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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	3619
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	3621
22-17(5) – Upcoming Improvements to NWT Parks' Beaches (Ramsay)	3621
23-17(5) – Highway No. 4 – Ingraham Trail Realignment (Beaulieu).....	3622
24-17(5) – Improved Communications During Power Outages (Miltenberger)	3622
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	3623
Peel River Watershed (Blake).....	3623
On-Line Driver and Motor Vehicle Services (Bouchard)	3623
GNWT Program Review Office (Dolynny).....	3624
Wiilideh Language Lessons at Aurora College (Bromley).....	3624
Long-Term Care Facility in the Sahtu (Yakeleya)	3625
Speaking Out Against Drug Dealing and Bootlegging (Moses).....	3625
GNWT On-Line Job Recruitment (Bisaro).....	3625
Human Resources Funding (Hawkins)	3626
Deh Cho Constituency Issues (Nadli)	3627
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	3627, 3638
ORAL QUESTIONS	3627
MOTIONS	3638
9-17(5) – Extended Adjournment of the House to February 17, 2014 (Yakeleya)	3638
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	3639
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	3641
ORDERS OF THE DAY	3641

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 13, 2014****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs. Jane Groenewegen):

Good afternoon, colleagues.

Before we begin today, I'd like to draw your attention to the Canadian flags on your desks. In 1996, February 15th was declared National Flag Day of Canada to mark the introduction of Canada's national flag.

It was on February 15, 1965, that the first flag with its distinctive red and white maple leaf design flew proudly on Parliament Hill in our nation's capital. Since then the flag has become an iconic symbol of Canada, known the world over and associated with the Canadian ideals of democracy, freedom and respect.

Although we don't see maple trees in this part of the country, we proudly fly our Canadian flags across the Northwest Territories as a symbol of our unity with our fellow Canadians across this country, our Olympians representing Canada in Sochi, Russia, and proud Canadians across the world.

Members, please join me in celebration of National Flag Day of Canada.

Minister Miltenberger.

POINT OF ORDER

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a point of order today under clause 23(m) which states, "In debate, a Member will be called to order by the Speaker if the Member introduces any matter in debate that offends the practices and precedents of this Assembly."

I've waited until today, Madam Speaker, to look at Hansard to make sure of the remarks. Yesterday during question period and I quote from page 18 of the unedited Hansard from Wednesday, February 12, 2014, "We've heard that deputy ministers will move money that is intended for human resources over to projects because they want to fulfil their mandate within their department. My view is they are actually breaking direction laid out by the

Legislature. In essence, it's tantamount, in my view, of breaking the law."

On the same page, Mr. Hawkins also said, "I'd like to ask what the Finance Minister is going to do if we know that deputy ministers are signing off human resources money that is designated, protected and passed in this Legislature by a duly elected body when they go behind the scenes and re-appropriate the money for their pet projects."

Madam Speaker, Mr. Hawkins has clearly accused deputy ministers of deliberate criminal behaviour and, in doing so, I believe violates the established practices and rules of this Assembly. There have been explicit rulings on this matter in the past.

On March 25, 1995, in a landmark ruling, the Honourable Sam Gargan ruled, "The respect in which Members hold this institution is clearly evident. In order to uphold and enhance this respect, I will not permit comments, whether written or spoken, in this Legislative Assembly that have the tendency to question the personal integrity of others in this House or impute motives to those unable to respond or which have had the impact of adversely reflecting on those persons outside the Legislature."

More recently, on February 15, 2007, Honourable Paul Delorey ruled, "It is both the rule of this Assembly and a common courtesy to not make reference to persons who are not Members of this House and do not enjoy parliamentary immunity. This includes reference to Members of the public specifically by name or in such a way that there can be no mistake as to the identity of the individual involved. The parliamentary immunity that we all enjoy within this Chamber comes with certain responsibilities. I would ask that Members respect the rights of those who do not have direct voice in this Chamber both in formal session and in Committee of the Whole."

On that basis, Madam Speaker, I respectfully request that Mr. Hawkins be directed to withdraw his remarks and apologize to the House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. I will allow some debate on Mr. Miltenberger's point of order. Anyone who wishes to is allowed to speak once. Is there anybody who would like to speak to Minister Miltenberger's point

of order? Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before us here today, we have an interesting situation which reminds me of an almost identical circumstance that happened on February 16, 2006, to be exact. I raised a point of order and it is described as such: I felt a Member of the Assembly used unparliamentary language to insult me. However, it's important to note that this was not brought up in a timely way. I quote Speaker Delorey of the day and his quote is as such, when he ruled that it wasn't a point of order: "I'm going to rule the point of order should have been brought up at the time, so I'm going to rule that you do not have a point of order based on that it should have been brought up at the time the comments were made."

Madam Speaker, I didn't raise my point of order of my concern of the language used against me in a timely way. I did it later in the day. Then Speaker Delorey's ruling, which I accepted, is also precedence, which reminds us, simply stated, that a breach must be brought up in a timely way at its first opportunity. If it isn't, then the details of the specific grievance, in the end, matter little.

Proper process is the key, Madam Speaker, and I certainly agree. Minister Miltenberger, in his view, is telling the House here today that this is his first opportunity to raise this concern, which in essence, in my view, is wrong. I draw the attention of the Assembly towards the simple fact that these words, if they cause such grievance, why he didn't call a point of order in a timely way at the first opportunity. Why do I say that, Madam Speaker? Because which yesterday was, as a matter of supporting fact, I call everyone's attention to yesterday's Hansard. Minister Miltenberger expressed his grievance with my comments and rebuts them repeatedly during several responses to my questions. Not once, Madam Speaker, but five times. Surely if it was such an offence yesterday, a skilled, if not an elder parliamentarian, as he respectfully is, would have made note of the grievance and called a point of order in a respectable time, as highlighted by Speaker Delorey's earlier ruling.

This reaffirms that this was drawn to his attention at that particular time. It furthermore says, as the rules state, he should have risen to a point of order to address them at that time, but he didn't.

To tie it a little tighter, Madam Speaker, under Section 319 of Beauchesne's, "Any Member is entitled, if not bound, to bring to the Speaker's immediate notice of any instance of breach of order. The Speaker's attention must be directed to a breach of order at the proper moment, namely the moment it occurred."

If we respectfully boil this issue down to what it is, Minister Miltenberger didn't use the words I used to

express my feelings on how I feel, which I stressed "in my view." These are my feelings, in my view, and in my view, they are still my feelings, how I feel. I'm not going to be in any position, Madam Speaker, here to judge Minister Miltenberger's thoughts or suggestions, perhaps, to the situation. Only he can clarify and he's welcome to do so.

I'm going to quote two small passages from Beauchesne's to finish up. Under Section 24, "Parliamentary privilege is a sum of particular rights enjoyed by each House collectively, and its Members, and its Members of the House individually without which could not discharge their functions which exceed those processes by any bodies or individuals. The privileges of Parliament are rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of the powers."

Finally another quote, Madam Speaker, from Section 75, "The privilege of freedom of speech is both the least questioned and the most fundamental rights of a Member of Parliament on the floor of the House and in committee." Of course, we all know that expands to the Legislature here.

Finally, I say this, Madam Speaker, in closing, we could clear all of these comments up if the government would simply offer sanction and confirm the witness statements made at the in camera meeting held on February 11th to which I cannot specifically refer to because they were made in camera and that would be a breach of the House's rules. So, we could ask Minister Miltenberger if he would authorize that and we can let the public be the final judge of public accountability on this measure and allow the court of public opinion to make their ruling in their view. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Would anyone else like to speak to the point of order? Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the Member has acknowledged the breach and now he's trying to use process to not withdraw his remarks.

In this House, the process has always been you raise it at the first opportunity and almost every instance that I can recall, the 17th Assembly, the 16th Assembly, invariably the Member waits until the next morning so they have a chance to review Hansard. There's no process for trying to find out how a Member feels when he's making the remarks, but it's very clear that if people outside this House can't speak to protect themselves and it's not normal process for them to do so, I think that the Member should withdraw his remarks because it's inappropriate use in this House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier McLeod. Any further comment or debate to the point of order? If not, I will take the point of order and the comments that have been made subsequently under advisement and withhold any ruling on that until a future date. Thank you.

Back to orders of the day, we have item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 22-17(5): UPCOMING IMPROVEMENTS TO NWT PARKS' BEACHES

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thousands of our residents and visitors enjoy the parks and campgrounds across the territory. In particular, the beaches located within the territorial parks contribute enormously to the quality of life for many families on hot summer days.

The 2014 parks season formally opens on May 15th and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is making important changes to beaches in Fred Henne Territorial Park and Hay River Territorial Park that I want to share with you. These changes will help to ensure everyone enjoys the beaches in a fun, safe way.

This past summer the department contracted the Lifesaving Society of Alberta and the NWT to perform aquatic safety audits on the unsupervised waterfront beaches at both territorial parks. The Lifesaving Society is a charitable organization working to prevent drowning and water-related injury. The purpose of these audits was to analyze and provide recommendations to maximize the safety of beach users.

The Lifesaving Society has made a number of recommendations they have told us will make the beaches safer. ITI is putting all of these recommendations in place that will move the beaches up in the level of safety. They include easy-to-read signage alerting parents, guardians and other beachgoers about beach rules and hazards. Providing emergency equipment such as a reaching pole and throwing assist was also a direct safety recommendation. We will ensure those are available, and we will post emergency contact numbers.

Madam Speaker, a main focus of the recommendations is on public education. We will be engaging with our partners in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Transportation, and Health and Social Services to plan a territory-wide water and beach safety campaign, through the Injury Prevention Working

Group, to help ensure beachgoers are prepared to use and enjoy their beaches safely.

The Lifesaving Society has repeatedly stressed the importance of direct and constant supervision for children at the beachfront and in the water. We are making public awareness a major focus of this safety campaign.

In addition, the department is contracting the Lifesaving Society to deliver basic training in basic waterfront and local emergency procedures. This will be provided to park staff at Fred Henne and Hay River territorial parks. In the event of an emergency, parks staff could provide assistance until fire or ambulance crews arrive on scene. Programs and training can be customized to suit the waterfront and staff comfort level.

These plans are in addition to the lifejacket loaner station that was installed at the Fred Henne beach last summer, and we will install another at the Hay River beach during the 2014 parks season.

Madam Speaker, in addition to these safety audits, we also contracted the Lifesaving Society to do a study on what would be required to put lifeguards on Fred Henne beach. We expect to receive the report very soon and I look forward to reading it and sharing this information.

Throughout this process, the department has encouraged feedback and comments from NWT residents, and I want to thank people who have taken the time to comment and share their concerns and suggestions. We want to hear their feedback on these safety measures and to ask questions about these recommendations.

Our on-line survey about beach safety at Fred Henne has been available for a few weeks now and we have already had over 300 responses. I would encourage people to visit the ITI website to complete this survey and give us your feedback as it will be closing at the end of this week.

In addition, we are holding a facilitated public forum in Yellowknife tonight at the Yellowknife Ski Club at 6:00 p.m. We want to talk to people about the Lifesaving Society's safety recommendations, current safety issues at the beach, and potential ideas and solutions to addressing these issues. We will work in small groups to ensure all ideas are taken into account.

Another forum is scheduled in Hay River in early March. We will be able to confirm the date with you shortly.

Madam Speaker, safety at the beach is everyone's responsibility. By putting these safety measures in place as recommended by the Lifesaving Society, we hope even more residents – especially families – will come and experience the natural, spectacular beach facilities we have right here in our backyard. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 23-17(5):
HIGHWAY NO. 4 – INGRAHAM TRAIL
REALIGNMENT

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Madam Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Madam Speaker, the new Highway No. 4 realignment opened to traffic on January 31st. Residents now bypass the remediation work underway at the former Giant Mine site and travel on a safer highway with better turns and sight lines. It is an important infrastructure investment toward ensuring responsible stewardship and providing jobs and business opportunities to dozens of Northerners.

This work started last summer with the construction of a new entrance. More than 250,000 cubic meters of rock were moved to use as sub-base and base materials for the road. The department thanks residents and users of the nearby Fred Henne Territorial Park for their cooperation during the necessary drilling, blasting and crushing operations.

A temporary lighting system is in place at the Highway No. 3 intersection. Later, a permanent system will be installed this summer when we upgrade the Ingraham Trail between the Vee Lake access road and the Yellowknife River and finish applying chipseal.

Madam Speaker, administrative, engineering and construction jobs for this project have largely been filled by our very own Northerners. As of the end of November 2013, the bypass project had created 8,677 person days of employment for northern and local workers. The contractor, Det'on Cho Corporation, is wholly owned by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. Several local companies were subcontracted to complete the design and build the project successfully, with an overall average of nearly 86 percent local and northern employment. Madam Speaker, it is good to see the opportunities for skill building and success through this project.

Madam Speaker, the new alignment means that residents are able to enjoy a new view of the territory's natural surroundings. The Department of Transportation has been working closely with the Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment to modify the Prospector's Trail to include a new pullout, provide access to a new mining heritage location, and create a new lake trail loop so residents can stop to appreciate the land.

Madam Speaker, I am confident that the bypass project will contribute to the safety and enjoyment of residents for many years to come. Mahsi cho, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. The honourable Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 24-17(5):
IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS
DURING POWER OUTAGES

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Speaker, during December's power outage in the city of Yellowknife, it became apparent that communications from the Northwest Territories Power Corporation did not meet its customers' expectations or its own standards. It is our goal to keep power outages to a minimum. The corporation has taken steps necessary to improve communication during both planned and unplanned power outages in the territory and will continue to do so.

This incident made it clear that we needed a more coordinated, timely and consistent approach to communicating power outages. We immediately updated our communications protocol in response to concerns from our customers, and our new manager of communications will manage its implementation. The improved protocol sets new thresholds for the declaration of a Northwest Territories Power Corporation emergency as well as timelines and methods of communications that may include web notices, social media, radio, or even going door to door.

This protocol also sets the foundation for strengthening our relationship with our distribution partner, Northland Utilities Limited.

We will keep communications open before, during and after power outages, and wherever possible, we will coordinate our outage communications plans. This will give NTPC a more active role in communicating during outages in Yellowknife whenever the outage is the Power Corporation's responsibility. There will still be situations where an outage is related to Northland Utilities' infrastructure.

The Internet plays a major role in providing information to the public, and in late January NTPC launched a new customer-focused website that includes all pertinent information about outages such as who is affected; the cause, if known; and an estimate of when power will be restored. We will also be posting updates on social media before the end of next month.

Our ultimate goal is to avoid power outages altogether. NTPC is researching the possibility of investing in a large battery at the Jackfish plant that would provide a 15-minute window to bring additional power generation on-line without the customer losing power. This could cut the Yellowknife outage rate in half, but it would be a

significant investment and we need to do due diligence before making that decision.

In the meantime, NTPC continues to improve its overall communications to meet the ever-growing and changing needs of its customers. Along with power outage information, conservation information and being able to apply for NTPC jobs, the new website will soon provide the option for customers to pay their power bills on-line as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PEEL RIVER WATERSHED

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The rivers, the air, the fish and caribou, lines on the map mean nothing to them. Where they go is where they belong.

The Gwich'in people know how important the Peel River Watershed is to the land around it and all the wildlife and people who depend on it. I want to voice my disappointment in the Yukon government for losing sight of this when they decided to alter the Peel Land Use Plan before it was released last month.

Residents from Fort McPherson, Aklavik, Inuvik and also protestors in the Yukon walked on January 28, 2014, in support of the Land Use Plan that was originally recommended, which would have provided permanent protection for 80 percent of the Peel River Watershed. The modified plan protects a mere 29 percent. That leaves 71 percent open to development.

I can't sit back and not voice my disappointment in the Yukon government and its lack of understanding for the people who live in and near the Peel Watershed and all those who are affected downstream. It seems the Yukon government did not listen to the people who spoke from their hearts and from their experience about why they don't want development in the Peel River.

Last February more than 200 people in Fort McPherson crammed into the community hall to discuss their strong historical ties to the Peel Watershed. The Gwich'in have traditional lands in the Yukon, as stated in the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

The transboundary overlap agreement is being ignored by the Yukon government. This is just not right. We have worked for years developing our land claims, only to have it shelved in the Yukon Legislature.

Decisions made in the Yukon affect the portion of the Peel Watershed that lies within the Northwest Territories. Our government must do all that it can to protect our land and waters. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ON-LINE DRIVER AND MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the government is constantly changing and we're adding more and more on-line items, I had the opportunity the last couple of days to take advantage of the Department of Transportation's on-line drivers and motor vehicles services. I must commend the department on an effective on-line service. I was able to register my vehicle through this on-line service. The first time is obviously a little bit more cumbersome; you have to register your ID and your driver's licence, wait for an e-mail to be returned that they've got your proper information and then you go ahead and register. This allows individuals and people to register their vehicles, basically out of the comfort of their home, offices, with their feet up on the couch, maybe even with my bunny slippers on, yes, Mr. Hawkins.

All you need is some of the basic information: obviously your driver's license, a copy of your insurance form, your license plate number. I think it's very effective that we're doing this for people. It gives us an opportunity to speed up the process and not wait in lines and not slow down the general public, and as more and more people are using this, it's more effective.

The other thing that it does, and it's good to hear, is – back to the notices – through e-mail you get a notice when your driver's licence is about to expire, so that you don't show up to some sort of event and your driver's license is expired. This is what the government used to do. This is back in the old days when they used to send you out a mail notice that your driver's license or your registration has been expired. This system allows us to get back to the good old days when the government is actually informing the public of vital information. Through Internet, through the on-line service, obviously, but today we're going forward but we're also going back to a service that we used to provide.

I will have some questions for the Department of Transportation Minister on just how we evaluate this going forward, what have we done, and basically, where can we see any pitfalls, if any.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT PROGRAM REVIEW OFFICE

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The program review office of the GNWT was established in 2008-2009 for the executive branch of the day to undertake a number of targeted programs and reviews. Its role was to clarify and confirm mandates, determine program effectiveness and recommend modifications such as the elimination, reduction and service improvements. Now, I'm sure when the concept of this office of the executive was cleverly conceived, it had all the poise and promise of the day. Who wouldn't want their own private army of ombudsmen working feverishly to support your strategic initiatives? It sounds good. It even looks good on paper, but since then, has it been effective? Let's take a look.

If you go to our GNWT website and search for program review office, you get a very simple executive summary under the banner "refocusing government." Not really finding this beneficial, I went to our new NWT Legislative Assembly website, which is very cool, by the way, typed in a general search for program review office, and nothing. Well, there must be at least a tabled document from this office, so I searched through all the tabled documents since 2008. Guess what. Nothing. Nothing. I took to the Internet on a wide search with different combinations of words to try to find something reported by this office. I found one hit. It was a copy of the key activity summary during the 2009-2010 annual business plan, but I found no reports, no findings and definitely no recommendations.

To the question: For over six years and at millions of dollars to operate, what value has this office provided in finding program effectiveness, or to eliminate, reduce or improve service? The only thing of late from what this House has managed to piece together was the recent data on PTR – that's pupil-teacher ratio – that is being used for the junior kindergarten rollout. Other than that, the jury is out. We're not sure. In fact, the last time Regular Members had any interaction with this office was under the request of Premier McLeod asking for Regular Members to identify priorities for this program review office to undertake within their three-year work plan. This has been over a year now and Regular Members have never heard back from the Premier.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: Today I want to ask the Premier of the Northwest Territories what this program review office has been doing since giving our list of priorities for review back in 2012, but more importantly, is it not time we should take a critical

look at the structure, the mandate and the transparency of this office for the people of the Northwest Territories, because clearly, it is not living up to its intended purpose.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
WIILIDEH LANGUAGE LESSONS
AT AURORA COLLEGE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Aurora College and Mary Rose Sundberg for offering Wiilideh language lessons this year.

The course started on January 20th and continues until February 24th. Hugh Moloney, an instructor of the college, recently spent a year with his family, living and teaching in New Zealand. They were inspired about how the Maori language and culture have come to have an important role in New Zealand's national identity. When Hugh came back to Yellowknife, he wanted to learn more about the Wiilideh language and culture.

Fortunately, he found that Aurora College was supportive and, further, Mary-Rose had been developing teaching materials at the Goyatiko Language Centre in Detah. Within a few days of advertising the course, it was fully booked and there is now quite a waiting list. Most of the students are not Dene.

Language, culture and the land are intertwined. By learning the Wiilideh language, the students learn about the Wiilideh culture, the Dene way and their land. Learning the language will also build new relationships and strengthen cross-cultural ties.

I'm proud to report that about half of the students are Weledeh constituents. I have often said the Weledeh riding represents a special part of Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories. It is a place where many cultures thrive and interact. There is an interesting and well-known saying amongst the Tlicho people originating from Chief Jimmy Bruneau, I believe, that speaks about the relationship between the old ways and the new, between the Dene way and the "white man's way." They say being adept at both ways can make them strong like two people. Perhaps that can be applied to everyone.

I certainly hope that teaching and learning the Wiilideh language will build stronger connections within our community, stronger connections with the land, a stronger sense of pride and better understanding of our different ways of knowing.

Just a brief note, Madam Speaker, that my constituency assistant, Andrew Robinson, is attending Mary Rose's lessons and I'm sure he would welcome the opportunity to show off his

Wiilideh proficiency with any Weledeh speakers who would like to chat with him. Mahsi.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My statement is on the upcoming territorial long-term care facility in the Sahtu and a new wellness centre that's going to be built in Norman Wells. I listed out this week, the number of potential students who are going to be graduating this year, next year and the year after in the Sahtu and I also listed out some of the numbers of students who have gone through some form of post-secondary education institution training. There are 81 in the Sahtu, according to the list provided to me by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

We're very happy and very pleased in the Sahtu. Hopefully the construction will start sometime this summer, if the plans are in place. More importantly, staffing this long-term care facility, a territorial facility in Norman Wells, I'm looking for the opportunity for the department to start advertising, start setting up training programs and have proper training eligibilities for jobs in that facility where people can apply. We will encourage all students to bring up their marks, to stay in school. There is health care employment there and it's a lifelong commitment to that job, if their heart so desires, to look after people through cooking or caretaking or even becoming a nurse or doctor or some kind of specialist.

I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what types of plans have been put in place, because that facility is supposed to open in 2016. What type of preparations do we need to do in this facility and get our students ready and get them excited for a health care career? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SPEAKING OUT AGAINST DRUG DEALING
AND BOOTLEGGING

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It has been awhile since I've stood up in this House to address the continued concern that plagues most of our communities, and this concern is of those who continue to feed off our vulnerable residents and those who are battling with addictions: the drug dealers and the bootleggers.

I'm speaking here today because of concerns that I've heard from residents throughout the Northwest Territories recently, and talking about the issues

that still arise with the intimidation from families, from friends. We need to empower our residents of the Northwest Territories to speak up and speak out about these people who continue to live in these communities and continue to be the ones driving the nice skidoos and the fancy cars at the price and the health of the people who they grew up with.

We have campaigns such as the Not Us! campaign, we have Crime Stoppers, but that still doesn't seem to be having a strong effect because we continue to see this problem, especially in the areas where we're having some of our economic wealth and economic growth. We've seen it up in Inuvik when we were busy and in regions where we're getting more work developed. I think this government needs to take more of a focus and put some of its resources in these areas in these communities, especially the ones that are accessible by road and by air that we start taking a bigger stance on this and addressing the issue with the drug dealers and the bootleggers.

This government needs to look at also creating better incentives through us or in partnership with the federal government to those who want to speak up, but we also have to provide support and safety for those who want to speak up in our communities. That way they know that this government supports them when they want to get an illness out of their community.

It's not only us who need to work; the government can only do so much. We need residents of the Northwest Territories to speak up, to let us know and to let the RCMP know and the concerned members, the leadership in the community know who these drug dealers are, who these bootleggers are and get them out of the community and start building a more healthy community for the NWT.

I support these people who are trying to do this right now and I support their actions. Even though they might be feeling a little bit unsafe when they do speak up, I for one am a Member who supports these individuals who speak up for a healthier community. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT ON-LINE JOB RECRUITMENT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday I spoke briefly about the change in the advertising practice by the Department of Human Resources. I would like to further discuss our government's recent decision to move all government job recruitment on-line.

As of October 1st, the Department of Human Resources stopped putting individual job ads and job listings in print media publications, instead opting for a half-page ad promoting itself as an

employer and telling people to go on-line to look for openings.

As I said yesterday, I am concerned that this action will make it more difficult for NWT residents to apply for jobs. Many people in our smaller communities have no computer access or do not have reliable Internet or computer service.

The Minister has acknowledged there may be individuals in smaller communities without reliable access to the e-Recruit website and he's indicated the department is taking action to ensure these residents are made aware of job opportunities through other means. But it's not simply enough to provide printed job posters to local First Nations, hamlet and Metis offices and community stores. There must also be trained individuals who are prepared to sit down with NWT residents at government service offices and learning centres to assist them with access to on-line job postings.

The new e-Recruit system requires a level of computer literacy and computer access currently not available to many of our territory's residents. This is a great opportunity for adult learning centres to offer training and computer literacy. It will employ one of the most successful principles of successful adult learning: learning for a purpose. The direct result of the students' increased skills will be the ability to navigate the e-Recruit website.

Lastly, as it currently stands, you cannot apply for a job with the GNWT unless you have a valid e-mail address and that causes me additional concern. I'm not the only one concerned. In usual direct style, well-known Northern News Services Ltd. columnist and Sahtu woman warrior Cece McCauley recently asked, "What about the poor who can't afford Internet or computers?" Not only must access to computers and the Internet be made available but the need for an e-mail address must be reconsidered and a way found around that requirement.

It's been pointed out only 3 percent of applicants apply for a GNWT job in any way except on-line, so the move away from print advertising is probably justified.

Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: Thank you. The move is probably justified, but I'm not in favour of spending for the sake of spending and if on-line advertising for jobs saves unnecessary expenditures, that's a good thing, but my support is qualified. The GNWT, particularly the Department of Human Resources, must ensure that all residents can easily know of and apply for any NWT job. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HUMAN RESOURCES FUNDING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise again today to continue to raise the issue that Northerners want to apply on these mystery jobs. In some ways I view it more as they're being denied the right to apply on jobs by their own government.

This is something that you would hear of in a Third World country, something maybe in a dictatorship or who knows what; I can't describe it. But these are circumstances where people are telling me how they feel and certainly I say that I agree that how they feel is right.

In the crux of the problem we keep digging deeper, or as I said the other day, the further you peel this onion back, the stinkier it gets. We try to track down where this human resource money goes. The Cabinet sits over there and laughs at the questions I pose to the government. Now, that's okay if they want to laugh at my questions, but what it does is continue to reaffirm the cavalier attitude towards accountability that they have to Members like me and certainly questions that come to me by the public. So they're not just laughing at me, they're laughing at all 11 Members on this side of the House and certainly they're laughing at the public at large. This is just not right.

I would say it's not just one Minister, it's all seven and they all had bellyfuls of laughs yesterday when I tried to ask about where the money is, but yet they show no interest. As a committee, the other day we received a briefing and it was an in camera briefing, and for the public that means we can't talk about it because it's private. However, I will draw the attention of the Assembly, not specifically, but will say that I have an audio recording and, furthermore, a page from the briefing that would help clear this whole matter up. All we need is Cabinet's approval to table this before the House. This would bring clarity to the whole issue about helping us track down the money.

This is so important. What has happened to accountability? Have we brokered it away for a few trinkets? I don't know. I can tell you right now the broad perspective out there is accountability is lost and yet it becomes more and more stressful, but I can assure you, Madam Speaker, and I can certainly assure the public these things would help turn those bread crumbs into solid facts, concerns I will continue to raise. But I assure you these facts would turn them into crystal clear principles that people would be asking, saying what's happening over there.

So when I ask the questions, continue to laugh. Laugh as hard as you want, but do not forget you are laughing not at me but the public. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'm not sure if that recording Mr. Hawkins referred to

would be considered a prop in the Assembly, but let's remember that we're not allowed to bring props into the Chamber to use them for the effectiveness of our statements and such. Thank you. The Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO CONSTITUENCY ISSUES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good afternoon. We're well into the second half of the 17th Legislative Assembly. I'd like to highlight some of the significant accomplishments in my beautiful Deh Cho riding and the important work that remains to be done.

Progress has been made on the new Fort Providence Health Centre. The foundation is ready and the construction will resume in April. Community members and especially front-line workers look forward to the completion of the new facility.

I would like to congratulate Mr. John Leskiw, the new mayor-elect of Enterprise, on winning the recent election. Strong municipal governments are important to all the communities. Along with the constituents, I look forward to the leadership that he will bring.

The K'atloodieche Reserve continues to advance its fibre optic project and plans to extend the line further. The community continues to express concerns surrounding income support and, like all other communities in the Deh Cho, is concerned about current unemployment rates and the lack of job opportunities, especially for local youth and people who are not available to work in the mining sector.

Kakisa wants to build a new community hall and revitalize its fish plant. I'm pleased to see the commitment to a commercial fishery in this year's budget and hope that Kakisa will benefit from this investment.

The biomass industry holds great potential for the Deh Cho communities. My constituents want to see projects and advance wood pellet manufacturing and similar initiatives. Forest management agreements have been signed or are being negotiated with a number of communities and we hope that leads to the development of a viable industry. The hope that during the remainder of this government that important groundwork is laid for renewed forest management legislation that will assist the Northwest Territories in diversifying its economy through forest resources.

The Deh Cho is the first community visitors see when they come to the NWT, and their first impressions are important. There is huge opportunity for the development of tourist attractions. Initiatives such as a bison interpretative centre, promotion of the Deh Cho Bridge and the

Deh Cho Connection could help this spectacular part of the NWT reach its tourism potential and bring welcome activity to our communities.

In the final year of the 17th Assembly, I encourage the community members, leadership and governments to work together to reach the goals of healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities in the Deh Cho. Mahsi.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Minister McLeod.

Recognitions of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Madam Speaker, I would like to use this opportunity to recognize my wife of almost 35 years. It will be 35 years in July. I would like to recognize my wife, Judy. Welcome to the gallery.

MADAM SPEAKER: Since Minister McLeod has recognized his significant other in the gallery today, may I also take this opportunity to send our collective best wishes to our significant others, partners, spouses on the eve of Valentine's Day today. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I'd like to recognize all the Pages that are here with us today, all this week, for all the hard work that they're doing, but more specifically from the Monfwi riding. I'd like to recognize Shaylynn Mantla that's here with us, and also Noelene Nitsiza that's here with us. They both came from Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchoko. I'd just like to say thank you for your hard work. Mahsi.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to recognize one Page that's a resident of Kam Lake, Mr. Chris Yurris that's with us in the House this week. I also want to recognize all the other Pages that put in the hard work here for us during this session. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 99-17(5):
GNWT PROGRAM REVIEW OFFICE

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As a follow-up to my Member's statement earlier today, I question the current effectiveness of the secretive program review office that now reports to the office of the executive. Many have questioned as to what this office has been up to for the past couple of

years and many think it's time that we take a real critical look at its structure, mandate and accountability for the Members of this House and for the residents it services. My questions today are for the Premier.

It has been over one year since Regular Members have heard back from the Premier's office as to the workings of the program review office. Can the Premier indicate to the House what this office has been doing, and especially what has this office done with the list of priorities it received by Regular Members?

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm very pleased that the Member has raised the matter of the program review office. They have been very busy working on the priorities that were developed and the projects that were developed in conjunction with committee. Also, I'm very pleased that their recommendations have and will result in this government saving hundreds of millions of dollars. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. DOLYNNY: It's shocking to hear about all this money that we've saved, because again, we've had no report. Not everyone would agree that we've got proper communication, and of course, transparency is the key to accountability. So, if one was to go on-line, there is only one public document found, which is a 2009-10 annual business plan and under key activity two of the executive operations, it states under program review, "Results of the ongoing monitoring and reporting process will be updated and made available to the public by on-line publication."

Can the Premier indicate to the House where can one find this on-line publication? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'll check with our website designers to see where you can find it. We've done better than that. We've written committee and updated committee on a regular basis and we've even had responses from committee commending us on the work and asking us for more detail on why we are moving the program review office from the Department of Executive to the Department of Finance. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. DOLYNNY: Of course, the Premier is aware that he's quoting some of the backroom programs, correspondences that I didn't want to bring here to the House. Clearly, this program review office is working in a shroud of secrecy. Members have seen very little in the last year and it's definitely not available to the public as was conceived by the previous Assembly and the current House.

Will the Premier commit that it's time for this program review office to be reviewed, to find better structured input from Regular Members, a clearer mandate of delivery and, more importantly, a better

and transparent platform to broadcast its results? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: This government is always interested in improving all of our programs and services, so we'd be very pleased to undertake a review. But just to make sure that everybody understands some of the work that they have done: the results of the K to 12 school programs and pupil-teacher ratio and inclusive schooling; the general office space evaluation; the health programs and services evaluation; the adult and education training programs evaluation; rationalizing phones, faxes and printers; harvesters' support program review; single-window service centres and I should also indicate that we are prepared to look at the structure. The structure is not the problem, as I see it. The program review office makes recommendations and it's very hard to get agreement or even get a decision on the recommendations that they make. If that's what you are interested in looking at to find a better way to deal with the results and the recommendations, we are all for it, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Some of the recommendations that we've heard from the Premier today is news to many of us here, as you can see the shock and awe on our faces here.

When will the Premier be able to table these fine results and recommendations for Regular Members to see? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I believe it has all been shared with the Members, but I will resubmit them to committee. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier McLeod. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 100-17(5):
LAUNCH OF ON-LINE DRIVERS AND
MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES WEBSITE

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Transportation on the launch of the new on-line motor vehicles website and registration. I am wondering: in the development of this, is there an agency that the department uses to make sure we have consistency in presentation? That's for all departments, but especially in this one, I see that it's been effective and how do we spread that contagious event?

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Minister of the Department of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The department is using some organizations in some of the smaller communities. For the most part, we have built our own infrastructure up in the department to be able to provide these services. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: As we do more and more items on-line, I am wondering about the duality of running a manual system where somebody can come into an office or they can do it on-line.

When are we expecting to go only on-line? What savings are we seeing by just doing on-line and when will we be eliminating, if we will be eliminating, some of the offices we currently go to?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The on-line services at this time are something that we will be running for three years. Then we are looking at re-evaluating or evaluating the service at that time. Currently, we have minimum walk-in services in most places where we do have walk-in services. For example, we have one station in a place like Inuvik where individuals have the option to walk in to do their registrations and so on. If we went to a full system to save some money, we would have to shut that one down. So, we're thinking of continuing to run a dual system and that system is designed to make things more efficient, especially to provide a better service to the people of the NWT. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I wonder if the department is actually seeing any savings by implementing this on-line service or if it's just for convenience of the general public.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We do not intend to close any of the walk-in services. We would probably not gain any savings. Again, it's for more efficiency for people who are trying to do their registration. It's not a huge cost to add this system. On the other hand, the intent is not to save money by closing down the walk-in service. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I indicated, I am pleased with the service. It is very effective. I guess when we have these types of programs, when we start them, do we have an evaluation process in place to start from the beginning? The Minister indicated three years. Is that the evaluation time period? Are we doing an evaluation after one year, two years and three years? Maybe you could just speak to the evaluation process of this service.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: It's not a huge operation, so if we wish to do so, it would be easy for us to evaluate after year one, after adding the vehicle registration, document replacement, registered permits and some self-management for some of the other tolls and so on. Once we are able to do that through year one, we can actually do a bit of an

evaluation on it. We were thinking that we would add everything before we did a thorough evaluation. It looks at the outset that it's going to be a very good system and people seem to like the ability to register their vehicles at home. So this is something we would maintain, but we can do an evaluation at any time. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 101-17(15):
DEH CHO BRIDGE PROJECT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have some questions addressed to the Minister of Transportation today. I'd like to get an update on the Deh Cho Bridge

It was my understanding that it was to be completed in the summer of 2013. I'd like to first of all ask the Minister, is the bridge considered completed, and if it is not, what is left to be completed and at what cost? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is no further outstanding work to complete the bridge. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that confirmation. I'd like to go back to December of 2011 when the then Minister of Transportation said in a Minister's statement, December 13th it was, "At this time I also want to reiterate the commitment of the previous government, which was to undertake a retrospective analysis of the project after it's completed. The analysis will include total project costs as well as lessons learned."

I'd like to ask the Minister, now that the bridge project is considered completed, the Minister in 2011 stated that that analysis would take place within six months of completion. I figure we're probably at about six months of the summer by now.

I'd like to know from the Minister of Transportation if the Department of Transportation is in the process of doing an analysis of the Deh Cho Bridge Project. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The Department of Transportation is aware of the full cost of the bridge and whatnot and the evaluation will be based on the tolls that we've put in place for the crossing of the bridge at one point. At the end of I think the last fiscal year, we had completed an analysis of the cost, the toll costs and the revenues that we've received from that and we have that information available. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: That only goes partway to what I had understood was going to be the analysis of the

project. I think the previous Minister spoke to lessons learned. Certainly, there were a lot of things to be learned from that project. It started off as a P3 project, it did not end up as P3 project. Certainly in the 16th Assembly there were many comments about what we needed to do to do a comprehensive analysis of the project, where things went right, where things went wrong. I understand that the Minister says there are costs there, but I'd like to know whether or not there's going to be a further analysis, a comprehensive analysis of the project including all aspects of the project and provide that response to Members and to the public. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I will talk to the department about what extent the bridge has been evaluated in as far as looking at the bridge for lessons learned and so on from the time the bridge was approved until the time the construction was completed and provide that information to the House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thanks to the Minister, but I want to reiterate that what Members were asking for in the 16th and the 17th and what we're now expecting is a full analysis of the project, as the Minister said, from the time that it was contracted...actually, from the time that I think the act was passed to when it was fully completed.

I'd like to know from the Minister, if that has not been done, when he responds, will he please advise when Members can expect that kind of analysis and report? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. I don't have a timeline on that. What I can do is go back to the department and they will provide me a timeline of that full analysis that the Member speaks of and then provide that timeline to the House. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 102-17(5):

EMPOWERING RESIDENTS TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST DRUG DEALING AND BOOTLEGGING

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to follow up with questions to the Minister of Justice today in regard to my Member's statement.

Concerns were brought to my office, phone calls, e-mails, in regard to some of the issues that we continue to face in our small communities. All you have to look at are some of these coroner's reports of the alcohol and drug-related fatalities that we continue to see over the years every time a report is tabled in this House. If you look at where some of these alcohol and drug-related fatalities have taken

place, and they've taken place in communities where there are no liquor establishments, there are no liquor stores, so the alcohol and drugs had to get there somehow.

My first question today will be: Has the Minister of Justice worked with any partners to develop stiffer penalties for those that are caught bootlegging in their communities? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Justice, Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Stiffer penalties were introduced a number of years ago. I think it was three or four years back for bootleggers in the Northwest Territories, stiffer fines and a possibility of incarceration as well.

We continue to work with the RCMP to ensure that we have the patrols, especially on the winter road, that we are trying to get the drug dealers and bootleggers off the streets and out of our communities. It's really incumbent, especially in the smaller communities where folks in many cases know who the drug dealers are, they know who the bootleggers are, that they say something about it. I'd encourage the Member to keep promoting Crime Stoppers and the anonymous way that folks can call Crime Stoppers to report a crime, report bootleggers, report drug dealers and we'd make our best effort to ensure that our communities are free from the bootleggers and drug dealers. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: If stiffer penalties were introduced four years ago, we're still continuing to see these issues in the communities. Obviously we need to address the situation but, as I said in my Member's statement, government can't do it alone. We need the support of our residents to speak up and speak out on this. In that case, some of our residents are afraid to say anything or be a witness or go to court to provide some of this information.

What is the government doing to provide that support to our residents who want to speak up and how are we going to keep them safe? Does he have a plan to assist those that want to get the drug dealers out of their communities? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We need to, again, extol the reality that Crime Stoppers is an anonymous vehicle for folks to make a call. They can also text a complaint to Crime Stoppers. They won't have to go to court. I served some time previously on the Crime Stoppers board here in the Northwest Territories. It is an anonymous program and it's a program that works. Tips that are phoned in to Crime Stoppers will be investigated and I would encourage the Member, we can get him a poster for his office in Inuvik, a Crime Stoppers poster. I'd encourage all Members to keep supporting Crime Stoppers here in the Northwest Territories and the good work that program can do. People can make

anonymous tips to the RCMP so they can be investigated and, again, in many cases, especially in the smaller communities, community members know who the drug dealers are and who the bootleggers are. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: The Minister referred to Crime Stoppers and it is an anonymous way to get the information to those that need it to see about some type of case or some type of file.

Does the Minister have statistics on the amount of times that Crime Stoppers has been used over this past fiscal year, the year previous? Does his department collect stats on Crime Stoppers so that we know, as a public, that it's actually being used and it's actually being utilized by people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I don't have those statistics with me today, but I would certainly go back to the department and get the statistics. Also, I'm curious myself to find out what marketing efforts are currently underway for the Crime Stoppers program around the Northwest Territories, especially in the smaller communities, and I'll get that information for the Member and for the House. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Final supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Speaker. During our most recent community committee trip to the communities, we heard a lot of startling statistics and facts. Obviously, there has to be some kind of marketing strategy out there to empower our residents to speak up, and I look forward to seeing some of those details.

One of the other ways that we do it is a program called the Not Us! campaign. A lot of communities across the Northwest Territories use it. I just want to ask where the department is in terms of this campaign. How many years has it been running, how successful is it and specifically how many communities across the Northwest Territories access this Not Us! campaign that's very effective? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Madam Speaker, the Not Us! campaign has been very successful. The department is undergoing an evaluation of the program. We've got money out to a variety of communities all across the Northwest Territories.

Getting back to the bootlegging question, a lot of times communities want to focus on the drugs with the Not Us! campaign. But certainly, if the community wants to work with us, we can tailor a Not Us! program to bootlegging, as well, and incorporate that into the Not Us! program. We're interested in hearing from communities if that's what they want to see in a program.

In our estimation – and again, we're doing an evaluation – we believe the program has been hugely successful in a community like Hay River and in other communities around the Northwest Territories, and we look to be doing more of that type of work at the grassroots levels, to try to root out bootlegging and drug dealing in our territory. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 103-17(5):
PROFILING THE CONSUMER
AFFAIRS DIVISION

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to use today's opportunity to ask certain questions regarding the consumer affairs division. Sorry, I'm going to change topic for Cabinet and I'm sure they're disappointed.

On March 6, 2013, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs committed to me in the House several items, but perhaps the issue really boils down to simply this: I was concerned, and many people in the public are concerned, that the consumer affairs division is anonymous, just like those 571 jobs as a matter of fact. Incidentally, I should say. But that said, I asked the Minister what he would do to promote to profile this office and certainly to access that, and as such, he provided several commitments to the House which are basically to say that they'll make sure information gets out there, they'll publicize it, they'll do outreach and it goes on and on and on.

I guess my question to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs is: They've had almost a year – because that's from Hansard of March 6, 2013 – what have they done to promote this idea when consumers are tired and exhausted, whether it's gas prices, cell phone prices, other areas of complaint that they legitimately need to bring to an office to complain about to research and get something done for consumer protection? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our consumer affairs office is actually all of two people. As far as communicating to the public, if there's a slippage there, that's on my part. I'll wear that. But I will see what kind of information we have out there and relay it on to the Member. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Madam Speaker, a commitment was made in the House about developing a communications plan to get out there, we want to promote phone numbers and access points. In my view, the consumer affairs division may not need a

singular street window type of office where people can walk up to, but the fact is, it needs to be publicized in a way that people know where to bring their concerns.

Does the Minister see this as important, or should it be nestled away in some area of government that it's kept anonymous, as it seems to be? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Madam Speaker, our consumer affairs office is not nestled away. If there's a slippage in promoting it – and I did make the commitment and I will follow up with the department as soon as we're done here – but it's not nestled away. We don't receive many complaints at the moment, but again, that's still no excuse for not communicating as well as we should that the office exists and what the numbers are. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Madam Speaker, perhaps they don't get any complaints because no one knows they exist. That could be part of the issue.

I guess my question would be: When would the Minister be able to address this problem? He says he's going to go back to the department. I heard that; that wasn't lost upon me. But he did say almost a year ago that they would get on this, so I would like to know if he could have an action plan sent to my office before the end of next week as to how they will address these issues.

The action plan doesn't mean they've done it. What the action plan clearly states is these are the issues we see as a problem the Member has been raising and we're going to tackle them in this type of approach, and that could at least get me through to at least next week and we can leave it at that. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I stated before, I will follow up with the department and I will ask for an action plan and have to it to the Member by the end of March.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Perhaps my calendar is different than the Minister's, although he's laughing and I think he did it as a joke and I'll accept it in the way it was delivered with some humour. But let's just be clear. Let's work off the February 21st date, if that's agreeable.

Again, I'm looking for an action plan on direction. I'm not looking for a 20-page report, I'm just looking for a couple pages that say this is how we're strategizing and we will work toward achievables. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'm glad the Member took it for the way it was intended, and we were all laughing with him. I'll have some information for the

Member by the end of next week. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 104-17(5):
COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF VARIOUS
GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION INITIATIVES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before Christmas I asked the Minister of Environment a written question on the cost-effectiveness of the various initiatives his department is funding as part of the Greenhouse Gas Strategy. At the time, I got the impression that the Minister was surprised by the question, which was not my intent. So I wanted to check, was the Minister surprised to be asked about the cost-effectiveness of his department's greenhouse gas reduction initiatives? Mahsi.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'll let Minister Miltenberger answer the question. Technically speaking, you're asking the Minister not about the content of what's in the purview of his department but you're asking about his feeling about something, his opinion. It's a little bit close to the edge, but I'll let Minister Miltenberger go ahead. Please, Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. After the number of years we've been in the House together, nothing the Member asks surprises me any further. Thank you.

---Laughter

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the Minister's response. I appreciate that and I also appreciate being close to the edge. That means I'm doing my job.

Madam Speaker, the Minister may or may not have been surprised, but I'm fairly sure I have not seen an analysis like this before. While the response left out an analysis of the rebate program that was requested, some programs are clearly more cost-effective than others.

Why, after running greenhouse gas reduction programs for over a decade, has the Minister never presented us with an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of these various greenhouse gas reduction programs? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Speaker, there is work underway to in fact produce such a document. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I don't know whether it's in your purview to direct a Minister to answer a question, but that certainly did not answer the question.

The Diavik Diamond Mine has done some great work in reducing their emissions by installing wind turbines up at their mine site and they deserve full

credit for this. Yet, in his response, the Minister claims the emission reductions from the Diavik wind program go to GNWT.

Did the Minister get permission from Diavik to claim credits – and these are very valuable credits – for their actions? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Speaker, we are collating all the greenhouse gas savings that we can across the territory. Absolutely, Diavik deserves full credit. If the Member says they are valuable credits, if it's political credit, absolutely. If they're using them for some type of carbon trading credit, that's totally their purview, but when we look at the success in the Northwest Territories, we can't just look at government. We have a very significant private sector and industry, the diamond mines, and Diavik has, in fact, invested money. It's saving millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases and it's something that as a territory we constantly point to with great pride. Not only the GNWT but private industry, as well, stepped up to the plate.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thanks to the Minister. If I had wanted the private emissions reductions cost efficiency, which I suspect would be a lot higher than GNWT, then I would have asked of that, but in fact, I asked for the government data.

I want to be sure that I do not surprise any other Ministers when I ask about the cost-effectiveness of their greenhouse gas reducing initiatives. We need to be sure that we are getting the best bang for the rare dollar that is allocated to this programming.

Will the Minister commit to working with his colleagues in ITI, Public Works and Services, NTPC and the Housing Corporation to ensure that the cost-effectiveness of greenhouse gas emissions initiatives is included in future programs, evaluations and updates? Just a note, I do appreciate that there will be a report coming forward and I'll very much look forward to that.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We will incorporate the issue of cost-effectiveness of greenhouse gases as we look at doing things like LNG, like hydro, like biomass, solar, wind. We will look at those and make sure we include that in our calculations.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 105-17(5):
STAFFING FOR WELLNESS CENTRE AND
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY
IN NORMAN WELLS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Social

Services. It's my understanding that the new wellness centre in Norman Wells is going to be started soon, having a territorial long-term care facility there, and the construction is supposed to start sometime this summer and completed by 2016. More importantly, the facility will be staffed with trained health care professionals, and I'm hoping that the Minister can enlighten the House and constituents in the Sahtu on what type of plans are there and put in place to start training these workers and what type of opportunities would the schools, colleges and other institutions have to bring up their grade marks or their required courses to take part in some form of training that's going to be needed in the health centre and the long-term care facility.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The health centre and long-term care facility in Norman Wells are scheduled to begin operations in 2016. We know that there are a significant number of positions that will come along with that facility, and the types of positions include registered nurses, licenced practical nurses, resident care aides, activity coordinators, physiotherapists, dietitians, cooks, cooks helpers, housecleaning, laundry, as well as some admin support, so there are a variety of types of jobs that may be there.

With respect to one of the areas, we know that we need to train some local people on the personal support workers, which basically prepares individuals to be resident care aides or home support workers. We are working closely with authority staff to plan training for the new long-term care facility as well as the health centre ensuring that personal support workers can receive the training appropriate for the work that we need them to do when these new facilities open. The authority has met with a number of representatives from Aurora College in Norman Wells and they have all agreed that for this year what we need to focus on is preparing potential candidates to meet the qualifications for accessing the personal support worker. That work is going on now, and that includes working with Aurora College, community learning centres and the Sahtu Secretariat to encourage potential candidates for the Personal Support Worker program to enrol, and adult education courses so that they're ready to take the Personal Support Worker program when it is delivered.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister outlined various numbers of positions and requirements to get into these types of health careers.

I want to ask the Minister, is he working closely with the Department of Education, Culture and

Employment and any other institutions to get the awareness, the presentations in the high schools? Because the construction will be completed in 2016, preparing our young people, like I said, the potential number of candidates that are going to graduate this year. There are a number of students who are now in post-secondary institutions. This is a facility that's going to be completed in two years.

Is the Minister working to see if we have almost like a career fair in our schools that the students can now start preparing to take the required courses to get into the program?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The majority of the work, as I indicated previously, has been between the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority and the Aurora College, and they have been working with individuals in the community to encourage students to develop the qualifications they need to enrol in the Personal Support Worker program. But I hear the Member, and I hear the Member indicating that we need to do a little bit more, because it's not just personal support worker positions in the community. There will be nursing positions as well as other positions.

What I will commit to now is having somebody from the department talk to Education, Culture and Employment and see what we can do in the school to help the young people recognize the types of jobs that will be coming and how these jobs can offer long-term, meaningful employment in their communities. Some of them are statutory so they obviously require some secondary education, so I will certainly have the department talk with Education, Culture and Employment and work with the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority and Aurora College.

MR. YAKELEYA: Given the level of, say, for example, personal support care workers, is there a location that this training possibly could take place given the location in Norman Wells is... I know there's some complexity about bringing that training to the region. Are there locations that we are looking at so that students then can be prepared potentially, you know, that if they want this type of training these are the locations we're looking at right now? Nothing yet has been determined.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I don't believe any agreements have been made necessarily at this point between Aurora College and the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority where our personal support worker training is going to occur. I do know over the many years that the Personal Support Worker program has been delivered in a number of different communities. I believe at one point it was delivered in Fort Res in cooperation with Yellowknife. I know last year there was a large graduating class out of Yellowknife. I will certainly have those conversations to see if there are any

opportunities to deliver it in the region where the work is going to occur.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I would also ask the Minister if he would possibly look at the possibility of bringing some of the training to the Sahtu region. I don't know if that's to be split. I don't know if it's cost-effective, but also we would like see some of the training being done in the Sahtu region on some of these positions that are going to be created with the long-term care facility.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I think that's what I just said. I think I just said that I would talk to the college to see if there are any opportunities to bring programs like the Personal Support Worker to the region where the work is going to occur. I will need to have those conversations with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Health.

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

QUESTION 106-17(5):
PROTECTION OF THE
PEEL RIVER WATERSHED

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Further to my statement earlier today, I'd like to ask the honourable Premier a few questions.

First, what is our government doing to protect the waters of the Peel River in case of development in the Yukon?

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This government was very futuristic when we negotiated a transboundary water agreement with Yukon approximately 15 years ago. We have been making overtures to the Yukon government to modernize it and we are continuing to do so because we recognize the Peel River Watershed is a very important body of water not only for the Yukon but also for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: I would also like to ask our Premier, what input did our government provide to the Yukon Peel Land Use Planning Commission in order to protect the Peel waters in the NWT and Yukon? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The consultation process for the Peel River Watershed occurred in the previous... It's taken the Yukon government seven years to come to this conclusion and the consultation period was the first part of the seven years. The previous Premier had written to the Government of the Yukon indicating that they

supported 80 percent protection that the Gwich'in had requested through the consultation process. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: I realize the Yukon is a party system, but I'd like to ask the Premier, what options does our government have to persuade the Yukon to protect more of the Peel Watershed upstream from our border? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The portion of the Peel that's in the Northwest Territories is approximately 11 percent.

In September of 2010, at the request of the Gwich'in Tribal Council leadership, I wrote to the Premier of the Yukon indicating that we supported the call of the Gwich'in. I believe there are a number of options. Obviously we want to re-negotiate the Peel River Watershed and the Yukon/Northwest Territories Transboundary Water Agreement to modernize that agreement. There is a court case that has been filed and, as a government, we will be looking at that to see what kind of a role we should play in that court case. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the Premier willing to work with the Gwich'in Tribal Council to set up monitoring systems along the Peel River for future data? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: When we review the court case, we will look at our options and decide if we will take any action, if any. Obviously with devolution, we are looking at where the best locations for monitoring sites would be and I would expect we would look very closely at putting in monitoring sites in that area. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Premier McLeod. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 107-17(5):
SPORTS EXCLUDED FROM
2016 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have some questions today for the Minister responsible for sport. With Arctic Winter Games coming up and with the Olympics on, it's a good time for me to ask some questions about the sports that were left out of the 2016 Arctic Winter Games. It was quite a controversy last year and I know there has been some work that has been ongoing.

I would like to ask Minister McLeod if he could provide an update on arrangements for competitions for the six, I think it is, sports – I can't remember the exact number – that were left out of

the Arctic Winter Games International Committee decision to be in the 2016 Arctic Winter Games. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are very disappointed that these sports were left out of the 2016 Games that are going to be taking place in Greenland. I have been working with my territorial colleagues and other partner jurisdictions and Ministers. We have come up with a plan to have an alternate event for the sports that were excluded. We are just working on the details now. One of our partner jurisdictions has volunteered themselves as a location, so we're just working out the details now. We are hoping to have something to report back to our territorial sport organizations and Members of the Assembly as soon as we get that information and get it all confirmed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. The Minister has said that a location has been identified; it may not be confirmed.

I would like to ask the Minister if all the sports are going to be able to be in one location, whatever that location is, or are they going to be in several locations in 2016. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have heard from all sport organizations in the NWT that were excluded from 2016 and their preference was to have all the sports in one location to give them that opportunity to compete together. We had another location that was probably willing to step forward, but one of the excluded sports would not have been included in that particular venue. This location, we are anticipating that all six sports that were eliminated will be able to compete in one area. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister and I'm really glad to hear that because I know full well that it's not the same when everybody is not together, so I'm very glad that that's a high priority.

We allocate money through our budgets for Arctic Winter Games and Canada Games and so on. In terms of the 2016 Games for these sports that are not covered under our allocation of funds for the Arctic Winter Games, will the cost of those games be covered for these athletes? Will they be paying the same amount as if they went to the Arctic Winter Games themselves? Will that be covered through our budget and the other jurisdictions' budgets? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That is our intent, to try to cover off the cost of these games through our multi-sport line item budget if there is money left. We intend not to pass on the cost to the athletes. They would be paying their normal cost such as

their registration. We are working hard with our other jurisdiction partners to see how we can work this out. We don't know the exact details yet if there's an opportunity for us to come back to this House to seek additional funding for that. That's something we will work on and we will inform Members of that as we proceed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Madam Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I am really glad to hear that we are looking at making things as equal for these sports that aren't part of the Arctic Winter Games as possible.

My last ask of the Minister would be, when details are a little more firm, when the location is determined and when costing perhaps has been figured out, if the Minister would provide an update to Members maybe by e-mail or letter or something just to keep us up to date.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I would be pleased to do that. We should have additional details after we meet in Fairbanks during the Arctic Winter Games that are taking place next month. There will be an opportunity there to meet with my colleagues from other jurisdictions. We should have the details ironed out a bit more and once we do have that, I do intend on informing the territorial sport organizations as well as Members of this House. I will be providing regular updates. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister McLeod. Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 108-17(5):
PROTOCOLS FOR PROTECTION OF
ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On February 6th of this year, I had asked the Minister of Health about what type of protocols kick in when someone who doesn't have authorization is visiting other people's files. In essence, they are cyberstalking. I don't know any other way of describing it. The only way the people find out, that I'm aware of, is purely by accident. It could be quite some time between the initial incident and by the time they stumble upon it by information being shared. My specific question is built around what type of protocols that inform those who are in charge of the system and lets them know someone is viewing who is unfairly or certainly not empowered to be visiting files.

I'd like to know what the Minister has done in a week, if he has been brought up to speed on this file, because this is an important issue. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Member for his question. As I indicated, we will share those protocols with the Member. I have had the opportunity to speak to the department about the protocols that are in place, including security passwords and all the other mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the privacy is secure.

I am not aware of any breaches of this system. A breach would be a serious issue. If there are breaches, I would appreciate the Member and all of my colleagues, if they're aware, sharing those with us so that we can quantify them, fix them and make sure it doesn't happen again. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm not hearing anything that actually tips off the manager or the administrator of this type of private information that a particular person is spending hours, maybe even days examining individual and private files. I haven't heard a single word built around that fact that there's something that informs the administrator that something wrong is going on.

Would the Minister be able to speak to that issue specifically, to find out does anything address that type of problem? I've been informed they're a problem, but I'm more worried about the broader protocols at this second to that issue.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Madam Speaker, as I indicated, we take our security on our records very seriously with respect to our medical records. As I indicated, if the Member would share with me, I'd be happy to dig in and look.

We do have a significant number of protocols, which I've already indicated I would share with the Member and I will be sharing those with the Member. We do have a significant number of staff within the department who monitor our programs to make sure the data coming in is appropriate and that people have the appropriate access to gain access to that information. So, I will share the protocols with the Member.

MR. HAWKINS: Madam Speaker, I guess I'm going to ask the Minister to contradict me, because I'm going to say this is happening and I want him to tell me this isn't how it happens.

Somebody can be viewing a particular file, who's not authorized, for hours on end. They have access to the system because that's their job.

Is there an electronic process that kicks in to tell the administrator that situation X is happening and they should evaluate it as such, or is it when he's referring to protocols is that, well, they find out when they find out? That's what I'm trying to ask. Is

the system designed in any way to tell the administrator that people are searching files that they should not be? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, I will share those protocols with the Member so that he can understand the protocols that are in place.

Individuals who have access to our electronic medical records are those individuals who have a reason to be reviewing those files with respect to the clinical management of a patient or client. But I will share those protocols with the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do appreciate the offer and certainly the public has not heard one iota that speaks to how those protocols are triggered within the system.

Is there a computerized system that pops up, alerts the administrator that files are being searched by unauthorized people, even though they are authorized on the system at large, and indicates that they're spending time reviewing files that they shouldn't be? Quite frankly, I think the public deserves some clarity on this issue because potentially folks could be out there searching. We don't know if that's the case, so I'm boiling it down to how is the system designed, what alerts the administrator and how do we ensure private information is protected.

I don't want to be told we'll sit down later and talk about it. I want to be told now and I think that should be shared with the public. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Madam Speaker, as I indicated, only individuals who require that access or require that information that are involved in the circle of care would have access to those files. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 109-17(5):
REPORT ON COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF
GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION INITIATIVES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to follow up from my earlier questions with the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I understand there is a report coming out on the cost-effectiveness of our respective program for greenhouse gas reductions. The Minister has obviously got the results as a result of the analysis he did in response to my questions.

What sort of contemplations are in place, are happening towards now responding to that information we have so that we can increase our cost-effectiveness on the basis of these analyses? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To use a phrase used in this House by you, we are looking to see if we can do things better. Clearly, we started back in 2007 or thereabouts with the Greenhouse Gas Strategy. We have worked our way through or are partway through the second iteration and we're going to be looking at what improvements can be made to our work, to the significant investments that we make to the Ministerial Energy Coordinating Committee and to new initiatives, and how do we look at and measure what's most effective in achieving the various goals. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. Will the Minister also be incorporating into that some other ways of urging this to happen in a systemic way? Right now we have lots of one-off actions where we'll replace a boiler here or subsidize somebody to do something, but we obviously need systemic actions that work across the public and private and government sector.

Will the Minister be considering some new initiatives there that, rather than nickel and diming here, actually goes towards the degree of action that we need? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Speaker, rather than debate the details of the policy approaches, I'm not sure what suggestions the Member has in mind. For example, we would be more than willing to appear before committee with all the appropriate folks to have a discussion about those detailed issues.

Right now we are spending millions on rebate programs, support programs, incentive programs to encourage individuals and businesses to convert. As a territorial government, we have embarked upon a government-wide biomass retrofit process, in some cases with hydro as well. So we have, I believe, moved past the one-off pilot issue. There are still some pilots that we deal with. At the same time, we are fully engaged in our role at ENR to work with the development of industry for biomass, for example, in the Northwest Territories. It would probably be best to have that kind of fulsome discussion at a table where we're not bound by the rules of the House and we can have more free-flowing discussion. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks again for the Minister's response. I know he'd like me to answer the questions that I'm asking here, but I think that's his job and obviously he has the resources. I'm happy to come up with my own suggestion, but he's got a lot of professionals working for him, so I think those are the people we want to engage.

Does the Minister agree that regulatory legislative sorts of actions can be quite cost-effective – they don't cost millions of dollars – and are a toolbox that we should be looking at to get the objectives achieved that we know we need to achieve? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Speaker, I would encourage the Member to share his good ideas as opposed to us doing what we think is appropriate and wait for Mr. Bromley to say whether we've got it right, in his opinion, or not. It's a much tougher way and much more time-consuming way to do business. I would encourage the Member to share the specifics. We can arrange a meeting, if committee is interested, and we can make this as collaborative as we can. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that, Madam Speaker. Again the Minister didn't answer my question. There's a whole toolbox out there of regulatory and legislative means that actually present systemic solutions to the greenhouse gas reduction challenge.

Does the Minister agree and is he willing to look into that toolbox to see what might be apt to flow in the Northwest Territories, and that would go beyond our very specific programs that we have in place to replace this boiler and building with that boiler? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I'm not sure if that's code for carbon tax, but we're prepared to look at all these tools. In fact, we have looked extensively at a carbon tax, as well, and what systemic changes are there, policy changes, legislative changes that are there when you look at our environment, our cold weather environment, the fact that we rely so heavily for diesel for heating at this point, the high cost of living within those factors. Of course, we are always looking to see what we can do, which is why we're spending so much money on biomass, trying to advance solar, wind, batteries, we're looking at hydro expansion, grid expansion and those type of things. So keeping in mind, as well, we have about 597 days left until the next election at this point, we have to see what is doable and possible. As well, we have one more business planning cycle that we'll be starting probably early April, as well, which would start that final process. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. The time for oral questions has expired. Moving on, on the orders, item 9, written questions. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I request unanimous consent to return to item 6 on the Order Paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was remiss earlier and I need to recognize some Pages from Frame Lake who have been working for us here this week. I know that Mr. Ramsay mentioned Chris Yurris, but he does live in Frame Lake. I don't know if somebody doesn't know that, so I'm going to recognize Chris Yurris. I'm going to recognize Emily Paddock and I'm going to recognize John O'Connor and thank them all for their service, and all the Pages who are doing a great job. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, replies to budget address. Item 13, petitions. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. The Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Motions

MOTION 9-17(5):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO FEBRUARY 17, 2014,
CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on February 13, 2014, it shall be adjourned until Monday, February 17, 2014;

AND FURTHER, at any time prior to February 17, 2014, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and 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 the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mr. Bouchard in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Ms. Bisaro, what is the wish of committee?

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Defeated

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): What is the wish of committee?

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will continue with Tabled Document 22-17(5) and the opening comments to the Department of Human Resources.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We'll take a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): I like to call Committee of the Whole to order. Committee, we've agreed to continue general comments from the Department of Human Resources. Minister Beaulieu, do you have witnesses?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the Chamber.

Minister Beaulieu, I'll get you to please introduce your witnesses.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is Sheila Bassi-Kellett, deputy minister, Department of Human Resources; to my left is Michelle Beard, director of policy, Department of Human Resources.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. I'll open the floor for general comments on the Department of Human Resources. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the department being here today. We had a pretty good start to general comments and I appreciated the discussion yesterday and many of the points that I had were ticked off there. That is, addressed one by one.

There was a lot of discussion on vacancy rates and recruitment. One thing I didn't hear about was turnover rates. We're winning these awards as the best darn employer around, which I appreciate and I want to reiterate my earlier congratulations to the Minister and his staff, but if it's just, you know, we pay really well and we help with expenses and people leave soon after it's a bit hollow, hopefully that's not the case.

Do we have information on turnover rates, how long people stay in a job, and what the trend is on that over time? Of course, ultimately, that might be instructive – I don't know – for the Minister if it was available by community and region and so on.

Also, in terms of vacancy rates and turnover rates, do we have numbers for other jurisdictions so that we can sort of see where we fit on the scale? If I could start with that, thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank the Member for mentioning the best diversity employer. The department appreciates the Member's comments on that.

On the turnover rates, there has been, from the information we have, a slight decrease between 2011 and 2012 of about a 1.3 percent. On average, we pretty well turn over about 10 percent of our staff on an annual basis, although our average tenure for the public service in the GNWT is nine years, but annually we're turning over, I would say, about 10 percent, a little under 10 percent and sometimes slightly over 10 percent.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. The other side of that was, do we know where we fit in the larger scale looking at other jurisdictions?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I'm going to ask the deputy minister to provide a response on that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

MS. BASSI-KELLETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We are competitive. We're comparable to other jurisdictions in terms of our turnover rate, but clearly, it's one thing where we know in the public sector across the country we're competing with other public sector governments, as well, for many of the jobs that we may have where we don't have the labour pool at home. So we're clearly really interested in focusing on a lot of retention initiatives to make sure that we build up and enhance the ability for our own staff to stay longer in their jobs. We're really looking at opportunities and certainly the employee engagement and satisfaction survey is one way that we constantly check in with staff to see how they're doing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to Ms. Bassi-Kellett for that. I guess I'm going to leave it at that. Like I said, many of the topics were covered. I was particularly interested in succession planning and where we are at that and whether there are any trends in that trying to build ourselves a bigger buffer there, because it was pretty serious a few years ago. I think I'll just leave it at that at this point.

In terms of recruitment, one of the concerns I have – and the Minister addressed this the other day – is that the exit interviews aren't telling us what the external factors are that are causing them to leave. There are obviously positive things, they found a better job or whatever. They're moving up in the department or to another department. But then there are the negatives, the cost of living is too darn high – I'm out of here sort of thing – and it would be very good to be able to capture that sort of thing. It's because people are choosing, and I guess this is an option to choose, not to do the exit interview.

So maybe I'll just ask, is there any other way that the Minister could consider how we could get that information, what these external factors are so that we know which are actually things that we can deal with in the government and others as a personnel manager and others that we can deal with as a government in terms of quality of life and things like this, cost of living and so on? Is there any other way that we can get at that information? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do surveys with our public service. Satisfaction surveys are one way that we are gauging whether or not individuals in the public service are happy or unhappy. That is, for us, the preferred method to try to make the changes while the staff are still with us, and usually if we only take a survey of the individuals that leave the public service and we're going through exit surveys, the data is very slanted. So, like I indicated yesterday, it appeared to be an opportunity for people to vent their frustrations with having worked with the government and why they left more than anything. Many of the people that did leave on a good note, we were not capturing that. We were capturing some, but not capturing that, but it wasn't a good stat across the board.

When we're doing the satisfaction surveys with the staff while they're employed with us, it's a good, true percentage of the staff. I think it's 43 percent of the staff that completed the surveys. I believe that was the number that I had seen, but we can confirm that. It was a high number for statistical purposes. So that gives us a good indication of those people that filled out that information, 80 percent roughly were very satisfied to be employed here.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of comments. First of all I'd like to congratulate the department on its recognition of its efforts to maintain our labour force within government. That being said, I was somewhat reserved in terms of this initiative to go to Ottawa and seek people from outside the NWT to move into the North and basically join the workforce.

I acknowledge that it's a challenge of hiring Northerners and First Nations people in the NWT. The act itself of going to Ottawa and recruiting people from outside of the NWT presumes that it's a matter of fact that we have a challenge of ensuring that we have a very diverse labour pool and that we're trying to seek Northerners and also First Nations people to join the workforce. It's pretty clear that it's a challenge in terms of being employable, looking for jobs or business opportunities in communities, and it's hard to accept that this idea of going out of the NWT and trying to get people other jobs when in fact here in the NWT there's still a high rate of unemployment in the communities. So that was hard to take. I understand perhaps it was necessary for the department to go to Ottawa.

The other point I wanted to make is in terms of vacant positions. Obviously, in the small communities, because there's a somewhat limited labour pool, people are put on casual and it's probable for people to work on a casual basis for the rest of their lives, but it creates uncertainty for families and for people that are trying to make a living when they're given a casual position perhaps on a seasonable basis and they have to basically work from month to month or else even year to year. In that respect, I think there's likely ways that the department is trying to remedy that challenge of ensuring that we address that dilemma in the communities.

I wanted to ask, in terms of the Affirmative Action Policy, whether indeed such a policy still exists within government, and whether indeed we're employing it and invoking it to ensure that there's a level of parity for people that have grown up here in the NWT, have been encouraged by their parents and by their leaders to go to school. We send our kids down south, perhaps to other institutions, to go as high as they can and they come back up here and they've gone as far as they could in terms of getting an education, perhaps lacking experience to apply for a job, and then they're told that they don't have the qualifications or the experience. That's hard to accept, but at the same time, I do realize that it is a challenge that we're trying to meet and that we could perhaps do more.

One thing that I also became aware of is that there is an element of an Aboriginal component to this that we're trying to bring people that have a very solid track record, in terms of their careers, and serve as, perhaps, role models, and that we're trying to gain from their experiences and expertise in trying to remedy some of the labour force challenges, especially for the labour pool that exists for the NWT and also particularly for First Nations people.

Those are just some of my comments that I had. Perhaps if the Minister responds, likely I will have some supplementary. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. The career fair that we had in Ottawa is one method for the GNWT to attract individuals to come to work in the Northwest Territories. As a government, our approach is holistic when we try to also bring in some population, bring some people in and we have a goal of increasing our population in the territory, but one of the principle reasons for going to Ottawa would be to look at some of the very difficult to fill positions. Also, attracting some Northerners to come back to the territory.

When we were down there, we had contact with over 600 people. Some of them are Northerners that are working down there that would like to come back to work in the territory. In addition to the open houses, we want to gauge the success of that, but we're not obligated to just hire people from the South. What we're doing is we're trying to spread out the methods in which we use to try to fill the public service positions in the GNWT. We have the open houses that we're going to continue to use to communicate to individuals in the regional centres, in the communities and so on. We have completed one open house – I personally have not seen the results of that open house – and we're continuing to run open houses into May in the various centres, including a couple of open houses here.

We want to have some of the strategies, Workforce Planning Strategy, which has the regional recruitment and the Aboriginal Management Development Program in our overall Workforce Planning Strategy, so we are looking everywhere to try to keep the vacancy rate down as low possible across the territory.

Going to Ottawa is not something that we would do in replacement of trying to hire Northerners. Our priority is to still hire Northerners. Our priority is still to apply the Affirmative Action Policy when they come to apply for jobs with the various departments across our government. Human Resources does ensure that the Affirmative Action Policy is used on all hiring actions. So if a department has a job out and there's a priority 1 candidate that is qualified for that job, they would receive their interviews first to try to get our affirmative action numbers up as high as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Sergeant-at-Arms, please relinquish the witnesses. I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MADAM SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 22-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015, and would like to report progress. Madam Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Do I have a seconder? Minister Ramsay.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Orders of the day for Monday, February 17, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

- Tabled Document 4-17(5), Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2013 Final Report
- Tabled Document 22-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 17th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:15 p.m.