



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2015**

Pages 5451 – 5490

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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(Nunakput)

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*Minister responsible for*

*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

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**Mr. Michael Nadli**

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*Minister of Industry, Tourism*

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**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

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Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 11, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

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

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 139-17(5):  
COMMUNITY POLICING PLANS  
DEMONSTRATE A DIFFERENCE

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, communities have worked with the RCMP to develop policing priorities and action plans that designate specific priorities to make our communities safer. I would like to share with Members how this collaboration is making a difference in our communities.

Stopping bootlegging and stemming the inflow of prohibited liquor is a main focus for many communities. This priority is very important, especially around Christmas, holidays and other community events. It requires active participation by everyone, including community members and leaders, RCMP and partners, to combat bootlegging and maintain healthy homes and communities.

In Deline, strong partnerships between the RCMP, citizens and community leaders recently led to successful initiatives including check stops and investigations. These resulted in a seizure of a significant amount of alcohol: in December, a total of 67 bottles of vodka, 51 cans of beer and two bottles of wine. Charges were subsequently laid under the Deline Liquor Restriction Regulations.

However, it wasn't all about punitive activities. In addition to enhanced law enforcement, the community of Deline hosted cultural activities with RCMP participation throughout the holiday season. Their aim was to help promote sobriety and safer, healthier choices. The results are clear. In December 2014 there was a 32 percent reduction in the number of calls to the RCMP for service compared to December 2013.

Other communities have seen similar successes. Fort Resolution saw charges laid for a seizure in December totaling 73 bottles of liquor, and Fort Good Hope had 51 bottles confiscated in one seizure. Each of these communities saw positive change for December as a result of these actions.

If you have information about any illegal activity affecting your community, speak with your local RCMP. You can also call Crime Stoppers. Crime Stoppers is safe and anonymous and will get your information to the people who can help to make positive change happen.

As you can see from these examples, each of us is able to have an impact and make a difference when we work together to build safer homes and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER STATEMENT 140-17(5):  
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Glen Abernethy will be absent from the House today due to illness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Members' Statements**

MEMBER'S STATEMENTS ON  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ISSUES

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like most MLAs, many of us spend a large portion of our time assisting our residents with affordable housing situations. For the most part we find solutions but, sadly, there is still much disappointment for our most vulnerable in society. This has prompted me to speak today about what I think should be a basic human right. That right, Mr. Speaker, is the right to shelter.

There is nothing more colonial in our modern-day history than the way a number of bureaucrats and politicians in Ottawa decide on budgets for our nation's housing crisis. Sadly, with federal CMHC funding declining to zero in the next 23 years,

provinces and territories are left struggling to fill the void of affordability, adequacy, quality and homelessness. In essence, housing has become the real orphan of public policy in Canada and the North is not immune.

With our small population base and our inability to increase own-source revenues, this state of dependency is further cast into despair of resentment and dysfunction in seeking resolution to the question many of us ask: Do we have the power and the means to address the challenges of housing in our foreseeable future? Many are optimistic. I myself am very skeptical.

You see, this download of responsibility has created nothing more than a crisis of governance that provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments share. None of these entities have the means to address this issue alone, even with the best of intentions and collaboration. Dysfunction is imminent.

It's time, with 2015 being the year of elections at all levels, I ask citizens to address these challenges in the voters booth by asking and seeking clarity in the way we divide the fiscal pie, to ensure that the proper revenue streams are going to the right orders of government and to make sure the housing crisis is deserving of a proper transparency and accountability its citizens want and need.

We can learn from our history when it comes to our housing crisis, but we cannot afford to live in it any further. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EXPANDING TAX REVENUES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a revenue problem. It's no surprise that when the Minister of Finance was gathering views of NWT residents during his Budget Dialogue 2014, no one called for lower taxes. Indeed, some suggested increasing revenues through smarter taxation and improved royalties.

The need for investment in sustainable energy infrastructure, home retrofits, early childhood education, adequate housing, job training and addictions is obvious. Expenses are going up. How can we address this need? Shifting to a smarter tax approach is a good start.

Reducing taxes on low and middle income earners balanced by slightly higher ones for high income earners would help with cost of living, attracting new residents and retaining current ones, both yielding federal transfer revenues.

Sin taxes are a natural target and we've acted on these for tobacco and alcohol, but let's recognize that the definition of "sin" includes pollution, and

start making polluters pay instead of blindly accepting these health and environment costs with no ability to pay.

With no revisions since 1997, the NWT's transportation fuel taxes are significantly below the national average, yet fossil fuel prices have gone through the roof since then. We don't even tax a penny on natural gas and propane. Economists have shown that, done smartly, establishing a price on pollution, including carbon, would help us to capture industry innovation and reduce cost of living while improving our job numbers with other benefits.

Some corporations reduce northern tax payments by using creative accounting techniques and using commuting labour from afar. A capital tax would help make sure they pay their fair share. Another untapped revenue source is a resource income tax, which could contribute to our Heritage Fund and help smooth out the boom and bust nature of our resource economy.

Hotel and airport departure taxes, common throughout Canada, are unlikely to affect tourism, considering their small proportion of overall travel costs.

While yearly increasing our subsidies to the extractive industry, the Minister was consulting with the public about our budget. In those consultations, people were clear in demanding more than the promise of a few jobs over the life of hugely profitable projects in exchange for our non-renewable resources.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BROMLEY:** A better balance is needed. The resources of the North belong to the people. They are valuable and they are being exploited with too little public benefit for owners of the resource.

A revenue tune-up is long overdue, but I acknowledge it will take courage to get it done. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Colleagues, before we go on today, I would like to welcome our honourable table officer and a man who needs no introduction here in the House, Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford. Welcome back to the House today, Tony.

---Applause

The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENERGY EFFICIENT LED LIGHTING

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I've got the blues, but I want to tell you why that's a good thing. Today I want to talk about LEDs. LED

stands for light emitting diode, and these lights offer a way to replace old-fashioned incandescent lightbulbs and less efficient light sources.

LEDs light up the lives of NWT residents every day at home, school, work and while travelling, from household lightbulbs, televisions and laptop computers to vehicles, streetlights, runway lights at the airport in Lutselk'e and even Christmas lights.

Yes, I've got the LED blues. Each of these lights uses a unique blue LED chip. This chip forms the base for LEDs of many different colours. That's what makes these lights different from other bulbs. LEDs use as much as 80 percent less energy and last up to three times longer than fluorescent bulbs and 10 times longer than incandescent.

In our thermal communities, relying on diesel for electricity, this kind of energy efficiency is even more important for residents' wallets and for community savings. It's also better for the environment.

Since January 2014, federal regulations have seen retailers required to sell alternatives to incandescent bulbs, often fluorescent lights. But LEDs are still an efficient, sensible option. Unlike some fluorescent bulbs, LEDs have no mercury. If you're interested in making a switch, rebates are available through the Arctic Energy Alliance for up to \$200 for people in diesel communities.

At the community level, I know that communities across the Territories are replacing costly, low-efficient streetlights with LEDs. The NWT Power Corporation estimates that this will cut costs in half. Changing a few lightbulbs may seem like a small thing, but every little step you can conserve energy helps reduce the load on diesel generators in our communities. That means lower fuel consumption, lower cost and better outcomes for our environment.

Today I want to thank the Members' families and communities that are already making the switch to LEDs, but I hope I can encourage anyone who is still hesitant to come down to the house of blue lights too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HOUSING NEEDS IN FORT SIMPSON

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As a small community MLA, in the past I have blasted Yellowknife, but today I want to commend them. I was pleased to see the City of Yellowknife address the needs of the homelessness with their Housing First initiative. They have developed a five-year strategy to deal with the homeless, especially with the youth.

In my Nahendeh riding and throughout the other regions of our NWT, there is a need to increase the amount of housing units and even homelessness shelter complexes, much like Yellowknife has planned. In Fort Simpson there are over 30 single people homeless and on the housing list waiting for units. There are individuals on that list that have been there for about seven years. As our young population ages and starts young families, they too are now looking for accommodations and places to live. There is a private market there, but one developer has about 12 to 14 units that are close to being condemned, and then where would those families go? Fort Simpson is a regional centre and people from the surrounding communities do migrate to Fort Simpson looking for work and also increasing the pressures for a place to live.

I have been in contact with the NWT Housing Corporation to work with the leadership of Fort Simpson in addressing this issue, also in finding a way to use their available programming and that of the Anti-Poverty Strategy to make an impact on increasing available public units and establishing a homelessness shelter.

Mr. Speaker, today I'm calling on our government and the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation in offering all their resources in addressing this situation.

I will be asking questions later to the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation about our Homelessness Strategy and what resources we have to address these regional centre concerns. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUDGET DIALOGUE 2014 – SUPPORTING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 18<sup>th</sup> I attended the budget dialogue in Inuvik where various concerns and recommendations were brought to the government in the Minister of Finance's budget dialogue tour across the Northwest Territories. There was a big discussion around investment in renewable energy, and obviously Inuvik is going through a gas situation, and that was one of the big topics, and I'm glad to see that it was also reiterated in other regions with the high cost of living and energy that was put into the Taking Stock Budget Dialogue.

This government is working on, right now, passing a \$1.6 billion budget. There is a big increase in the wages and the benefits that we do supply our employees. When I was going through the budget dialogues for the last three years, in 2012 one of the things that I noticed in the overarching themes was mention of duplication of programs. We do

have organizations in the Northwest Territories that do programs on behalf of government and do really great work that help residents become healthier, become educated, become part of society, yet we still do some of those programs within our departments.

Yesterday, during some of our dialogue with one of the departments, we got around to talking about the Third-Party Accountability Framework and how this government is increasing the budget of two not-for-profit organizations in the Northwest Territories who do work on behalf of government, and found out that under this accountability framework the department actually went out and worked with these organizations to increase their wages and benefits, like we do with the employees for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

We still have numerous other not-for-profit organizations that have been running on the same budgets, the same wages and same salaries for years.

I will ask question to the Premier of this government on what he's going to do to ensure that all not-for-profit organizations do come up to speed with the economy that we're dealing with right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ALBERTA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT TEST RESULTS

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to speak about education in our small communities. In 2013 the Alberta Achievement Test results show that the Northwest Territories is not doing very well. Actually, this test is a measurement of our education system in the Northwest Territories, and when you look at it, the results are pretty grim and bleak in the small communities. We do have a commonality with the larger centres. When you look at the results from the small communities and larger centres like Yellowknife and Hay River and Inuvik and Smith, there's a commonality that connects us, and that shows in the results of testing the grades 10 and 11 students. That's where the results show that the students dip below the percentage. It goes down.

There's something happening for the students right across the North by grades 10 and 11. Attendance grades are up, then all of a sudden they all drop no matter where you are, Yellowknife, Smith, Hay River or in Colville Lake or Deline. The attendance drops and slightly peaks at Grade 11. So that's the factor that shows our system isn't well.

If you look at the other tests, our small communities are way below 50 percent. Students are operating below their grade level, meaning that they can't

comprehend. If you have a Grade 3 here in Yellowknife and a Grade 3 in Fort Good Hope, they're not at the same level. They're actually maybe at Grade 1 or Grade 2 at the best, so we're failing them at that level.

I wanted to talk about what will it take to provide a quality education. The Minister talked about the four programs as being the foundation, and this is only for academics. There are students who do not want to be a doctor or a teacher; there are students who want to be in the trades. Like the Budget Dialogue says, we need to put screwdrivers and hammers in their hands to make a living.

So, I will ask the Minister, at the appropriate time, some questions on my statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COSTS AND BENEFITS OF BUDGET DIALOGUE PROCESS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start today by praising the Finance Minister for the initiative he has shown for holding budget dialogue events for the last three years, allowing NWT residents to comment on NWT budgets.

Over the three years the meetings have produced considerable feedback, but due to the timing of the forums, I'm not sure that feedback has actually been used. I have to wonder about the value for money of this initiative. Having said that, though, I've previously said that we can't put a price on democracy. Consultation is a necessary evil of government.

This year there were 97 attendees at seven meetings held all over the NWT. Other years have had about the same number of participants, but what has this exercise cost us? Has it been worth the expense?

As I said, I'm unsure how the feedback has been used. In the report from the 2014 Budget Dialogue, the section called Next Steps states "The results of this process will be used to inform Legislative Assembly discussions in its February budget session and beyond." The budget dialogues have been held in late fall, generally in November. Given that this year the 2015-16 budget was all but finalized by early December, I don't know how the Minister used the results of the November 2014 dialogue to influence this year's budget.

The same can be said of the report's statement that "Other feedback pertaining to the government's fiscal priorities and programs and services will be used in the 2015-16 budget." I have to ask, what info was used and how did the budget change from November 2014 to today?



On another note, there's significant mention in the Budget Dialogue report of the government's strategy announced last year at this time, a strategy to grow our population. The report mentions a number of obstacles to achieving this goal and one of the most mentioned is government recruitment.

I want to thank the Minister for his commitment earlier this session to provide Members with concrete evidence of the government's plan to get us 2,000 new residents, and I look forward to reviewing that plan.

In closing, although I question the value of this budget dialogue exercise and I hope the Minister will do a value for money audit on it, I compliment the Minister and department for holding these forums and giving residents a chance to express their views in person.

I'm hopeful the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly will continue to seek out residents' views on NWT budgets. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUDGET DIALOGUE 2014 REVIEW

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will obviously be talking about the budget dialogue that the Minister of Finance continues to hold for the last three years.

I'm not sure if I'm really that confident in this budget dialogue process. Indications from this year are we had 97 people attend and we had 11 individuals or groups submit. Those are really low numbers and I'm not sure if we're using this to direct or just as an excuse that we've consulted, because the numbers look crazy as far as I'm concerned. Thirty people from Yellowknife attended. Thirty people from a community that's very large, the centre and our capital. That's a very small number. In Hay River we had eight and I know Hay River had more interested; we had a conflict in meetings.

From this type of dialogue, the government moves forward with the budget. Like my colleague indicated, most of this is probably in stone already. So I'm just wondering if the Minister and his department really were hearing the public in this process, or did they have a preconceived notion? Because I know at each meeting, the meetings that I attended, the Minister and the staff had a presentation to make, had a discussion on the fiscal strategy and that we were limited to what we can do anyway. So I'm just wondering if there's a preconceived notion of how this process is going to happen and the budget that was going to happen. So, are we just playing lip service to the general public?

I'll have questions for the Minister about what he actually learned out there this year. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BRINGING BUDGET DIALOGUE TO SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too will say a few words on the budget dialogue that has happened over the last three years. When this first began in one of the communities we even had a peaceful demonstration, which showed great support for the Inuvik-Tuk Highway Project and that is one of our priorities that we have undertaken over the last couple of years. Also with the Fibre Optic Link.

Those investments in the Beaufort-Delta region really needed to happen. Before that it was very slow up in the region, but now there's a lot of jobs happening over the winter season, a lot of people working, a lot of happy families over Christmas.

Also, what I was hoping to say, and if this happens in the future, is come and visit the small communities, not just the regional centres. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BUDGET DIALOGUE PROCESS

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not to the substance of the budget dialogue but to the process, I would like to say that I applaud the Minister for his efforts to consult with people in the communities. It is always a debate, to dialogue or not to dialogue, to consult or not to consult, because we don't have any way of realistically predicting how many people, how many constituents, how many people in the communities will actually be interested in taking the time to come out and speak with the government. Perhaps there could be some tweaking or adjusting done in terms of the timing of the consultation if people feel that the input could be put to better use if we had it earlier on in the process. So, those are things that we could think of.

But the fact is that for the last three years the Minister of Finance has taken his staff and he has gone out to the people in the Northwest Territories. If they did not avail themselves of that opportunity to have input, that is their choice, but we as a government have, I believe, a duty to consult and we made those efforts and we made that investment. So it's hard now, after the fact, to say that we shouldn't have done it because of poor turnout. As Mr. Bouchard said, in Hay River there was something conflicting that night. I didn't even make it to the budget dialogue that night as there

was something else going on in town, but I can't remember what it was.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also say that for myself as a part of this government, I am happy to have someone like Mr. Miltenberger in the position of Minister of Finance. That is not an easy job, I can tell you that I've been here as long as he has and I could not do that job. It is something that after the number of years that he's been doing that job... I was saying to his brother at the airport the other day, that Michael – oh, I should say Mr. Miltenberger – almost makes the job look easy. But I know it is not easy and it is leading a team, and we as a government have credibility when we speak to our counterparts and our other Ministers across this country when that portfolio is handled by someone who has the ability to do it well. So I would like to thank him for his years as Finance Minister and say a job well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON POWER FRANCHISE PURCHASE AGREEMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, once again I want to talk about the problems families are facing with their power bills and how they relate to the cost of living. So, what better area to focus in on today than the subject of power companies having specifically tuned to their franchise purchase agreements with the communities in the North?

Families taking care of families matters to me most, and that's something I think most of us know every day here, is we worry about our constituents and we don't lose sight of that. So, keeping that in mind, I've been looking at the franchise agreement process, and what I'm noticing is franchise agreements can easily be described as, or even somewhat compared to, sole-source negotiated contracts. In fact, the similarities are so close I'm not sure anyone can really tell the difference between them. So if a person isn't a contract expert or certainly an administrator, I don't think they can tell the difference.

So now that we're starting to put our finger on the problem in the right way, looking at it with the right eyes, whose interest is being served? Well, let me draw the House's attention to a particularly great Member's statement made some time ago here that puts the finger on the problem. It was a statement that drew the attention of the Cabinet's increasing practice of awarding lucrative contracts without any competition. So, I quote the Member of the day: "I'm not suggesting that the people who have received these contracts are not competent. I'm not suggesting that they're not offering a fair price. What I'm saying is that there's no way to be sure of

either of these things if we do not use a competitive process like a tender or an RFP. This is particularly true when we are sole sourcing contracts to individuals with very close ties to government." Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Member, MLA Ramsay, for that particular quote and passage provided on February 23, 2010.

What the issue really comes down to is we need to find ways to create a competitive environment that helps drive down the cost of power for Northerners so we can afford to live here, because the cupidity of these sole-source contracts are so aggressively sought after, people dare not let them go.

However, if we cannot create an environment of a robust competition, then we simply need to have the courage to break up the monopoly, because the Power Corp Minister said quite nicely the other day, this is an "essential" service. We must find a way to protect the public's interest. That's why we're here. That's what we should be fighting for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I'd like to welcome everybody in the public gallery. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings here today.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### Oral Questions

##### QUESTION 597-17(5): EXPANDING TAX REVENUES

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my Member's statement today with questions to the Minister of Finance. This government definitely needs increased revenues if it's to shift to a sustainable foundation and continue providing a sufficient level of services and programs to people it serves. We've heard of a plan to attract 2,000 new souls to the North. To date, we have seen neither the plan nor the souls.

The global economy is, understandably, stalled and our big investments in giant infrastructure provide little economic return. Five percent on \$2 billion worth of diamonds exported from the NWT seems too little.

What real opportunities for increased revenue is the Minister of Finance pursuing? Mahsi.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One quick word about the diamond mines. We have a GDP of about \$3.6 billion a year. Of that, half of that comes from the diamond mines. So when you look what they pay in royalties, but you have to combine that with all the money and

value added that comes into the territory, that if we didn't have those diamond mines and the \$1.6 billion or so that they contribute to our economy, we'd be having a considerably more difficult conversation in this House.

The approach that we are taking in an area that has some of the highest costs of living in the country is to look at trying to build the strategic infrastructure that's going to help create the conditions and provide the tools for continued economic growth that will expand our tax base as a result. I point to things like the \$80 million commitment to put in the Fibre Optic Link which, if it holds true as to what happened in Kiruna, Sweden, we'll see over the years an added value to the community of Inuvik of hopefully over \$100 million a year. If we get good at it, the value added in terms of jobs could be anywhere in the neighbourhood of 400 jobs, if Kiruna, Sweden, is any indication.

It's that kind of investment that we see as where we want to put our attention and invest our money, as opposed to at this point looking at expanding the taxes on Northerners. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I think the fibre optic line is a good project and probably our best and, unfortunately, our only example. The 400 jobs the Minister speaks of are obviously far beyond any estimates I've seen provided by Cabinet, but I do support that project.

Obviously, the GDP that the Minister mentions is a false measure. It has been well recognized as a false measure. We know that over half a billion dollars, the Minister tells me, in wages are being sent out of the Northwest Territories. That all goes to the GDP, right? So how real is that?

One possible enticement for people who might be considering a move to the NWT, though, and a reason for those already here to remain, would be lower income taxes on low and middle income brackets. There are many aspects of this that would have to be examined, but the Minister seems to write this off out of hand.

How has the Minister considered this possibility in a plan to attract new residents and their intended transfer payments? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We're looking at our initiative, as noted by the Member, where we've committed to provide an actual formal strategy that links together all the pieces that we're doing on our 2,000 folks into the territory in now four years. We see that as, once again, a way where we can bring people into the territory.

The issue of changing the tax rates, more taxes on the higher income, lowering it on the lower incomes, we haven't. I've made a decision, we've made a decision that we want to focus on building the tax base. So we haven't spent a lot of time looking at how much we would need to raise the

taxes on the high income, lower them on the lower and middle income. If it's to be revenue neutral, that's one thing. If it's to put a whole bunch of new revenue in the pockets of the government so that we can spend it on other needs, then I would think that would be a fairly significant increase. We've tried over the years to raise our corporate taxes. We raised them up to 14 percent. I think that lasted about a year. We've quickly changed back to a more competitive rate as there was an absolute flood of equity and investment out of the Northwest Territories to file their taxes in other jurisdictions where the rates were more competitive. So it's a very delicate balance. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Obviously, the Minister has got a hope and a prayer for revenues, but I think we need a little more than that. You know, the hope that people are going to move here because we want them to move here is not going to get us what we're looking for. We need some real action on revenue. Increasing taxes on bad behaviours, or sin taxes they're called, are always popular and we've done a little bit of that. The increased revenue is useful and any decreased demand on costs of the bad behaviour is welcome.

The inclusion of fossil fuel use for energy generation and transportation could be considered in this light. When was the last time this House reviewed the Petroleum Products Act, and how will the Minister go after this potential opportunity? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** To dismiss out of hand the initiatives to become more efficient in our hiring, to empower our people to go down south on hard-to-fill positions to be able to make on-the-spot job offers, to make us more competitive in terms of how we do that, to say that the Nominee Program that will hopefully increase the number of seats available with the expedited process, cut the times down to six months would help bring, hopefully, hundreds of people into the Northwest Territories, plus their families is not worth the effort, I think doesn't do justice to the complexity and the going back to the issue of let's just tax the small diminishing population that we do have in the hopes that somehow we can generate the amount of revenue that we need. What we need is an expanded population, expanded tax base that's going to create more tax revenue, more people with jobs, families here using our services, driving up the quality of living in the Northwest Territories and giving us the capacity to do things we need to do.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I agree this is complex and there's a complexity to this that can't be addressed in this format, but this Minister is not coming forward with discussions on revenue generation. We're not

having any of that. There's no analysis being done. To do analysis requires an unbelievable effort on part of committee. Currently there is no tax levy on natural gas and propane in the NWT. The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, had it gone ahead, would have been powered on natural gas without a penny of tax collected by this government, and this situation, this travesty remains true today. Not surprisingly, no other jurisdiction subsidizes such fossil fuel consumption and foregoes revenues in this completely inexplicable way.

Would the Minister at least consider closing the policy gap and protecting our people by establishing a revenue opportunity to help with costs incurred from that activity, even though he's refused to do so to date? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Once again what I will commit to do is I'll commit to put a paper together that I'll share with committee that will lay out some of the challenges when it comes to raising some of the taxes, which we have looked at in terms of petroleum products and motive and non-motive fuels. It's not like we dismiss it out of hand, but we have to look at the balance and the cost impact on the economy. I will share that with committee and we can have a discussion if committee wishes to ask us to appear before committee. If there is a consensus, we will look at including that in the transition document, but in this budget there's no intention to raise taxes. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 598-17(5):  
IMPACT OF ATTENDANCE ON  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2013 Alberta Achievement Tests, they talk about factors that give our smaller communities and larger centres test results. One of the biggest factors that brought our percentage down was the children's attendance in schools.

I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, in order to raise the level of success for our young people, what is the department doing along with education boards in communities to ensure that children go to school, stay in school and bring their grades up? Right now, the biggest factor is children not attending school.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This particular area is a prime focus of my department to improve the overall education system in the Northwest Territories. The students learning and success will improve if attendance rates also

improve. The Member is alluding to that. Ensuring students attend regularly is a shared responsibility between the school boards, ourselves as the Department of Education, families and the community at large.

We are doing what we can. Within Educational Renewable and Innovation, we want to focus on students' well-being through safety and care as school practice and nutritious food in our schools and also enhancing the school/community relations through elders in schools, residential school resources, staff training and also providing personalized quality of education through focused inclusive learning supports, career orientation and distance learning programming. Those are just some of the key areas we've initiated within our department and we will continue to make those improvements in our educational programming. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I do wish the department all the success in their initiatives to raise the level of attendance of our children for them to go to school.

Is the Minister looking at some innovative ways that the school itself can do to get the children and parents saying it's important that your child gets the proper amount of rest so they can come to school fresh and be ready to hit the school work? Is his department working with the educational boards to do a one-time initiative, as they did a long time ago, and get the teachers to go and visit the families at their homes, sit down with the parents, talk with them at their homes rather than have the parents come to the school and meet with the teachers? Can we do a reversal on that?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We are discussing both of either the parents going into the school system or the teachers going into households to talk about attendance as well. Parents and guardians are encouraged to ensure their children attend school on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker. When an individual misses one day a week of school over the life of high school, it equals one year without school. That has a tremendous impact. So there should be attendance of 90 percent or more. That's our target that we want to achieve. We are working very closely with the school boards to achieve that. We are developing various action plans geared towards how we can improve attendance in our school systems. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** In today's life, students bring with them lots of issues to school. Some of these issues they have they need support on. Is the school now looking at ways to help the children with their emotional and mental issues, so they can have support other than to hold on to them and not deal with them? That sometimes prevents a child from attending school. Is there support for them such as counselling services in our small schools for the kids?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The quickest answer would be yes. Again, we are working with school boards to establish those kinds of support mechanisms. Again, poor attendance is a symptom of underlying issues, such as students being disengaged in learning, negative feelings within our schools towards students or families, a sense of not belonging, and the safety factor is a huge issue. It's a priority for school boards. Our prime focus is on student well-being through safe and caring school practices, providing nutritious food in our school system. Those are fundamental and what we've heard from our elders and educators in the school system that we must provide to our education system in the Northwest Territories. Those are areas that we will push forward on. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, before we go on today, we've been going through eight questions and eight answers today and it takes 15 minutes. Your preamble and your responses, if you could tighten it up a little bit for the House, thank you. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

#### QUESTION 599-17(5):

##### IMPROVING BUDGET DIALOGUE PROCESS

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement about the budget, I will have questions for the hardworking veteran Minister of Finance.

I would like to see if the Minister can give me some information on how they look at getting more information from these budget dialogues going forward. The numbers are definitely low. Can we get some information on how we improve that?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you go out on budget dialogues, it's a commitment that takes a number of weeks. There's a Swedish word that caught my eye that sort of lays out some of the challenges of that task. The Swedish word is *resfeber*. It's the restless beat of a traveller's heart before the journey begins, a mixture of anxiety and anticipation. Every time I go out and go around the territory, I always wonder how it's going to go. I look forward to going out to the communities to meet with people no matter who shows up, not only in the rooms where we are but in the coffee shops and in the offices when we go around to meet employees.

So, how do we get more people out? It's a good question for this Assembly because as I came back in here, I looked around the auditorium and there's not a soul in here but the work we do is important. We come here day after day, sometimes people show up. I know we're wired in for people. People

in the communities value the fact that central agency folks, especially finance people, take the time to go out there. How do we do that? There has been advice provided and we'll look at the struggle of trying to do our budget consultations, the timing, because it ties in with business plan reviews, the work that we do, advertising, trying to figure out ways that we don't conflict with community activities. One of the challenges, being we have to book so far ahead, by the time we get there, other things could overtake us. I think there are ways and we look forward to feedback from the Members. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** My next question is: What did we hear this year and how does that apply and how has it been applied to our current budget?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The work we do is cumulative and every Assembly builds on the work of previous Assemblies. Every budget builds on the work of previous budgets. The 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly charted out a bunch of priorities that we've been trying to implement. We've done things that the communities have asked us to do. We've put more money into prevention. We've protected programs and services. We've beefed up our capital plan in the places like the Far North. We've put in projects that are going to help not only provide infrastructure but some employment.

As I pointed out before, this is not a situation where communities are sitting there and it's a blank slate. They have MLAs that sit in this building – and I commended MLAs prior to this – who reflect the views of their constituencies to a great degree. Plus, we all travel. It just gives us a chance to put faces to names and to hear firsthand many of the things we already know or think, or we know are critical principles and values of the Northwest Territories and of government, and in some cases they give us good advice, regional advice that we can look at when we come back. It may not be reflected in the budget, but it could be reflected in how the departments adjust their business on a day-to-day basis. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I would like a specific example of what, out of this year's budget dialogue, came out from the public, because I'm concerned the presentation was just made, the presentation was there, the public was heard, but nothing was implemented.

What specifically was implemented from this budget dialogue will be going forward or was implemented to this budget?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Let me give a couple of examples. There are a legion I could give, but let me give a couple.

The Western Arctic Geomatics Centre we're setting up in Inuvik. It came up that we need to look at getting stuff out of Yellowknife; we need to tie into

the work of the fibre optic line; we need to do a better job now that we're the land owners post-devolution, and we need to invest money to do that and we've done that with the Western Geomatics.

We committed to decentralization, and one of the places that we're going to decentralize to: some positions from ITI parks to Hay River.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** This is the problem that I have, is I think that those park positions were in the budget before the budget dialogue. So, I'm looking for specific examples from the budget dialogue that were implemented. We already knew about the fibre optic line; we already knew some of this stuff. I'll even go back to the previous budget dialogues.

What has the department learned from the public, has implemented and put into our budget process and into the operations of the government?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Let me use another example. We put, I think, \$425,000 into doing an Integrated Case Management Pilot Project, of which Inuvik and Yellowknife and, I believe, Hay River are going to be beneficiaries to push the departments that deal in the social envelope to integrate their case management approach so that when they deal with individuals and clients with multiple presenting problems, they do it in an integrated, coordinated way. A goal we've been striving to get done ever since I can remember and I'm in my 40<sup>th</sup> year now in government. We believe that maybe this will help us turn the corner on that. That's a specific one.

If we want to look back, the Fibre Optic Link has had a life in the previous Assembly, and as we build off the work of that Assembly, we've now broken ground, we've got countries beating the path to the door of Inuvik. We've put in the Western Arctic Geomatics Centre to build off of the opportunities that the Fibre Optic Link provides. I would be glad to maybe share again a copy of the budget address with my colleague for Hay River North because it is replete with all the fine things that this Legislative Assembly has asked to get done that we are doing. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 600-17(5):  
HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in the day I spoke about the need to get more public housing units in Fort Simpson as well as begin a plan about doing a homelessness complex. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation – I know that we do have a Homelessness Strategy – what kind of

supports are there in the Homelessness Strategy that can help with projects such as this. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is right; we do have a Homelessness Strategy. One of the parts of the strategy is the Northern Pathways to Housing, and it's a pilot project that we've been trying to implement in the communities. I think we have four communities that were identified. We have two communities, Aklavik and Behchoko, that actually have their proposal put together, and we have Fort Simpson and Fort Good Hope that we're continuing to engage with, hoping they take us up on our offer.

It's up to \$100,000 to renovate an existing unit and there is ongoing funding of \$70,000 over five years. That would go a long way in trying to help address some of the issues facing these smaller communities, and also it would be an opportunity there for some employment in a small community, because we do want to work with a community organization to deliver this program on our behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** That's certainly something that we can move towards. I was talking to my colleague Mr. Yakeleya, and the Housing Needs Survey of 2014 indicates the Nahendeh region, of course, is number one again in core needs. We had addressed that the last survey but it's creeping back up again, and some of the issues are new and emerging young people and families. So I appreciate that answer about homelessness.

Can that program also work in conjunction with our Anti-Poverty Strategy and accessing more funds to make units available for the homeless in the regional centres like Fort Simpson? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, it is our hope to try and address the homelessness. It used to be that it was more of a regional issue, but I think we're finding more and more that it's continuing to branch out into a lot of the smaller communities and that's one of the reasons that we've come up with this program to try and assist with that.

There are opportunities there to tie into the Anti-Poverty Strategy and all the different pieces of work we've got going out there. We have identified some money through our corporation to help deal with this and we'll continue to do so. I think we have about four or five programs that are specific to design to help deal with homelessness activities across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'd like to thank the Minister for that answer. In addressing the homelessness, I think part of the issue in Fort Simpson, as well, is the lack of public housing. I indicated in my list,

particularly for single people there's a list that's almost 30 people long. In fact, a couple of the applicants have been on that list for about seven years.

So I would just like to know, how are we addressing increasing public units in the community of Fort Simpson, especially in light of there being a private developer that has 12 to 14 units and I think they may be shut down within the next year or two, as well, and that will certainly increase the need for more units for Fort Simpson. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the person who has been waiting for seven years, I would have to look into that. As I was saying the other day, there are many reasons people are on a waiting list, but one of the requirements of receiving support from income support is to be on the waiting list – they could be on the waiting list even with support from income support – but also paying off their arrears. I've seen a number of cases where they've been on the waiting list for a long time and taking care of their arrears and they were, in fact, allocated housing units once their arrears were paid off. I commend them for that. There are a couple of cases where they've been on a repayment plan for a number of years, but they've seen that through and are now in public housing.

As far as increasing the public housing stock in the Member's community, we do use the Community Needs Survey that we just completed in 2014, to help identify some of the communities and the most in need. Again, the Member pointed out that his region was number one, so we use that in helping to allocate units to a particular community.

I mean, we're challenged with some of the funding decline, but we're taking steps to try and deal with that issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In using the housing needs assessment, if in this case of the assessment being done in 2013-2014, I wonder if I can ask the Minister if he can check with his officials if they're aware of this private housing provider about his units, 12 to 14 units being shut down and how that would affect the current needs assessment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I'll be glad to have a conversation with the officials and ask them about the units being shut down in Fort Simpson and how that's going to affect our numbers there. I will gather that information and I will have conversations with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 601-17(5):  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ISSUES

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement earlier today, I mentioned that as a nation we are facing an affordable public housing crisis. With only 23 years left in the declining funding model from Ottawa, the NWT is being saddled with decisions on affordability, adequacy and quality in its annual public housing budgets. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

Recently the Minister was in Ottawa with his Cabinet colleagues discussing the infrastructure needs for Northerners with his federal counterparts. We know that an announcement for \$18 million over five years for the extension of the Affordable Housing Agreement followed.

Can the Minister inform the House, what does this extension mean and does this deal with the shortcomings of a declining CMHC funding model? Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The agreement was an extension to the Investment in Northern Housing Initiative that provided \$1.8 million annually from the federal government, which is matched by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. So that gives us about \$3.6 million in investment over the next five years.

We've used these funds in the past to help deal with some of the programs to help low and modest income homeownership repairs, and it doesn't address the problem of declining federal funding to operate social housing.

We're continuing to have discussions with our counterpart in Ottawa on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, we know that CMHC funding for the Northwest Territories is declining from \$21 million in 2001 to zero by 2038 with only 23 years left in funding. We also know that 50 percent of our housing stock today is over 30 years old or more.

Can the Minister tell us, what is the current strategy of the NWT Housing Corporation in dealing with these two very important problems? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we're very fortunate that the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly has added about \$2.1 million annually to the NWT Housing Corp to help offset some of the decline in federal funding. We do have a long-term strategy. I mean, we would hope that the federal government enters into an arrangement on public housing for long-term, stable funding in partnership

with us, because we see that as a way of going forward.

But we are taking steps to address the declining funding. I've spoken to this before. We're building more multi-family energy-efficient units to help with that. We've done about 700 retrofits to existing units during the life of this 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. We've invested in energy initiatives like solar and biomass. We're also realigned our rent scales and we've improved the administrative efficiencies of our operation with the local housing authorities. I have to give a shout out to the local housing authorities, not only to them but to the clients because many of them are stepping up to the plate and starting to honour the commitments that they've made. That's why I made the announcement during my opening remarks yesterday that the collection rate is at 97 percent, so I think a huge shout out should go to them.

This helps us deal with the sustainability of our public housing stock, because if we can collect rent, then we can reinvest that money and not have to count so much on the declining federal funding. So we're taking steps to deal with that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, of course managing our assets better will result in a healthier balance sheet. This is a given. We know that there are about 400 mortgages still being held by the Housing Corporation and this has not always been a smoothly run area. Collection rates were around 30 percent back in 2012 with arrears totaling about \$16 million, then came the Revised Mortgage Balance Program to deal with that.

Can the Minister inform the House today, what is the current status of this Revised Mortgage Balance Program and what is our current rate of collection and how are we dealing with this balance of arrears? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Member is correct that we did introduce a Revised Mortgage Balance Program near the end of 2012. We gave homeowners with mortgages with the NWT Housing Corporation a chance to get a fresh start with predictable, fair monthly rent. Total arrears in the mortgage portfolio have been reduced from \$16.5 million to \$9.1 million over the last couple of years. A majority of the clients have actually opted into the new program and collection rates have been in the 70 to 80 percent range for these clients. We have about 115 clients that have not entered the new program for one reason or another and collections among these clients are very low. A lot of these clients we're now talking to legal counsel, pursue collections through the courts. Thank you.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With 2,700 rental units being managed by local housing authorities across the NWT, again, managing our rental collection, and if done properly, will help the bottom line.

So I do applaud the good work that the Minister and Housing Corporation has done in cleaning up this backlog of a low collection rate, which back in 2008 was about 71 percent and as we heard today, I got the number 97 percent today. So that's a good job. That said, we still have some LHOs today that have collection rates under 70 percent.

What is the Minister doing to improve these rental collections in those specific communities? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** There are about three elements to the collection approach for our rental units. First of all, we need to improve the collection of current rent and we did note that 97 percent was a good sign that progress is being made, and I think we see that in all areas of the Northwest Territories.

Secondly, we need to ensure that those who have accumulated arrears enter into some form of repayment plan, and we do obtain rental officer orders for these tenants. We're currently seeing the number of tenants with large arrears declining as people are starting to dig themselves out of the hole, and we still need to engage with collection of former residents. Because you moved out of one of our units, that doesn't change the amount that you owe to the NWT Housing Corporation.

As the Member noted, we had a couple of LHOs that had collection rates under 70 percent last year. We're working with the LHOs to ensure that they're obtaining rental officer orders for tenants not paying their rent. At the same time, we want to work with tenants to enter into a repayment plan because our goal is to house people, not to evict them, and this goes a long way.

Again, I give a shout out to those that are honouring the commitments that they've made because we have seen a bit of an improvement. I just said that in a lot of these communities they do run a high risk of eviction if they don't keep up with their rental payments and their arrears. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 602-17(5): SUPPORTING NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to follow up on my Member's statement. In our main estimates it shows that there has been an increase to the forced growth for two not-for-profit organizations. I'd like to commend the Premier for taking that initiative to get our organizations, that do excellent work on behalf of government, and getting



their wages and benefits up to par with what we pay our government employees. So my first question is to the Premier.

When we're going through an exercise like this, who initiates that process? Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this case it was the NGOs in question. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** So, moving forward just in terms of awareness and an education component, hopefully some of our non-profit organizations that we do fund are listening and can take that same process, but sometimes those organizations don't want to come knocking at the door.

Would the Premier make a recommendation to his Cabinet Ministers to go and talk to their non-profit organizations and see if they do in fact need an increase in their funding for salaries and wages and benefits to keep up to par? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The Government of the Northwest Territories has what we call a Third-Party Accountability Framework and that is to deal with third parties who provide services and programs to the Government of the Northwest Territories. In the interest of accountability and transparency, we have a framework in which we determine the level of accountability for third-party agencies, which includes political risk, financial risk and results risk, and on the basis of that rating we put them into three categories, which determines the funding process that we use. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** Can I ask the Premier, when was the framework developed and what year did it come into effect and, in fact, if that framework will be reviewed? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. The framework was developed in 2004 and in 2011 it was updated with a Program Managers Guide for Funding NGOs. Thank you.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just making a recommendation to the Premier, would the Premier, in the framework, make it mandatory that forced growth with all our non-profit organizations be reviewed or even the framework be reviewed every four years or every time there's a GNWT negotiating the Collective Agreement for our GNWT employees and do the same for our not-for-profit sector? The ones that we fund.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. The Third-Party Accountability Framework results in three categories of third-party funding. The first category is for major service delivery bodies and that provides for multi-year funding through the business planning process.

The second category is for other service delivery and commercial Crown corporations that don't have large infrastructure, and in those cases there's a mandatory budget consultation with the funding departments.

The third category is for the much smaller, quasi-judicial, smaller NGOs and those are annual funding requests or application-based. Through that process they would approach their department for funding.

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

QUESTION 603-17(5):  
COMMUNITY POWER  
DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions for the Minister of the NWT Power Corporation.

My question for the Minister is: Can the Minister of the NWT Power Corp inform this House which of our 33 communities the NWT Power Corp does not service as the distribution agent and explain why that is not the case? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That would be Hay River, Yellowknife, Providence, Wekweeti, Enterprise, Trout Lake. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Would the Minister of the NWT Power Corporation explain why the NWT Power Corp isn't the agent for distribution of power in those particular communities or from his ability to explain how we got where we are today to have individual franchise agreements for those particular communities and not in the others that remain out of the 33? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you. The way our system is structured, communities make the choice of who they would like to make an agreement with to provide their electrical services. There's a process through the franchise process to do that and communities have done that over the years. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** We're all well aware that the Cabinet has the authority, as does the Executive Council, to exempt the NWT Power Corp from delivering a dividend payment to the government. By the way, when I say dividend I mean profit.

Is the Minister able to speak to how long this happens to be the case and when was the last time the government directed the NWT Power Corp to deliver a dividend? As this government waived the dividend, what is the intent of why they've waived it?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The Power Corporation does have a rate of return, but as has been demonstrated over the last number of years, there have been cost pressures on the Power Corporation that far exceed to manage without the government's ability to come and cushion the blow on the ratepayers. The 37 or 38 million dollars we put in to cushion the impact of what would have been a rate cliff because the prices of fuel hadn't been raised over the last number of years. The most recent one would have been the low water surcharge that we've covered off as a contribution to the Power Corporation. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the NWT government has the ability to waive the dividend, can the Minister speak particularly to the franchise agreement? I believe they are 10-year agreements. Would the Minister be able to speak to that detail on whether they are all 10-year agreements and does the territorial government have what one could define as an exit clause if they need to find a new direction for the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Those franchise agreements are arrangements between the communities and power provider. I would have to commit to the Member to find out the length of time of the agreements. I don't have that knowledge readily at my fingertips. The GNWT does not have a role to play as the communities look at their franchise arrangements. For example, the community of Inuvik just signed an agreement with the Inuvik Gas for a 10-year period. That was work they carried out as the community government. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 604-17(5):

##### MINING INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I would like to follow up on an announcement that the Minister made on January 28<sup>th</sup> when he was in Vancouver. The Minister announced a Mining Industry Advisory Board. Since that time, there's been some comment by my colleague in the Assembly raising some questions. We've had questions from two organizations concerned about the environment that are also raising questions.

I would like to ask questions to the Minister around what he is intending with this advisory board. First of all, the announcement stated that the board members will have direct experience in the NWT

minerals industry. That suggests that they will be limited to just the minerals industry.

What is going to be the composition of this board? How many members and who will they be representing? Thank you.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The composition of the board will be made up of folks who have a wide range of experiencing in the mining industry, not only here in the Northwest Territories but across the country. The full complement will be somewhere between five to seven members. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. So a wide-ranging experience in the mining industry. How are these people going to be chosen? Are they simply going to be representatives of mining companies? Are they going to be representatives of chambers of mines? Will there be any representation from social interests? As the Minister stated in his press release, "something that will encourage economic growth while maintaining high regulatory, environmental and social standards." So that's a concern that has been expressed. What will the representation be on this five or seven?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** The appointments to the board will be at my discretion. Again, Mr. Speaker, these will be industry experts. We will be looking for a cross-section of experience from producers to explorers to folks in the service side. We are still working on who is going to populate this advisory board. It's an industry advisory board; it's not a social advocacy board. We will populate it with people we will get information from that will help us develop a mining industry here in the Northwest Territories.

I will add that there's ample opportunity for folks if they are interested in providing commentary on how we develop the industry here by writing letters. I have a couple of letters, as the Member has indicated, today and yesterday or the other day in the House. I welcome anybody's feedback on this.

As the Mineral Development Strategy laid out, this is an important part of us being a successful mining jurisdiction. We have a really strong history when it comes to mining. We've seen numbers on exploration grow 32 percent last year. We were the only territory of the three that have seen their numbers continue to climb last year.

We really need to focus on how is it the Northwest Territories can be a jurisdiction where people want to invest money and we want to look at opportunities. I know Mr. Bromley talked about increasing our government revenue. That's going to happen by developing the resources we have here in the territory. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** I thank the Minister for his Member's statement. I have no qualms with increasing mining in the territory. I know we need the economic development. However, when we have economic development, the offshoot and the results have an effect on our social conditions. I think it is extremely important that we have a cross-section, not just people who are experts in mining but people who are experts on the impact of mining.

Can the Minister provide me and Members on this side of the House with a terms of reference for this committee? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Again, this is an industry advisory panel to the Minister. They will also be able to provide input to other Ministers as needed. In the Northwest Territories today, we have a very stringent regulatory system. Again, there's ample opportunity for the public and groups to comment on developments as they occur. We can't lose sight of the fact that this is an industry advisory panel and nothing more, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I need to say to the Minister that industry itself is concerned with the impacts it has on the social conditions in communities that they're close to. So I guess there are no terms of reference. I would like to ask the Minister, that as terms of reference are developed, as this project goes forward, if he will involve committee in providing some feedback to this board as it is developed. Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I would be happy to provide Members with a terms of reference on the make-up, composition of this committee. Again, this advisory board is going to be populated at the discretion of the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I will get the best people on that board to give this government and myself the best advice we can receive so we can have a jurisdiction companies want to invest in to help us develop the resources we have here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 605-17(5):  
ON-THE-LAND PROGRAMMING  
IN THE MACKENZIE DELTA

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Justice. It's been almost a year now since there was an offer for proposals to offer on-the-land programming in the Mackenzie Delta region. Why did it take so long and also has the department selected a successful candidate to offer the program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Members for their support for wilderness and on-the-land programming. I know there are a number of Members interested in seeing the Department of Justice move forward with this initiative. Last year we were unsuccessful. Earlier this year, on January 20<sup>th</sup>, we had an REOI, a request for expressions of interest, across the Northwest Territories looking for proponents to help us get a wilderness, camp set up so we can have programs for inmates here in the Northwest Territories. That closed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of this year, 2015, and we had a number of folks respond to that, several. Our hope is to have a meeting of those interested proponents take place sometime in the very near future and we'll be notifying those folks by the end of this month. Thank you.

**MR. BLAKE:** Mr. Speaker, that's great. In the past we had a great program offered just outside of Aklavik.

When does the Minister see the programs starting again in the Delta region? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, that would be dependent upon us finding a successful proponent, somebody the department can work with in the Mackenzie Delta. I know we've had some success there in the past and we're very much interested. I think this is a real key priority for the department, is to see on-the-land wilderness-type programming for inmates here in the Northwest Territories. So we're going to do whatever we can to work with the folks that responded to our request for expression of interest. We'll work with them; we'll try to get a program up and running. I wouldn't want to hazard a guess as to when that might happen, but the wheels are in motion today to ensure that that happens. Thank you.

**MR. BLAKE:** I'd just like to ask the Minister, what type of facility is required to offer this program? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** There would be a wide range of equipment and facilities that would be required, and again, the department is interested in talking to interested folks across the territory that have responded, about what equipment they have, what services they have, what facilities they have, so that we can get a program up and running here in the NWT once again. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 606-17(5):  
ASSISTING COMMUNITIES TO  
STUDENT ATTENDANCE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask my last question to Mr. Lafferty, Minister of

Education, Culture and Employment. We know that from the Sahtu needs assessment studies and indications from other reports that if you have Grade 12 or a post-secondary university or college degree, your chances of getting a job are a lot better than a dropout. We also know that people, like some of my friends, who have Grade 7 who have a successful business, so there's a balance. There are Henry Fords and there are Thomas Edisons and Alexander Graham Bells in our small communities.

I want to ask the Minister, has his department challenged the communities to get the best thinkers and the formula for success for our young people in our communities so that the communities can be involved in getting the kids to school, do the hard work? Is there any type of innovative thinking that can happen in the communities to get our kids off to a good start? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. All of the above, yes. Those are key discussions we are currently having with the regional groups, the stakeholders and those people that are actively engaged with educating our kids; as well, the school boards, the leadership.

We've had regional forums, as well, when we spoke about Aboriginal Student Achievement and leading towards Early Childhood Development Framework, the 10-year framework, and also Education Renewal and Innovation. So there's a lot of work ahead of us, and that will certainly capture what the Member's raising the concerns over the years and we are dealing with that as we speak. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I want to again ask the Minister to challenge the schools. You know, there are people in what the Budget Dialogue talked about, putting hammers and screwdrivers and wrenches into the young hands. You know, there are kids that are very, very intelligent, very smart. You know, just the hard work. So how do we get them into the schools maybe where it's exciting where they want to be in school? Is there a challenge in the schools that the Minister can challenge the school and say, any schools in the Northwest Territories who have a certain percentage of attendees, you'll somehow be rewarded with some type of school prize? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, over the years in my tenure as Minister of Education since 2007, I've visited so many schools in the Northwest Territories, and each school has their own incentive program to deal with absenteeism and also have regular attendance. I must commend those individual school boards for making that effort. We always support them as well.

Through the Education Renewal there are opportunities such as dual credit courses that we are starting to offer in the high school, whether it be early childhood focused or trades access programming that we are seriously looking at delivering to our high school system.

The Member has brought it to my attention that this is an area that we should be focusing on and we are working towards that as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the Order Paper, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize two visitors with us in the gallery today: Ms. Cathie Bolstad, executive director, NWT Tourism, and also with her is Mr. Ron Ostrom. He's the director of marketing with NWT Tourism. I want to thank both of them for all the great work they do in our partnership in marketing the Northwest Territories around the world. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize Cathie Bolstad, a resident of Weledeh.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too wish to recognize Cathie Bolstad with NWT Tourism. As well, I'd like to recognize a constituent of Yellowknife Centre which is Ron Ostrom. Many people will also recognize him from the many walks and journeys he has made around Frame Lake. He really did a great job promoting exercise and active living.

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

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 195-17(5):  
2015-2016 MARKETING PLAN –  
SPECTACULAR NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled “2015-2016 Marketing Plan: Spectacular Northwest Territories.” Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 196-17(5):  
MANAGING THE RISKS OF  
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I have a document from the Fraser Institute dated December 2014, Managing the Risks of Hydraulic Fracking.

DOCUMENT 197-17(5):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

**MR. SPEAKER:** Pursuant to Section 21 of the Human Rights Act, I wish to table the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission Annual Report, 2013-2014.

Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. 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: Tabled Document 188-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016; Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act; and Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. There are three items before us today. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sure we want to continue with Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-16. We'd like to continue with the NWT Housing Corporation and, time permitting, do the Department of Justice. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Okay. Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. Thank you. We'll commence with that after a brief break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. Yesterday when we recessed, we were on the NWT Housing Corporation. The Minister had delivered his opening comments and Members were making general comments. I'd like to ask the Minister at this time, in continuance of that, if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Madam Chair, I would.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Does the committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Mr. McLeod, for the record could you please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right I have Mr. David Stewart. He is the president of the NWT Housing Corporation. To my left I have Mr. Jeff Anderson, vice-president of infrastructure and finance, NWT Housing Corporation.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. For general comments from the list left from yesterday I have Mr. Yakeleya. Did you want to make general comments? Okay, Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I welcome the Minister and his staff. I wanted to make my general comments to the latest NWT Housing Community Survey and the summary of the housing results.

I see in the core need that in the Northwest Territories with market communities, the core need is at 13.1 percent and in the non-market communities the core need is at 32.3 percent. If you look at the definition of core needs, it has to do with suitability, adequacy and affordability of housing. Under those definitions, certainly the non-market communities are just about triple the number in the core need than the market communities. So, we have a large difference in these numbers.

Earlier Mr. Menicoche talked about being number one in his riding under the findings of the survey. Just below that by a couple numbers, the Sahtu falls at number two. Looking at the comparison to the 2009 results of the housing survey, the Housing Corporation certainly has done a lot. So I want to give my thanks to the Minister and his staff for

bringing those numbers down in the Sahtu communities.

I also noticed in the other ridings, some of the communities are fairly high. Like, Behchoko and Whati are fairly high and the Hay River Reserve is pretty high and the same with Fort Providence and Wrigley. So just looking at some of these numbers, some of the communities are still very high. But the overall, when you look at the region, the Sahtu is right up there, minus the town of Norman Wells which is very low, similar to the same number in Yellowknife.

I wanted to say to the Minister that I certainly agree with you. There is a significant difference in housing between our market and non-market communities. I just wanted to state that I do want to say to the Minister that I'm looking forward to seeing where some of the programs are meeting some of the needs in the small communities.

I was recently in Fort Good Hope and some of the older people who came up to me were more or less just surviving the cold weather. With the types of programs that we're offering, it's not meeting the needs of the elders in regard to the condition of their housing. They're pretty well frozen right up to the pipes, to the furnace, to whatever. They're just barely making it in these cold conditions. Because of the complexities or some of the issues not being taken care of, it's quite difficult to get some of the programs into their hands so their houses can be fixed.

Some of these elders have frozen lines, frozen toilets, frozen sinks, even furnaces. They have furnace problems and they're not getting the help through working with them to see how we can get them the money to get their houses fixed. They're having quite a difficult time because it involved another department, the Department of Lands to be involved. So they find it difficult to get some support.

I guess what I'm saying is that some of these elders are in their 70s, they don't speak English very well, they don't understand the documents they have in front of them. All they know is my pipes are frozen, the toilet is frozen and I just want them to get them fixed, but sometimes the bureaucracy and the red tape is a little more challenging for them and they don't understand or comprehend the language or understand what's in the fine print.

So that's when they come to leadership and ask to get Housing to work on their house. That's really challenging. I know that the staff in our region is working hard. It's just that sometimes it takes a little more work. When it's 44 or 50 below, they're sitting at home, cold and trying to figure out, okay, how do we get something going with their houses.

So I look forward to some of those innovative types of learning, teaching for our seniors in regard to

their homes. Can we look at ways to make it simpler? Can we look at ways to get quicker service to their houses? So I want to see some movement in that area.

I also want to see if Housing, through the programs in our small communities, especially to the community of Fort Good Hope, maybe further to Colville Lake, that the way they ship their materials, it's usually late in the season and this year the barging was late because of the low water, or whatever reason, and some of the materials weren't shipped to the communities. That's my understanding. Is there a possibility of getting housing material on the barges by June and shipped to the communities so they've got July and August and September to work on their houses? I'm hearing that some of the materials came in late. I'm not too sure, but that's what we're getting from the community of Fort Good Hope.

I do want to say that the programs that are being run, we're starting to see some of the improvements in our communities. The units that are being fixed up are starting to result, because of the way that the regional offices are working with the small communities in places like Good Hope that seems to have the highest need, Colville Lake seems to have the second highest, first highest need, followed by Good Hope and Deline that they have a high percentage of core need. Meaning that there's a problem with suitability, affordability and the adequacy of our units.

There are also a lot of people who own their own homes in these communities that also are looking for some support with their units. I know the Minister and I talked about this several times where the local housing authority, through their bulk ordering of materials and supplies, can have some of this stuff available for homeowners, because homeowners are usually left on their own to get the material for their house. I'm not too sure if that has been implemented or if it has been talked about.

I want to thank the Minister. I look forward to Fort Good Hope getting their units. I know last year it didn't happen. I wasn't a happy camper, but I said okay, as long as it gets done this year for whatever reason people were looking forward to it. However, we said okay, let's see if we can get it done this year. So I'm looking forward to seeing that being built this year and I know Good Hope is looking forward to that.

So I do want to say to the Minister, keep fighting this with the federal government, this is an issue that is on our minds as to the decline of our funding. So those are my comments, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Yakeleya, did you want the Minister to respond now or did you want to go with the system we had of hearing three general comments and then... Three? Okay, very good.

Then next on the list for general comments I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. More just comments. No particular questions for the Housing Corp here. Just over the course, this is the fourth time we've sat down with the department in terms of our operational budgets. I remember at the onset of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and the Auditor General's report that came out that had some pretty scathing results that I think committee of the day was just raring to go with this Housing Corp in terms of looking at getting to the work.

Even before they came to committee they started taking the necessary approaches to make the changes that would affect that work coming out of the Auditor General's report. I just want to commend the work of the Minister and his staff and all the LHOs in the regions on the improvements that have been made over the course of these last three years. Just the correspondence that they've had with standing committee, whether it was through written correspondence or briefing and for committee not having to approach the Housing Corporation to sit down and have a chat, or if there were any concerns that were brought up that was always very neutral in terms of how information was delivered, especially on the collection rates.

Early on in this government, as well, we did have a presentation by Alternatives North in terms of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and moving forward on that. I recall us asking Alternatives North if there was one thing that we could fix to deal with poverty; they said housing, housing needs to be fixed. Just looking at some of these new initiatives that the Housing Corp has come out with over the past year in terms of addressing homelessness but also dealing with some of the wait times with our public housing, the new funding that's coming over from ECE into the Housing Corp to look at getting some work at rental units for the security of tenure for our residents for longer term is just some innovative thinking in making sure that our people have a place to stay for the longer term, and I think that's the kind of thinking that we need in terms of addressing our housing needs.

Also, with decentralization, getting these market rental units up in the communities to have people who are moving into the communities through decentralization having an adequate home.

Like I said, I'm just giving more of some general comments. Over the course of this government, I've seen the improvements that this Housing Corp has made in the communities and small communities as well. I know we can't fix it all in one term, but we've made a really big impact, from what I've seen, and commend the Minister and his staff as well as staff in the regions at the LHOs for doing such a great job. I look forward to the ongoing progress with the LHOs in communities.

That's more of a comment, Madam Chair. I just wanted to get that on the record seeing that this is the last operational budget and the last opportunity to sit down and have a chat with the Minister and his Housing Corp. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I do have some comments. Thank you for the opportunity. I have a couple of questions. One of them comes from the Minister's comments yesterday when he opened the department. I was struck on page 3 where he said that, "NWT Housing Corp activities are just part of the overall support as homelessness is addressed through the activities within a number of departments in the GNWT." I thought that we had consolidated homelessness within the NWT Housing Corporation. That struck me as a little strange. I would appreciate an explanation of what that means.

Right after that, the Minister mentioned we have increased the funding for homelessness from \$325,000 to \$855,000. I am extremely pleased to see that. It certainly was a paltry amount at \$325,000. It needs to go beyond the \$855,000, but it's certainly a step in the right direction. I hope the emphasis on homelessness will continue. Along with that, the funding that has been provided for the City of Yellowknife for the Housing First program is an extremely positive step and I want to thank you on behalf of council and the residents of Yellowknife.

In looking at the numbers, it's really good to see that rent revenue is being collected, that the percentage of rent revenue we are collecting has gone up. I think the corp has made changes to assist the LHOs in their rent collections and it's obviously working, because rent revenues are far better than they were a couple of years ago. I would say keep the pressure on, it's working and keep it up.

I want to express strong support for the move to bring the money from ECE into Housing to provide for housing for clients who are on income support, the long-term income support clients. I think it's an excellent move. I think it's going to make it easier for those clients to deal with their daily struggles with paperwork, applications and so on. It does help to a certain extent to alleviate the need for public housing stock in Yellowknife, but my other concern is there's a huge need for public housing stock in Yellowknife. There's a huge need pretty much across the Territories, so we're not alone in Yellowknife in asking for this, but I would hope that the corporation, albeit you're strapped for money, that you would be looking at public housing on a per capita basis and making things a bit more equitable from a Yellowknife perspective.

I wondered about the impact of investment in Affordable Housing money we're getting from the federal government. It was recently announced. I'm presuming that maybe the Minister and the Housing Corp knew about this previously. Do we have money in the budget to match what the federal government is giving us? Are we going to be able to use this in the 2015-16 budget year? I certainly hope so.

Just something that came up during oral questions earlier, I thought the Minister said it's \$1.8 million per year coming to the NWT and then I thought I heard him say \$3.6 million over five years is what we're getting. So, \$1.8 million times five doesn't equal \$3.6 million, so I'm a little confused here.

I have to speak again about the need for seniors housing in Yellowknife particularly. I think, I know that the Housing Corp is involved with the steering committee or whatever it's called that's dealing with the Avens project. I certainly hope that that project can get a green light to go forward, and I just encourage the Housing Corp to do everything they can to make sure that the Avens project goes ahead. It's desperately needed.

There was a statement sometime within the last year about the Housing Corporation monitoring utilities in public housing. I guess I would like to know if that is still happening. Has there been a reduction in the cost of utilities for all of our public housing units across the territory? If so, because we're monitoring, that's great, but if we're not doing any monitoring, is there an intent on the part of the Housing Corp to start monitoring utility usage in public housing units? I think that's something we are going to have to do if we are ever going to experience any kind of efficiencies in the use of heat and power.

The Rent Supplement Program, I believe we're almost on to two years now and the Minister said we're going to do an evaluation after a two-year initial period. I would hope that that would happen fairly soon. I want to, again, suggest that the Rent Supplement Program should be applicable to those people who are renting a room in a house, not that they have their own unit, but they're just renting a room in a house. There are many people that that's all they can afford and some of them still need to get some kind of a rent supplement. Maybe not the full \$500, maybe something less, but there are people who are struggling to make it when they are only renting a room.

Lastly, Madam Chair, the CMHC money is declining. We heard that from Mr. Dolynny today. The government has been putting money in, the Housing Corporation has been putting money into their programs over the years. As the CMHC money declines and the input from the GNWT increases, are we going to get to a point where we're going to be able to cover the whole shortfall

from the CMHC funding, or is that something that is not going to be attainable? I guess we could, but is it going to be an unmanageable amount? We are saving some money with the various changes the Housing Corporation has put in place. My guess is that the savings don't equal the revenue that we're losing through CMHC, but as we go forward we need to have a plan to deal with the lack of CMHC funding in another 20 years or so. Is it going to simply be an infusion of cash from the GNWT, or are we going to be able to generate savings that are going to be equal to the money we don't get from the feds? I kind of doubt that.

With regard to Housing Ministers and the federal government, I know our Housing Minister has experienced frustration because there's a lack of willingness on the part of the federal government to meet with the Housing Ministers, particularly to discuss the declining CMHC funding. I guess I would like to know from the Minister if there is any progress on that front. Are we getting any closer to being able to negotiate with the federal government to try to reinstate some CMHC funding for our housing stock? Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. At this time, we have had three speakers with their general comments. I will ask for the Minister to respond to any questions or comments that he heard. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In response to Mr. Yakeleya's concerns, the core need is something we use to determine where some of our allocations are. If you look at the numbers in core need, that includes all households in the community, not just the public housing portfolio in the community. So we have some challenges there. One of the questions they ask people is, do you think your housing is adequate, and nine times out of 10 people will say no. Every one of us in here can think of something that we need done in our house, so I'm not sure if it's a true indicator. I suppose the only way to get a true indication is to hire a building inspector and go unit to unit, then that would be an awfully costly venture. We use these numbers to help with some of our determinations.

On the Fort Good Hope issue, we are looking forward to having a contract awarded. I'm not sure if it has been awarded yet. We are looking forward to having construction started on that. When you talk about the materials in the communities, it's a challenge we face with the low water levels. A lot of the M and I work we have planned for next year, we are trying to get the material in this year on the winter road so the work can begin right away.

As far as extra material goes, we have given that some consideration. We know it's a challenge in remote communities. It's something we are looking at. We just have to be sure that we don't have



people opening up charge accounts and come and charge a bunch of material and not pay for it. It is something that is on our radar and we're looking at dealing with that.

We have a number of programs designed for seniors. You talked about the land tenure, Mr. Yakeleya. One of the things we think the community can help us with is the land tenure. It's a lot easier on their applications when they do have land tenure and it was one of the requirements we had. The only program where we don't require land tenure is in our SAFE program, the Emergency Repair Program because it's an emergency, so we're not going to be too concerned about that at that time. A lot of the programs are going to our co-pay and we actually have people who have their water pump replaced, for example. They've come up with \$200 as part of the co-pay. We find that that's working well. We're looking at expanding on that.

Mr. Moses' comments we appreciate on the relationship we've had with committee. We try to seek committee's input and advice on some of the initiatives we have. We find with that political support, it's a lot easier to move some of our initiatives forward instead of just coming to you and saying this is what we're doing, end of story. We found that it has really been helpful in advancing some of our initiatives because, after all, they are 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly initiatives.

The 100 units that we're doing over three years, I think we're in year two and there are 36 being done this year. We've been very fortunate. We've had an investment of \$21 million from the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly to help deal with this. That program is being rolled out.

Again, we appreciate the comments commending the work the folks on the front line are doing. It's going a long way to advancing some of our initiatives.

Ms. Bisaro's comments, we are pleased to hear the Member is pleased with the additional investment in homelessness. I will have Mr. Stewart speak to that later as well as the cross-departmental work we're doing.

The \$150,000, we think, is going to be a worthwhile initiative once we get all the information from the report and how they can best implement some of the recommendations.

Rent revenue has gone up. Again, as I mentioned to Mr. Dolynny in our exchange before, a shout out has to go to our LHOs and the clients for honouring the commitments that they've made and they are actually paying the rent. As I said before, it helps us in our ability to look after the units and look after some of the declining CMHC funding.

The move to move money from ECE to Housing, again, I'll get Mr. Stewart touch on that later.

Public housing stock in Yellowknife is a concern that the Member has raised the last number of years. We hear it. One of the ways we tried to deal with that is through the territorial rent supplement and we're fortunate that in the capital we have a number of organizations in the community that take a lot of these initiatives on their own. We contribute to some of the initiatives they've taken on to provide additional housing spaces for folks in Yellowknife, through the Betty House, for example. I think Rockhill Apartments is one we make contributions to. It makes it a lot easier when you have an organization to work with, and I touched on it before in my exchange with Mr. Menicoche from Nahendeh. We have this pilot program we have been wanting to bring out into the communities. We've had two communities who have taken us up on it. We are still engaging with two more. It's an opportunity for organizations in the community where for \$100,000 we will renovate an existing unit and then we will pay them \$70,000 a year for five years. That can create a couple of positions within that community. It's going to be exactly what we wanted to do. It's going to be a place for people to go stay or sleep that don't have a roof over their heads. You know, we can have communities step up, like a lot of organizations do in the capital, then make it a lot easier to roll that initiative out.

Monitoring utilities, I'll have Mr. Stewart touch on that.

The CMHC declining funding, I'm going to just clarify some of the numbers here, Ms. Bisaro. The \$1.8 million per year is money that we are getting from the federal government and we're matching it, \$1.8 million each year, so that gives us \$3.6 million a year times five years, that's where we got the \$18 million investment from. I apologize if I didn't make it clear in my communication. So that's the \$18 million.

I would like to point out that we're one of the only jurisdictions in the country that matches the money we get from Canada. We had the Northern Housing Trust a few years ago. I think it was a \$58 million investment from Canada. The Northwest Territories government matched that \$58 million, so we had \$116 million that we put towards units on the ground, so that was a worthwhile investment. We've converted a number of those units to public housing because they originally went down as HELP units and we've converted them to public housing because we didn't have the clientele we thought we were going to get, so they've served their purpose.

The declining CMHC funding is one that's on our radar. I recently had a meeting with the new federal Minister of Housing and the new president of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and I did relay our concern on to them that we are concerned with the declining CMHC funding.

Member Bisaro is absolutely correct; the money would just get harder to sustain as our money comes in from CMHC. As that number goes down, it's going to be harder and harder for this government to sustain. I think this year we got \$23 million, I've seen the figures somewhere. We got \$22 million from CMHC and that number is going to go down. We're fortunate this year it didn't go down too much, but through the life of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly I think it's gone down \$2.1 million. The 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly it will go down an additional \$1.3 million during the life of that Assembly. So we're taking steps to try to deal with that but it is on the radar.

A lot of the larger jurisdictions down south are starting to feel it now. We felt it right away because we depend a lot on that money. They're starting to feel it now, so the pressure is starting to ramp up on the federal government. So we continue to have those discussions with them. I was very encouraged that CMHC has a new president and there is a new Minister of Housing and I made them aware of some of the issues that we're facing, so we're hoping to have those ongoing discussions.

I'm going to turn it over now, Madam Chair, to Mr. Stewart. He's going to touch on a couple of the other issues that Ms. Bisaro had raised. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just on the comment around other departments and their role in homelessness. As the Member is well aware, homelessness is a complicated issue where there are lots of facets to it, but other departments do continue, even though there was some consolidation, to play an important role. For example, there are a number of emergency shelters that receive funding through ECE as part of the per diem that they get for income support-type payments. There are family violence shelters that are funded through other departments that are important parts of that. The Day Shelter in Yellowknife, of course, is funded by Health and Social Services and they provide funding, as well, for the SideDoor youth centre. Transitional housing, there's a grant-in-kind through Public Works for Rockhill Apartments, so there's a variety of sources for addressing homelessness and I think I would be remiss if I also didn't note that when you're dealing with homelessness that all of those other services... I have been known to say that Housing First is important but it can't be only housing, and so there are all those other services that are just as important to deal with homelessness as well.

On the second issue around utilities, we are monitoring that very carefully. We're getting some very good data coming out of that. For something like fuel oil, you can imagine that we probably need to get a full annual cycle of data, because there are

delivery times and you've got to be a little careful that it doesn't look like there's more consumption just because somebody delivers more frequently than others, and it's similar with water but we've now been at it since April so we're starting to take a look at that. Electricity, we've been watching very carefully. I, just a couple of days ago, took a look at that and we've processed, just out of interest, almost 30,000 electricity bills over the last several months, obviously since we started, and you are starting to see some interesting patterns. Only about 2.5 percent of the bills have more than 900 kilowatt hours of usage, so we're starting to be able to identify units that are maybe using a little more, and in the next several months we're going to be developing reports so that anybody that's a real outlier on any of the utility ones, the LHOs can start to address to see if there are behaviours or other reasons why those units may be higher on the consumption scale. So some very, very interesting data there. I think it will also be very interesting to look at that and understand the impacts of some of our retrofits and those sorts of things as well. So I think there will be more good stuff coming out of that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. General comments. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to welcome the Minister and the Housing Corporation executives here today. The hard part about going near the end of general comments is that a lot of the good things have been said by members on the committee and also responded to by the Minister. But I would like to mention a few things in my opening comments that I think may have not been addressed, or at least echo some of the comments, and I've already heard some of the responses so I don't expect the Minister to reply accordingly.

As mentioned by Member Moses, faced with a very scathing Auditor General of Canada report it's only befitting that we find ourselves on the tail end of a lot of good work from the department. This committee has faced, and as a Member I know I've sometimes faced, questioning departments with a real can't-do attitude. It's a pleasure to work with the Ministers; it's a pleasure to work with authorities here as well as the corporation where it's been a can-do attitude after a scathing report. So, congratulations for literally, I believe, within a short period of time, in my opinion, you've turned a lot of negatives into positives and that's not an easy task. That's a monumental task. It's not the work of one individual. It was definitely a team effort. I know you're flanked, Mr. Minister, with some pretty good people on your right and your left, but I think kudos go to your entire department.

So, first and foremost, it's worth noting that if you look at the main estimates here for Housing, there's

only a 1 percent increase from the main estimates, which I'm pleased to say is in line with our revenues. So, congratulations for actually living up to the rigours of the statement of the Finance Minister.

That said, if I started to look at your opening address, the areas that I think are worth mentioning, and I think there are some good things happening, and as I mentioned earlier, homelessness. I know Member Menicoche talked earlier today in the House about it. But I think when you look at the steps – and they're not just gradual steps, these are monumental steps in homelessness over the past three or four years – it's been almost a threefold investment and that's very impressive. Could we do more? Absolutely we could do more. But the fact that we're seeing those increases over that period of time in addressing homelessness, as you said from \$325,000 at the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly to now \$855,000 in this budget, I commend you and I commend your ability to leverage those monies out of our bigger budget.

As mentioned here, Ms. Bisaro mentioned and again Member Menicoche, on behalf of Yellowknife we do appreciate the Housing First approach. I know it's not a lot of money, it's \$150,000, but it's still \$150,000. It's still the intent and I believe that this coordinated approach will have a spilling factor into the communities and I'm hoping we can work with our colleagues to make sure that is a successful endeavour.

That being said, I'm still a bit concerned that this Housing Corporation is still faced with two very large operating pressures. As I mentioned earlier in my statements and also covered by Ms. Bisaro and others, that declining CMHC funding, there's a time when the pavement is going to hit the road, the rubber is going to hit the road. What I mean by that is that right now, as it was indicated, you're feeling it now, but we're really going to feel it when those numbers are really not going to be strong enough to do what we need to do and I don't know when we're going to hit that threshold. Like I said, we only have 23 years left of funding and that number is decreasing gradually, so even every year we're getting less and less money, which is almost like a double negative. I think that is by far one of the largest operational pressures to which today, as a Member, I'm still a little bit perplexed by how we're going to do it. I can't quantify, I can't visualize how this department is going to mitigate that over the next couple of years.

Of course, there are graphs that show where the money is. But as we are all well aware, I look at our revenue streams over the next couple of years, the predictability models and the fact that we're having pressure on our resource revenues. Unless something cataclysmic occurs in terms of revenue

stream, we're going to be hitting a wall and I'm concerned about that.

The second key operating pressure that I think is going to be facing us, and is facing us currently and as I said in my statement today, is our aging stock of inventory. With 50 percent of our houses over 30 years old, it's only a matter of time where those houses are going to be beyond repair. Those houses are going to be beyond any preventative maintenance program, which means that we're going to be looking at new inventory, and we know the cost of new inventory and the disposal of old.

Again, I know it has been discussed here but I still think those two key operating pressures are still a little bit murky in terms of how we're going to deal with that moving forward.

That said, again as I indicated, we carry about 400 mortgages. I know that the collection rate, as we talked about earlier today in our exchange, was about 30 percent back in 2012 and that arrears are around \$16 million. We heard today that those arrears are \$9.1 million. If I'm wrong, please correct me. I think that is an important milestone. That's huge in terms of getting those monies back, and I do commend the government for doing so. I will have questions regarding the 115 clients that have not yet met that obligation, and we'll deal with that in detail shortly.

The issue of the 2007 rental units that are managed by our local housing authorities, again we have seen great strides in rent collection. This is part of that can-do attitude. We know that a number of LHOs were faced with really poor collection rates when we first started our jobs here not that many years ago. When you look at it today, from a 71 percent collection rate to now a 97 collection rate, those are huge numbers. As we indicated earlier in our oral exchange, still we have those who are still under 70 percent collection. I will have questions a little more specifically when we get to that number.

The other thing, as I indicated, was seeing the overall aspect of the Housing Corporation in terms of a lot of their housing preventative maintenance or preventative care models, and there are lots of options out there for our residents. I don't understand the rationale behind doing that, because if we were to invest into prevention and good maintenance of our units, it will definitely decrease those major repairs. So you're spending 10 cents to hopefully save a dollar. I get it. However, as we get into details and one of your plans, actually your CARE model, it's interesting that we're seeing a reduction. So if this is indeed a philosophy of the corporation in terms of wanting to invest into preventative maintenance, when we get to that operating line or that activity I will be asking why are we going in the other direction, because it goes against the philosophy that I believe we've

been given as a committee and I just want to get clarification.

That being said, with the amount of potential opportunity in this corporation, I don't want to lose the shining star that I think we have before us here today. We have to give it the due consideration of the House, and I believe what you've heard today from many Members, we have done so. Are there opportunities? Yes, there are always opportunities within a department, within especially a housing corporation. But bar none, this has been a department that clearly rose to the occasion, has taken on this challenge right on the chin, and I'm sure had to mitigate and swim through shark-infested waters to get it to where they are today and live up to the mantra of their terms of reference for the people they serve. So for that I'd just like to say congratulations and I'm looking forward to more details. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. We'll go on to two other Members before we turn the floor over to Minister McLeod to respond. Next on the list I have Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a couple comments in the general comments area. The first one is I'd like to know what the Housing Corporation is doing to combat, obviously, all the pressure we have with seniors, the aging population we have in the Northwest Territories and how many units we're expecting to build for seniors, how much we're expecting the seniors to stay in their own homes, maybe seniors programs to assist in that area. I guess I'd like to get a little update on what we're doing.

We know some of the pressures that are coming over the next five or 10 years with the aging population of the Northwest Territories and what we're doing to assist in that pressure.

The other area, and I've talked to the department about it a little bit, is the centralization purchasing or the use of shared procurement. We've had some concerns from local providers of goods and products and services and the fact that we're using shared services. I guess I've been hearing that there have been some difficulties in that process. There's a little bit of a disconnect between the LHO and the supplier of the products and when the products are coming in.

The other area of concern is if BIP is being extended to the LHO, where LHOs are able to go south without having to use BIP. I've even heard stories of some LHOs getting together and hiring a southern purchaser to buy stuff directly from the South and not following BIP. My understanding of BIP is if you're funded by the government and you're over 50 percent, you should be following BIP as well.

Those are a couple of the main areas that have come up more recently. I'd like to see what the Minister and department have to say about them. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to speak here on housing and the Housing Corporation proposals. I'd like to recognize, first of all, the 2014 NWT Community Survey. These five-year surveys are a huge tool, sort of an evaluation tool, a monitoring tool and I know have played an important role in pointing the Housing Corp towards problem areas. I think the data reflects a job well done in many of our small communities, most of which have shown some significant improvement. That has not been done without big challenges, and I recognize the effort that has been put in to make that achievement.

I also want to recognize right off the bat the response to my and other's calls for actions in Members' statements and so on, highlighting the issues of ECE income assistance clients for housing and the need to get the Housing Corp involved in that. They're the professionals with housing. You know, we've been running into so many... I spend way too much and I know others do, too, on constituent issues related to that. So kudos, first of all, and strong encouragement to expand that. I also have clients asking how they can try and get on that list of transferring from ECE income assistance to the Housing Corp. I'd appreciate some information now or outside of the House on how I can advise them to take advantage of that opportunity.

Just looking at utilities, I'm not seeing the savings there yet that I would hope to. I understand the monitoring is starting to produce some opportunities. I'm very excited about the 232 major retrofits. I know there's always an energy focus in those and I know you've done a lot. I think this brings us up to 700. So I would expect to see some savings there now, especially of course with the reductions in heating fuel costs and I'm not seeing that. Were these projections made before the price dropped? Anyway, I did catch Mr. Stewart's comments and I appreciated that, but I'll be looking for further information as we go and as time goes by over the next few months.

This is sort of a sweet and sour exercise here. Getting into the sour, 60 percent of the housing issues on affordability are right here in Yellowknife, right under your noses. Whereas we've done well in the small communities and the Minister's introductory comments is all about small communities until we got to a little few bucks for Yellowknife homelessness, which is an initiative of the City of Yellowknife. There's nothing in the

Minister's remarks on this major issue, which I spend a lot of my time on and I know people are in real difficulties out there and I don't see it addressed or recognized. So that's one thing I'd like to mention. Over 1,000 families is what we're talking about here in Yellowknife. Greater than 20 percent, and if you throw in other issues, then obviously 25 percent of all housing issues in the NWT increased over the five years by 45 percent. We are 45 percent worse today in Yellowknife than five years ago, over 1,000 families. Again, not mentioned.

I'm happy to see the increase in contributions to the homelessness issue and partnering with the City of Yellowknife. I think partnering is always important and working with communities. I was fortunate to be in the Yukon where there was a lot of presentations given on Housing First, and I know the Minister's staff were there too and enjoyed some good discussions there, although I don't see the department going for it. It's being left to Yellowknife, for example. But when you look at where these problems arise, I know the Minister is aware of where our homelessness issues arise, it's from other communities. So we really need a Housing First program in other communities where these people are coming from. They're coming to Yellowknife because there are services here or there are more opportunities to make it without services. So you can't blame them, but really I think it would be much healthier to try and capture the issue with a Housing First approach on a very modest basis. We're not talking about hundreds here and working with communities to capture that opportunity.

I'm still not seeing much, I know there has probably been some thinking on this, but much action on the way of a system to award Housing clients who show good behaviour in terms of reducing energy consumption and other evidence of efforts to keep costs low. I think that in many cases these are able-bodied people and able people who are unemployed. Often they're long-term and it seems to me still that this is an opportunity to look into. With smart metres, is that an opportunity, with some work to educate our public? You know, going to biomass heating. There may be some insurance issues there, but I'm not convinced we can't overcome some of those maybe with pellet boilers or whatever or pellet stoves. I'll leave that one.

I'm still getting major constituent issues with Housing not always related to things I've spoken of already and some of which have only been resolved by going to the courts or the rental officer and making presentations and getting them to turn around the Housing Corp's direction. That's unfortunate. It takes a lot of energy, very hard on people. As far as I can tell, it's mostly to do with communications. A little bit of the issue we've had with income support treatment of clients in the past.

I don't know whether it's an unfortunate culture or what it is, but I think there are some opportunities for some tune-ups there and I am happy to visit with the Minister about those.

Finally, I know there are lots of others, Housing is so important to our programs, but the seniors and assisted living side of things, again I'm seeing a lot of things happening in small communities, which I'm very glad to see quite a list of them here. But I'm not seeing the same attention paid to Yellowknife, although it's clear from the statistics that we have a much more rapidly accelerating issue than anywhere else in the Northwest Territories.

So in terms of catching up on the rent debt and so on, debt payments, I think the Minister is well aware of where the issue was on that front. It was moving to ECE and finally getting it back into Housing, which the Minister was instrumental in doing. So I appreciate the improved performance, but I would expect nothing less with the return to common sense on how to collect those rents and so on.

So thank you, Mr. Chair. A bit of a sweet and sour, but I think there are opportunities to do better, as good as many of the efforts have been by the Housing Corporation. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. With that, we'll turn it over to the Minister for replies. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We appreciate the comment's that the Member made and it's correct, it is a team effort, not only with the folks delivering the program but I think it's also the Members of the Legislative Assembly because, as I said before, without a lot of the support that they give us, it makes it harder for us to move some of our initiatives forward. So I think we can all take credit for that.

The decline in CMHC funding, I mean, that's an issue that we're going to have to deal with and we'll have to continue to bring that forward.

The aging stock, again, that's another one we have to deal with. We do have a mid-life retrofit that goes into a lot of these units. We expect, I think, about 50 years out of them. So we do a mid-life retrofit and we've done a lot of those. Our plan is to replace 40 of these units a year with newer stock, and again, that will have a trickle-down effect because they'll be a lot more energy efficient and everything else will go down.

Dealing with the arrears, and one of the things we've done that I think alleviates a lot of the pressure on the local housing authorities, is we've taken a lot of those arrears to headquarters in Yellowknife and we have started to deal with and hear. One of the problems we've faced in a lot of the smaller communities especially, not so much the bigger communities, but the smaller

communities, is the people that work in the LHO know pretty much everybody in town and it was difficult for them, I think, in many cases, to try and do evictions or do some collection of those. So we thought by bringing it here to the capital, and I think we've seen a good indicator of that improvement because we do the garnishees, we do the evictions out of headquarters and I think that's going a long way to having people step up and start dealing with many of the issues, and we've taken a lot of pressure off of the LHOs. At the end of the day, I think that's a good thing.

Mr. Bouchard's comments, we're doing five seniors units right now. I'm not sure what the long-term plan is. I would have to find that, but we're hoping that's a start in dealing with much of the aging population that we know is coming. So we'll continue to work on that. We do offer, I just announced, I think in my comments, about the care mobility where we will work with a lot of the seniors or people that have mobility issues in taking care of that so they can actually stay in their houses or stay in their units much longer. Like through the Preventative Maintenance Program, and I think there's a number of other programs that are offered through the Government of the Northwest Territories to assist seniors in staying in their own homes. I mean, I can think of the fuel subsidy and there are a few others, but we try to do what we can to have them stay in their own units for as long as possible. That will take some of the pressure off them moving into public housing or into a seniors facility. But we do recognize that it is an issue that's forthcoming, so doing the five seniors unit is a start and we'll continue to... I'm going to have Mr. Stewart a little later touch on the centralizing, leasing and purchasing and that. I'll have Mr. Stewart touch on that a bit.

Mr. Bromley's comments, I'll take the sweet. I won't respond to this, however. No. Member Bromley is correct; the survey tool is an important instrument in how we determine some of our allocations. I think I said that on a number of occasions. You see there is an improvement in numbers. We've spent a lot of money in the last eight years in trying to improve our housing stock; \$182 million was spent in a lot of the smaller communities; \$72 million was spent in some of the regional centres and I think about \$29 million was spent in capital. There has been a major increase in the money that we spend. We try to distribute it around in the smaller communities when you have 65 percent of the homes in the community are housing stock, and that's what you see. If you look in some of the market communities, Yellowknife for example, that number is not as high. I'm not sure what the exact percentage is. So, some of the options that they have are options that they don't have in the smaller communities.

The Territorial Rent Supplement Program is one way we try to deal with that. It was designed more

for the market communities so we can get more people into units.

Our numbers for that are down. We think a lot of people actually have used it for the two years and it's allowed them to get a foot up. Then they were able to save some money and move into homeownership. So we find that those numbers are down, but we will continue to take applications for that.

Mr. Bromley talked about partnering, and that's one of the advantages that I think we have here in the capital is that we are able to partner with a number of organizations. We'll make contributions to them. So that the ability to partner with community groups, I think, is more evident here in the capital than it is in a lot of the smaller communities where the LHOs are about the only partner we have there, and I've said it before. I think we see that in the Northern Pathways to Housing Program we're trying to deliver, where we have four pilots that we're hoping to do this here. I mentioned the figures that we have \$100,000 that we would use to renovate an existing unit in the community, \$70,000 a year over five years to partner with an organization in the community to watch over this unit for us, provide services, or just be there.

We have two communities that have proposals in; we're still waiting to engage with a couple more. We think that might deal with some of the issues in some of the smaller communities. Unfortunately, they still will gravitate towards the larger communities because there just is a lot more there for them. But if we can keep them in communities... These are designed for people who don't have homes that need maybe a place to sleep for the night and just to have a roof over their head instead of just wandering around. We're hoping that will alleviate some of the pressure.

As I said before, it's a pilot project. If we find that it's working, then we'll do the evaluation. If we find it's working well, then we'll expand the program. Hopefully that will take some of the pressure off a lot of people coming to the larger... It is one that is definitely on the radar and it's one that we feel that we have to deal with.

The...(inaudible)...for utilities. Again, Mr. Stewart is going to touch on the utilities. Just very briefly I can say it's something that these numbers that we have I think are from the spring. These numbers are from the spring, so we haven't been able to do the calculations with all the drop in prices. With the new system, we're monitoring all of the utilities for the communities now. I think that came into effect April 1<sup>st</sup> of last year. So we're able to gather some baseline data now and we'll be able to share that with the Members.

A lot of the improvements that we've made over the years I believe are geared more towards energy efficiency because, obviously, if your house is

energy efficient or the unit is energy efficient, then there will be some savings in the long run. I think in a couple of communities, we've gone to a central biomass heating operation and we're looking to realize some of the savings in that. I think it was just on the news last year that we were doing the panels and the home in Hay River. Again, we're looking to see some of the savings out of that.

We've been monitoring the unit up in Inuvik for the last couple of years and it's on line. We're looking to see with all... It was a bit of a research project, so we want to see what the outcome is of that. I know it was very expensive to build. I think we put \$500,000 into that unit and I believe CMHC gave us \$500,000. It was very expensive, but we want to see if there is some... It was a research project, so you pay for those to help you develop some options going forward.

Seniors in assisted living, we do contribute again to some of the organizations here in town that maintain some... I don't have the exact numbers; Mr. Stewart may have those. He may want to touch on that, or we can get into it as we get into detail.

I think I've touched on the issues that the last few Members have raised. If I missed any, my apologies.

Mr. Bromley's comment about the income assistance, we can have that conversation outside of here and we'll be able to fill you in on some of the work that we're doing going forward. We'll have that conversation.

I'm going to ask Mr. Stewart if he can touch on Mr. Bouchard's comments on the centralization and the purchasing and the other contributions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just quickly, as the Member is aware, we went to a bulk procurement process for our LHOs, and part of the reason for that was to some of the issues that you raised, was to make sure that there was a consistent approach to being used to inventory control and that there was some thinking behind what they bought and where we get it.

For last year's bulk procurement, 100 percent of the tenders in there, the contracts went to northern companies. Eighty percent were local and the other 20 percent went to companies in other regions, when we did it by region by region.

Certainly, if there are examples in terms of the issue around BIP, you're absolutely right that the LHOs should be following the Business Incentive Policy. If we know of examples where that isn't taking place, we would certainly want to know those so that we can make sure that they understand

their requirements to follow the Business Incentive Policy.

Just quickly on some of the contributions here in various spots but certainly in Yellowknife just in response to Mr. Bromley's comments. There are a number of other organizations. While we provide, obviously, about 300 or 290 public housing units, there are a number of other organizations that we provide extensive support for. For example, Avens, we provide about \$540,000 a year for them to operate their units. North Slave Housing here in the capital that runs about 75 units, we provide \$1 million a year for their supports. Then there are a number of other smaller organizations and smaller facilities that we also provide some support, including the YWCA to support the Rockhill operations. There are some of these in other communities I should mention, to be fair. Teepee Housing in Inuvik, for example, basically runs social housing but we provide about \$320,000 to them. We do operate, obviously, a large number of units, but we also support a number of other groups that provide lower income folks with some housing supports as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Committee, general comments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree we can proceed with detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I just want to remind folks that all items under the NWT Housing Corporation are information items only, so we'll just be asking questions. With that, I'll get committee to turn to page 393 in your main estimates book. NWT Housing Corporation, financial summary information, information item. Any questions? Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Just listening to the responses and to the comments of the Members, I want to ask the Minister and staff that are compiling data, a very interesting note here I made, the NWT Housing Corporation is processing electricity bills, you said about 30,000. Are we going to get some of that data to know what we're spending in the Sahtu as a result of the fuel, because that's a big indicator of operation of the units and also for the electricity, water and the sewer. I guess I'm trying to get at a point where the philosophy of the Housing Corporation is going to state clearly that some of this responsibility is to go to the tenants. You know, we can go to communities and you will see some units that at minus 44 or 45 they have their upstairs bedroom windows open and I'll say, well, what's going on, it's so hot upstairs but it's cold downstairs. I'd say if we were private homeowners,

you would have everything bundled up to be nice and warm and conserve as much heat as possible.

Until there's a way that you're going to put wood pellets as a source of heat in those units, diesel is there to stay and we are covering, in the public housing units, the cost. The Minister has put in some other alternative energy use in the small communities and that's the matter of the fact. So I guess I'm looking for some details. You know, when you put somebody in a house, you have to let them know that this is what the Government of the Northwest Territories is covering for you to stay there.

You know, in this House the Minister talked about the mid-life on the retrofits and I'm glad and I also want to know how many retrofits have come into the Sahtu that age and it's time to reno, shake them up and get them nice and new again so that these units will be up to par.

As I walk around the communities, I know some of the units that are still boarded up, some need to be worked on and some of the equipment and materials should be in the Sahtu now, taking advantage of the winter road, you know, and I would really stress the importance of the barging system. It has to happen with barging that it gets there in June, not later, and I'm asking the Minister for this type of information so that we could somehow, from our regional office to the local housing authorities, the tenants get into the units that when there is damage to the units this is what it's costing us as taxpayers to fix this house up and that's what we need to get to them.

In the olden days, you know, I think that type of teaching was happening. Somehow we missed it. Somehow some of these units are almost like an entitlement to the social housing and we as taxpayers cover the cost. You know, I understand the issue of homelessness has been something that we're going to throw lots of money in.

A long time ago, in the '60s and '70s, there was no issue of homelessness in the Northwest Territories. Now we're paying lots of money for homelessness. I wonder what's going on. You look at the core needs in our small communities, there are five, six, eight, 10 people living in one house. It's still happening today. With all the people living in our small communities, with overcrowding comes health issues, social issues and all kinds of other issues that are compounded by this issue here. So I guess I'm looking for that kind of data from the Minister and from the staff and saying let's put the real crux of these types of costs on the table and say these are the factors. If I was to walk around in Sahtu communities and look at the housing units, you know, I would be able to do that. I'm very concerned that the Minister is saying that from the housing needs. Is that the true indicator? I'm not sure, so I don't know what the Minister means by

that. We do the Housing Corp needs or the surveying and these are the numbers, the percentage, this is what it's saying and I just took note of that. I'm not too sure what he means by that, because there are some real issues in our small communities with overcrowding, freezing pipes and sewer pipes.

Mr. Minister, some of the units, I hear it right from the local housing authorities that people are putting grease and stuff down the sinks and they're freezing up. But even that's simple education. I'm hearing from the tenants and also from the people who are working at housing and saying they shouldn't be putting the grease and the macaroni and hamburgers down because it freezes up and pretty soon they're complaining to me and I'm running to the office of the housing here. Something like preventative measures in our small units, so things like that.

People who are in our units that, you know, as taxpayers we're paying for these utility costs without any type of consequence to the young tenants. I guess I'm looking at some responsibilities. Where do we draw the line? Because the government is not giving us any more money, actually they're decreasing the funding and now we're dealing with some issues here in Yellowknife, such as housing. So lots of money is going to homeless. Is that taking away from other needs of the community because now we have to deal with the housing of the homeless people in Yellowknife?

The president rattled off a lot of money going into this capital city here. Lots of money, and I'd appreciate the Minister's willingness and flexibility to look at those four small communities and hoping that they'd get the support to have this in their small communities. There are two right now I know and, as he said, there are two more, so I might have to get on the phone and get cracking here to see that that will happen in our region.

Okay, I'll leave shortly. I just want to finish this.

I just want to know about the data, they're important indicators. We really need to know, as a government, what it's costing us in subsidies that we're covering those units here. There are opportunities in the future, like they have in Yellowknife. We have corporations that own real estate and I think some of them would love to have one or two of their tenants that are supported by Education, Culture and Employment to be paid by Housing. There are a couple of empty units that we have in our communities that we would love to have some of the Education, Culture and Employment tenants move in there that the Housing could cover some of the costs.

I'm going to conclude at that, Mr. Chair.



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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just very quickly, homelessness is an issue that's facing all departments, I think, within this government, and it's not just because they don't have a home, there are many other reasons and we all need to do our part to deal with it. So as the Housing Corp, we do what we can to help deal with it and the other departments do what they can.

I like the Member's point, though, and it's something that we tried to do, is make the tenants aware of what it's costing on that unit. I think it used to be right on their receipt, I believe, even on their power. A couple of years ago we increased the user pay part of the power from I think it was six to nine cents. So we were hoping the consumption would come down. I mean...(inaudible)...you could be in one community where you could have a house that was just recently renovated, so the energy you're using there is obviously going to be a little less than if you're next door and you're waiting to get your unit renovated. So there's a bit of a difference there. But we do make them aware. You know, somebody could be paying \$90 a month, depending on what community they live in, \$90 all in, but it's costing us \$2,500 a month to maintain that unit and we need to make them aware of that, that they're being subsidized \$2,410 a month.

I think clients are becoming more aware of what it's costing to maintain that unit. I think they're also becoming more aware of the fact that the Housing Corp is serious about rent collection and I believe they're stepping up. It has been the mindset for too long that, well, I'm not going to pay my rent, I can run up \$50,000 in arrears and nothing is going to happen, but that has changed. So we'll continue to work on that. There's tenant damage for exactly what the Member was talking about. There could be tenant damage charges for that. We continue to deal with that, but the Member's point is well taken that we need to make them aware of what it's costing the taxpayers to have them in a particular unit, so we'll continue to do that.

I think I touched on most of the other issues that the Member had raised. If I didn't, Mr. Yakeleya, I apologize.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Committee, we are on page 393. I'd ask committee if you are going to be asking questions regarding detail on the following activities and information items, if you please specify which line entry, whether it's revenue or expenditure program detail. With that, committee, NWT Housing Corporation, financial summary information, information item. Any questions? Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. It's my understanding that in Deninu K'ue the community has an eight-plex and I was curious as to what's

happening with it. It has been sitting there for years and I want to hear what the plan is, either to replace or not. It has been empty for a number of years. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod. With that, we'll go to Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe the Member is talking about the eight-plex in Fort Resolution. There were some land issues that we had to straighten out to be able to get the proper land tenure there. We are prepared to sell that unit off, if there are interested parties in that. However, there has also been interest expressed recently to use that property for other purposes within the community that we've heard from the community leadership. I think Public Works and Services is looking at that request to see if it's appropriate for what they would like to use, so we'll hold off selling it until we hear from Public Works whether they have a use for the property and if they don't, then we'll go ahead and put that out for sale and somebody can hopefully use that unit for rentals within the community. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you. How long has it been on the operational side of the ledger? In other words, sitting there empty.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Stewart. Sorry. We'll go to Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It has been about three years, but we'll confirm that information and relay that on to the Members. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** In speaking to the chief of the community, of course not recently, has the Housing Corp done an assessment as to what it would require to be up and running as a viable unit for housing people in the community?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know we have done a technical assessment of the building in the past. I don't have the information right in front of me, but we did look at what would be required to get it back operational and that's something we would consider in setting the purchase price. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** What's the housing core need in the community of Fort Res?

**MR. STEWART:** I believe the 2014 result was 24.6 percent of the dwellings were in core need.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Noting that it's 24.6 in core need, what have we done? Does this not move the core need higher if this eight-plex is not replaced back into the operational pool? Thank you.

**MR. STEWART:** The unit was empty at the time, I believe, of the needs survey. I would point out, though, that between 2009 and 2014 the core need in Fort Resolution in 2009 was 50 percent of dwellings and in 2014 it was 24.6 percent of dwellings. So I think there has been a fair amount of progress in that community in terms of addressing core need.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I would ask how many people are in the community of Fort Res needing housing. In other words, we have housing authorities all around the Northwest Territories and people on waiting lists. If the Housing Corporation is unable to supply the specific number, would it be safe to guess that there would be at least eight people looking for housing in that community? Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We've got 12 on the waiting list.

**MR. HAWKINS:** So if we have 12 on the list, it would be safe to say that if we open up that particular unit once again, we would take off two-thirds of the waiting list. Is that correct?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, the unit needs a considerable amount of work and there has been interest in parties wanting to purchase that unit, so we're exploring that right now. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Chairman, what does "financially" mean in financial terms when the Minister uses the word "considerable"? I'm trying to put a dollar amount to it.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, the president has committed to providing that information. We don't have the numbers offhand, but we will provide the information to the Members. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I believe in Yellowknife they were talking about expending dollars so they could expand programs through housing to stabilize rents, to stabilize affordability. Has there been a cost-benefit analysis to make the determination that it's cheaper to sell the unit in case someone else wants to rent them or own the unit, which we own already, and fix it up and work through our housing program for housing for people in need? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Stewart

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The allocation of our public housing stock is obviously done at a community level. Fort Resolution has 75 units that you would expect to see in public

housing. They currently have 75 units, excluding those eight that are being sold. So to put those back in the stock would change the community allocations and then we would have to find the extra resources to provide the subsidy there as well. They are at their allocation currently. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** We would not be in a position to reallocate that allocation?

**MR. STEWART:** That is certainly something we could do, but obviously there's a fixed number of units that we have available in the Northwest Territories. So if we were to add eight in Fort Resolution, we would have to take eight away from another community and I suspect there would be concerns raised about taking eight units away from another community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Has the Minister come to the Legislature to ask for additional money to repair those eight units to ensure we would increase the housing stock in that community with more than 10 percent by adding those...for those 12 individuals or families waiting to get housing?

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've been waiting, as I said before, to sell those units and they can repair those units. I think that was the original ask when those units became available. I think even they saw that it was going to be quite costly to renovate those units. Again, I committed to providing the actual numbers to the Members. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you. I do thank the Minister and certainly the corporation for supplying that information in advance of receiving it.

How long is the waiting list in that community? Once you're on it, what is the average waiting time?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We have 12 on the waiting list. As for the length of time, we don't have that information. We will contact the local housing authority and let them know there was a concern raised with the length of time with the waiting list and how long is the average time on the waiting list. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** In a perfect world the Housing Corporation decides to get away from this particular unit that has eight units, we sell it for whatever dollar amount, I have yet to find the value or balance. We sell it, which means the money goes into the GNWT coffers. Somebody now becomes the owner and someone decides they want to be in

the rental business in the Northwest Territories in this community. I don't want to ask a hypothetical question because we'd be ruled out of order, but I see it as a huge opening that someone would be coming to us asking for money and assistance in order to create a business opportunity in this community. Would this be giving them their money back to repair it? What type of program opportunities will happen in this community that will either deal with this or avoid this situation?

I'm sure the Minister sees what I'm saying. If we sell it to someone, we get the money for it and we just give them back the money to repair it, so they can rent it and we rent from them. We're just finding a method to move wealth around, so the government not only pays but we pay double. Can this conceivably be the situation, or does the department have a plan and this isn't the case?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. You did ask a hypothetical question as can it conceivably happen. Can you be more specific in your question, please? Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Yes, I know. It's a tough one. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Does the Housing Corporation have a program that will pay for repairs of a particular multiplex unit such as this eight-plex unit that a person could apply for? That is not a hypothetical question. That's a real question.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, if someone came forward and said they wanted to buy the unit, then we would sell it to them. We also have a program we have been offering the last number of years now called the... It's got a long title, but we give them \$50,000, \$25,000... It just went down as I was speaking. We give them \$25,000 a door and it's a program that we've offered for a while. It's more designed for those who want to rent to professionals in the community. We've had some good uptake in a number of communities. I can provide a list to the Member of communities that have taken us up on this offer. We saw that as a way to try and assist with development in the community where they bought a unit and they needed some assistance in renovating the unit and we were able to provide some assistance. They, in turn, would become the landlord. They would rent it to individuals in town, professionals. If they rented, they would not rent it back to us. We wouldn't rent it off them unless there was some type of program that was offered for that. There is a program that exists and we have helped out a number of communities and we will provide the list. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Committee, we are on page 393, NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'm not going to need 10 minutes. I just want to make a point, which is \$25,000 a door could be \$200,000. I would just see the government sell the unit and then pay for its full repairs and then rent it back in some form or fashion. Anyway, I just wanted to make sure I said that, eight doors times \$25,000, \$200,000. Who knows what they are going to sell it for or buy it back or pay? I would just hate to see that situation. I would rather just pay to fix the darn thing, house the families and make sure they are up on their own and find a way to pay for it. Come to the Legislature. I would support money to go into the community for a resolution if it got more people in secure, safe housing. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I didn't hear a question there. I will take that as a comment. Committee, we are on page 393, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, financial summary information, information item. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, committee. We'll defer page 395 to the end. Page 396, active position summary, information item. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 399, community housing services, operations expenditure summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can I ask the Minister for a breakdown of utilities? Is this the total cost that we give to the Housing Corporation or that's what they collect? Is \$26 million what you've been talking about?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the \$26 million is for the utilities we would pay to operate the public housing or the housing stock across the NWT that we own. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** That's a lot of...(inaudible)... Can I ask for a breakdown in regards to what we're paying for in the Sahtu communities and other communities, a breakdown of the utility costs? Also, the funding we give to the regional corporations, the regional offices, is this money we provide to them being expended through the year? In other words, is this what we're doing for the communities in the Sahtu? The money is being expended and they are using the money for what it is intended for in the communities. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't have that level of detail of information handy. We will compile that information and share it with the Members. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the same note for the comments from... I'm not sure if this is the right area to look at, but looking at the contracts and work, I would really appreciate the staff and the Minister to hear the Northerners and local contractors are doing the work. They are working out of the regional office. We certainly like to see the economy in our communities have a little bit of a reprieve there for our people, so I appreciate whatever they are doing to make it happen. I fully support the Housing Corporation to see that that work gets there. I just wanted to give kudos to the staff and the Minister on that. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I take that as a comment, so I will leave it at that. Committee, we are on page 399, community housing services, operations expenditure summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 400, community housing services, grants, contributions and transfers. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 403, executive, operations expenditure summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 405, finance and infrastructure services, operations expenditure summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 406, finance and infrastructure services, grants, contributions and transfers. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Finance and infrastructure services, grants, contributions and transfers. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 409, programs and district operations, operations expenditure summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 410, programs and district operations, grants, contributions and transfers. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you. Page 411, lease commitments, information item. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Committee, if I can get you to turn back to page 395, NWT Housing Corporation, departmental totals. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree that consideration of the NWT Housing Corporation is completed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I would like to thank the Minister, Mr. Stewart and Mr. Anderson for joining us this evening. Could I please get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you, committee.

Continuing on, we agreed earlier today to turn our attention to the Department of Justice, page 295 in the main estimates. With that, I will turn it over to the Minister accountable for opening comments, Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 2015-2016 Main Estimates for the Department of Justice. Overall the department's estimates propose an increase of \$3.8 million, or 3.1 percent, over the 2014-2015 estimates.

These estimates represent the work of the department for the administration of a justice system for the Northwest Territories that is open, accessible and responsive to the needs of the people we serve. We are presenting a budget that continues to be prudent and responsible. Accordingly, we are presenting \$809,000 in expenditure reductions and reducing \$992,000 through sunseting programs. Revenue increases have been included at 3 percent, or \$422,000, mainly due to securities registration fees administered by the legal registries division.

The largest increase in these budget estimates represents just over \$3.7 million in forced growth costs. These include collective bargaining and contractual obligations and nondiscretionary contribution increases for judicial and RCMP pensions.

A total of \$374,000 has been included for the expansion of the Integrated Case Management Pilot Project into Inuvik to strengthen government services to be more effective for those who are most vulnerable.

In keeping with the Assembly's priorities, I would like to highlight \$872,000 to fully implement the specialized Wellness Court to assist those in our

society who come into conflict with the law through mental health or addictions issues. This second year funding continues the work started in the 2014-2015 year.

The department's French Operating Plan outlines steps necessary to meet our legal responsibilities and improve the French services available to residents of the Northwest Territories, and \$772,000 is included in this budget to continue the implementation of that work.

The department will continue to meet the expectations of this Assembly. We will continue our efforts throughout the coming year to support families when they are in conflict or personal crisis. Through this support, families and individuals will be empowered to work towards successful resolutions allowing them to turn their energies to more constructive and healthier alternatives.

We will continue to provide safe and secure custody of offenders and will provide rehabilitation programs that support reintegration back into communities. We will help youth in trouble with the law to make better choices. We will ensure we are able to support government activities by securing a proper base of legislation and regulations to support and build a strong and sustainable territory for the future.

This concludes my opening remarks. I welcome your comments and questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Do you have witnesses you would like to bring into the Chamber?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I do, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort our witnesses into the House today.

Minister Ramsay, would you be kind enough to introduce your witnesses to the House?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would be my pleasure. To my right is Ms. Sylvia Haener, deputy minister for the Department of Justice; to my left, Ms. Kim Schofield, director of corporate services with the Department of Justice.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Ms. Haener, Ms. Schofield, welcome again to the Chamber. It's nice to see you.

Committee, we are on general comments, Department of Justice. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will have opening comments to the Minister recognizing that this is an operational and maintenance budget. I'm

hoping to put another plug in, I know it's not time for infrastructure but I will still continue with my consistent plea for an RCMP presence more consistently and maybe permanently in the communities without a detachment. For example, Colville Lake. I know the department is working on that with the Fort Good Hope detachment and doing their best to make sure the presence is in Fort Good Hope. I'm going to just remind the Minister that I will continue until our Assembly is completed for ways the department can look at this with their deputies and directors. They have ways to look at it rather than coming back with the response no, we can't do that, no, we can't do that. I would like to hear some maybes; maybe we can look at something. That's more feasible to satisfy the people in Colville Lake. That community now is experiencing the presence of more alcohol abuse and illegal drugs coming into that community. I ask that the staff and the Minister give some consideration for the community of Colville Lake. I know the challenges the Minister has within his department, but perhaps there can be a way. I am looking for some help here.

Now I want to ask the Minister for other ways to look at dealing with justice, especially with inmates who are in our corrections facilities. I did talk earlier to the Minister. There is a lady in San Francisco. Her name is Dr. Mimi Silbert. Mimi Silbert has worked with 16,000 inmates over the past 30 years and she runs a program down in that area. There are no therapists, no professional supports, no guards.

Dr. Silbert has a very impressive record from her research and report. Ninety percent of the inmates that she worked with don't go back to hard drugs or gangs. A lot of these inmates obtain a high school degree, college degree, a university degree. She has worked with 16,000 inmates. It's a real unique program. That's the type of innovation that I'm looking for from this department. It would be wonderful to have her come up and speak to the officials or to community justice like on-the-land programs, community justice, and we can do something. It's been proven. It's in a book that I'm reading right now. It talks about Dr. Silbert. It talks about many other people, education with health. The section I'm reading is on justice. She could bring that experience to us, especially in the North here with the Minister.

When you have a record like that, that shows that you don't need any guards or therapists or professional support, and she has a program that maybe could be used in the Northwest Territories. Why not try something like this maybe in our region where maybe we aren't getting a very good uptake or there are some reasons that we can't do justice and healing on the land?

Fort Good Hope has been asking for an on-the-land program. There are barriers. Why don't we look at this and have Dr. Silbert come to the North and work with us? That type of goal, direction, thinking, that could happen.

I'm making a public plea right now with the Minister in looking at how we work with inmates that shouldn't be in there. I'm very happy to hear that the Wellness Court is coming into force. We supported it. Thank you to the Minister and the staff to get that all set up, because a lot of people who are in those facilities could maybe benefit from the Wellness Court. I heard that in my region.

The Minister made a statement in the House earlier about illegal bootlegging that's going on in the communities. That's a lot of money if you look at \$60 for a bottle. How many bottles? Fifty-one bottles on one of his notes there? That's about \$3,000. So when they say they don't have money, I say no, you have money, it's there. It's just that you don't have money for... Your priorities do not quite all fit in line. There's something not right here, so we need to change that. I'm looking to see how the Minister is working to increase it and tell people that by these seizures of liquor, it's quick, easy money, but it's competition against the government. You need to know that you're breaking the law. On top of that, you're contributing constantly to a serious health or danger in the community. We have lots of people in our region and we need to really think about this. It's more important to get the people to really think about this issue here.

The last point I want to state is the community of law enforcement. Can we look at auxiliary police in our communities for the young people? I know some people in some of my communities had looked at being an RCMP member. It's volunteering. I don't know how it will work in the small communities, doing minor law enforcement or tagging along with the Regular Members. It might be something to look at in order to bring some hope to our young people.

We have to do a whole bunch of things because of what we're experiencing now with the funding with our government, looking at with Justice, the courts, on-the-land programs, a whole wide range of services that the department is providing in our communities. I guess I want to look at that and see if there is any type of possible justice conference that can be looked at in the regions. I would really consider strongly suggesting to the Minister that we invite Dr. Mimi Silbert up and look at this and take advantage of her 30 years of experience working with 16,000 inmates. Ninety percent do not go back to drugs or gangs. A lot of them have college or education degrees. Let's learn from her experience. Can we use that here in both of our centres here? I would suggest that they have some discussion. I look forward to her maybe coming into our region.

We want to do an on-the-land program. We need those types of people.

Thank you to the Minister for the hard work your staff are doing and being open. Thanks to the RCMP members who are working in our small communities. We have to say thank you because we don't say thank you enough. Sometimes we get on too fast. They have a job to do and it's our responsibility as public to uphold our bargain here. I want to say that with all the goodness of my heart. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. As agreed upon earlier with convention, we are going to go through three Members' general comments and then we'll ask the Minister to reply. With that, I have Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to use the occasion to get an update as to the Aboriginal wellness coordinator that I was asking back in October of last year. As I understand it, at the time this position hadn't been filled and we were using a person that I thought at one time we were trying to encourage to apply for the job and they were doing it. I would like an update as to where that may be at this particular time with that position. Has it been staffed and when had it been staffed?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Did you want that reply now?

**MR. HAWKINS:** It doesn't matter to me. I just want the answer.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you. As, again, we agreed upon earlier, we are going to do three Members here with general comments and we'll ask the Minister to do three Members at a time, so are you finished with your general comments?

**MR. HAWKINS:** Yes.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you. With that, we will go to Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a couple of comments here. First and foremost I would like to comment on the Wellness Court. It's been a long time coming and I'm glad that we are getting there. When we reviewed business plans, Members expressed some concerns about the resources which may or may not be available for the Wellness Court. We had concerns about whether or not the services and the programs were going to be available to make the program succeed. I think there was going to be an update ready for us somewhere around this time, so I guess I would like to know from the Minister and from the staff if there is an update that they can give us on the Wellness Court. How is it proceeding? How are things going in terms of access to services and success in that area?

Also, when we discussed the department, we talked a fair bit about IT systems, supporting the Justice

department. I guess I would like to know which systems currently are needing replacement and/or upgrading and what the department is doing about it. Are they going to be dealt with in this budget year, or is it going to be over the next couple of years? I understand there's more than one system that needs some help.

We talked about community justice systems when we reviewed the business plans, and I want to stress that I think there needs to be, and I believe committee said as much, but we need to stress that there needs to be more emphasis and/or funding put into community justice committees. They have proven to be quite successful, I think the department would agree, but they don't get, I don't think, as much funding as they should. I think having a community justice committee in every community is the optimum. I don't know if we do or not, I can't remember. So I would appreciate being given the info on that. We need to give them funding in order for them to get training and to do the job that we want them to do, which is only going to make our communities better and safer.

Legal aid was an issue for us; it has been for the last several years. I'd like to know from the Minister, from the department, where we are at in terms of wait times for people to get service from a legal aid lawyer. It was an extremely long wait time, probably a wait list as well, but the wait time was quite long, not too bad in Yellowknife, but extremely long outside of the capital. I'd like to know where that wait time is right now. I hope it has gone down. Can I get an indication of how long clients have to wait to get a lawyer outside of the capital and the regional centres?

I think that's it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We'll turn our attention over to Minister Ramsay to reply to Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Hawkins and Ms. Bisaro. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd be pleased to respond to the three Members that provided some opening comments.

Starting with Mr. Yakeleya and looking at the RCMP detachments, I want to let Mr. Yakeleya know that our community justice and policing folks met with the chief and SAO from Colville Lake in December of '14. We are also just coming off a meeting that was held in January with the community again. We're in the process now of compiling a report from the information we received from the community leaders in Colville Lake. So we will be working towards a community safety plan for the community of Colville Lake as well.

I have mentioned in the House before that under the new funding arrangement the Government of the Northwest Territories is responsible for 70 percent of the capital costs for new detachments in

the Northwest Territories, and that's something that is going to become an issue if we want to try to put detachments in communities across the territory that don't currently have detachments. We're looking at a refurbishment in Inuvik, a big expenditure in Inuvik, and also in Behchoko as well. We're happy to get into communities. I've had the opportunity to travel into some communities to discuss with the leadership in the communities about community safety plans, policing plans and how it is that we can work with the RCMP and work with community leaders around the territory to make communities safer. I'm happy to do that and I will extend an offer to the Member if there are communities, and I know Colville Lake was mentioned here today, if they want to see me in person. If we can get up to the community, I'd be more than happy to do that and talk about community safety when I get into the community.

I want to thank the Member for bringing up Mimi Silbert and her experience dealing with inmates and what she could possibly bring to the table. The department has a strong track record of a demonstrated willingness to look at things differently and try new things. I think if we could make contact with her and discuss perhaps an opportunity to come here and try something different, we'd be willing to explore that. So I want to thank the Member for bringing that up today.

On the issue with bootlegging, I had a statement today talking about a number of communities where we've had some large seizures and we're very pleased to see the work of the RCMP paying dividends and seizing alcohol. We have to continue to get the message out that it's okay if you see illegal activity taking place in your community; it's okay to call the authorities; it's okay to tell somebody about it. That's the only way we're going to stop bootleggers and drug dealers from ravaging our communities. I think calling Crime Stoppers, calling the RCMP, it's okay to do that. We've seen far too many tragedies here in the Northwest Territories that involve alcohol and young people and we just have to make that call. I want to impress upon people that it is okay to call the authorities and let them know that there's illegal activity taking place in your community and that's how the RCMP were helped in getting those seizures done. It was the help of the public. Again, I want to thank the public that helped the RCMP get that booze out of our communities.

It was mentioned about continuing to educate our communities, our people about alcohol. Anything we can do to work with the Department of Finance on efforts to get that message out, we will continue to do that. I know the Member also wanted to thank the RCMP, and I agree with you; I don't think we thank the RCMP enough for the work that they do on behalf of our residents and ourselves each and

every day in all of our communities. So I will certainly pass your comments on to the RCMP.

On Mr. Hawkins' question, we did have some success in finally filling the position. It's a transfer assignment. An Aboriginal person that was working at the North Slave Correctional Centre is now in that position. That happened sometime before Christmas, I don't have the exact date. So that position now is filled and it was filled internally.

To Ms. Bisaro, the Wellness Court, we will compile, I've got a raft of material. We'll get something together. I did make a promise to Members to get you an update on what has happened, how it has happened and the success that Wellness Court has had to date. I will compile that information and I'd be happy to share that with Members at the earliest opportunity. It might take us a little while to put it all together, but you will get it. I'd like to say by the end of this month you'll have all that information.

As far as which systems need to be updated, I think it's the FACTS and the COMS. They both need some work. We are currently trying to get some kind of update as to the scope of the work that's going to be required to update those systems. So that's work that's currently ongoing.

We don't have a community justice committee in every community, but I appreciate the Member's comments. Where we have them we need to resource them to the best of our abilities.

On the legal aid office, most cases outside of family law are dealt with immediately as required, but the wait times for family law have inched up over the six-month mark. We were at around seven months. Our hope is – and we've got some new lawyers on staff – that those times will come back down under six months, but seven months is far too long, and I've impressed upon the department the importance of seeing that come back down. So we are working on that, and hopefully with the new lawyers we'll have a handle on that in the very near future. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Continuing on with general comments, I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to acknowledge the department for the two programs that they're putting into place here, the Integrated Case Management Pilot Project and seeing that the department is taking the initiative to get our departments to work together, rather than in silos, to integrate our people back into society and become, hopefully, stand-up citizens so they get jobs and work, and Mr. Yakeleya was making some references to that earlier. It's better late than never. Coming to the game with that now, I think we are going to start seeing some improvements in how our people that were incarcerated get back into the community.

I think it's going to be something that's going to have to be ongoing in terms of review, not on an annual basis but like a monthly basis just to see how people are being integrated. Obviously, something like counselling or probation where you have to follow up on some of these previous offenders to make sure that the program is actually working as well as the specialized Wellness Courts. I know that it's something that committee has worked strongly with the department for. I know that we have had a member of the committee go to the Yukon to see how that's working. Seeing the progress that we've made in that area I think is great.

When we went through the briefing during the business planning session, it was noted that we are still second highest in the country in terms of violent crime. I think that we need to take a stronger stance in that area. I understand there was a men's violence pilot program. I don't need a full update today, but maybe even just a written commitment on how that program is going, what's the uptake, what's the update, and if that could be sent to the standing committee just to see how that's working.

Something that was brought to our standing committee was treatment down south. One of the provisions for one of the treatment centres that we have a contract with is they don't take anybody with violent or sexual convictions unless they've gone through a program, some type of program that deals with violent sexual assault training. In that case, anybody who has been incarcerated for a violent crime or a sexual assault but needs the treatment and is ready to go to treatment and ready to take those steps, there is no avenue for them to get in. If we have a training program here in the Northwest Territories, I think that's something that might fall under a combination between the Department of Health and maybe Justice to get that in place. After residential school and all the work that the TRC has put in, it has opened up a lot of people in terms of speaking about it and ready to take that next step in healing. I thank Mr. Yakeleya for bringing that to our attention in looking at taking the steps to deal with that.

Last session I asked the Minister questions on proceeds of crime legislation. The back and forth dialogue was great in the sense that the Minister did mention that we were taking some of these things that we have taken over and used it to give to victims or give to communities or give to prevention programs like the Not Us! campaign. I think that has to be almost a standard practice, especially where we may see some good headway in the Sahtu in terms of the bootlegging bust and the drug busts, and in Resolution as the Minister had made in the Member's statement earlier today. I was lucky enough to join the Minister at attending an opening for the victim services coordinators last month, or maybe the month before, and the work



that they're doing. It is a pretty stressful job. Most communities only have 0.5 positions. So when they are dealing with victims, as the Minister knows, victims need a lot of support. They have gone through traumatizing events. In some cases, they want to drop the charges because it is too much stress on them when they're looking at proceeding with crime or charges. I think that we have to find a way that we can support our victim services coordinators in the communities. I think we'll see more charges in the court system and people would not beat the charges if somebody didn't show up to a court case because they didn't have the support to go and make a statement. It's just sad because it becomes repeated in domestic violence and I think that's something that we need to stay on. I think the statistics in the business planning showed that charges in spousal assaults were down in the last year, but like I said, in some cases we don't have the support for the victim service coordinators to help victims go right to the end with the charges.

Ms. Bisaro spoke to the community justice committees and I appreciate the answer that the Minister had given. Mr. Yakeleya talked a little bit about the community safety strategies. Maybe if we can get an update on how many communities have those strategies in place and how our government is supporting getting those strategies up and running and supported.

The Minister knows that I'm a big supporter of the coroner's report recommendations. At times I do have meetings with the chief coroner of the NWT and talk about recommendations, talk about support that we can move forward on. I think the last one of the meetings we previously had with the coroner, there was some really good dialogue back and forth.

Out of that dialogue, actually, I made a recommendation in terms of a domestic violence death review committee, which couldn't hold more water or light than it is today just because of what happened and what was presented in the news. As I mentioned, these domestic violence death review committees would have something like a physician, a nurse, an RCMP, a community person working on giving recommendations to government on how we proceed with any of these kinds of issues that are resulting in domestic violence before they even have to, unfortunately, go before a death review committee, which we don't have in place right now but there are many jurisdictions across Canada that have that in place and they give really sound recommendations to government so this is preventable and we stop it before it happens. I think that's something that I will continue to fight for and try to support until the end of this 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

One thing that I'm pretty concerned about, Members have talked about it, and in the life of this

government even our Minister of Health had mentioned that we might not see it. Hopefully we will get a discussion paper to work on it. In fact, that is the Mental Health Act. We are currently using the old Mental Health Act right now. As a result, we are still continuing to have people fall through the cracks. I think we need a very strong educational and awareness component to the Mental Health Act for all those points of introduction into the system for people that have mental health illness, such as emergency rooms, hospitals, the RCMP incarcerations, counselling services, and identify those points of contact for people with mental illness and make sure that the people that are providing the service have a strong idea of what the Mental Health Act is and the powers that they have to use to give the right information or the right services to these individuals.

The two news reports that were out last year that caught attention in the media were the inmates that were out on the loose and one actually that was out on an inmate work release permit and then he was gone for... I don't know; I think they caught him in a couple of days, real quick. But it would have been very unfortunate if he was in for some type of violent nature or some kind of other convictions, that the victim be notified when a person goes out on a work release permit. Obviously, it happened twice last year. I'm pretty sure the Minister and the correctional facilities have taken stronger standards in how they do that program. I think any one that has been incarcerated for any type of crime, that the victim be notified. It should be standard practice that the victim be notified that this person is going out to work. Should something happen if they are working in the city and somebody walks around the corner and the victim sees the perpetrator, it could have a devastating effect on them. I think there has to be a stronger standard, a stronger provision in place when inmates are able to go out and work in the communities.

That's about it. I know it's a long list. Chairing of the Social Programs committee is a good opportunity to understand the department before us and a lot of other concerns other Members have brought forth. So, thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Given the time, we'll let Minister Ramsay respond to your general comments. Minister Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for your indulgence. I'll start with the ICM and the pilot in Inuvik. We're happy to hear the support from the Member and other Members on that rollout. We're excited about getting that pilot up and running in Inuvik. We're interested, again, in trying to do things a bit differently and trying to work not from silos but include others. So we're anxious to see that happen.

On the men who use violence, we have had some referrals to the Tree of Peace. The program is going to start back up in March. So we're hopeful that this will be successful. It's a program that's needed. So, that will be starting up shortly.

On the Community Safety Strategy and Safety Plan, what underpins all of this is the fact that the communities around the Northwest Territories have policing plans in place. On top of that is a Community Safety Plan. We're currently working with a number of communities across the Northwest Territories on developing those community safety plans. I've got a list of communities. I can go through some of them here. Tulita, Inuvik, K'atloodeeche, Colville Lake I mentioned earlier, Tsiigehtchic and Gameti and there will be others that we continue to work on and continue to promote community safety. So that's a work in progress.

On the death review committees, I want to thank the Member for his interest in the work of the coroner, and I know there are other Members who are interested. Mr. Moses did attend the coroner's event here in Yellowknife and I appreciate that. On the death review committees, we really believe there would be some significant cost to government. We'd also have to look at some new legislative changes with death review committees, and with the government only being around for another eight months, that is something that will have to be put off until the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly on looking at death review committees. But I want to thank, again, the Member for his interest in that.

Health, I know the Member was talking about mental health. Health does have a Mental Health Strategy. It's important for the Department of Justice to try to link into that as much as we can and we're certainly interested in that work as it rolls out and how it impacts, potentially, the crime rates here in the Northwest Territories and criminal activity.

On the issue of work release and somebody not coming back on one of those TAs, you don't get a TA – that's a temporary absence – unless you are low risk. You wouldn't see somebody that was high risk getting work release and being able to be on a TA. In this case we did notify the victim, as that person disobeyed his TA. We do have also a Victim Notification Program where the victim can request to be notified and that has been very successful for us as well. We will reach out to the victims should they wish, and we have done that in the past and we'll continue to do that.

With that, I thank the Member for his comments. I know he's very much interested in the work we're doing and we're happy to have his support. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Committee, noting the clock, I will now

rise and report progress. I would like to thank our witnesses here today. Ms. Schofield and Ms. Haener, thank you for joining us. We'll see you tomorrow. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolynny?

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. Do we have a seconder to the motion? Mr. Beaulieu.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**HONOURARY TABLE OFFICER (Mr. Tony Whitford):** Orders of the day for Thursday, February 12, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Replies to Budget Address
13. Petitions
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
  - Motion 33-17(5), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 16, 2015
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills

21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016
- Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act
- Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

