



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 63

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, February 20, 2015

Pages 5695 – 5726

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, February 20, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 10:00 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good morning, colleagues. Before we begin today, I would like to take a moment to extend the condolences of this Legislative Assembly, our Members and our staff, to the family of Mrs. Barb Bromley on her recent passing. Mrs. Bromley was a long-time Yellowknifer, nurse, volunteer, community activist and the mother of the Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bob Bromley.

Mrs. Bromley came to Yellowknife in 1948 with her fiancé, Peter. Shortly after their arrival, they were married and soon Mrs. Bromley, a recent nursing graduate, was working at the Red Cross Hospital. Over the years that followed, Mrs. Bromley made significant contributions to the local medical community including becoming the head nurse of the first public health centre in 1963, leading the drive to form an official registered nurses' union in 1969, a "well baby" clinic to support new mothers and their babies and later dedicated her time and attention to seniors' care.

Mrs. Bromley's contributions to the community were second to none. From teaching Sunday school and founding Yellowknife's local Cub Scouts chapter to her instrumental role in establishing Yellowknife's Meals on Wheels program, Mrs. Bromley helped make the community what it is today. Her contributions were recognized in 2000 when she was inducted into the Order of Canada.

Mrs. Bromley will be remembered fondly by all who knew her, as a mother, friend and outstanding member of the community. Her legacy will be a lasting one and a shining example of what can be achieved by truly remarkable people. Colleagues, please join me in recognizing and celebrating the life and accomplishments of Mrs. Bromley. Thank you, colleagues.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 154-17(5):
SERVICE INNOVATION STRATEGY
HOUSE UPDATE NO. 2**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, last year I spoke on the government's Service Innovation Strategy. Today I would like to provide an update. The Service Innovation Strategy has many parts and is ultimately intended to improve government services to the public, whether online, by phone or in person. It supports our 17th Legislative Assembly goal of effective and efficient government.

Last fall the Northwest Territories hosted the annual meetings of the Public Sector Service Delivery Council and the Public Sector Chief Information Officers. The two councils, composed of members from jurisdictions across the country, work collaboratively to enhance public service to Canadians and bring together service leaders from the federal, provincial and territorial governments to share information and best practices.

These councils are an invaluable resource for the Government of the Northwest Territories as we work toward improving our services to the public and adapting many of our services to an online channel.

During the meetings we had the opportunity to showcase the work being done by the Department of Executive government service officers in our smallest communities. Both councils were most impressed, noting that the GSOs are this government's human equivalent of a one-stop shop for government services in the regions. GSOs connect people, information and services, by providing one-on-one support to residents of the smallest communities who may need additional help getting online and other services offered by the GNWT, federal or municipal governments.

The GNWT is committed to improving service, so measuring satisfaction is key. Along with our participation in these councils, the GNWT is participating in two national surveys which track resident and business satisfaction with government services. The results will be used to identify areas for improvement and focus our resources better.

A key area we have been trying to improve is making it easier to search and find information and services online. One of the ways we are doing that is by providing a consistent user experience to anyone visiting our websites. GNWT departments are now required to use common standards when they develop or update their websites. This will help ensure people are able to find the information and services they need, regardless of which department website they are visiting. The Department of Finance is currently updating its website in accordance with these standards.

Providing easy-to-find information on government services was the first priority of the Service Innovation Strategy. The Service Directory website, which is an online, searchable website of GNWT services, was launched in December 2013. It made it easier for residents to find information on government services. Next on the horizon is a refresh of our flagship GNWT website. We are also looking to create a portal for easier access to all online services and hope to make that available in early 2016. Both of these initiatives are designed to improve our ability to connect and communicate with citizens in ways that they prefer.

Recently, we established a trusted method for departments to put services online and for residents to create secure credentials when signing up for online service, using a username and password of their choice. The Department of Transportation was the first to incorporate these new features, which now allow residents to renew or cancel their vehicle registrations online, book a driver exam, or obtain a driver abstract. Residents are able to reprint receipts online for any of the services they have used. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will be next, as they introduce this new secure method with their online services, including a "myECE" portal with student financial assistance and apprenticeship services. Several other services are being planned to use the same approach and will be rolled out over the next two years.

Online services work best when we have sufficient bandwidth and telecommunications services in all communities. Mr. Speaker, with construction of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link now underway, we look forward to the improvements this important initiative will bring for both government service and community access. This strategic piece of infrastructure is going to play a key role in moving the NWT into the digital economy, making us a global leader in remote satellite sensing and improving services for Northerners.

We are also active participants in Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission proceedings and in federal government broadband initiatives which might impact Northerners, such as recent discussions with Industry Canada regarding the Connecting Canada funding.

All of these initiatives and more to come in order to ensure we can meet you online. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 155-17(5):
CORRECTIONS PERFORMANCE ASSURANCE
AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK**

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice has been a Canadian leader in the corrections field with innovative and respectful wellness programs for Aboriginal inmates, including traditional counsellors, healing rooms, counselling with elders and spiritual ceremonies.

As Members from previous Assemblies will remember, I have always been a strong, and at times vocal, proponent of the need for a transparent, effective and accountable corrections system.

As Minister, I continue to fully support open and accountable processes for the management of the corrections service and rehabilitation of inmates, the security of our staff and the safety of our communities. This mirrors a trend that is also happening throughout the various correctional services in Canada.

Our professional corrections service staff are responsive to those committed to their care. Their work is performed on a 24/7 basis in five NWT facilities and by probation staff in our communities. We take the obligations for public safety and for the security of our staff and the inmates in our care seriously and thoughtfully. We will continue the practice of making strong and measured decisions after careful consideration.

As part of this commitment, the corrections service has created a new Performance Assurance and Accountability Framework. This work began late last year and will be advanced through a phased approach until fully implemented in 2016. This framework will address how we support staff as they carry out their duties. It will address the ethics and values they bring to their work, emphasize accountability to the processes in our system and allow us to apply policies and directives efficiently and effectively using best correctional practises.

The framework will give us an enhanced and structured ability to monitor key performance areas, including areas related to legislation, correctional directives and key operational objectives.

It will also enable us to realize efficiencies by managing staff deployment levels to provide safe and efficient management of our facilities. The framework will assist in monitoring the timely provision of vital staff training for ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for all corrections staff as

they work to maintain and improve their skills and work performance.

While reviewing workloads and operations in our facilities is not new, the Performance Assurance and Accountability Framework will give the department a formalized structure to reach the efficiencies expected by this Assembly, to be effective and to maintain the safety and security of our facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice will continue to review its work and evolve with best practices to provide an environment that helps inmates work towards their rehabilitation and prepares them to reintegrate as healthy contributing members of our communities.

I will keep this Assembly informed of our progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 156-17(5):
BIOMASS PROJECTS UPDATE**

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, in support of our Government's NWT Biomass Energy and Greenhouse Gas Strategies, the promotion and use of biomass technologies remains a priority for this government in its efforts to reduce energy costs and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

With the ability to reduce the fossil fuel usage of a building by 80 to 90 percent, the Department of Public Works and Services' early adoption of, and continued use of, renewable biomass energy technology is something I wish to highlight today.

By March 31st of this year, the Department will have installed 22 biomass systems in seven communities that will be providing heat to 30 separate buildings and facilities throughout the Northwest Territories. These completed biomass installations displaced 1.8 million litres of fossil fuel in 2013-2014 alone and reduced greenhouse gas emissions associated with the operation of our public infrastructure by 4,882 tonnes per year.

New biomass projects scheduled for completion this year include the Deninu School in Fort Resolution, the Airport Terminal Building in Yellowknife and the South Mackenzie Correction Centre in Hay River, while the projects planned for 2015-2016 include the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, along with the schools in Fort Good Hope and Tulita.

Over the years we have adapted our policies and procedures to better support our continued commitment to this technology. Today all major capital projects are considered for biomass installations as part of our planning process. I am pleased to advise Members that biomass heating

systems are being installed for new health centres in the communities of Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Hay River and Norman Wells.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT is considered a leader in the deployment of commercial biomass technology for public infrastructure. While biomass heating is one of many programs and approaches used by the Department of Public Works and Services, it plays an important role in supporting our government's energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our government's goal of reducing the cost of living in our northern communities.

By the end of this fiscal year, our investments in biomass technology will have cumulatively displaced heating oil equivalent to 10 million litres, will have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 26,444 tonnes and will have saved our government approximately \$2.42 million in associated costs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INTERNATIONAL OPEN DATA DAY**

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement, I want to highlight an important event that is taking place tomorrow and that is International Open Data Day.

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, this makes it possible to have online information public in an easy format to be used. [Translation ends]

...encourages innovation and citizens' participation that has lasting positive results for our communities. Around the world, individuals and organizations have used open data to deliver meaningful projects that the public service either hasn't considered before or doesn't have the resources to do themselves.

Tomorrow people will gather in cities around the world to write applications, improve access to public data and encourage the world's local, regional and national governments to adopt open data policies. Events are planned in more than 135 cities and towns from Edmonton to Ottawa here in Canada, to Washington, DC, Paris, Nairobi and around the world.

Open Data isn't just something that is happening elsewhere. I am proud to speak of a local community initiative called OpenNWT that was launched right here in Yellowknife by a Range Lake constituent. First launched in 2014 by Mr. David Wasylciw, who is actually joining us today in the gallery, OpenNWT aims to make government data

easy to access for use for both residents and businesses.

OpenNWT was developed, and continues to be developed on a volunteer basis, and today in celebration of International Open Data Day I understand that a number of new information tools will be launched. Visitors to the OpenNWT website will be able to browse the history of ministerial portfolios, committee memberships and government travel expenses in an easily searchable format.

Governments across the globe, big and small, have recognized the importance of open data and are making the necessary investments to give their citizens and businesses universal, easy to use access to information being collected by public organizations.

[Translation] Mr. Speaker, by taking into account the capacity of the population to keep itself informed of what we're doing, the way we spend taxpayers' money and the way we monitor our success and our failures, open data makes a more transparent, more responsible and democratic government. [Translation ends]

...to support the adoption of the open data approach and to visit OpenNWT website to see a homegrown example of easily accessible information in action. Mahsi. Merci beaucoup.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY NAME CHANGES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. During the colonial era, explorers often gave English or French names to northern communities. Reverting to a traditional name is a way to ensure the community's name reflects the language and culture of local people.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for the NWT Cultural Places Program. It is responsible for archeological sites, historic places and official place names. If a community wants an official name change, it must also go through the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs.

I'd like to provide some examples. Tuktoyaktuk, formerly known as Port Brabant and renamed in 1950, was the first place in Canada to revert to its traditional name. Deline, once known as Fort Franklin, was renamed in 1993. Tsiigehtchic, once known as Arctic Red River, changed its name in 1994. In 2006 the former hamlet of Holman became known as Ulukhaktok.

Mr. Speaker, there are required steps before an official change can take place. The community itself must start the process and work with the

Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Supporting documents also must be provided to prove that the community is behind the change. Program officials then work with Ministers and government officials to formalize the change and notify relevant authorities.

The South Slavey name for the Hay River Reserve is K'atlodeeche; Fort Providence is locally known as Zhahti Koe, and Kakisa is called Ka'a'gee Tu. These are beautiful names. I don't mean to be presumptuous; any name changes would obviously have to come from the people. At the same time, I want to create a forum for discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEALTH TRAVEL INSURANCE WITHIN CANADA

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to bring up a very important issue today. I'd like the constituents of the Northwest Territories to know there's a lack of coverage when you're outside of the Northwest Territories travelling in Canada. I think most people feel when they travel to the U.S., they buy insurance, they cover health insurance. Most people are covered when they're travelling outside of Canada, they take that precaution.

We have had constituents that have road accidents, have to get an ambulance, then maybe a medevac into Edmonton. Some of those scenarios are out there. That cost of that ambulance and that medevac becomes the responsibility of the individual. We need to get it out to the public that they need to buy insurance, travel insurance, medical travel insurance while they are in Canada. Your medical coverage will be covered from the Northwest Territories but that travel portion is not being covered.

We've had a couple of scenarios in Hay River, very costly for individuals. We need to get that out there, it is of grave concern.

I am going to have questions for the Minister of Health, how we are getting that information out there.

The other issue is that when you are travelling in Canada, you need to carry your NWT health care card. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TAXATION POLICY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NWT needs to attract investment and we always

must be a competitive environment because we all know the world is hungry for investment. The NWT is no different. We all know government must raise its revenue through fair and sound taxation policy and we have seen the global environment be very competitive to attract opportunities.

Industry needs help, at least partway through the taxation structure, that listens to their needs. Now, the government doesn't have to do it all and I have to stress up front, if you don't have something to tax, you can't raise revenue, so I hope the taxation Minister is listening to that point.

Governments need to raise taxes to raise revenue. It encourages growth through sound taxation policy and brings investment. It oftentimes controls growth when it needs to, but occasionally, when taxation structures discourage investment, they don't come, or they leave, even worse. What that means is that it takes investment away and kills job growth.

The NWT, like every jurisdiction, is hungry for revenue growth and we need to find ways to encourage taxation by encouraging investment, not by raising taxation prices but to find a way through sound policy that encourages growth and investment.

I have been speaking to a particular telecom communication company that was born in the Northwest Territories and wants to expand and grow, but they find that the taxation structure in the communication industry is just so burdensome that they would rather leave and do business elsewhere. Why? Because the world is a global economy. Now, the Northwest Territories wants to join in to the communication network work but yet we are not supporting our homegrown opportunities. They want to try to invest and expand in smaller communities throughout the North because they have services we need, but our structured self, in essence, is depressive. It does not provide open opportunities for people to do these things.

May I remind you again, and the House, we need investment to tax, because if we can't tax, we can't raise revenues, we can't take care of our folks through social programs and the social needs that we try to strive so hard to take care.

The point being here is we have seen taxation holidays and better rates for mining industries. What about other industries such as communications infrastructure? Again, the world is a different place. We can put all our eggs in the mining basket and we can see how that is playing out. We could spread our growth, create opportunity, create jobs and create revenue at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, the last point I will say is, we have different tax structures – we see them all the time – such as fuel. We could do this on this. We could

create jobs, growth; we can help everybody in the long haul. Thank you.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EKATI INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL
MONITORING AGENCY BOARD**

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to give voice today to some concerns that arose yesterday after I learned of changes coming to the Ekati Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency Board.

As its name suggests, this is an independent organization, registered as a non-profit, a non-decision-making, non-management type of organization which provides advice to both the company, Ekati, and government, NWT and federal.

What caught my attention yesterday, what made me concerned, is a proposed action. Well, it is not proposed anymore, Mr. Speaker. It has been decided that three very experienced, very knowledgeable, expert in their field board members will be replaced at the end of this month.

There are no terms to the agency's board appointments. No term is ending at the end of February, but three board members will be replaced, apparently because they do not live in the NWT and government believes that this very technical board should be populated only by Northerners. There is some validity to that argument, but not enough to remove the extremely valuable expertise, the institutional memory and the corporate knowledge that these board members represent. Not enough to remove them from the board.

Apart from the loss of knowledge and skills, what floored me was that this change is to happen in the middle of an environmental assessment for the Ekati Mine expansion project. The monitoring board is very involved in any Ekati environmental assessment, analyzing documents, reviewing submissions, making presentations to the Assessment Review Board and so on.

Three new board members will be dropped into the middle of this current assessment. They will not have had the benefit of knowing the work done to date. I have no doubt that the new board members will be competent, but they will not be up to speed where the Ekati expansion environmental assessment is concerned, nor will they have the same technical skills as the three exiting board members.

Why would the Minister not wait until this particular assessment is completed, or why not bring new members on while the old ones are still there, to provide for some overlap, a transfer of knowledge

and continuity? Board members have changed in the past, of course, but through retirement not by government edict. Why not replace board members as they retire from the board, instead of summarily dismissing them? I believe that has been past practice and I ask why the sudden change.

As a devolved and presumably evolved territory, we ought to be exercising our new authority responsibly. This action doesn't suggest that to me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONGRATULATIONS TO
EAST THREE EAGLES ELEMENTARY
BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know the importance of how sport can positively affect and influence a child's life. In most cases success in sport at a young age can also lead to success in life.

About the same time last year, I stood in this House to recognize the accomplishments of a group of younger superstars, the East Three Eagles Elementary Basketball Team, claiming their first ever banner for the new school and new gymnasium in Inuvik. Today I'd like to stand in this House and once again recognize this group of young, fine gentlemen on defending their championship last weekend here in Yellowknife with a 35 to 33 nail biter of a final game last weekend and the work that they do and the effort that these children have been doing ever since they were taking a youth basketball program in Inuvik, and I just wanted to congratulate them on their win again.

Also, I'd like to recognize and congratulate the Grade 6 Girls Basketball Team who did make it to the finals this year. They didn't win, but to make it to the finals is a great accomplishment for them as well.

I'd just like to take the opportunity to thank the coaches and the chaperones that came down with these youth and helped them participate in the basketball tournament and also taking in some of the recreational activities here in Yellowknife.

I'd also just like to take the opportunity to thank Basketball NWT that puts this Cager Tournament on every year and does a really great job, and all the volunteers, referees and scorekeepers who put this tournament on and do a great job.

This weekend is the Senior Cager Basketball Tournament here in Yellowknife. We have a lot of teams coming from out of town, and I think it's one of the biggest showings of out-of-town teams that come to this weekend's tournament.

I just want to take the opportunity to wish good luck to the teams that are representing East Three Secondary School this weekend. I know last year they had some very exciting games in the senior boys division as well as the ladies. I want to wish them the best of luck and hope they do well and bring another title home to Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HOUSING TRANSFER FROM
INCOME ASSISTANCE TO
NWT HOUSING CORPORATION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The plan to transfer 1.6 million housing support dollars from the ECE's Income Assistance program to the NWT Housing Corporation is a welcome action indeed. This action will begin to address the debilitating circumstances for long-term income assistance clients who must continually wrestle with Northern Properties' policy barriers and ECE barriers that clients must try to jump over every month to get even delayed let alone timely housing assistance.

These barriers include a record of failed property maintenance, threats or attempts to evict, difficulties associated with shared apartments when one tenant leaves, and other problems ad infinitum. Income assistance clients have been left to struggle with these issues without effective government support, something which is clearly intended but not being delivered by income assistance.

With this transfer of housing dollars and clients to the NWT Housing Corporation, issues associated with 75 housing spaces for income support individuals and families in the market communities of Inuvik, Hay River and Yellowknife will quickly begin to be dealt with. The Housing Corporation will take over maintenance of the spaces and pay rent directly to the landlord, allowing tenants to pursue the priorities that will allow them to seek a better and more self-sufficient life. This will have a real and immediate impact on the quality of life for these clients.

The recent community housing survey showed that 60 percent of all NWT housing affordability issues are in Yellowknife and that the problem has worsened by an incredible 45 percent since 2009. This, while \$1 million in the corporation's Rent Supplement Program languished unspent, clearly failing to address the declining state of housing affordability in Yellowknife.

The transfer of ECE housing dollars to the Housing Corporation is another mechanism that can help, in this case, 55 tenants in Yellowknife. Yet, in

Yellowknife we have 1,055 families with housing affordability issues.

I do not know how many of these are long-term income assistance clients who could similarly benefit from the transfer of income assistance housing dollars to the Housing Corporation, but I assume such an analysis is being done. I suspect we need more of this, much more, and I will be expecting ECE and the Housing Corporation to report on this and respond appropriately.

One last comment. Not only does this move make imminent good sense, it very probably will save the government money, allowing more time and more to be done.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

--Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: I will have questions on the evaluation program that will be put in place to determine savings and effectiveness and how this transfer can be expanded. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY PALLIATIVE CARE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk about the importance of bringing our people back into our communities for their last days on this earth. I recall a time when I had a discussion with people in Colville Lake when they had an elderly person come to Yellowknife. In Colville Lake the people were kind of missing him. So I sat with the leadership and they were asking this older man to come back to the community. They were saying it was like they took a book of knowledge, an encyclopedia out of our community. They said this old man had this special knowledge with the animals and it's like we don't have the information in our community and we would like to bring him back into Colville Lake because he has this knowledge about the animals and we need to learn from him. Without it, it's like we're lost and we're searching for answers.

So I was thinking about this and I'm somewhat glad to hear the Minister yesterday talk about training some of the nurses in health care to bring people and make their last couple of days comfortable in their homes, and train the nurses and make it possible that we can have some of our people come back to our communities to spend their last couple of days and to pass on their knowledge to the people, give their last words to their children. These are very important culturally for our people.

I want to continue to press the Minister on Deline's request to look at a place where the private homes might be a little too much to look after someone

who is dying, so they could move into a special place. I wanted to ask the Minister again on what's the progress of this study here that Deline has been asking for. I do want to say that this is an issue that has been on the Sahtu's radar for several years, so I'll ask the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGHWAY NO. 7 RECONSTRUCTION

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. I have been beating the drum on this side on my favourite two words: Highway 7. I, like my constituents who use it daily, have rattled on the washboards, sunk in its mud holes, avoided the sinkholes. Actually, I didn't avoid it. I actually stood in one with Minister Ramsay a couple of years ago, and now at kilometre 169 there's a dip so big it reminds of a roller coaster.

My constituents value that highway and I believe our government should as well.

Highway No. 7 is part of our National Highway Transportation System. The residents of Fort Liard and Fort Simpson, who use the highway daily, would like this road reconstructed back to the standards of a national highway. I am very dismayed that, despite raising and highlighting the major attention that Highway 7 needs, I never see these two words mentioned in any official government documents such as our yearly budget addresses, speeches by Cabinet in Ottawa, and most recently the Minister of Transportation's opening remarks in Committee of the Whole yesterday. They tell me it's a priority. But like an idea, it's not an idea until it's written down. So make this a real priority. This government simply must be beating the drum too.

Two new initiatives, the Slave Geological highway and the Mackenzie Valley Highway expansion, have significant documentation and significant attention by our government. This is the level of attention and written priority that simply must be given to Highway No. 7 in order to get this piece of infrastructure supported in Ottawa. The benefits of upgrading the road base are many and can generate much needed revenue in the future for our government.

I would say that my efforts and the support of my colleagues are not fruitless. This Assembly has dedicated capital resources for repairs for some reconstruction this year in the capital budget and there is a long-term strategy. However, I believe, as I have stated today, much more has to be done to make this highway a real priority for this government for our Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELDER HOME CARE IN FORT MCPHERSON

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Chief William Koe isn't the only one concerned about elders in Fort McPherson; we are all worried about them. The simple fact is that Fort McPherson needs more home care workers. A single worker cares for more than 30 people. On average, that means that elders receive only four hours of care in an entire month. It's not enough, Mr. Speaker, and as the population ages, the situation is only going to worsen.

The community really needs at least one more full-time worker with up to four home care workers available on a rotational basis.

In December 2011, at the outset of the 17th Assembly, the former Minister, Tom Beaulieu, acknowledged the need for better home care workers in the Mackenzie Delta. He specifically stated that the Beaufort-Delta authority would be looking at hiring more home care workers in Fort McPherson.

Again, on June 6, 2012, Minister Beaulieu stated that smaller communities are asking for a simpler, less expensive response than a long-term care facility. He said that the department would be increasing the number of home care workers.

Two years later, in June 2014, the current Minister of Health and Social Services tabled Our Elders, Our Communities. It's supposed to be a blueprint for the department's Aging in Place Action Plan, basically ensuring that elders can live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. So far, Fort McPherson hasn't seen any action on this action plan.

I'll have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two Hay River Huskies. Jackson Fuller and Jet Maher, please stand up. They're here for a hockey tournament this weekend. I'd also like to recognize Shelley Maher, one of our ladies that put together our Arctic Winter Games bid recently. Obviously, I saved the best for last, the love of my life, Julianne Fuller.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize some individuals from Tu Nedhe today. First, I would like to recognize our interpreters that have been interpreting all week here. There is a new interpreter in there, Dennis Drygeese from Lutselk'e and, of course, also the veteran interpreter, Tommy Unka from Fort Resolution. Also, we have two Pages from Lutselk'e, Dacho Poole and Johnny Yassie, and their chaperone, Jordan Michel. I am not sure if he is here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce, to you and through you, in reference to my Member's statement earlier today, Mr. OpenNWT himself, from Range Lake, Mr. David Wasylciw. Thanks, Dave, for joining us today. Of course, I would like to welcome one of my pharmacist colleagues from Hay River, Ms. Julianne Fuller. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot top my colleague's introduction of his visitors in the gallery, but all four of the Hay River residents visiting here today are residents of Hay River South, so I would also like to welcome them. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize one of the Pages who has been working with us for the last couple of weeks, Raya Laframboise. She's not in the House today, but she has been doing great work along with all the other Pages who have been working with us for this week and last week. I can't see him, but I can't not say hello to Mr. David Wasylciw. Welcome to the house, David. Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a Page from Yellowknife South, Kyra Hanninen, and thank all the Pages that have assisted here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize the good work of all the Pages in the House. This is a long session; I know a lot of the Pages have put in long hours here, so thank you. I want to specifically recognize Ashley Stride. Ashley is a constituent of Kam Lake and a student at Sir John Franklin School. Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. I would like to welcome everybody in the public gallery here

today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 665-17(5): FUEL COST SAVINGS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On February 6, 2015, the Minister of Public Works and Services announced an immediate fuel savings of eight to nine cents per litre in 16 communities that it serves. This is indeed great news for these NWT residents and I applaud the government for finally capturing the recent lower fuel prices by passing on such savings and helping to lower the cost of living for our Northerners. However, upon further analysis, I do have questions for the Minister.

Can the Minister indicate by what methodology did Public Works and Services come up with the eight to nine cents per litre saving model for these 16 communities? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister of Public Works, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We determine price by the actual price of the products and the transportation of those products and, of course, the distribution once they are in the community. We look at those and, recognizing that the fuel was not actually in the community yet, we are looking at the rack price of fuel down south and when we are going to buy, anticipating the transportation costs in there, and we were very comfortable with the reduction. We could anticipate more reductions, as well, later on in this winter road season. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: From the Minister's own words, it sounds like some of this fuel is not yet in the community and it appears that the PWS fuel services' buying strategy is using some form of hedging that they are applying and passing to the customers. This strategy would suggest that these fuel savings would extend well into next season's bulk purchases as well.

Can the Minister elaborate? Are these fuel price savings being hedged over a two-year window? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: These prices are for this year. We think that the price may stabilize or go back up a bit, but we haven't hedged the cost of fuel moving forward. We have the Stabilization Fund that's designed to stabilize the fuel costs in the communities. When the fuel prices go down, we increase the Stabilization Fund. When the fuel prices go back up, we decrease the Stabilization

Fund, keeping it stable but not two years into the future. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Even if we're using the term "stabilization," it's still a form of a hedging because we're balancing out those prices. Should this hedging concept produce even greater savings per litre with a new summer bulk purchase program and should fuel prices remain the same or stabilize, does the Minister see further reduction of the price per litre being passed on to the residents in these communities? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we do.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's reply there. Some jurisdictions in North America are stockpiling fuel at today's market price. Some are renting extra storage and realizing that these fuel savings trump storage costs.

If this is indeed the case, can the Minister indicate if his department is considering doing the same to keep stretching these savings to the residents? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The shelf life of fuel is about three years, and we also need the capacity in order to store fuel. The Member is correct; there are possibilities of renting storage for fuel, but I think the cost of fuel would have to be considerably lower than what we're anticipating in the future in order to make it feasible. So right now we're looking at filling up our own capacities, to buy as much fuel as possible at this point with the capacity that we currently have without renting from outside of government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 666-17(5): COMMUNITY NAME CHANGES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The language initiative across the NWT is taking on different forms. One of the initiatives that complicated this is trying to instill a level of cultural identity. Some communities have gone to advance those initiatives by changing the name of their community. But what we have is two government departments, so my question is to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Does the Minister's department work seamlessly with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to facilitate a community's application for an official name change? Mahsi.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a coordinated approach between Municipal and Community Affairs and Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Can the Minister clarify whether a simple majority on the plebiscite or option poll is enough to prove that a community wants a name change? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I can't clarify that right now, but I would assume it's 50 percent, 51 percent to approve a name change. But I will confirm that and relay that on to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Does the government have an official position on community name changes and does it actively support communities that want to take this step, or is the government neutral on this matter? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We work with the communities and if there's a desire from the communities to change their name to their more traditional language, which a lot of them are doing, this government would fully support the position of the community, and if that's their wish then we will respect that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister explain, for the sake of the community understanding this process, what would the process entail and perhaps how long might that process take? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. As far as how long the process goes, I'm really not quite sure. We will work with the communities and try to expedite their desire to change their name if they wish to do that. So I will get the correct information and I will share it with the Member. Thank you.

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

**QUESTION 667-17(5):
TAXATION POLICY**

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be to the Finance Minister regarding taxation policy. A communication company has approached the Northwest Territories government and wanted to talk about creating a better or more appropriate taxation environment for investment and communication equipment and they're trying to expand throughout the Northwest Territories, but at this time the monopoly seems to have all the corners covered and it's very discouraging for a new business or a small business to invest in the NWT if the taxation climate isn't favourable or reasonable or certainly one that is welcoming.

Can the Minister of Finance give us an update as to what type of taxation policy and flexibility do we have to create tax holidays that encourage investment, growth and long-term revenues for the Government of the Northwest Territories, and at the same time encourages job growth that we so dearly, direly need? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing as a government is investing over \$80 million in a Fibre Optic Link that's going to go all the way up and down the valley. It's going to hook in all the small communities. It's going to create tremendous business opportunity for the final mile piece in the communities in terms of all the services that need to be provided for, the infrastructure to support those services.

So we see this approach, and the Member touched on it in his statement, about it's not so much the taxing, it's the creating the conditions for economic development and that's what we see our focus on. If the Member would rather me try to give a smorgasbord of what may be possible for what the Member calls tax holidays, I'm more interested or we're more interested in tax fairness. If he has a specific suggestion, I'm happy to discuss that. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Governments have been very generous on tax holidays and I see his point about, well, let's just put one particular issue on the table, but often we hear, well, we shouldn't single out an industry. So now I'm hearing we should single out an industry. So I'll say, would the Minister be able to create a tax environment that invests in communication equipment? He so rightly highlighted the \$80 million investment in the Fibre Optic Link. Well, here we are drawing the attention of the world. Why don't we expand a little further so that attention of the world gets investment in our communities through a communications taxation scheme that encourages the investment and will demonstrate long-term job growth and stabilized revenue that meets our needs?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. Our corporate income tax is, I believe, 11.5 percent, which puts us somewhere in the middle in terms of corporate taxes across Canada, middle to the lowest, I think on the low side. Our small business tax is, I believe, very modest, as well, 4 percent I believe. So when the Member talks about a tax holiday for telecommunications, for certain telecommunications, he'd have to be clearer. It's maybe not that easy to say that there's going to be a lot of implications and why we would focus on one particular industry when I'm sure that we would be able to hear a very strong case from just about

every sector about why they should all be given tax holidays. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I'm not talking about every industry. I'm talking about ones that we're spending a fair bit of money in. We're spending \$80 million on the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link, which is a great thing. Well, let's support that with a tax structure that supports new investment. New investment means new taxation opportunities. If people don't invest money, we don't have taxation opportunities, no growth. That's what I'm talking about.

So what is wrong with developing a climate that encourages new investment, which would be new taxation opportunities? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I would argue quite strenuously that the \$82 million investment in the Fibre Optic Link is just the kind of investment that the Member is talking about. We're putting in critical economic infrastructure that helps create the conditions for development.

When you are in business, there are all sorts of write-offs, depreciation, capital investments, construction investments that can be written off. So, once again, the Member is making a fairly sweeping statement. He's decided that the focus should be a certain aspect of the telecommunications industry and it's not clear enough to me how he would make that justification and not other sectors or why not the whole area. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister can say what he wants, but the fact is this Member is trying to do something and the Minister is trying to defend the status quo. The point is we have to encourage investments, outside investment, in order to create growth and jobs. That's all I hear is lip service from this government. Here's a real opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Minister go back to the table and say how can we target markets to encourage investment in the Northwest Territories? As far as the Mackenzie Fibre Optic Link, we are paying for it and we don't tax ourselves. We want outside investment coming to the NWT. I've heard this for years about how we want to get people and money here, so this is how we do it.

Will the Minister take it back to the table and ask his officials, who all like to say no, to find a way to do it other than finding a way not to do it? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The erosion of our tax revenues is an issue of concern, as I pointed out in our budget address. Our corporate taxes are down many tens of millions of dollars. So, once again, the Member is standing up saying we

should make an investment. I'm saying an \$82 million investment in digital infrastructure, fibre optic infrastructure, gives tremendous benefit and ability for people to do business, for telecommunication people to do business with cutting edge, top-of-the-line facilities is the kind of investment that government should be doing. If we just said we were going to give an \$80 million tax holiday and have nothing to show for it, people would say, what are you doing? Now, we can say we are going to spend \$80 million of taxpayers' money. We're going to put in a fibre optic link that is going to create a huge economic opportunity in Inuvik, remote sensing site, global capacity and global significance along with every community down the valley is going to have fibre optic connections and all the business opportunities that flow from that, to me, is the kind of investment government should be making. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 668-17(5):
EKATI INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL
MONITORING AGENCY BOARD

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. I would like to follow up on my statement and ask some questions about the action that's going to be taken on replacing board members on the Ekati Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency Board.

In my experience, that board has done extremely good work. In my experience, as well, it is past practice to replace board members when they retire. It's also my experience that the board has been relatively critical in doing their good work and sometimes forces the owner/operator, Ekati, to do some things which they may not want to do but which are better in the long run.

My first question to the Minister is: Who initiated this change in board members? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular board has bylaws where folks are appointed, but there is no end date to their terms. That's one issue. At least one of the members has been on the board since 1997. That's another issue. In the Northwest Territories in my time in government, my time in government period, the whole goal has been to put Northerners in positions and on the boards where they are making decisions about activities that affect people of the Northwest Territories, the whole thrust of devolution. So when the opportunity came that the board bylaws were going to be redone, that there's

going to be terms set in and that everybody would have end terms, their terms would lapse and the new bylaws would kick in, it seemed to be a very critical time and a natural time to put Northerners into those positions. We do have capable Northerners, skilled Northerners, experienced Northerners who can do that. That's one of the functions of government, and when that opportunity came due, I as Minister said this was the time to do that. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that information. I can't argue against putting Northerners on boards. I agree with that, but I do have a large problem with the way this process was done. It suggests that these particular board members weren't doing good work and I know that that's not true.

So, in order to provide for continuity on the board, in order to find a good way to do it to ensure a smooth transition from one set of board members to another, because this is happening in the middle of an environmental assessment, I would like to ask the Minister if he consulted the board before this decision was made on what was the best way to do it. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I, as well, would like to acknowledge that the work that was done by the current board members is not the question. Their ability is not being questioned. The fact that they have the skill is not being questioned. What we have is an opportunity with the changing of the bylaws and putting in terms, that there's a natural transition point that we should take advantage of because there's a fundamental underlying priority that we have Northerners who can do those jobs and can fill those positions and they should be there. Current board members live in other jurisdictions, other provinces south of 60 and the time has come to make the switch. We've done it in a time where the board is changing its bylaws, there then will be an opportunity for outgoing board members to sit in a meeting with the incoming board members, along with the other board, to have that final meeting, to have that transitional arrangement. Then this board will be populated with Northerners, which is a fundamental priority of the government.

MS. BISARO: To say that these people, yes, they are living in the South; however, they lived here for a very long time. I think two out of the three I know for sure were here for 10 or 15 years. To make this change in the middle of an environmental assessment is what really concerns me. I don't think that the Minister has accepted that.

In replacing these board members, what skillsets did he consider are needed for the board to do its job? What were they looking for in replacing these board members? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There are three members out of the board, so there is critical mass there already. If, God forbid, these three hardworking individuals from the South were hit by lightning and were unable to do their jobs, we would soldier on. We would pick up the pieces and we would put people there to do the job. So this is a circumstance where there's a natural break where we can put Northerners in place and we are looking for people, Northerners, educated, knowledge of the regulatory system, knowledge of the context of the work that's being done, knowledge of the players, knowledge of the history of the North that live here and that have a clear, vested interest in making the right decisions, working with the rest of the board members. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister may consider that it's a natural break, but I think there are people who don't consider replacing people in the middle of an environmental assessment is a natural break.

Considering the skills that are leaving the board and considering that we are in the middle of an environmental assessment, I would like to ask the Minister why he did not talk to the board prior to making this change. Why not get some ideas for potential replacements? Why not get some ideas about the best timing to do this change? Why not get some ideas about the best way to do it to transition and to maintain continuity? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The decision to make the change was a political decision. The decision on how it was going to be done was worked through so that it would come at a time that makes logical sense, which the board was involved in and which the board supports. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 669-17(5):
OIL AND GAS STRATEGY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment made a statement in the House the other day about the Oil and Gas Strategy, and in his statement he mentions that he's got a job on the expertise and knowledge of regional territorial stakeholders, Aboriginal governments and industry to develop a strategy that truly reflects northern values and priorities.

Can I ask the Minister just to get an update on where he is with that? Has he held these regional meetings, specifically up in the Beaufort-Delta, to look at developing this strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're still in the process of doing consultation. We've had probably about 20 meetings with individuals, Aboriginal governments and people involved in industry. As we get towards developing our Oil and Gas Strategy – and we will be at the earliest opportunity – I mentioned in my statement the other day that we will be getting in front of SCEDI and the Regular Members and getting their input on the developments of an Oil and Gas Strategy for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: In terms of just starting the process of consultation, I'd like to ask the Minister, has he had any consultation with Aurora College and learning centres? Specifically in Inuvik, they have that mobile trades unit that can go into the communities and train our individuals on these particular appropriate trades and skills for the oil and gas sector when that economy picks back up.

Has he had those consultations with Aurora College to start developing those kinds of trades programs so that we'll have people trained and educated and ready to take the jobs when the economy picks back up?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Having an able-bodied workforce and people ready to take advantage of the jobs that are going to be coming in the oil and gas sector is very important. I know we had a focus group session in Inuvik recently. I'd have to go back to the department. I'm not sure if Aurora College or folks from ECE were at that meeting. I'll get that information for the Member. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: I appreciate the efforts that are going into this Oil and Gas Strategy and looking at trying to get our resources out to market. However, we do have two communities in the Northwest Territories that are actually surrounded by oil and gas and having issues with their gas situation, and that's Norman Wells and Inuvik.

I wonder if, in this strategy, whether or not the Minister would look at... We're building all this infrastructure and roads with the Canada Building Fund, once that gets approved, to get our resources out to market. I'm thinking about a different type of infrastructure in terms of... Can we get some infrastructure built to one of the wells near Inuvik so that we can start supplying natural gas back to the community, which will lower the costs for residents, for the businesses and also lower costs for this government as we're paying all that money to trucking up all the LNG and paying for all those bills that we have our government buildings on diesel? Is that going to be part of the strategy, building this other type of infrastructure?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Utilizing the resource that we have here in the Northwest Territories for our

own residents and our own communities certainly is something that we should be striving toward, and of course with Inuvik being surrounded, as the Member mentioned, with gas, and the construction of the Inuvik-Tuk highway, there could perfectly be opportunities here as we move forward to get more gas into Inuvik, into Tuktoyaktuk and other communities in the Mackenzie Delta as well. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that that's a possibility. I want to make sure that there's an assurance to that.

When this strategy is being developed and with the Inuvik-Tuk highway being developed, as well, can the Minister ensure residents of the Beaufort-Delta that infrastructure will be on the agenda to get the oil and gas back to the communities of Inuvik and possibly Tuktoyaktuk when we're developing the strategy? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Of course, infrastructure is a key to any success we are going to have in the oil and gas sector as we continue to develop our resources here in the territory. I would encourage residents in the Mackenzie Delta and in the Beaufort region to go online because we are going to have a survey online. I would encourage Members, when we do have consultation with Members, to continue to highlight that fact.

Undoubtedly, infrastructure will be a key part of the Oil and Gas Strategy on how we get our resources developed. So, again, I would encourage the Member and residents to please take part in the consultation process as it plays itself out. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 670-17(5):
HOUSING TRANSFER FROM
INCOME ASSISTANCE TO
NWT HOUSING CORPORATION

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my Member's statement with questions for the Minister of the Housing Corporation. I certainly did express support for the transfer from ECE to the Housing Corporation for some of our income assistance clients. Hopefully, we will soon see a reduction in the barriers to affordable shelter for some of our most vulnerable people.

When will we see the protocols in place for the new Housing Corporation takeover of the ECE clients and when will people be able to access these new supports? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Housing, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are just in the process of working with ECE to identify possible income support clients that we could transfer over to this program. We find that this program is going to be a good step going forward because, in the past, income support clients have had difficulty accessing private rentals. We feel with the NWT Housing Corporation having the lease, or sub-lease, then we would be able to make it a little easier for these clients to access housing. As soon as we come up with a progress report, or as we are moving along, we will be sure to update committee on the work that we are doing as we go forward. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I didn't hear an answer when this will be in place. I hope it will be in place April 1st.

Seventy-five new public housing spaces NWT-wide, 50 new places in Yellowknife is a good start, but it's not nearly enough to make a dent in the pent-up demand. Affordable housing is one of the most pressing social issues that this government faces in market communities.

What are this government's plans to expand this program to further address the crushing need for affordable housing for income support clients? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Working with income support clients and trying to get people into units is obviously our top priority. In response to the Member's question before, and I apologize for not giving a timeline, it's actually effective April 1st that we will be leasing or subleasing private rental units. There is an expression for interest out there right now. We're trying to deal with the affordability issue, especially in some of the market communities, through the Transitional Rent Supplement Program and other programs that we are trying to introduce. We are seeing this as a first step in trying to help address that. It is obviously a challenge and we will have to continue to deal with it as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I hope he is going to work with committee on this. One thousand fifty-five Yellowknife families have housing affordability issues, up 45 percent. Yet \$900,000 in rent supplement budgeted to help people exactly like this remained unspent last year.

So, what is the Minister doing to ensure that the money budgeted for housing assistance this year, through the Rent Supplement Program, for example, makes it to the people who need it in the market communities like Yellowknife? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I think that's a point that needs to be clarified. I did see it in the media that \$900,000 was unused, which was in my response to Member Bisaro the other day.

We had \$1 million originally budgeted for this program. We have reduced that to about \$900,000. We were doing some math the other day and it comes to about \$75,000 a month that we are trying to assist transitional rent supplement clients and that works out to \$900,000 per year. Our uptake right now is not where we want it to be and we need to make people more aware that the program is out there. We have had some ads in the paper. We have helped 158 people who have gone through the program. Some have moved out for different reasons. We need to get the information out there and we will continue to do what we can, as the Housing Corporation, to ensure that residents are aware of these programs and how it might benefit them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. With the crushing need out there, the Minister needs to do something beyond just the normal communications efforts, I would say, to get this happening.

As I mentioned, 60 percent of the housing affordability issues are in Yellowknife for the whole territory and the problem is worsening considerably.

What other action does the Minister intend to take to lessen the burden of finding affordable housing in Yellowknife and the NWT? What evaluations are planned to ensure another five years of failure are prevented? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I shudder to think where this territory would be without the investment from the NWT Housing Corporation. To say five years of failure I think, Mr. Speaker, is an unfair statement. If you look at the money the corporation has spent housing people, they have helped many people. We know there is an affordability issue in some of the market communities and that is a result of the market, and we take steps to deal with that. We continue to invest money, such as the territorial Rent Supplement Program or Public Housing Program. We have other initiatives that we are working on right now to try and help address some of the housing crunch in some of the larger communities. We will continue to plug along.

We have made a huge investment in housing in the Northwest Territories along with the Legislative Assembly and we will continue to go forward and do what we can to ensure all residents of the Northwest Territories are adequately housed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 671-17(5):
DELINE PALLIATIVE CARE STUDY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, are there any updates to the requests for the Deline palliative care bed study that they have been asking for, for some time.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, there are some updates. In October 2014 we made a commitment to evaluate the palliative care needs in Deline. I do apologize to the Member; the Member asked the question yesterday and my response wasn't as clear as I had hoped it would be and I added some additional confusion. I do apologize to the Member for the frustration there. But, yes, we are moving forward with palliative care needs in Deline. We do intend to have staff come in in 2015-2016 to visit the community to assess the existing infrastructure and evaluate the applicability. The assessment is necessary to help us better understand what type of resources and potential infrastructure and improvements may be required to have additional palliative support in the community. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 672-17(5):
HIGHWAY NO. 7 RECONSTRUCTION

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement on the need to prioritize Highway No. 7 as a priority of this government. Like I said in my Member's statement, despite all my best efforts over the years, my two words "Highway 7" never gets in any official documents like budget addresses or speeches by Cabinet. Despite that, I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation about... He indicates that there is investment in Highway No. 7 this year in the capital plan and there is a bit of a strategy, so I would like to ask the Minister, what is the strategy going forward for Highway No. 7? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has quietly spent \$12 million on Highway No. 7 to date.

--Laughter

For this coming year, we have \$3 million in the capital plan and we're going to concentrate on that serious area that the Member referred to, kilometres 169 to 170. We're fixing that area. A lot of that money is going to go to strengthening the

road from Liard to approximately where the Nahanni Butte turnoff is, and also there's some finishing work still to be completed between Liard and the BC border. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much. The Minister mentioned completing the work that's between the B.C. border and Fort Liard and there were plans for chipsealing. So I would like to ask the Minister, will that work be completed this summer, 2015? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, that work will be completed this summer.

MR. MENICOCHE: The continued investment in Highway No. 7, because we also know that we're also talking about a proposed Canadian Zinc mine expansion plan. As well, not to mention the benefits of tourism that travels up Highway No. 7. They're often delayed or else they're actually told at the B.C. border, the B.C. Tourism, about the condition of Highway No. 7. So I would like to ask about mitigating the impact of the traffic increase on Highway No. 7.

What other work is being done to let the public know and the tourists know about Highway No. 7 when it comes open for this season's traffic? Thank you

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Of course, we're continuing the maintenance work on the highway and making Highway No. 7 as passable as possible. We're always striving to improve that road. So, with this money we're also going to improve any areas where there have been problems. The people know exactly which areas are problems, and for the first package of work that we intend to do we intend to spend an additional \$12 million over the next four years. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now, I was pleased to hear about the investment in our transportation infrastructure and I'd like to invite the Minister to come see that work this spring, and also residents of Wrigley would like to see him, as well, this spring. So I'd like to invite the Minister one more time. He was just there in December, I know, but he's going to have to come with me and ride the roads. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: More of a comment. Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would commit to driving Highway No. 7 to Liard and also to Wrigley with the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 673-17(5):
HOME CARE IN FORT MCPHERSON

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. We've heard plenty in this House about the impending demographic shift, the rapidly increasing proportion of elders. Even before the 17th Assembly, the department was talking about moving away from long-term care facilities and toward more cost-effective home care programs.

In the Mackenzie Delta there are more than 300 elders over the age of 60 and yet there's a chronic shortage of home care workers.

What is the Minister doing to improve health care in Fort McPherson and other communities in the Mackenzie Delta? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member mentioned in his statement, Our Elders, Our Community has been released as a framework for taking action to support seniors and elders throughout the Northwest Territories. Under that document we are taking a number of actions, including developing a number of action plans. One of the action plans is about respite home care for seniors throughout the Northwest Territories, which will benefit all residents in the Northwest Territories including those in Fort McPherson and Aklavik.

The Member has mentioned a couple of times that he has concerns about the workload of the home care workers and the home support workers that actually happen to be in Fort McPherson. I've asked the department to work with the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority to do a quick assessment on the workload in that community to see if those home support workers are actually at a higher workload than other areas, at which point I will share that information with the Member and we could have some discussions about that if we need to take some immediate action. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: This week we've been discussing the Health and Social Services budget and hearing quite a bit about system transformation. Also, in some of my past exchanges with the Minister, he has stated that system transformation will include a review and renewal of the Service Delivery Model. So, taking this a step further, I'm wondering if the Service Delivery Model specifically addresses home care workers. In other words, does the Service Delivery Model include a population base formula for determining the number of home care workers assigned to each community, and if not, where are the decisions about home care workers actually made? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. The Member is correct. I mean, as we move forward with system transformation, we are doing that work and that work does take into consideration population, but it also takes into consideration the demands, as well, because not every situation has the same demands. A home support worker in a community could have a multiple number of clients and some of them could be simple with maybe a visit a week. Others are going to take a significant amount of work. The demand will change in communities as the needs of our patients change over time. So, we need to be able to be flexible with that, as well, but we will continue to work with Members and keep them posted as we move forward on transformation as well as keeping them up to date on the work we're doing around the design as well. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: I know the department tracks a number of performance measures. I'm wondering: does it track patient satisfaction and program effectiveness, specifically for home care. If so, I'd like to ask the Minister to give the numbers for the Mackenzie Delta communities. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We actually do conduct a number of performance or satisfaction surveys throughout the Northwest Territories on different functions. I can't say for sure whether we have a specific one in the Beaufort-Delta for home care, but I will check and I will confirm that with the Member at a later date. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Blake. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 674-17(5):
HEALTH INSURANCE OUTSIDE THE NWT

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services in follow-up to my Member's statement about medical travel while outside of the territory in Canada.

Can I get the Minister to describe what coverage people have when they're travelling outside of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Travel outside of the Northwest Territories within Canada and outside of Canada is certainly different. The NWT Health Care Plan does cover residents for medically necessary hospital and medical expenses when residents are travelling outside the Northwest Territories and we have reciprocal billing agreements with the different provinces, which actually articulate or dictate what those costs that we're covering are. We do have an agreement with most of the provinces and

territories to direct bill the Department of Health and Social Services for doctor visits and hospital care for medically required services.

Sometimes there are situations where individuals are asked to pay for medically necessary services in provinces upfront. They can submit invoices to us and we'll reimburse them for those medically necessary services.

What we don't cover and what is not covered by any jurisdiction are costs such as for medevacs or air ambulances that occur. So if you're travelling and you're injured on a highway, as the Member articulated earlier, the cost of the ambulance wouldn't be covered by the GNWT. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you. I guess we have had a couple of situations like this. What has the Minister and the department been doing to get people to know this situation? I think most people think if you're travelling within Canada, your medical costs are covered for you. Most people buy insurance when they're travelling outside of the country, obviously, but what is the Department of Health doing to promote the fact that you need to buy travel insurance?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We do a number of things to make people aware and encourage them to get medical travel or travellers insurance when they travel within country. For the record we'll say it again, get travellers insurance when you're travelling outside of the Northwest Territories and Canada. I'd strongly encourage Members to include it on their websites, in their newsletters or any other way that they can.

In the meantime, the department is doing a number of things. We place ads in newspapers, social media, we have a whole bunch of brochures that are available in health centres as well as in travel agencies. I personally have tweeted a number of times to encourage people to get travellers insurance when they're travelling within the country.

Currently, actually later this month and into next month, we're planning to do another round of newspaper ads, and we've gone to most of the newspapers in the Northwest Territories – News/North, Northern Journal, L'Aquilou – we're also hoping to be in YK Edge, and we do have brochures, it's on our website. I know the deputy minister tweets on a regular basis. I've seen tweets on this issue from the chief public health officer, and I'd like to see tweets from all of you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I'm just wondering why the disconnection. Obviously, we cover the medical expenses during that time if you're out of the territory, but why wouldn't we cover the medical costs in travel costs? We cover the medical costs in the hospital. If you went to the hospital, all your medical costs would be covered, and we cover that

medical travel in the Northwest Territories. Why do we not extend that out to the other provinces? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: None of the other provinces or jurisdictions actually provide ambulance services for individuals who are outside of their jurisdictions. Once again, we only cover medically necessary treatment while people are out of the territory. If they go down for procedures that aren't covered here, we wouldn't be covering those either.

This is something that's consistent across the country. We don't actually provide ground ambulance services here in the Northwest Territories for residents, either, and most of the costs that come from ground ambulance are billed directly to our residents. Most people, a lot of people happen to have insurance or something to cover it. It's not something that's covered by any jurisdiction.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I was an MLA, I didn't even know about this situation. I think we need to get that out there more.

Is there a way that the GNWT would look at doing a group insurance? Obviously, I know I've purchased insurance myself and it's very inexpensive for one year. Is there a way that the GNWT could do a mass insurance for all the people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Not at this point. We do know that there are a significant number of organizations out there that can provide that insurance to residents of the Northwest Territories. I know, when I travel, I go to the Royal Bank and I get the travellers insurance just in case something happens to me when I'm in the South, and I think it costs me \$75 or less a month. So I would encourage people to go to one of the many, many providers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage Members to include this information on their websites, in their newsletters, in any tweeting they happen to be doing and when they're talking to constituents. Let's make sure that we're continually reminding people that it's important to have travel insurance when you travel not only outside of Canada but within Canada outside of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 675-17(5):
POPULATION GROWTH STRATEGY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to ask the government – I'm not too sure if

it's the Minister of Finance – the question is on our strategy working to increase the population and bring 2,000 people in by 2019. That's a couple years away. Is it working?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We believe that the strategy will work. The elements are there. We spent some time getting organized. The private sector, Dominion Diamonds, for example, has taken a very strong position to discourage the fly-out part of the operation, to encourage people to stay here. The Ministers of ECE as well as ITI have laid out through the Nominee Program the increases and the seats are available. Now that we're going to aggressively pursue maximizing every seat that is there, we can see as much as, if it all works out, 800 people a year with these 250 seats that we can fill, hopefully with folks with families. We're sorting ourselves out to do the work with our students, to make sure we're out there recruiting as well. So, we believe we have lots to offer, it's just a case of us getting organized and taking advantage of the tools that we have at our disposal. So, yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: With the elements being there and the work that the Ministers are doing, and that's quite an ambitious project to work on, I want to ask the Minister, what's the backup plan not meeting the goal here of 800 persons per year and raising the population in the Northwest Territories?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Two thousand people in five years is part of a broader strategy where there's an enormous focus by this Assembly now and in the past, but definitely going forward on the cost of living. That is where we're going to want to make the investments in critical economic infrastructure, infrastructure like the Fibre Optic Link, infrastructure like the energy infrastructure where we want to go into the thermal communities and come up with ways to cut the cost by getting folks off diesel with biomass and solar and batteries, other alternative energies, LNG where it's appropriate, as well as the other infrastructure that's going to help promote economic conditions in a couple of big roads. There's the Contwoyto-Tibbett Lake ice road and converting that to an all-weather road. It's the next link from Wrigley to Norman Wells and, of course, we also have, in the Tlicho region, the road from NICO Mines up through Whati that we're putting in an all-weather road. All those things there will combine to create stronger conditions for economic growth and people coming here because they can make money and there's an affordable cost of living. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 676-17(5):
ENCOURAGING PRIVATE SECTOR
INVESTMENT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It made my day. We'll see how Cabinet feels about it, but you made by day.

I appreciate the Minister of Finance's ability to distract the House where we got talking about the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link. That wasn't the issue; it was about creating a climate for investment such as infrastructure. So my question really is to be focused in on let's not talk about oil and gas, let's not talk about the mining sector or the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link.

The Minister is quite right; we have declining revenue through corporate taxation, so what is the Minister doing to attract investment from industry to new investment into infrastructure so we can tax it and create opportunities and jobs? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also feel like I'd be chewing everybody's cabbage twice here if I repeated my long, fulsome answer that I just gave the Member for Sahtu that captures all the pieces that we're putting in place to promote economic development, create conditions for growth, grow our population. All those things combine to do the things that the Member has asked about and I won't repeat them in the same detail that I just did. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: I appreciate that because I'd hate to see the Minister wrong twice, so I'm really glad we got through that.

The Quebec government has worked very hard to create a taxation scheme that develops and accelerates private sector investment in their economy through strategic sectors they've targeted, such as industry, manufacturing and data processing hosting. They realize focused tax opportunities create investment.

What is this government doing about creating investment in targeted sectors for growth? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We've had this discussion now going back and forth. I'll keep coming back to the investments we're making in economic infrastructure, the conditions that we want to create for that economic development, to do the same thing the Member wants. If the Member has a specific tax he wants to talk about... Is he talking about a tax rate, not 11.5 but some other number lower, tax holidays as he calls it for some specific sector? Then stand up and give us a number. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Why am I the only one that's trying to do work here to create investment? It's not my job to come up with the number. He has all the machinery. He has a multi-million dollar department that can come up with the right balance to create investment. I'm saying, I've given the communications sector as an example to stimulate new investment, because if it's not here you can't tax it. So, how do we encourage investment? We have a good taxation structure. Sometimes it means tax holidays; sometimes it means those types of concepts.

Will the Minister invest a little time in his job and stop finding excuses not to do it and find a way to get to the bottom line, which is find a way to get investment in the Northwest Territories from top to bottom in every community?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: From my learned young colleague from Yellowknife Centre, I appreciate his passion sometimes verges on bavardage, but in this case I will respond.

We share the same interests and I put as much time in my job, I would venture to say at least as much time as the Member does.

So, we have laid out the discussion here fully. It's now getting to where we are being repetitive. We are doing the things we think are necessary to promote economic growth, grow the population. The Member wants some kind of tax holiday. I would like him just to specify what exactly that means when we know our corporate tax rate is 11.5 and the business rate of small business is 4 percent. What specifically is he suggesting that would give us advice to be able to possibly look at? Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I say to my very senior Member across the way, who probably didn't hear me for various reasons, I don't know why, I'm saying let's create a tax holiday for infrastructure investment that's new. I gave a targeted sector such as the communications sector a way to help stimulate new growth. I'm not talking about lowering the business tax on any other sector, for any other reason on anything. I'm talking about creating any investment climate, such as a tax holiday.

Quebec can do it. They have the courage to attract new investment. Let's target sectors that work. We can't do it all on our budget. Let's get the private sector in on part on the solution. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Once again, we agree. We have the private sector that's churning out about half of our \$3.6 billion GDP. Half of that comes from the diamond mines. We have the private industry hard at work on a P3 process, putting that Fibre Optic Link in that's going to create

a whole industry, telecommunications, IT-focused industry in Inuvik. It's going to provide that same advantage to every community down the valley. I believe we're doing the same thing that the Member is asking us to do, and I appreciate him raising repeatedly the issue of the need to have the conditions for economic development. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 46: DELINÉ FINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT ACT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, February 23, 2015, I will move that Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act; Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act; Committee Report 10-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; and Tabled Document 188-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order and ask, what is the wish of the committee today? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will continue with Tabled Document 188-17(5), continuing with the Department of Transportation and then the Department of Executive. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I believe we will take a break before we commence with that. Thank you, committee.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, committee. I will call committee back to order. We are on the Department of Transportation reviewing Tabled Document 188-17(5). We will go to the Minister. Do you have witnesses to bring into the House, Minister Beaulieu?

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

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Thank you. Minister, could you please start by introducing your witnesses.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right is Russell Neudorf, deputy minister, Department of Transportation; to my left, Daniel Auger, assistant deputy minister, Department of Transportation; and to my far right, Jim Martin, director of corporate services, Department of Transportation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister. Committee, we are on general comments for the Department of Transportation. First on my list I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. This is one of the departments that I deal with extensively because we've got almost 25 percent of the roads in the Nahendeh riding and airport infrastructure as well. We had good exchange in the House earlier with the Minister with regard to Highway No. 7, the strategy and what the department has planned to upgrade and reconstruct that road, given the impending Canadian Zinc Mine expansion plans as well as constituents have always told me the importance of Highway No. 7 when it comes to tourism.

I think I have said it in the House before, that Ted Grant actually gets phone calls from Europe when tourists are coming north and asking specifically about how is Highway No. 7. He's a good man; he's honest and he tells them, if it's in very, very poor condition, don't even try to drive up this way. The tourism stops in northern BC also let tourists know what the condition is of the highway.

For me, we have to continue working on Highway No. 7. We've got to get on it early to prevent a blow-up like we did about four years ago when small vehicles were actually getting stuck in the highway. That just removes a lot of income

potential from tourism and people bringing their freight through Highway No. 7 to and from Fort Liard as well. So, it has an economic impact and loss of economic benefits as well. So, that's interest in Highway No. 7.

Another big, important aspect of transportation in the past few years was the construction of the new 3,500 airstrip in Trout Lake. I am very pleased the Minister of Transportation was able to go through there in December. We viewed it, it was completed, we landed on it and it was an absolutely wonderful piece of infrastructure. One thing missing is – I'm glad it was blowing cold – there is no terminal there. I'd like to ask the Minister what the plans are to get that terminal into Trout Lake.

As well, the members of the community raised the concern about how the airport was constructed and there may be some issues come spring thaw with settling and that kind of stuff. They remained concerned about that, so I convey that to the Minister as well. I'd like to know what their plan is, should there be a failure on that runway, Mr. Chair.

Also, Trout Lake has always been requesting a snow blower to help them clean their runways. I think, in this case, a request for a snow blower even makes more sense. It's a much larger airport, it has a much larger apron and it will take a lot of work. I know they have done the work with the grader in the past, but I don't believe it's as effective as a snow blower will be. So I continue to trust the matter and ask the Minister if they can come up with a plan to look at getting a snow blower for the community of Trout Lake.

Some of the other highway sections are between Fort Simpson and Wrigley. I know they did some work last year. I'd like to ask the Minister what the continued plan is for strengthening the Wrigley section. As we talk about the Mackenzie Valley Highway extension, I believe we have to continue strengthening that road. They've done wonderful work between Fort Simpson and Nduli ferry. So, they have to continue that same level of upgrading and grade lifts between the Nduli ferry and the community of Wrigley. There are some soft spots there as well. I'd like to know what the plans are for investing in that section. I am going to put it in as a request, but highway reports keep indicating that section is in poor condition. That's the department's own report. So it's time to review the situation and say, how are we going to upgrade the report to the point where we don't have to concentrate on it when we develop our expansion plans for the Mackenzie Valley Highway north?

We have had some great investments in continuing the chipsealing between Providence junction and Checkpoint. Constituents are quite excited that in our lifetime we might actually see that whole 240 kilometres chipsealed. I would like to know what the plan is moving forward with that. It's always great to

see men with equipment working on that, upgrading and making it wider. That's an old highway, as well, so it's great to see the investment there, only because the future of the North can get busy with the development of future economic development in the Sahtu region not only while they travel on a planned Mackenzie Valley extension but also on their existing infrastructure like Highway No. 7 and Highway No. 1. That's the importance of that, strengthening and continuing a chipseal program as we move forward. With that, I conclude my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are maintaining Highway No. 7. We're hoping that all of the areas that were identified as very bad spots are going to be attended to sooner rather than later, although our concentration is going to be in around fixing that highway and finishing the chipseal to Liard from BC, from Liard over to Nahanni, and there will be lots of BCP money going in there.

Other areas where there are soft spots – and it was a major concern when we were in Fort Liard, where it's very bad and we're aware of it – the guys and the department from Simpson seem very aware of it so we will be paying attention to that.

The Trout Lake Airport, the ATB is something we had initially planned in the process. It was part of the planning process, but the airport construction consumed all of the budget and we had to find additional funds just to finish the airport work itself.

The ATB, I do believe we had budgeted about \$400,000. So that is something we are doing. We are looking internally now as we move money into that area to finish the airstrip itself, we're looking for money internally to do some work so something can be done this summer, some of the work. Otherwise, we are also, as a backup, going through the process to re-enter it into the capital planning process, although it's been through there once already.

As far as a snow blower goes, so far for strips this size we haven't provided snow blowers. They are expensive pieces of equipment, but what we've agreed to do is monitor it through the full winter season and see how it went. If there were issues with the equipment they have, if it caused any deals or issues with planes landing and so on after this construction season, if the problems were there, then we would certainly consider maybe an alternative solution. I don't know if that would be a snow blower or better equipment, but we will monitor that for that reason.

The Wrigley/Simpson highway, right now we're maintaining the highway, maintenance only. There's not a lot of capital money going into that.

It's mostly and all to do with volume of traffic. During the winter months when the highway is open to Norman Wells, Good Hope and so on, when the highway opens to the Sahtu the volume goes up when the highway is frozen. So it doesn't have the type of impact that it would when driving it in the summertime. Then in the summertime the volume is low. Those are things we consider when we consider spending capital on highways. We will continue to monitor that. As the Mackenzie Highway comes closer to construction, then we would be upgrading that portion and it would be unwise not to upgrade the first section of the new highway going into Norman Wells.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister. I'll go to the deputy minister.

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of the plans for Highway No. 1, it is a project that we're putting forward under the Building Canada Plan. We are looking at the stretch between Fort Providence junction and Checkpoint. We will put more chipseal on, so we'll get to kilometre 395. Over the next two or three years we hope to reconstruct and chipseal another 20 kilometres, so we'll get to kilometre 397 which is the junction of the Jean Marie access road. Then if there's some funding left after that under the Building Canada Plan, we'll be working from both ends towards the middle so that over the next five to 10 years we hope we can considerably expand the amount of chipseal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Deputy Minister Neudorf. Next on my list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, in the organization chart I did a little creative drawing and I put in a little box that says superintendent for the Sahtu. It's really simple, Mr. Chair. Again, just to ask the department to keep that in mind, to consider being creative with that type of thinking.

I do want to say, in all seriousness, my appreciation for the winter roads we have open and the contractors this winter. The contractors have done an excellent job, despite the amount of money that they need. I think all the contractors on our winter roads in the North do a really good job. We have probably the best heavy equipment operators in the North here. We have given them so much money and they do what they have to do with it. So I want to thank them first of all and then thank the department for the region – I come from the Sahtu – with regards to listening to the people on the additional Arctic paving program that the Minister has done some work with the staff to get some of the dollars into the roads. He and I heard, when we took a trip to Tulita and to Fort Good Hope, about the driving conditions that we subject our drivers to go through each day for the next couple months

when the winter roads are open. I want to thank the Minister for taking the trip with me.

I also want to mention to the Minister about some of the approaches for the winter road. From time to time we get written observation reports, we get verbal reports on different sections of the winter roads that need additional care and need additional work, and sometimes the approaches to the bridges need to be looked at. I want to tell the Minister that there's one bridge, called the Oscar Creek Bridge, that is really out in nowhere and it's been sitting there for a couple years and it's quite embarrassing for the department and ourselves to see this bridge here. Even though it's been on the books, we really haven't moved on that bridge and we keep putting it off every year. We all seem to put that bridge off and find other priorities that jump the queue, so to speak, and they've just moved this bridge back. I'm not sure of the rationale behind that type of thinking on our infrastructure.

I want to let the Minister know about the airports, the terminal, and Deline is very, very small, especially when they have a lot of traffic. People are quite crowded in that terminal building in Deline. I look forward to seeing some work being done to see what they can do to increase that terminal building similar to what they've done in Fort Good Hope in regards to that piece of infrastructure.

I want to talk about the marine. I look forward to the Minister meeting with his federal counterpart to look at dredging of the waterway systems in the Mackenzie River. I know Hay River has talked about dredging around their area. There are also areas along the Mackenzie River that have been identified. There are some areas that are not high on the ranking of dredging, but we did listen to the mayor of Norman Wells talk about the dredging around the dock areas and we certainly heard the people in Fort Good Hope talk about the low waters and the difficulties they had getting their supplies into that community.

The proposal for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, we look forward to that being reviewed by the federal government and seeing how we can move on that proposal. It's much needed infrastructure in our region. People in Tulita and the Sahtu area talk about this next big proposal for the Northwest Territories. In saying that, inside the Mackenzie Valley proposal there are two areas I want to talk about. The Norman Wells Canol Creek proposal that the Minister talked about is a living document; it's on his desk. This is to look at getting some work done prior to the big Mackenzie Valley Highway proposal. It's part and parcel to the work there.

The people in Tulita said the Bear River Bridge was off and is now back on again. The Bear River Bridge is on the radar to make sure this infrastructure is something that they want to move on.

I do want to close off by saying thank you to the Minister for the continued support on the very valuable Community Access Roads Program. It's a program that's really appreciated by the people who can take advantage of it in our small communities. If you link that Access Roads Program to the unemployment, you'll see it makes sense. We don't have activity like there is in some of the communities or regions. Some of our communities or regions look forward to that type of program the government can offer and the government does support. So from a small community perspective, I want to say thank you for maintaining that funding level. That was a very smart move to continue to move this and I want to thank you, Mr. Minister.

The last part I want to say is I will continue working with you on the road licensing issues. I know your department and myself had discussions and we were trying to figure out ways to deal with some of the unique issues we have to deal with in our small communities, the way the licence system is worked out there. I look forward to seeing some kind of licence driving programs in our small communities such as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment bringing those programs into our high schools or even to the Aurora College centres so people can take advantage of these types of skill development and programs offered by the Department of Transportation. That's all for my comments, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree with the Member. The contractors in the Sahtu that build the winter roads do a good job, a good job of maintaining it. Some years, depending on the volumes of snowfall largely determines some of the conditions. There is heavy snowfall at times, so the grading that is scheduled inside the contracts can't keep up. On the other hand, sometimes there is a minimal amount of snowfall and that causes some of the road to be rough. We have to work with the conditions, do an estimate on what we think the standard is. We pretty well know. For example, last year people weren't sure how much snow came. People said there wasn't a lot of snow, but there was about 90 percent of what was normal in the NWT, so the other issues related to that were not directly because of snow volumes. That is an issue, but we had agreed, where we had talked to industry, and we have added some money to it and that we would also be looking to add money in our base in order to improve the winter road.

Oscar Creek is a long-standing issue. Right now we have the winter road running by it. Aside from the fact that it looks very odd, we are not using it and we are going around it. For sure, before there is any permanent highway built that bridge has to be

placed... Either the entry, the ramps up to the bridge have to be built or the bridge has to be moved, one of the two. We are looking at that. We have recently drove by it and the department sent us some pictures to take a look at it from the air to see all the water that's around that area, so you get a feel for what type of work would be needed on that bridge once we have to move it and place it in a permanent place.

The ATB in Deline is something that we will be working on this summer. There is going to be an expansion to that. It is very small, and for a community of 650 to 700, they have a very small building and we recognize that. In fact, sometimes there are three flights in there if there's a charter or something and it gets pretty crowded there. We recognize that so we will be doing some work on that.

On the dredging, when we wrote a letter to address the issues around Hay River, it also included all of the waterway that would need dredging. The comments that we made to the federal Minister was about the whole Mackenzie River. So that's something we are hoping we are going to get engaged with the federal government on in the near future.

The Mackenzie Valley Highway, Canyon Creek, we're seeing the first bit of money coming from CanNor. We are very close to getting that money from the federal government, not the full amount for the project, which is a \$22 million project, but an amount to get started and do the planning on it.

There is a lot of discussion in the community of Tulita plus Norman Wells, plus anybody who I think wants the Mackenzie Valley built from Wrigley to Norman Wells, a priority might be a Bear River Bridge. It seemed to be something that was very valuable for the actual construction of the highway itself. There is access to a gravel pit on the other side of the river where there was very little access, or I think the access was about 40 kilometres away from Tulita going south. Whereas, if the bridge was in first when the construction started, if and when the construction of the Mackenzie Valley started, it appears as though Bear River Bridge may be something we want to do soon in the project as opposed to later on in the project. That's something that we recognize.

Access Roads Program – thank you, Member – it's a very valuable program. It goes into the small communities. A few years ago we had some of the members of the Rural and Remote Communities, which most of the Members from the small communities sit on, had that increased to \$1 million per year and we have maintained that.

On the road licensing, it is a very tough one to deal with. You have people wishing to have a standard Class 5 licence in the small communities. For the department, we can go in there and do a restricted

licence because there is no traffic volume in these communities, so it's like giving someone a licence when you haven't tested them in traffic. One of the things we are asking is when individuals come to Yellowknife, is to get a licence, because without being tested in traffic... With a regular Class 5 licence you can drive anywhere in the country, anywhere in the world actually. So, to put somebody that's got a driver's licence where they went through the whole test without encountering any traffic lights, any volume of traffic at all and then sending them down to Edmonton and putting them behind the wheel would not be something that the department wishes to do and would not be a wise thing to do. What we need to do is we need to get the people tested in Yellowknife, if possible, and if there is a way to do the training anywhere, like we have talked with some Members about doing it at the school to get all the basics there, giving them an increased chance of success when they do run the standard test in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith, or Inuvik, for that matter. We also issue full licences there. I think in Simpson as well. We like to stay with that because we think that anything else will be unsafe. If we find a safe way where we can issue those licences, then that's what we'll do. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on my list I have Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to welcome the Department of Transportation here today and specifically Mr. Auger for joining us for his last tour. He will be missed, for sure.

Mr. Chair, really in no particular order, there will be a number of things I will be bringing up in general comments and some of those I will be re-emphasizing in detail.

To the Minister's opening comments: what caught my attention in terms of something that I applaud as being noble, but when I look at the expenditure and what they are spending money on, I had to question the validity; and that is the \$163,000 to increase services and information in French. That in itself is noble. I heard that part of this will be to install signs in French. If that means road signs in French, I would have to question the validity of spending that money. I don't think constitutionally it is a requirement. I have yet to see road signs in French when I'm travelling in other western provinces. So again, if we are going to be spending money in French services, it should be more accessible to online narratives, those types of things. But if it is indeed to make signs French, I would probably question the spending of that in the communities and on the road access ways.

Ever since being a Member here, I have been fairly vocal on the area of emergency preparedness in our communities and on our highways. I know that there has been some work done behind the scenes,

the highway emergency alerting protocol, HEAP for short, in conjunction with MACA. Some work has been done in the past. I know there was a discussion paper that was provided. But when you look at the seriousness and the geopolitical scope and landscape that we have here, we run the risk of putting our residents in grave danger on our highway systems. I'm a bit perplexed, given the nature and what I think is the severity of the cause. I see a budget before us that is relatively quiet, almost silent to the issue of emergency preparedness on highways. Again, we can dive more into detail when we get to the directorate part of it, but for someone who has been a champion of the cause, I am a little bit disappointed that we are not putting that higher on our awareness level.

I do have to applaud the department on its road licensing and safety. More particularly with all the technology that we've seen come on board in the last year with online accessibility to abstracts and things of that nature. Again, I encourage that expenditure and I see the fruits of our labour in action and I think the residents of the Northwest Territories want to thank the forward-thinking in that area.

That being said, I know I've spoken in the House; I know the Member for Sahtu has spoken in the House and the Minister has commented as well today on getting our young people to get their driver's licence in our smaller communities. This was a very problematic issue that came to our attention about a year or two ago, where a lot of our students who are graduating Grade 12 couldn't apply for some of our jobs and some of our mining opportunities as a result of not having a driver's licence, and I found that to be quite problematic and prevalent. I know I've heard that they're trying to work with ECE to try to do proper protocols and put programs in place in our schools, but I don't think we're there yet and I strongly encourage a more sweeping approach, a more targeted approach to make sure that we're getting drivers' licences into the schools, incorporating schools that don't have a road licensing safety office in that community. Let's open up the doors of opportunity and that starts with a driver's licence.

I know myself and I'm sure everyone here who got their first driver's licence, you are pretty proud when you have one. Not only are you able to drive a vehicle but sometimes it's your first piece of real I.D. with your picture on it. So there's a sense of pride behind that, as well, when you're travelling abroad going, I've got a driver's licence.

So it is an accomplishment, and if we're trying to foster an environment of trying to make people feel positive, I think it starts with our kids. It starts with the schools, and I encourage the department to reach out with the departments of ECE and MACA

to see if they can formulate a more formal process and let's put the money in those types of projects.

I will have a more detailed piece when you talk about airports in general. The Minister is very much aware of my enthusiasm on looking at changes to the Yellowknife Airport governance program in a way that we are able to leverage our assets and provide better tools and a better economic landscape with our Yellowknife Airport. Again, I'll leave that for later and I don't expect the Minister to comment until we get to that detail.

I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't talk about the tolls at the Deh Cho Bridge for a second. I know the Member for Hay River North brought it up yesterday in general comments. My take on it is quite simple. I believe that we're penalizing, to some degree, the small business owner who has a four-by-four truck, a half-ton truck, a three-quarter-ton truck, those types of vehicles. These commercial vehicles easily reach over that 4,500 kilogram threshold the moment they pull a trailer, the moment they pull a boat, the moment they pull a holiday trailer. A lot of times these businesses have to maintain separate accounting records for CRA, for taxation if they're using that vehicle for personal use, but we don't differentiate behind that at all. The moment a commercial truck goes northbound on that bridge, according to the new regulations it will be a \$95 toll. I think if we're trying to foster an environment of fairness, we're trying to lower our cost of living. I think we've got to be fair to the small business owner. Because I know these regulations are under review, I'm going to strongly encourage, once again, that we look at eliminating that lesser threshold. I don't believe it's a cash grab that's making the department a lot of money, but it's an irritant, pure and simple, a complete irritant to the business community and those that are in and around that bridge area. I basically sympathize with them, including Yellowknifers who have to go northbound on that highway and pay that toll, especially for those categories I indicated.

It's going to be in the not-too-distant future that the issue of NWT fires are going to be problematic again. We know we're headed into another dry season and I do have to applaud the department for coordinating quite efficiently with ENR during our fire season of 2014. I know that there were bumps in the road. We know that the communication aspect of highway closures improved during the summer and I think the use of social media and social networking were definitely testaments to that improvement.

That being said, I can honestly say, as well, that there was also opportunity, and I'm hoping that we learned from our past in terms of how we can make things better for our residents. As I said, a lot of those closures were due to visibility. But unfortunately, when I say the word "visibility," I was

almost skeptical that the visibility seemed to be very problematic during the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. but during the daytime visibility was okay. So I know the manpower and people power is an issue if we didn't have enough people to man roadblocks or at least go up and down the highways or get aerial views of the road conditions. But I can't count how many closures there were, especially on Highway No. 3 going into the capital city last year. I can attest, though, being someone who actually travelled those roads during closures and basically travelling on these roads when they were open immediately after and actually immediately closed, the conditions were fine. Yes, there was smoke, there was smoke everywhere in the Northwest Territories, but I don't believe that they were to that level of liability and safety that I would consider it being an impediment. But I do have to indicate the fact that they were closed during certain periods of time, which begs to ask, did we have enough manpower or people power to actually make that decision. I'll leave it up to the department to respond to that one.

Again, optics were definitely paramount. This is definitely the buzzword; the whisper around people waiting on both sides of the roads going, okay, why can't we go through? Because it appeared it was fine. Again, I know the department is worried about safety, and for all intents and purposes I always err on the caution side, but I had to put that out there and this is my venue for doing so.

Last but not least, I know it's a capital issue and I'll talk about it a little bit more when we get into the highways. I know the Highway No. 4 bypass and all the rigours of some of the liabilities, the fact that it's probably not complete. I'm really concerned about the liability, a contractor still not being paid. So I'll leave that to when we get to that detail line. I know it's an operational budget, but I need to get some update on that highway as well.

So, just a few things, Mr. Chair, and I'd like to thank the department again. I appreciate it. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The French language services, the signs were put up for safety reasons. Anywhere where we felt there were potential safety-related issues we put up signs in both languages to ensure that it was understood by all the travelling public. The majority of that money, we provide French services, as well, in addition to that, and that was salary and a little bit of travel. So we thought it was well spent.

Highway emergency learning protocol is something that we work with the departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and Health and Social Services. We're going to continue to work on that. We know that it's not a simple solution, covering the highway, emergency services on the highway. It might seem

simple; however, who covers which area from which community and who pays for the ongoing services inside that community? So the emergency, like an ambulance, for example, that sits in the community of Behchoko is used within the community of Behchoko. If they respond to something on the highway, who pays for it? Like, those types of things. So we're working with, like I said, the two other departments, to try to come up with the correct protocol on how to address emergency services on the highways.

Drivers' licences, I've always felt was a good idea that drivers' licences be part of the school curriculum. Everything the Member said about that is true. Still today you get 25-year-old guys who are applying for a job and they can do the actual job, but one of the requirements is a driver's licence, and that's something I think everyone should have. If we have a better system of issuing drivers' licences, full drivers' licences to people who meet all the qualifications, we're all for that. The driver's licence is very well used. I use that instead of my passport to travel all over within Canada. It's a good document that's recognized by the travel industry, for sure, and so on. It's something I wish anybody who can achieve it at the right age could get it.

We'll talk a bit about the governance of the ATB in Yellowknife when we get to that detail.

The Deh Cho tolls, we tried to answer that in various ways. Individuals who don't want to be penalized for hauling their personal boat or pulling their personal trailer should just buy a regular licence plate as opposed to a commercial licence plate and that will avoid having to pay for commercial-type tolls.

The NWT fires, it's an interesting point of view from the Member, but it is a fact that winds do die down at night. Along with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, we've had 24-hour coverage during the heavy fire season. We were talking about a very long highway that was in jeopardy, 200 kilometres. We didn't want to send people down the highway and one hour later they were in the middle of 200 kilometres of highway and if there is a fire on each end, what do we do? We had to use escorts and we had to make sure when we did open it, it was very safe. So we did what we did. We'll pick up some knowledge from the fires last year. I know the Department of Environment and Natural Resources does a debriefing on fires, so maybe this year we could have some of our DOT people from highways join them. I will have a discussion on that with the Minister, or maybe you have already. It's already happened? That's good.

Again, I look forward to having an exchange on Highway No. 4 when we get to the detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on my list I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a few comments. First of all I just want to make some comments on the ferry operations in Inuvik this past winter. The first year was definitely a learning experience. The way it was developed and operated this year was excellent. I know all the guys working on it and some people making comments said it was really well done this year. Moving forward, it's going to be a very efficient practice getting that up and running.

I also want to just make a comment about the Aviation Career Development Program. I am pretty sure that scholarship is fully utilized every year and maybe we need to increase the funding into that. I have a constituent who's received that scholarship twice and he's excelling in the aviation field and he appreciates the support the department is giving him.

Once again, the investment into the Inuvik-Tuk highway, the department is staying on top of that in terms of getting that road up and running. Like I said, it's an investment into the region and getting a lot of people working. The Minister made a statement saying there were 600 people employed, which is great with the economy we are seeing right now in the Beaufort-Delta region.

A few things of concern and an idea I will throw out there as well. I know the Minister has made trips up to Inuvik, and almost on a yearly basis the access road into Inuvik from the airport always seems to need some type of maintenance. I think last year we had some funding put in there that worked on certain sections, but I think that continues to need to be addressed.

The department also knows my concern with the runway in Inuvik. The last time we had a briefing, there was a study going on to look into that. I wanted to know where the plan is moving forward on the runway.

There's not a whole lot that hasn't already been said by my colleagues, but we are building this Inuvik to Tuk highway to the Beaufort Sea and we're also getting a lot more vessels through the Northwest Passage. I wonder if it's feasible for this government to look at possibly putting in a deep water port in the Beaufort Sea where we can start getting things shipped up there and shipping it down the valley from there. It might be a possibility. Whether the department has that on the books, I'm not sure.

So, really not much more other than that. The ferry operations were great last year.

Also, the Canada Building Fund, I know we're waiting to hear the details on that and what's going on. I know we will be building big infrastructure projects if that funding is approved. Maybe if we could get an update or a possible timeline when

that will be updated for Members, that would be appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We agree that the ferry operations in the Beaufort-Delta went very well this year. I do believe traffic was closed for one day only. I'm sorry, I had an understanding it was only closed for one day for regular traffic. The deputy minister tells me it was actually eight days. I don't know if that was heavy traffic. I guess on average we were closed for eight days.

The aviation scholarship is something that people do benefit from. We do have a reduction in that scholarship this year, but we're also re-examining how we can use that scholarship money.

Investment in the Inuvik-Tuk highway has gone very well, no question about that. We are on schedule and maybe even slightly ahead of schedule. The money we anticipated spending for that highway is something we will spend. We're going to get an opportunity for Members of this House to look at it firsthand on March 16th and 17th as we travel up there with the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure.

The Inuvik airport road is in the plan for the Building Canada Plan. I can't remember the exact amount we put in there, \$10 million to fix the dips and try to fix it permanently. They will patch it or fill it and it will sink again, so they've come up with a more permanent solution. So we have some money in there for that.

The Inuvik runway, I'm going to have the deputy minister talk about this one because there was some research and stuff that went on there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We did have a depression in the runway appear quite suddenly about a year ago. We did an immediate emergency repair to it and that's working fine. In the meantime, we have engineers engaged to determine what the exact mechanism was that was causing that. That work is still ongoing, but we do have money that we hope to carry it forward to next year so that we can undertake a permanent repair next summer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just another comment about the feasibility of maybe looking at a deep water port for the Beaufort Sea in terms of the vessels going through the Northwest Passage on a more recurring basis and it might be an opportunity for various things in terms of getting our resources

out to market and bringing supplies in for the coastal communities, those kinds of things. So I'd like to know if that's something that the department is looking into. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The community of Tuktoyaktuk has been looking at this deep water port for some time. Of course, as the highway to Tuktoyaktuk is getting close to completion, there's more interest in a deep water port. It's another viable transportation method, so that's certainly something we would participate in.

In as far as what we can do from using our highway and so on, deep water ports are a federal responsibility and that's where it will probably remain for now. However, whatever we can do as a department to assist, we'll be there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on my list I have Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a few comments and concerns here. Under the Community Access Program there are a lot of great projects that fall under there, but one of the ones that I wanted to touch on was Willow River. Recently we purchased a bridge just this past year here and we were hoping to have that bridge in place this season. We are drawing near to the end of the season here. There's less than two months to go. I presume there are no funds secured for that at this point and I'd like to hear something positive on that.

Also, I did do a statement in November, I believe, with regards to the ice crossing at Tsiigehtchic. This winter, for the winter season, a lot of progress has been made. People are saying it's even faster than the service in the summer, which is good news to hear. I've been on it a few times and I think we've worked out all the kinks, and I look forward to seeing that continue in the future.

Under the Building Canada Plan, it hasn't been approved in the House yet, but there's a lot of concern in my riding about the continued work on the Dempster Highway. Just in the one year, this past year, there wasn't any work. That was a big impact on the community with 30 to 50 jobs that were lost. It would be nice to see this continuing this summer. I'm not sure if we can have a positive response on that at this point.

Also under the same Building Canada Plan, I'm kind of concerned at seeing the change from Wrigley to Norman Wells. I believe when we first brought this up it was from Wrigley to Inuvik. As a Member from the Beaufort-Delta, I'd like to see that highway actually go right to Inuvik in my lifetime here, just because of all the goods that we see coming from the Yukon that could actually be coming through our territory. You know, you think of

all the tolls and weight bans and all the expenses that can be staying here in our territory. Hopefully, one day we could see this project completed all the way up to Inuvik, connecting up to Tuk one day.

Also, under marine, under ferry contracts, I have a number of concerns from my riding. They'd like to see this contract actually being managed out of the communities in the coming year here, and the contract is coming to an end. Once we work on that, hopefully we can resolve that issue.

Also under Transportation, I recently did a statement on the overflow areas, specifically by Tsiigehtchic. It's affecting residents that actually live on that part of the land here. They chose to live a traditional lifestyle and it's being affected on a daily basis every winter with overflow and it's very challenging for them. Moving forward I hope we can adopt the practice that's in the Yukon that they do to address the overflow, which is to install a heat trace line in culverts. Whenever there's an issue, all they do is bring a generator there and plug it in. All you have to do is fill up the generator, check the oil. That actually eliminates that issue of overflow. It just passes through the culvert.

Those are about the only comments I have right now. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recently, the Member and I spoke to the mayor of Aklavik on the Willow River Bridge. Three-quarters of the bridge is in Inuvik and a quarter of that bridge is still sitting in Fort St. John. The plan is, of course, to bring that bridge and place it over the river, bridge the river with it. That's what we're hoping to do and that's what the community wants to do to have that access road to the gravel source.

Right now, since we've had the discussion, our people in the Beaufort-Delta, DOT people have been talking to the community and we're finding we're getting more... Right now we kind of have a verbal idea from them on what is needed, so we're just trying to get the written proposal right now. Once we're able to get that, we're... I mean, we want to fund that. We bought the bridge so we want to be able to put it in. It's something we all want to do.

The Tsiigehtchic ferry or the ferry that crosses at Tsiigehtchic was actually faster in the wintertime because it didn't have to stop in Tsiigehtchic. It just went straight across. It was a straight line across, so it did go across faster. So that's true.

On the Dempster Highway, it was a shame that there was no capital available this past summer, but we're hoping to get going again this summer. We've put in our supplementary portion, our GNWT portion, supplementary appropriation from the Building Canada and GNWT money together for the

work on the Dempster. What we're thinking is that it's going to be about \$4 million to \$4.5 million, most likely \$4.5 million worth of work in there each summer. In this first package that we presented, the first bundle, I guess, we presented to the federal government was for four years.

We wanted to make sure that our proposal was successful at the federal level. We felt that putting a proposal in from Wrigley to Norman Wells, we had the greatest chance of success than putting something in that went all the way to the Dempster, or even, for that matter, a proposal that went to Fort Good Hope, because to Norman Wells alone was a \$700 million proposal and that \$700 million proposal is not approved yet. We imagine that if we had put a \$2 billion proposal in front of the federal government asking for a highway to be built to connect to the Dempster, it would be even longer in the approval process. We know that we have to start building the Mackenzie Valley Highway somewhere, and we felt that... This was a decision that was taken to Cabinet and it was felt that our best chance of success would be to take the highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells. That's why that proposal is in. Of course, we all want to see the Mackenzie Valley Highway join the Dempster in the future. That's something that would be very positive for the whole North.

The ferry contract, we are in the middle of determining a new relationship with people that are going to run the ferry. Right now the contract is due. We've had some discussion, our people in Inuvik have had some discussion with a Gwich'in organization. I've had some discussion with local organizations in both McPherson and Tsiiigehtchic. We have had some discussion with Grizzly Marine, an individual company that is currently running the ferry for us. They have moved their manager to Fort McPherson, so that is something, trying to move some of the manager positions out of Inuvik and closer to where the action is. We are continuing with that, those negotiations, and we will keep the Member informed as we get closer to signing a new contract.

With the members on the other side of the Arctic Red River that are enduring some flooding problems, I would like to have the deputy minister respond to give some background. Thank you.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's about kilometre 140 where we have overflow problems with the Dempster Highway. That has been there since the highway was built that we have known about those problems. An individual moved into that area and started to experience some difficulties with the overflow. This kind of came to a head about eight years ago when DOT along with Housing Corporation paid to move the individual out

of the area to recognize the challenges that are there. I guess in the years that followed, the individual has chosen to move back.

In terms of heat trace, that is done, we use that in the springtime, but the water needs to be warm enough so that it keeps the culvert open once it starts to flow. It is the actual flow of the water that opens up the culvert. So that is more appropriate for getting culverts open in the springtime. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Next I have on my list Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of comments. The first one is on the winter crossing access road that leaves from Fort Providence. Formally it is the whole winter road section from the bridge to the peninsulas that jut out into the main river system. They are still there and there is interests by the people that reside in that area to try to upkeep and maintain that section of the road just for accessibility in terms of whether they might experience, hopefully not, an emergency situation and they have to drive into the community, either to the health centre or else perhaps dispatch maybe a fire truck out there for any reason if it's needed.

For those purposes, on several occasions it has been noted that it would be nice to maintain that section of road, but at the same time, in the summertime we have a very high interest in terms of its accessibility by tourists that travel to the area at the winter crossing. They practically live out there. They're not supposed to camp out there; it is day use areas, and they are basically out there to fish. It has become very interesting because, at the same time, it's a highly valued area. I just wanted to see if the Minister would reassure the community that the community access programs that exist within the department will continue and that the community at some point will be able to access such a program like that.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We agree that's the right program to do exactly what the Member is requesting. We encourage the community to put in an access road proposal to pay to keep that road open. We can have the local guys talk to the leadership over there, wherever we are going to receive a proposal from, to see if they could obtain that proposal from them for using the access road money to keep that road open.

MR. NADLI: Just some other points. I think my colleague touched on the ongoing system to come up with at least a unit of some kind that could be available for people that travel on the highway. I know that this has been ongoing. I think the Department of Transportation and two other

departments have been part of this exercise. They are trying to at least forge a semblance of unity in terms of trying to come up with an emergency system if it's ever needed. I have heard the discussion in terms of the community fire departments are confined to communities, and if ever they are called upon to deal with a situation on the highway, there is always a question in terms of liability, costs, and so that is ongoing. This effort has been, at least from my understanding, for the past two years or so and it has been ongoing. I think at some point a decision has to be made in terms of ensuring the wellness and safety of the public and that this government will come up with at least a very clear system so that they can respond to emergency situations on the highway.

In that same light, basically it has been very exciting for small communities to be finally on the information highway. This is the expansion of the cellular coverage and it's good. It has really enhanced communications. A lot of people are very active on social media. Young people are very tech savvy and are enthusiastically embracing the introduction of this technology into small communities.

Of course, there are some shortfalls. One of them is in cellular coverage, again in an emergency situation. There has been some discussions perhaps with NorthwesTel or with some other bodies that are able to provide those services, but if for example you have to have a high degree of traffic from Yellowknife all the way down to High Level, in between those communities sometimes you have blackouts and you don't have a communications system. If something happens and you need to communicate with someone, timing and getting a response sometimes is critical. So if perhaps this government could encourage companies like NorthwesTel to see if they could expand and enhance their cellular coverage. If you drive down to Fort Providence, you should be able to at least link up to the cellular system at Blue Fish Creek and as you drive by the community and maybe as far south as Dory Point. So at least a person, if you have to, can walk to those points and make a call either to the RCMP or else the health centre to try and get some help. So if the department or government could encourage companies like that to try to, at least in the public interest, enhance cellular services.

Other points of course my colleagues have raised were the forest fires, the interruptions it caused in terms of people's travelling, the roads being closed. This past summer was a very big experience. I think we learned a lot from it. People were practically stranded. People were stranded in their vehicles for perhaps maybe five days, seven days and these people have kids it was very hot during that time too. Hopefully we've learned so that perhaps this summer we will have a contingency

plan in terms of how we're going to be responding in the interest of public safety, of course, and at the same time in the interest of the travelling public.

The other thing, too, is that because of the burnt areas we're going to have a high number of people that are picking mushrooms, a lot of activity in those areas. So, the department should have an understanding of how they're going to deal with a situation like that.

The other point is the multi-modal strategy. I understand that's ongoing. I think they've mentioned the idea of a rail expansion, but whether it's in the works or maybe perhaps discussion.

Another idea is the marine transportation. There's been discussion of perhaps dredging to make the barges more accessible to the communities, and we have to realize that the big lake is frozen right until about the middle of June. The Mackenzie River is free of ice through mid-May and it just makes sense that perhaps a port of some kind or a marine transportation hub perhaps, be imported to Fort Providence. I think that should be discussed at some point.

The other point I wanted to make is in terms of the tolls for private vehicles. I think we try not to create any disincentives for people that are in the small business sector. We need to be in a supportive capacity. Becoming a hindrance to small business growth should not be the role of government. We should be encouraging them. For those reasons, we should seriously consider how it is that we collect tolls on private vehicles that cross the bridge, in some instances.

The other thing is that I think we need to do a concerted effort to ensure that young people get their licences, you know, simultaneously when they graduate from high school and not wait until they're about 26 or 30 years old to get their licences. It should just be a logical step. If you graduate, you should have your licence to drive. Mahsi.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Again, I can reiterate the fact that we will continue to work with MACA and HSS to develop some sort of emergency highway coverage. We're working with the highway emergency and learning protocol, like I've indicated previously. We think it's needed. It's a matter of figuring out the logistics of how, how to do it. So, I mean, once the three departments are able to determine whose responsibility this would lie under. Right now it's shared. The responsibility appears to be shared. We're responsible for the highway, MACA is responsible for the municipal service that has the emergency vehicle, and potentially Health is responsible for the people that could end up injured and maybe who own the ambulances and so on. Now in the city of Yellowknife, for example, the city owns the ambulances.

So, all of those types of details must be worked out. I will have a discussion with my colleagues, maybe, to put some sort of timelines together for us to come up with something. I think we have dragged this on for a long time between the departments, so maybe it's time for us to put some timelines together to see what we can do and determine when we can do it.

As a department, we encourage larger areas for cellular coverage. We recognize that once you drive around in Alberta you always have coverage. We know that. We do have the dead spots. You leave here, 25 to 30 kilometres from here you lose your cell service, pick it up before Rae, it drops off the other side of Behchoko and so on and so forth. If we could open the coverage completely that would be ideal. We're not responsible for communication towers as a department, but we do encourage that they put them along the highway so that the coverage can be there.

The fires, we're hoping that we've learned. We can't help the individuals that were stranded. I mean, we couldn't help that they were stranded. We recognize all of the work that the people in Fort Providence did to make lives a little easier for individuals that were stranded in Providence, and many people commented on people bringing food, water, blankets, whatever to the people that were stranded. We certainly appreciate that. As a government we thought that the community did a real good job of trying to support. I think the same type of thing would have happened had there been a lot of traffic near other communities, but we certainly heard about that in Fort Providence and that's something we were happy that occurred.

Right now the rail service to Hay River is something that, as you know, we've talked about quite a bit. A recent announcement, or a recent upcoming announcement I suppose, I could say by the federal government to put maybe more infrastructure money into the railhead. So we're hoping that at least the rail is improved to Hay River. Now, getting any rail out into Fort Providence I think could be a difficult thing. It would be a major federal project for sure by the federal government, a real major project for them to put rail out there. It's an interesting thing on the marine because Cooper, a company out of BC does operate out of Fort Simpson and they're able to move things on the Mackenzie River fairly quickly as a result of what the Member indicated, the Mackenzie River opens and they're able to travel from Simpson up a lot sooner. It's an NTCL decision whether or not they think they should have an operation out of Fort Providence, so it's not something that the Department of Transportation would involve itself in. We would, as a government, utilize the service for sure if they were using NTCL out of Fort Providence. We utilize the service out of Hay River now. So I guess that's something that the Member would have to discuss with that company.

I wasn't 100 percent clear on the Deh Cho Bridge tolls. All I can say is that the people with private plates don't pay tolls and people with commercial plates that are hauling and in vehicles over 4,500 kilograms are paying tolls. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Next on my list I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a few things I want to mention here with Transportation. The first is an observation that there was a 60 percent increase or variance from the budget we passed about this time last year for Transportation and the budget we look like we are ending up with. So, obviously a lot of changes to the budget during the year with the appropriations and so on.

Most of that was Vote 4 dollars, but \$9 million of the \$60 million increase, a \$56 million increase was Vote 1 dollars. This was at a time when we've had a 50 percent reduction in net fiscal benefits. We had over \$100 million in unanticipated and unplanned climate-related expenses and many other issues to face.

I am just wondering: would the Minister be able to forecast a little bit of where he anticipates this budget to be ending up and how much of that will be revenues and what we might be looking on down the line for Vote 1 dollars and Transportation's budget, whether it's going to be anything like the current year which is not all said and done yet.

There are a couple of projects that are eight-year projects for me so far. I've been through a number of Ministers of Transportation. It's still unresolved and little progress, and important to the safety of my constituents. The first is the Detah road. Several years ago we finally had 4.5 kilometres reconstructed. That highway was never constructed. It was slapped together, as you know, and is in desperate need of reconstruction. So, I'm wondering when we will complete reconstruction of the Detah access road. I think we'd love to have an access road even in the condition of the Inuvik one.

The second one is the highway crossing between Niven Lake and the four-way stop entering Yellowknife. Again, this is now the eighth year of watching people walk along that highway, on the very edge of that highway, as we saw this morning and every morning, and this can sometimes be kids, strollers in the summertime and so on. It's a serious issue. I appreciated quite a number of years ago when the Minister of Transportation finally put in some street lighting to help with that. Drivers have complained as much as pedestrians because it's so dangerous and they know it. They've narrowly missed hitting people. Again, this has fallen through the cracks because it's a city issue, it's a GNWT issue, it's your issue, it's not my issue and so on. Meanwhile, the safety of our residents is

compromised. For me, it's disgusting. I'd like to see someone finally take an accountable role and get that resolved.

I heard about the Inuvik study. The money was budgeted for a study on that situation for the Inuvik Airport. I also believe I heard that money was being carried over. I want to know why that work wasn't done, when it's going to be done, and I'd like to know what other carry-overs we can expect from this department for work that hasn't been completed or you are anticipating not being able to complete. That's all I have, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to have the deputy minister or the director respond on the variance and the net fiscal benefit information and the Vote 1 revenues.

For the Detah road, we have all of the money in place now to reconstruct the Detah road completely.

We have some money in capital that we've spent and then the rest of it we've put in year one of the Building Canada Plan. This year when we did our first bundle, that's work that's going to be done under Building Canada Plan. The entire amount to finish that road, 100 percent, is in year one, so we're pleased with that.

The Niven road, it was difficult to come up with a solution. The people would cross the road at Niven. Realistically the only safe way is an overpass or underpass, but at some point they can't stay on the Niven side because if they keep staying on the Niven side as they get to the Explorer Hotel they'd come to a rock face and it's additionally unsafe there. So they do have to cross and, unfortunately, in order to safely walk towards town, they do have to cross right at Niven. I guess we could come up with a solution. Like I said, we'd build something over top of the road, but it would be a very expensive solution. We know that the traffic has been slowed down to the other side, so at one point you were able to pick up speed again as we corner towards Niven, but now the speed sign has... You can only pick up speed, from 45 kilometres to 60, on the other side of Niven. Plus, we put in better lighting. Those are the things we were able to do that were feasible to do at that point. Certainly, there has to be a solution, but it's expensive, and if we had to build a walking path from there all the way into the city on the other side of the Explorer, it would be another very expensive solution.

I'm going to, I guess, ask the deputy to speak on the variances and fiscal benefit Vote 1 and also why we're asking for the Inuvik Airport. Actually, I'll just briefly touch on it. It actually had to do with trying to come up with what we think is a good solution that's going to work. But with that, I'll ask

the deputy minister to respond to some of the Member's questions.

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

MR. NEUDORF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I certainly didn't follow the Member's details in terms of the variance, so if he's got more details, we can certainly answer any specific questions there.

I would note that our main estimates from last fiscal year to proposed '15-16 are proposed to go down by \$6.7 million. The majority of that, \$5.7 million, is due to amortization, so it's not real cash, but our budget is in fact going down from last year to proposed for next year.

Overall, on the capital side of course we did ask for and receive \$40 million for the Inuvik-Tuk highway so that we could...but it was just a cash flow adjustment. It was advancing the cash flow in order to reflect the progress that the contractor was expecting to make.

In terms of the Inuvik Airport dip repair, it did take time to come up with the right answer so that the engineers were comfortable that the solution we came up with would actually address the problem. We do think that there's water moving underneath the runway and that has caused some material to be eroded away from underneath the runway, so that's what we want to repair. That repair was started last fall, so we're creating a cut-off ditch to divert the water away from the runway so that doesn't occur again. Then the plan is, if the funding is carried over, that we will undertake to put a permanent repair of the runway next summer. Really, it's just making sure that we had maximized the benefit of the resources that were allocated to the project. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for those responses. It's good to hear about the Detah road.

Might I suggest a flashing yellow light would not be very expensive for the highway between Niven Lake and the four-way stop?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will look at that solution. We will have our engineers... I suppose it will have to do with the city, also. The engineers and the city will take a look at that, the flashing light.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Committee, noting the time, I will rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Thank you, witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been meaning to recognize the Pages in the House today and I'd like to mention a number from Weledeh. Grace Clark, Niva Stephenson, Harvey Fells and Hunaifa Malik and any other Pages who have been looking after us for the week, it's greatly appreciated. Mahsi.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, like Mr. Bromley, would like to recognize some Pages, and from the Yellowknife Centre riding I would like to recognize – I apologize if I pronounce your name incorrectly, but I'll do the best I can – Hunaifa Malik, who's a Sir John student and lives in Yellowknife Centre; and Mohammad Hasnain, who is from Sir John and a Yellowknife Centre Page as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Bouchard?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BOUCHARD: 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. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

COMMITTEE CLERK TRAINEE (Mrs. Mager): Orders of the day for Monday, February 23, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions

5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
 - Motion 36-17(5), Workplace Safety at Stanton Territorial Hospital
19. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act
 - Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act
 - Committee Report 10-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories
 - Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 23rd, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:04 p.m.