cash resources**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations noted that for 2011-12, the total for cash and cash equivalents or short-term investments, as reported under financial assets, decreased to \$68 million as at March 31, 2012, from \$117 million in 2011. The committee learned during the review that the decrease is due to the repayment of \$94 million of the NWT Opportunities Fund loans to the Government of Canada, offset by a \$37 million increase in the bank overdraft. As well, \$23 million of the Housing Corporation's temporary debt was reclassified as cash and cash equivalents, because of a decline in days to maturity.

According to Note 3, the GNWT increased its short-term investment portfolio over the year from about \$5.8 million to over \$23 million, but has decreased its cash holdings to \$44 million from nearly \$112 million. The committee considers holding less cash and investing a greater proportion of the total in safe short-term instruments to be consistent with prudent financial management on the part of the GNWT.

Also under financial assets, loans receivable decreased by \$32 million, from \$95 million in 2011 to \$63 million in 2012. This decrease was attributed mainly to the repayment of a loan from the NWT Opportunities Fund. According to Note 8, a \$34 million loan to Discovery Air at 10 percent interest payable monthly was due February 1, 2013. It was fully repaid, instead, in 2011-12. The standing committee had many questions for both the Auditor General's staff and the comptroller general about this loan repayment, as the early settlement represents a significant amount of lost interest to the GNWT.

The NWT Opportunities Fund was established by the GNWT to receive and invest the Northwest Territories' share of immigrant investor funds received under the federal Immigrant Investor Program. Cash balances were pooled with the government's surplus cash and invested in short-term securities, yielding 1.10 percent interest for the year ended March 31, 2012.

In December 2011 the fund was directed to transfer the maximum amount possible back to the federal government no later than March 31, 2012, three years earlier than originally anticipated. In January of 2012, the fund was also directed to negotiate a settlement of the fund's loan to Discovery Air by the same date. This loan was the only one outstanding to the fund.

Under the settlement, Discovery Air repaid approximately \$32 million, and the fund recorded a loss on the settlement of over \$2 million. The fund repaid the long-term debt owing to the federal government of approximately \$131 million and also wrote off loan origination fees of over \$3 million. The fees were paid, even though the government no longer had the benefit of the loan fund. This left

a little over \$8 million in the NWT Opportunities Fund, which was to be expended to support economic development initiatives in the NWT. As the Auditor General's staff put it, the NWT Opportunities Fund is now basically a bank account, and it will not be audited separately for 2012-13.

The Minister of Finance has told the committee and the Legislative Assembly that the NWT Opportunities Fund is being wound down. The government's rationale is that a new definition of long-term borrowing was negotiated between the federal and territorial governments as a condition of increasing the GNWT's borrowing limit, and the Opportunities Fund counted towards the limit under the new definition.

The standing committee recognizes the importance of additional borrowing room to meet the Northwest Territories' critical infrastructure needs. However, the committee considers that that the price of this higher credit limit was surprisingly high, at over \$5 million in foregone interest and fees. Members do not think the government got a particularly good deal on the new borrowing cap. At this point, the transactions have been made, and the committee can only express a final note of regret that the borrowing limit increase came at such a heavy one-time cost.

#### b. Net debt

The net debt position of the government is calculated as the difference between its liabilities and its financial assets in the Statement of Change in Net Debt. Net debt was \$458 million as at March 31, 2012. This amount is \$36 million less than budgeted for the year, but represents an increase of \$76 million over the 2011 actual of \$382 million. The GNWT was in the black in 2011-2012, with a small surplus of \$6 million. The increase in the debt is accounted for mainly by the acquisition of tangible capital assets.

#### c. Non-financial assets

Schedule A of the public accounts lists the non-financial assets of the government. These are mainly tangible capital assets, valued at approximately \$1.6 billion in 2011-2012. Nearly half of the value of the GNWT's tangible capital assets is in buildings; works and work-in-progress account for most of the rest.

#### d. Accumulated surplus

The accumulated surplus is the net debt plus the value of non-financial assets, an indicator which represents the net assets of the government. The GNWT's accumulated surplus for 2011-2012 was \$1.15 billion. This amount was \$6 million more than the previous year, as a result of the operating surplus of about \$3 million and net income from the NWT Hydro Corporation, also \$3 million.

3. GNWT Consolidated Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus for the year ended March 31, 2012

The Public Accounts Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus is the GNWT's "income statement." It reports the surplus or deficit from operations for the year, showing the revenues for the year, the cost of services provided, and the difference between them.

Taxation and general revenues were about \$60 million higher than forecast, though still \$11 million lower than the previous year. Corporate and personal income taxes were down by approximately \$25 million from 2010-11. Expenses, on the other hand, were almost \$60 million more than forecast and \$50 million more than the previous year. Revenues exceeded budget by 5 percent and expenses by 4 percent. The bulk of the additional expenses are accounted for by the compensation and benefits object, according to Note 22. The infrastructure departmental envelope was over budget by approximately \$35 million, while the education envelope saw the greatest year over year increase in dollar amount, approximately \$19 million.

The annual surplus for 2011-12 was \$6.4 million, compared to a forecast deficit of \$4.8 million and the prior year's deficit of \$2.4 million. The annual surplus plus the accumulated surplus from the previous year also produces the amount for the accumulated surplus at the end of the year, \$1.15 billion. During the review, members noted a forecasting error on the part of the Department of Finance: revenues from sales of items such as petroleum products and liquor should have been higher. Actual sales were three times forecast. This erroneous forecast did not affect the bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pass the floor over to Member Yakeleya for continuation of this report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Moses.

4. Key Notes to the Financial Statements for 2011-12

a. Note 6: Accounts Receivable

The standing committee noted with concern the substantial increase in the accounts receivable from the Government of Nunavut, which is close to \$10 million. Most of this sum relates to health, and according to the Comptroller General, \$2 million is non-collectable. Maintaining such a large interest-free receivable has cost implications for the GNWT, in that the government may have to borrow and pay interest on additional funds for its own needs, in addition to the loss of potential interest revenue.

The committee was glad to hear that the government is reviewing its interest rate policy for other jurisdictions, and may be able to charge Nunavut interest on individual items.

b. Note 8: Loans Receivable

This note has already been mentioned in connection with the repayment of the Discovery Air loan. The Standing Committee on Government Operations found another matter of concern in this note, namely outstanding Northwest Territories Housing Corporation mortgages. The amount listed as due to the GNWT is only \$15 million. The Housing Corporation's total mortgage balance as of March 31, 2012, however, was \$41 million.

The committee was told that the difference is accounted for by the deduction of interest and subsidy on impaired mortgages, resulting in an overall figure for loans of about \$36 million. Non-repayment subsidies totalling \$20 million are then subtracted, to reach the \$15 million figure. However, an allowance for doubtful accounts of \$13 million results in a net mortgage receivable of only \$2.5 million.

Members would like to think that the Housing Corporation can do better than this in collecting on its mortgage receivables. The present committee has already recommended, in its report on the Auditor General's status report – Committee Report 4-17(3) – presented in the House June 14, 2012, that the NWT Housing Corporation continue its efforts to collect mortgage receivables and report annually to this House on the number of clients who have chosen a repayment option, the total dollar amount of repayments, and the total amount still outstanding as of April 1<sup>st</sup> each year, starting with the data as of April 2012. The committee looks forward to seeing an improvement in the Housing Corporation's mortgage collections within the life of this Assembly.

The allowance for doubtful accounts is an estimate of the amount of accounts receivable which are expected to not be paid. Overall, the 2011-12 GNWT allowance for doubtful accounts is \$39 million, or just under 40 percent of the total loans receivable. In the previous year, the allowance for doubtful accounts was approximately 30 percent of the loans receivable. Part of the reason for the percentage change is the early repayment of the Discovery Air Loan, a one-time occurrence. Nevertheless, the committee would like to see better overall performance in GNWT collections, fewer accounts designated as uncollectible, and a lower allowance for doubtful accounts as a percentage of the loans receivable.

**Recommendation 6**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories monitor its loans

receivable and develop targets and measures to improve collections, with a view to reducing the allowance for doubtful accounts to less than 30 percent.

c. Note 15: Long-Term Debt

This note provides details of the GNWT's long-term borrowing. The long-term debt includes loans from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Citizenship and Immigration Canada – for the NWT Opportunities Fund – Yellowknife Catholic School debentures, and real return senior bonds redeemable at the option of the issuer. These borrowings totalled \$198 million for 2011-12, a sizeable decrease from \$325 million in 2010-11. The repayment of the NWT Opportunities Fund to the federal government is the major reason for the change. This note also gives the schedule of principal repayments on these loans by year to 2018.

Finally, the note shows how the government's authorized borrowing limit is being used. The GNWT's federally-authorized long-term borrowing limit was increased to \$800 million by Order-in-Council on March 8, 2012. When the public accounts were being prepared, new federal regulations to define "borrowing" for the purposes of the Northwest Territories Act had not been finalized. However, the anticipated changes were known, and the 2012 table in the public accounts reflects the new definition.

The standing committee had previously sought clarification of what amounts are now included in the new long-term borrowing definition compared to the old one. The new definition involves some changes to the recording of the NWT Hydro Corporation debt, which reduces the amount on the books by about \$23 million. However, capital lease obligations are now included, for \$27 million, as are Northwest Territories Housing Corporation mortgage guarantees of approximately \$31 million.

In 2011-12, under the new definition, the GNWT used about \$572 million of its new \$800 million borrowing room, leaving available borrowing capacity at \$228 million. Had the old borrowing limit and definition remained, the GNWT's borrowing capacity as at March 31, 2012, would have been \$39 million.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations considers that the GNWT has paid a high price for the borrowing limit increase, between the need to wind down the NWT Opportunities Fund and concessions made in the definition of long-term debt.

Mr. Speaker, now I turn the report over to the chairman, Mr. Nadli.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

d. Note 21: Environmental Liabilities

The government recognizes that there are costs associated with the remediation of environmentally contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible. The standing committee was pleased to learn that the Auditor General of Canada considers the GNWT's disclosure of these liabilities to have improved this year.

As of March 31, 2012, 139 sites for which the GNWT is responsible had been identified as potentially requiring environmental remediation. Twenty-six are active or decommissioned landfill sites that are outside incorporated communities, and therefore are the responsibility of the GNWT. A liability of \$1.1 million has been recorded for the 26 landfill sites, in accordance with public sector accounting standards.

Another of the 139 sites, Giant Mine, has been formally designated as contaminated under the NWT Environmental Protection Act. The balance of the GNWT's share of the Giant Mine remediation liability as at March 31, 2012, was approximately \$20 million.

The remaining 112 identified sites include 15 airports or airport-related sites, 19 sewage lagoons, 12 fuel tanks and six highways. Environmental assessments have not been completed for more than half of these potentially contaminated sites. Most have been investigated but are awaiting full assessment. GNWT remediation costs for the sites that are known to be contaminated are estimated at about \$23 million. Ongoing efforts to assess the remaining sites may result in additional environmental liabilities, which will be recorded in the year they become known. The committee would like the government to provide a schedule for the environmental assessment of all known potentially contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible.

**Recommendation 7**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide this House with a timetable or schedule for the environmental assessment of all known potentially contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible.

e. Note 25: Over-expenditure

This note refers to over-expenditures after supplementary appropriations have been voted. During 2011-12, two departments, Transportation and Education, exceeded their appropriations for a total of \$592,000. These over-expenditures contravene the Financial Administration Act subsection 32, which states that, "No person shall

incur an expenditure that causes the amount of the item set out in the estimates on which the appropriation is based to be exceeded." However, the standing committee was pleased to see that the amount of such over-expenditures is considerably less than the previous year, when the over-expenditure was nearly \$6 million. The government encourages the government to continue striving to reduce the incidence of over-expenditures.

#### 5. Government Indicators

This unaudited section of the public accounts provides background information on factors such as the Northwest Territories Gross Domestic Product, debt management, and trends in net financial resources and annual surplus. It concludes with an assessment of the GNWT's fiscal health in terms of accepted accounting criteria of sustainability, flexibility and vulnerability.

The GNWT rates itself as "stable" in terms of sustainability. Net debt, as described previously, increased by \$76 million in 2011-12, to a total of \$458 million. The GNWT describes this as a deterioration of its financial position, but suggests that the debt is manageable in the context of GNWT annual revenues of approximately \$1.5 billion. The net debt represents 30.5 percent, or approximately 16 weeks of revenue. The GNWT assumed the debt associated with the Deh Cho Bridge on April 1, 2010, significantly increasing its debt load for 2011 and subsequent fiscal years.

However, the government considers that it has limited flexibility to raise new revenues. While tax revenues are up in terms of dollar amounts, the GNWT's own-source revenue decreased as a proportion of total revenue in 2011-12 from about 29 percent to about 27 percent, mainly due to fluctuating amounts of income tax collected. The GNWT states that it has little room to increase taxes and still remain competitive with other provinces and territories.

Finally, the GNWT notes that it continues to be vulnerable to federal control over changes to its future revenues. The GNWT has limited own-source revenues and the corporate and personal tax remittances it does collect can vary considerably from year to year. The formula used for the annual grant from Canada will remain in effect until March 31, 2014. The Government of Canada has committed to renewing the current financing for an additional five years, to March 31, 2019.

#### Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has a mandate to review the Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Members were pleased with the assistance provided by the Office of the Auditor General and the frank responses of the NWT

comptroller general in this initial review. The standing committee intends to continue the practice of a public review of the public accounts, so that GNWT spending issues are publicly examined and all relevant information is placed before the public.

#### Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

#### MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 4-17(4) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, CARRIED

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the review of the 2011-2012 Public Accounts. Therefore, I move, seconded by the Member for Frame Lake, that Committee Report 4-17(4) be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Committee Report No. 4-17(4) will be moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 93(4) and move Committee Report 4-17(4) into Committee of the Whole for consideration today.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Committee Report 4-17(4) is moved into Committee of the Whole for today.

Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Ramsay.

#### Tabling of Documents

#### TABLED DOCUMENT 87-17(4): PATHWAYS TO MINERAL DEVELOPMENT: REPORT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PANEL FOR THE NWT MINERAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, APRIL 2013

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Pathways to Mineral Development: Report of the Stakeholders Engagement Panel for the NWT Mineral Development Strategy, April 2013."

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 88-17(4):  
FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION 2012-2016

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I wish to table the following document, entitled "Framework for Action 2012-2016." Thank you.

TABLED DOCUMENT 89-17(4):  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RETIRING  
ALLOWANCES FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
MARCH 31, 2013

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Pursuant to Section 21 of the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act, I wish to table the Legislative Assembly's Retiring Allowances Fund Financial Statements for the Year Ending March 31, 2013. Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 19-17(4):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE  
TO OCTOBER 17, 2013

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 6, 2013, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that notwithstanding Rule 4, when the House adjourns on June 6, 2013, it shall be adjourned until Thursday, October 17, 2013;

And further, that any time prior to October 17, 2013, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and the Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at a time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

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

MOTION 20-17(4):  
PROPOSAL FOR USE OF  
NEW RESOURCE REVENUES

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, June 6, 2013, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that this Legislative Assembly proposes on an annual basis the GNWT's share of the new Devolution Agreement resource revenues be expended according to the following formula:

- one-quarter to infrastructure investment;
- one-quarter to one-time Assembly priorities;
- one-quarter to the Heritage Fund; and

- one-quarter to debt repayment.

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories seek public input on the above proposal for the use of new resource revenue and report back to the Assembly on the results of those consultations;

And furthermore, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provides a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

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

MOTION 21-17(4):  
LIQUOR COMMISSION  
PROFITS TO PREVENTION

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 6, 2013, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that the Government of the Northwest Territories devote 10 percent of its net revenues generated by the Northwest Territories Liquor Commission to an alcohol abuse prevention and education campaign in the communities throughout the Northwest Territories;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories provides a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 25:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 2, 2013-2014

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on June 6, 2013, I will move that Bill 25, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2013-2014, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Beaulieu.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 21:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
DENTAL PROFESSION ACT

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for

Great Slave, that Bill 21, An Act to Amend the Dental Profession Act, be read for the second time.

This bill amends the Dental Profession Act to revise the registration requirements for specialists as well as registration and supervision requirements for students. It also amends the composition of the registration committee and creates the position of registrar, replacing the secretary. Finally, the bill makes a change to meet the requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade in respect of residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 21 has had second reading and is referred to the standing committee later today.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Bouchard.

#### BILL 22:

#### TERRITORIAL EMBLEMS AND HONOURS ACT

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Bill 22, Territorial Emblems and Honours Act, be read for the second time.

Bill 22 provides the adoption of the official emblems of the Northwest Territories and the establishment of the Order of the Northwest Territories. The bill also repeals the Flag Act and the Full Emblem Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 22 has had second reading.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 36(2) and have Bill 22, Territorial Emblems and Honours Act, moved into Committee of the Whole.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 22 will be put into Committee of the Whole for today.

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amendment Act; Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act; Bill 22, Territorial Emblems and Honours Act; Committee Report 3-17(4), Report on the Review of the 2011-2012 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; Committee Report 4-17(4), Report on the Review of the 2011-2012 Public Accounts; and Tabled Document 70-17(4), Electoral Boundaries Commission, Final Report, May 2013, with Mr. Dolynny in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I will call Committee of the Whole to order. Ms. Bisaro, what is the wish of the committee?

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, committee would like to consider Bill 11, Bill 20 and, time permitting, Committee Report 3-17(4).

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Okay. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** We will proceed here. We are at the commencement of Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amendment Act. We are going to turn over to Minister Miltenberger who is responsible for this bill. Mr. Miltenberger, would you like to introduce the bill?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here to present Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amendment Act.

This bill amends the Financial Administration Act as well as statutes respecting five public agencies to ensure the Financial Management Board has the authority to manage and control the activities of government and public agencies that constitute borrowing for the purposes of the Northwest Territories Borrowing Limits Regulations made under the Northwest Territories Act (Canada).

That completes the remarks that I have and I will be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Do you have any witnesses you wish to bring into the House?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses into the Chamber, please.

Committee, would Minister Miltenberger introduce the witnesses to the House, please.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Ms. Kelly McLaughlin, director of the legislative division.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Ms. McLaughlin, welcome to the House. Before we continue, I am going to ask the floor if there are any general comments on the bill.

General comments? Is the committee prepared to go clause by clause re the bill?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Committee, we are on page 1 of Bill 11. I am going to defer the first part here and we are going to Clause 1.

---Clauses 1 to 8 inclusive approved

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** We are going to go back to page 1. Does committee agree that Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amended Act, is now ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Committee, Bill 11 is now deemed ready for third reading. I would like to thank the Minister. I would like to thank the witness for coming in. Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witness from the Chamber.

Committee, we will turn our attention to Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act. With that, we will turn it over to the Minister involved with the introduction of the bill. I will ask Minister McLeod for opening comments.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act. The purpose of this legislation is to correct a drafting error identified following the passage of the Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act in March.

I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Do you have any witnesses you wish to bring into the House?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I do, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Sergeant-at-Arms, would you please escort the witnesses into the House, please.

Minister McLeod, would you like to introduce your witnesses to the House, please.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to my right Kelly McLaughlin, director of legislation division, and Mr. David Kravitz, manager of community governance.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Mr. Kravitz and Ms. McLaughlin. Welcome back to the House. Committee, we'll open up the floor now to general comments on Bill 20. General comments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'm hearing detail. Thank you, committee. Committee, page 1 of your bill. We're going to go line by line. Clause 1.

---Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive approved

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree that Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act, is now ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Bill 20 is now deemed ready for third reading.

I'd like to thank the Minister. I'd like to thank the witnesses for coming today. Thank you very much. Committee, thank you for your patience, we're just getting things in order.

Committee has agreed to consider Committee Report 3-17(4), Report on the Review of the 2011-2012 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. I would like to now go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations. The committee has conducted a review for our opening comments, so can I get Mr. Nadli for his opening comments. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has presented its Report on the Review of the Northwest Territories Information and Privacy Commissioner's 2011-2012 Annual Report.

The report, which includes five recommendations, was read into the record by the members of the committee and a motion was passed that moved the report into Committee of the Whole. The committee thanks Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts for her report and for her appearance before the committee on April 15, 2013.

The standing committee is pleased to see the government beginning to take action on some key recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and of previous standing committees for improving the access to information and protection of privacy in the Northwest Territories.

This year the committee urges the government to pick up the pace, especially on health privacy legislation, municipal access and privacy legislation, and an overall review of the Northwest Territories Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The committee requests that the government update Members on its progress in implementing these and other previous recommendations. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli, for those opening comments. Are there any general comments? Thank you, committee. That will conclude general comments for today. I'd like to now call upon Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 54-17(4):  
NEW HEALTH INFORMATION ACT,  
CARRIED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories expedite work on the new Health Information Act with a view to introducing a bill as soon as possible; and further, that if the government is not able to introduce this bill in the fall sitting, the standing committee recommends that the government table a detailed progress report in that sitting, identifying a timeline and any additional resources required so that a bill may be introduced within the 2013-14 fiscal year. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We'll just give a second to pass that motion around. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair and my colleagues. I appreciate the opportunity to make a few brief remarks.

I think it's important that we recognize the committee felt very strongly that the Health Information Act is a very necessary piece of legislation in the era of electronic medical records. Because of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's very strong recommendation that we needed this kind of legislation to cover privacy around health records, the committee felt it was important to bring this motion forward, and I just wanted to emphasize the importance of this. We have heard previously from the Minister that we will see something in the fall of 2013, and committee's glad to hear that. We will certainly be watching to see whether or not the Minister produces a bill as he has promised.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question had been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 55-17(4):  
BRINGING MUNICIPALITIES UNDER  
ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND  
PROTECTION OF PRIVACY LEGISLATION,  
CARRIED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories expedite work on bringing municipalities under access to information and protection of privacy legislation, and that a phased approach to implementation be considered in order to take into account the needs and resources of smaller communities, while

improving access to information and protection of privacy in larger population centres, and that the government table its review report and discussion paper in the fall sitting. If these are not available, the government should table a detailed progress report on the municipal access and privacy initiative, identifying a timeline for completion and any additional resources required to complete the review report within the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Ms. Bisaro, to pass that motion around. I think everyone has a copy. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this is an issue that the standing committee felt was extremely important. This is something which the Information and Privacy Commissioner has been recommending for many years, and from what we understand, the department has started to do some work on looking at access to information and protection of privacy legislation that would include municipalities. We urge them to speed it up. This motion, again, identifies that this is a very serious issue which the committee feels very strongly about.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 56-17(4):  
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF  
ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND  
PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT,  
CARRIED

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a detailed progress report to this Assembly on work done towards a comprehensive review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, identifying a timeline and any additional resources required to complete the review within the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 57-17(4):  
PROGRESS REPORT ON COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDATIONS SINCE 2008,  
CARRIED

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories table an upgraded progress report on the implementation plan for the committee's recommendations concerning access to information and protection of privacy presented in the House since 2008, during or before the fall of 2013 sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Nadli.

COMMITTEE MOTION 58-17(4):  
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE  
WITHIN 120 DAYS,  
CARRIED

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 3-17(4), Report on the Review of the 2011-2012 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Since we have time and I believe staff have the motions ready for us, we would like to consider Committee Report 4-17(4).

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Just give us a second and we will proceed. Committee has agreed to consider Committee Report 4-17(4), Report on the Review of the 2011-2012 Public Accounts. I will

now go to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations – this is the committee that conducted the review – for opening comments. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations has presented its report on the review of the 2011-2012 Public Accounts. The public review took place on March 15, 2013. The committee's report includes seven recommendations. The standing committee thanks the assistant auditor general, Terry DeJong, and his staff in the Office of the Auditor General of Canada for their generous assistance in this review. The committee also thanks the NWT comptroller general, Warren St. Germaine, and his staff for their assistance in their appearance with the committee during the public review.

The committee's report discusses and makes recommendations to include the timeliness of the public accounts. The committee examined the Auditor's report and makes their related recommendations with regard to the NWT Housing Corporation reporting. The review clarified the cost of repaying the Discovery Air loan, winding down the NWT Opportunities Fund. The committee expresses dismay that the increase in the government's borrowing limit came at a cost in foregoing interest and fees paid over \$5 million.

The standing committee also paid particular attention to the notes on the accounts receivables and outlined receivables. The committee was pleased to hear the government has reviewed the interest rate policy for other jurisdictions such as Nunavut.

Members also look forward to seeing an improvement in the NWT Housing Corporation's mortgage collections within the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The standing committee recommended that the government monitors loans receivable and develop targets and measures to improve collections, with a view to reducing the allowance for doubtful accounts to less than 30 percent of the total loans receivable.

Environmental liabilities have become a major issue in public centre accounting. The standing committee would like the government to provide a schedule or timetable for the environmental assessment of all known potentially contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible for.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has a mandate to review the public accounts. The committee's review was the first such examination of the public accounts in approximately nine years, but it will not be the last. The committee intends to continue the practice of a public review of the public accounts so that the GNWT spending issues are publicly examined and all relevant information is placed before the public. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. General comments. Seeing that there are no general comments, for closing, I will now move to Mr. Nadli.

COMMITTEE MOTION 59-17(4):  
REPORTING ON AGENCIES WHICH DO NOT  
MEET THE DEADLINE  
FOR COMPLETION OF THEIR AUDITS,  
CARRIED

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance include a list of agencies included in the consolidated public accounts which did not meet the deadline for completion of their audits, as part of the standard reporting process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 60-17(4):  
PROVISION OF FINAL ACCOUNTS TO  
COMMITTEE IMMEDIATELY  
UPON SIGN-OFF,  
CARRIED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Minister of Finance provide the committee with the final public accounts immediately upon sign-off, with the understanding that the committee may conduct a public review before the document is tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to say that the committee was pleased to see that the Finance department had produced the public accounts earlier than in the previous year. We would like to, as a committee, conclude the review of the public accounts as soon as possible after the audit is finished and so this allows us, within our rules, to hold a public hearing prior to having the document tabled in the Assembly. It will allow committee to speed up the review of the public accounts. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 61-17(4):  
PROVISION OF INTERIM PUBLIC ACCOUNTS  
TO COMMITTEE BY  
AUGUST 31 OF EVERY YEAR,  
CARRIED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Minister of Finance provide the committee with the interim public accounts by August 31<sup>st</sup> of every year, in time for committee review of the government's plans. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Moses.

COMMITTEE MOTION 62-17(4):  
COMPLETION OF INTERIM AND FINAL PUBLIC  
ACCOUNTS AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE  
DATE EACH YEAR,  
CARRIED

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Department of Finance continue to work with the Auditor General of Canada and GNWT departments, boards and agencies towards the completion of both the interim and final public accounts at the earliest possible date each year. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to this motion, any of these reports that we do get before standing committee would be very helpful in terms of how we plan out the business year. Without having these public accounts in place ahead of time, with some of the boards and agencies in their reporting, it is very difficult for committee to work on how we proceed with the business plans moving forward. Each year, whether or not departments spend all their funding or not, really reflects on how these reports are done.

Committee members, Regular Members going through the business planning cycle, it is a great opportunity to ensure that we get the best bang for our dollar but also know which programs are being efficient and which need help in the regions. Obviously, the motion is one that speaks towards efficiency and accountability towards the

governments and agencies that we work with in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 63-17(4):  
NWT HOUSING CORPORATION SUBMISSION  
OF 2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT  
WITHIN 150 DAYS OF FISCAL YEAR END,  
CARRIED

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the NWT Housing Corporation submits its 2012-2013 Annual Report within 150 days of the fiscal year end, with good reasons being provided to the House if this is not possible. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 64-17(4):  
REDUCTION OF ALLOWANCE FOR  
DOUBTFUL ACCOUNTS TO  
LESS THAN 30 PERCENT,  
CARRIED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories monitor its loans receivable and develop targets and measures to improve collections, with a view to reducing the allowance for doubtful accounts to less than 30 percent.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Members will have heard during the reading of the report, committee was somewhat concerned that the allowance for doubtful accounts had risen well beyond 30 percent and considered that that was too high a figure. This motion asks the government develop targets and measures specifically in terms of collections and in terms of reducing the allowance for doubtful accounts. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The motion is in order. To the Motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Nadli.

COMMITTEE MOTION 65-17(4):  
TIMETABLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIALLY  
CONTAMINATED SITES,  
CARRIED

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide this House with a timetable or schedule for the environmental assessment of all known potentially contaminated sites for which the GNWT is responsible. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 66-17(4):  
COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE  
WITHIN 120 DAYS,  
CARRIED

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provides a comprehensive response to this report within 120 days. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Question has been called.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree that we have concluded consideration of Committee Report 4-17(4), Report on the Review of the 2011-2012 Public Accounts?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** 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, Mr. Chair.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amendments Act; Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act; Committee Report 3-17(4), Report on the Review of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; and Committee Report 4-17(4), Report on the Review of the 2011-2012 Public Accounts. I'd like to report progress with 13 motions being adopted, and that the Committee Report 3-17(4) and Committee Report 4-17(4) are concluded, and that Bills 11 and 20 are ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Motion is in order. Do we have a seconder to the motion? Mr. Lafferty.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning at the rise of the House today.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 5, 2013, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions

- Motion 17-17(4), Support for the Approval of the NWT Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement

- Motion 18-17(4), Organ Donation/Human Tissue Act

#### 18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Liquor Act

#### 19. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Bill 22, Territorial Emblems and Honours Act

#### 21. Report of Committee of the Whole

#### 22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 11, Financial Administration and Public Agency Statutes (Borrowing Provisions) Amendment Act

- Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Tlicho Community Government Act

#### 23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:06 p.m.