



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 65

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

Pages 5769 – 5806

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackie Jacobson

(Nunakput)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister responsible for

Persons with Disabilities

Minister responsible for Seniors

Hon. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe)

Minister of Human Resources

Minister of Transportation

Minister of Public Works and Services

Ms. Wendy Bisaro

(Frame Lake)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Robert Bouchard

(Hay River North)

Mr. Bob Bromley

(Weledeh)

Mr. Daryl Dolynny

(Range Lake)

Mrs. Jane Groenewegen

(Hay River South)

Mr. Robert Hawkins

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Minister responsible for the Workers'

Safety and Compensation

Commission

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of Executive

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and

Intergovernmental Relations

Minister responsible for Women

Hon. Robert C. McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Minister of Municipal and

Community Affairs

Minister of Lands

Minister responsible for the

NWT Housing Corporation

Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Kevin Menicoche

(Nahendeh)

Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger

(Thebacha)

Government House Leader

Minister of Finance

Minister of Environment and Natural

Resources

Minister responsible for the

NWT Power Corporation

Mr. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Hon. David Ramsay

(Kam Lake)

Minister of Justice

Minister of Industry, Tourism

and Investment

Minister responsible for the

Public Utilities Board

Mr. Norman Yakeleya

(Sahtu)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

**Principal Clerk,
Committees and
Public Affairs**

Mr. Michael Ball

**Principal Clerk,
Corporate and
Interparliamentary Affairs**

Ms. Gail Bennett

**Committee Clerk
Trainee**

Mrs. Danielle Mager

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Ms. Malinda Kellett

Mr. Glen Rutland

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	5769
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	5769
159-17(5) – Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Progress (Miltenberger)	5769
160-17(5) – Transportation Research and Development (Beaulieu).....	5770
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	5770
Social Passing (Blake).....	5770
Coordination of Language Revitalization Strategies (Dolynny)	5770
Dechinta Bush University (Menicoche)	5771
Balancing Educational and Cultural Pursuits (Yakeleya)	5772
Education Renewal (Bromley)	5772
Dechinta Bush University (Moses).....	5772
Investment in Early Childhood Development Programs (Bisaro)	5773
Supporting Aurora College Programming (Hawkins)	5774
Facilitating Educational Success in Small Communities (Nadli)	5774
Implementation of Junior Kindergarten (Bouchard)	5775
Investment in Hay River Transportation Infrastructure (Groenewegen).....	5775
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	5776, 5787
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5777
ORAL QUESTIONS	5777
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON THE REVIEW OF BILLS	5787
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	5787
NOTICES OF MOTION	5787
Motion 37-17(5) – Extended Adjournment of the House to March 2, 2015 (Yakeleya)	5787
SECOND READING OF BILLS	5788
Bill 46 – Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act	5788
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	5789
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	5806
ORDERS OF THE DAY	5806

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, February 24, 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 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 159-17(5):
MACKENZIE VALLEY FIBRE LINK PROGRESS**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, this Legislative Assembly has a vision of strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. Achieving that vision requires a balanced approach that advances our economic, environmental and social priorities. This government is moving forward on all those fronts.

I would like to take a few moments to speak to the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project. On January 12, 2015, the government took the first step towards removing the limitations of our current communications infrastructure. This project will enable our government to improve our programs and services, particularly in the areas of education and health, and allow many more our residents and businesses to join the 21st century and communicate in real time with the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project was a shared vision of the 17th Legislative Assembly that has become a reality.

We presently are just over a month into the construction of the project and I am proud to say the construction activities are taking place in the Deh Cho, the Tulita District, the K'ahsho Got'ine and the Gwich'in Settlement Area. Some highlights:

- Over 187 kilometres of cable has been installed.
- The project has employed 40 local residents. This does not include residents supporting the project by providing camp and catering services.
- A directional drilling program was successfully and safely completed at the Great Bear River

crossing. Future directional drills are also planned at the Liard and Mackenzie River crossings.

Mr. Speaker, since construction commenced, we have experienced increased interest, nationally and internationally, in the growth of the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility. Since its official inauguration in 2010, a total of three 14-metre receiving antennas have been installed on site. Soon we will see the construction of a fourth antenna at the site and continue to have discussions with other potential users.

In order to obtain a better understanding of how growing the Inuvik Satellite Facility can support construction of a fibre optic link up the Mackenzie Valley, the Government of the Northwest Territories has undertaken two missions to Europe. The initial mission was led by then Premier Roland, and in May 2013 I led a delegation to Kiruna, Sweden, where the Swedish Space Corporation operates one of the largest satellite ground stations in the world.

We have seen first-hand the significant positive benefits the satellite ground station and remote sensing industry have not only on the economy of Kiruna but also the important role they play in facilitating advanced learning at the Institute of Space Physics. The potential impact of an expanded satellite ground station in Inuvik on the Aurora Research Centre is significant and could make this facility one of the "the places to be" to conduct space-based Arctic research.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to lead a delegation to Europe in June 2015 to visit selected European space agencies to further promote both the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link and the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility.

I would like to conclude my statement by thanking the efforts and support from our residents, businesses and the leadership throughout the communities of the Mackenzie Valley to ensure the continued success of the project.

I also want to thank all my colleagues of this Assembly for their support in advancing the project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 160-17(5):
TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, ensuring our residents are able to share the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories is our shared vision. Infrastructure is a key part of achieving that vision and our government continues to participate in research that will improve northern infrastructure design and protect our northern environment.

I'm pleased to announce that Transport Canada will be providing \$669,000 from the federal Northern Transportation Adaptation Initiative to proceed with two new innovative research and development projects on the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk highway.

Through this partnership, the department will construct test sections on the new embankment to study innovative techniques for installing drainage structures and reinforcing deep fill embankments with geotextiles.

Both installations will be fully monitored and the results will help us improve methods for constructing transportation infrastructure on permafrost terrain, an area of northern research and development in which Canada remains a world leader.

These projects complement other research the department has undertaken to develop strategies to mitigate the effect of climate change on the NWT transportation system. The department's Climate Change Adaptation Plan sets a framework for ongoing adaptation initiatives including ongoing research. Green Light, the department's environmental strategy, continues to drive the department's mitigation activities.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation will continue collaborating with other levels of government and the academic and engineering communities to advance transportation research. Through these partnerships, vulnerability assessments of airport runways, highways and winter roads are being completed. We have constructed and are monitoring the performance of test sections on Highway No. 3 and have ongoing projects assessing the impact of climate change on water levels on the critical Mackenzie River marine system.

Through the department's participation on Transport Canada's Networks of Expertise in Permafrost and the Network of Expertise on Arctic Waters, we continue to develop and test adaptation strategies with the Government of Canada, the

engineering and research community and our northern transportation counterparts in the Yukon, Nunavut, Manitoba and Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, identifying and adapting to the potential effects of climate change are critical to the long-term sustainability of the NWT's transportation infrastructure. We will continue our research efforts to identify opportunities to improve transportation infrastructure and services across Northern Canada over the coming decades and prepare the system for challenges related to climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SOCIAL PASSING

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we are having a theme day on education. One of the challenges our students are facing today has to do with social passing.

A few of my constituents, as of late, have brought up the concerns of their children dealing with social passing. Many times our students, even though they are not prepared for the grade, are put in. They are just very concerned that we are setting up our students for failure.

They look back on when they used to go to school and how they had to work hard, study hard in order to pass the grades. If they didn't do that work, then they were held back, which made them try even harder. That's what they would like to see for their children. They want this government to review the policies we have put in place for social passing. That way we can encourage our students and make them study hard. That way when they graduate, they can go to college at the right grade level, and the same with university. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COORDINATION OF LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NWT is a proud territory with 11 official languages, nine of them Aboriginal representing the moral fabric of our culture and self-identity.

As proud as many of us are to declare this statistic to visitors and diplomats, it saddens me to think that not all is well in the world of northern language and culture. Evidently, many of our Aboriginal languages are in decline. Some are even

suspected of extinction if we don't react accordingly.

Somebody must be asking, how is this possible when we pour millions of dollars annually into language and culture programs and services? The answer is not easily rectified with a dollar figure but more riddled with a crisis of governance, saddled with a lack of coordination and plagued with bureaucracy. If this sounds familiar, it should.

As with any attempt to deal with an issue through a myriad of different governments, so too is the complexity of accountability and transparency that is lost in design.

It is not the fault of any one party or agency or government as to why we face an Aboriginal language crisis in the North. We orphaned it years ago to the chagrin of complacency and, sadly, to its own colonialism and demise.

I have said on many occasions, to what rationale do we owe a language or culture to flourish when we have competing strategies such as the Aboriginal Languages Board directives, the Aboriginal Revitalization Languages Board directives, the Aboriginal governments' five-year language plans, ECE's 10-year Strategic Framework for Culture and Heritage, an Aboriginal Languages Secretariat accountability plan, the NWT Languages Commissioner monitoring plan and, of course, the recent department's review of the Aboriginal Languages and Culture-Based Education or ALCB directive?

I have serious concerns about the viability and effectiveness of this recent ALCB directive and note a lack of coordination of all these recent levels of governance. I mean, how on earth is language supposed to survive the smothering blanket of bureaucracy? This is foolishness and it must stop.

I call upon the Minister of Education to look at this serious lack on this coordinated territorial approach to Aboriginal languages and to properly clarify and justify all these various labels of competing governance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECHINTA BUSH UNIVERSITY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to be standing here to speak about the Dechinta Bush University today. I have many constituents who have completed the seven-week programming at the Blachford Lodge and are furthering their own communities.

We as the Government of the Northwest Territories have been growing up with the onset of devolution, and so should our education system. Canada is the only circumpolar country without a circumpolar

university. I believe strongly, as the board of directors of the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning who operate the Dechinta Bush University, that it is time for us to establish a full-time accredited university in the Northwest Territories.

Since its inception in 2009, the Dechinta University has successfully provided land-based post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories. Dechinta is accredited by the University of Alberta and the University of McGill, which means the diplomas granted are from them. The Dechinta University cannot grant a northern diploma without first being empowered by the Education Act of the Northwest Territories.

I do want to acknowledge that they are being financially supported by the departments of Education, MACA, ENR, but for the most part, and gratefully so, is also privately funded by foundations.

The Premier of the NWT has been on record for saying that we need made-in-the-North solutions, and here we have a real made-in-the-North solution to establishing a recognized and accredited university in the Northwest Territories.

I challenge the Minister of Education to also support and create this made-in-the-North solution to a post-secondary education. Certainly, we do have the Aurora College which provides excellent service; however, we are not complete as an education system unless we have a university we can call our own.

Dechinta has to be recognized in our Education Act to be an accredited institution that can fully grant major and minor diplomas to our Northerners. In the past five years they have proven that university-calibre education can be taught in the Northwest Territories. They have also proven that there is demand for it. For the past three years, applications are far exceeding the spaces available. Students that are applying believe that they should not have to leave the North to pursue a degree relevant to their future, unless it is their choice. With this interest, Northerners do want to be educated in the North.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MENICOCHÉ: In closing, we have to take the opportunity to empower ourselves as a territory by providing a truly complete northern education system. We must consider seriously the efforts of the Dechinta Bush University to offer to ourselves and to the world a truly unique major and minor diploma programming. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
BALANCING EDUCATIONAL AND
CULTURAL PURSUITS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to give a shout out to the 8,350 students in the Northwest Territories and the 49 schools across the North and the 800 educators in the 33 communities in the eight regions. That was from a newsletter that I received this morning. Thank you, Minister Lafferty, for sending that over to us.

I also want to say a special congratulations and support to the 62 teachers in the Sahtu region who are working with our students and making a difference in the lives of the students.

At the same time, I was reading a quote from an Ojibway elder, Mr. Jimmy Jackson. Mr. Jackson said, "We've got to learn what's going on today in the world, and we've got to get an education so that we can survive." I thought about this quote this morning because I know that we need to get an education either on the land or in school so we don't lose. That's key. We need lawyers, doctors, teachers, carpenters and welders. We need skilled people to help other people, and we need to learn and be in a state of learning all the time.

We also need to remember our culture, learn our dances, learn the significance of our dances, learn to sing our own songs, learn our songs, learn our language. In the education system we need to maintain our culture, our identity for the future generation. That's the most important education, is to tell the young people that you can be whatever you want to be, but you have to work hard for it, you have to survive. You know, you can do that whenever you want. That's the golden opportunity in the Northwest Territories. Be of service to other people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EDUCATION RENEWAL

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have all heard the traditional African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child." In Alaska they take this one step further and say, "Raising a graduate is everybody's business." They recognize it is the responsibility of the entire community to be involved in providing the elements necessary to ensure success for our students, and so must we as we embark on education renewal.

When a student is successful, the entire community benefits. Children first need a solid grounding in early childhood development to ensure the full capacity to realize the potential of school-based learning. Without this foundation, there could be disappointment through even the best education programs.

The system they progress through must also reflect and address the issues that affect the ability of students to learn. A sole focus on building schools and student-teacher ratios and lesson plans is not adequate. Children who are hungry, tired, distracted or hyperactive are unable to pay attention and learn.

I am happy to see a focus on self-regulation, a method that students can be taught to ultimately help themselves to optimize the state they are in, in order to ensure they are solidly in the learning zone in and out of school.

In addition to self-regulation, social and emotional learning is now recognized as critical to effective learning and development of life skills that optimize lifelong learning and success. Social and emotional learning is a process through which people learn and apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions. It is based on the understanding that the best learning takes place in supportive environments that make learning challenging, engaging and meaningful. Social and emotional skills are critical to being a successful student.

These skills are taught through effective classroom instruction, positive activities in and out of the classroom and strong parent and community involvement. All parts of the child's social environment must be involved in providing the conditions that support learning. Besides teachers, parents and family, public leaders and every person in the community must work towards the same goal: healthy, emotionally stable, curious children, excited to learn and help each other learn.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: Communities must be assisted to recognize the importance of the factors affecting education because, after all is said and done, raising a graduate is everybody's business.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DECHINTA BUSH UNIVERSITY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off by saying that was nice to see the NWT Teachers' Association set up their display and their meet-and-greet in the Great Hall this morning. They do it every year to talk about the successes and the great work of their educators.

I'd like to recognize all the educators throughout the North, but take this opportunity to recognize a

certain group that does extraordinary work, and that's the staff at the Dechinta Bush University. They have taken a very unique approach in promoting our traditional knowledge, culture and education throughout the Northwest Territories and getting participants from all the regions. They actually utilize a lot of our elders to promote and revitalize culture and traditions, something that is needed within this government, while also working on other academic achievements.

I'd just like to mention a few highlights Dechinta has done over the years. First of all, they're celebrating their five-year anniversary of land-based, university-accredited education. As my colleague Mr. Menicoche said, they're getting more applications than the funding that they have to meet these growing needs and people that want to go to school and get educated. Not only educated in the academic sense but also educated in traditional knowledge and culture, which is something that's being lost in some of the regions. This year alone, 97 people applied for 30 places, and for the spring they've had 34 applications and only 10 spots, so that means 24 other people are losing out on this very important education.

Dechinta has been operating in the NWT since 2009, and in that time they have had 250 course completions – and listen to this – and no dropouts during that time. You compare that to our education system, you can compare that to Aurora College system, compare that to any post-secondary education institution that we send students to down south, and this is 100 percent completion rates. That goes to show that we need to support this university in a bigger and better way. In fact, 10 people are in this program for the springtime and yet we're spending millions of dollars on programs in the Aurora College system and we're not even close to those numbers for certain programs. We've got to re-evaluate how we're spending those dollars.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MOSES: There are a lot of good statistics and highlights that I'd like to recommend. I don't have the time to do it at this moment, but what I do want to do at this moment is just thank Dechinta staff for their commitment to the delivery of quality education, traditional knowledge and culture, and utilizing our elders to do this, and also recognize them for the passion that they do in providing this work and for their dedication in making a difference in the lives of people across the Northwest Territories and in our young adults who are wanting to get an education and go back to school.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's Education Week, so it's very timely to have a theme day today on education.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is currently pursuing many initiatives. Education Renewal and Early Childhood Development, ECD, are just two of them. ECD generally encompasses the education and care provided for two- to four-year-olds. In the NWT it means licenced daycares, preschools, junior kindergarten and the Aboriginal Head Start program. Using that definition, about 70 percent of NWT two- to four-year-olds attend an Early Childhood Development Program.

That's pretty good, but what is the quality of education and care that the children are getting? One of our programs, Junior Kindergarten, requires licenced early childhood educators, but a daycare licence issued by the GNWT does not require the staff that they employ to be certified. That they're not required to do so is a direct result of how much this government spends on ECD. Although JK is fully funded by the GNWT, preschools and licenced daycares are not.

Canada, in comparison to other countries, spends much less for ECD programs, and in Canada the NWT spends the least of all Canadian jurisdictions on early childhood education, in 2014 just 1.1 percent of our total budget. Quebec, on the other hand, spent 4.3 percent of their 2014 budget on early childhood education.

The results of a recent study by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the University of Toronto show that only 1 percent of the NWT ECD budget goes to fee subsidies for early childhood programs. The GNWT does provide funds to daycares to assist in their operation, but there is no fee subsidy for daycare users, the parents. Amongst the provinces, some spend up to 65 percent of their early childhood budget on subsidies for parents and families. Here the GNWT child care user subsidy is only available by application through income assistance.

To quote the report: "Government subsidy levels often do not match the fees licenced centres must charge to attract and keep qualified staff. Low-income families are unable to pay for the gap between the fees charged and the subsidies governments provide, forcing them to settle for unregulated options." In the NWT that means unlicensed day homes, a good option for child care, but not the best.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: The best would be a licenced facility with required certified early childhood educators and a mandated curriculum, but the NWT has no standards. Day homes do not have to have certified early childhood educators on staff, nor does the Department of ECE require the use of an approved curriculum. That's not the case in other NWT ECE programs.

As part of the education renewal project, the Department of ECE has advised that the Early Childhood Development Action Plan includes a review of funding and governance for ECD programs. Part of that review is supposed to evaluate child care costs for families. This review is long overdue. We have a patchwork of programs for ECD and inconsistent methods of funding. For example, licenced day homes and preschools have not seen any significant increase in their funding for at least seven years and yet JK is fully funded.

Change is needed, and the sooner the better. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORTING AURORA COLLEGE PROGRAMMING

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Kofi Annan, the former secretary general of the UN, had said, "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family." I couldn't agree more. I really believe education is the true future before us. It's one we can write and help others write their own future.

I once again call upon this government to take a hard look at what it's doing to the future of education. We've all heard about the travesty of its plan on junior kindergarten, not thought out, well-conceived and believed in, but yet not thought out.

Let us not see another crash against the rocks on the Aurora College future. We see a program here with great promise and potential, but we see little future in it with the government not paying the attention it deserves.

Aurora College, in my view, has a real future in our North. It will have a real factor on where we go in the North. As I said, education is the real future. We must be asking ourselves, are we expanding and working in the right direction? Are we meeting the needs of the people today for the people of tomorrow? We could be expanding our two-year Social Work Program into a four-year bachelor's program. We could be addressing, through Aurora College, the education needs through our student teacher program. There are so many ways to teach for the future, not teach for just today, not teach and address the past problems. We must pause for an

environment that develops the potential of the future, not figure out how to fill holes in the past.

Let us not destroy the potential before us. There are many opportunities here and we may ask ourselves, well, what are they? Let us right a path towards a positive future with Aurora College. Let us blueprint an opportunity.

We've all heard about the potential of the Canada Winter Games coming eight short years away. Let us consider this. I've asked for the expansion of the college many times. I'm not the only one who has brought this to the House's attention. The Canada Winter Games will be calling upon this territory, maybe even this city, perhaps this government, to help support an athletes' village.

What a better gift to the people of Canada, through the Canada Winter Games, than having an athletes' village that was turned over to the future of the college? That would be the future of every student who wants to be educated in the North, and that would create the type of potential, foster an environment and show that education matters to Northerners. I know it certainly matters to me and it definitely matters to everyone on this side of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FACILITATING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Education is about going to school, learning... [Translation] ...we learn from the school. We sit around the table and listen and learn. Also, we work in the bush, as well, to educate ourselves in our culture and...[Translation ends]

[English not provided]

...our extended families and the knowledge is passed on through... [Translation] We learn from our culture. We learn from our legends and this is how our culture is passed on. This is how we learn as Dene people. [Translation ends]

...sometimes it is a detriment to the society of the NWT. Sometimes we are reminded of the reality that we are just fresh out of the residential school experience, and to go forth in education you have to be removed from your family and from your community. There's still a persistent view that once you do that you become a different person. So parents, at the best of times, have a hard time letting their children go to an institution of changing a person that they love and care for into another person that's educated and will go forth into the future.

The current reality is that in the NWT a First Nations community on average has a Grade 9

education. We have low levels of attendance. Our high school graduation rates are very low. At the same time, our students in the small communities don't fare as well as students in the larger centres and.... [Translation] ...for our young people we have to make sure that they grow up to be good people, and if they are well educated they will have a good future. Having them represent us in the future as good people would be beneficial for us. [Translation ends]

That's what we think. But today the view from the elders is also that, you know, one elder in particular, or some elders that I've come across coined this phrase that I take to my heart and, roughly translated, it says, "You go into the future holding a pen, and that's how you'll gain a foot into society."

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. NADLI: [Translation] Our elders say we will go into the future holding a pen. This is how the old people are saying we will benefit from the education [Translation ends]

...and together at work to agree that as a goal we need to act upon this and make it a priority to ensure that we improve the lives of our people, all of our people in the NWT. One goal that we should all aspire to work towards is our high school graduation rates. Let's agree that by 2016 we will graduate with at least 2,000 students by that time. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise too today, along with my colleagues, to discuss Education Week. Obviously, with Education Week we think of our teachers. We had the opportunity to talk to the NWT Teachers' Association. We are very thankful for those teachers that work in the Northwest Territories. We all know, in our personal lives, teachers that helped us out to get to where we are today.

These teachers are working hard, in the evenings and on some of their own time. We talked recently about some of the sporting events and how some communities do really well in certain sports because of the commitment from some of those teachers.

Recently, over the last year, we've had an attack on the teachers and the education, and we see that was the way junior kindergarten was implemented. There was lots of pressure financially on those

teachers and the DEAs to find the money to implement junior kindergarten the way it was rolled out. That's why we sat here and debated the junior kindergarten so strongly. The fact that they have so many financial pressures now, to add junior kindergarten to that system was not fair. It needed to be implemented in a different process. It needed some funding.

Junior kindergarten is a good idea. We support the concept of junior kindergarten, but not the way it was rolled out. It needs to be implemented by the communities for the communities.

We know there's a review currently underway of junior kindergarten, and I will have questions for the Minister later on how that review is coming and where the DEAs and those teachers can ask questions on how to implement junior kindergarten for their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INVESTMENT IN HAY RIVER TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's statement yesterday was two and a half minutes but it seemed to be like two and a half seconds, so I wanted to take this opportunity... I'm going to break from my colleagues on the education and I want to talk about one of my favourite subjects again today: Hay River. One I really don't need any notes to talk about.

I pride myself in being a very optimistic person. I'm not pessimistic. When people say, oh, gloom and doom, I go, hey, look it, think about that nice \$35 million mid-life retrofit to the Diamond Jenness Secondary School. Think about that new \$65 million hospital we're going to open here soon. Think about that \$10 million for extended care beds that we're going to be building in Hay River soon. I always try to focus on the positive.

---Interjection

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Oh, the list could go on. I try to focus on the positive, and these are good projects and they tide us over from year to year and season to season and they provide good infrastructure. But the problem is that if Hay River is truly the hub of the North, we cannot afford the erosion of those things that make Hay River what it is. Those things are the lake, the river, the rail, the road.

Right now, to get a bunch of train cars from High Level to Hay River, because of a lack of investment in the infrastructure for the rail, you can go 10 kilometres an hour. It takes two days to get from High Level to Hay River.

I know it's not our government's responsibility to put capital money into the rail bed, but as a government we certainly have an opportunity to talk to companies like CN Rail to talk about what are we going to do about that.

We cannot afford the erosion of those things that are foundational to what Hay River was built on and those things that are the underpinning of the economy that we will generate if those are there. The problem is the erosion of those things.

I join my colleague from Hay River North today to talk about dredging again. Whether it's for Canadian Coast Guard, Canadian Coast Guard has the west coast, the east coast and the Great Lakes and Hay River. That's an inland harbour in Hay River and that's been a mainstay of our economy, having that inland harbour. When visitors come to Hay River, they see those big ships sitting down there and they go, oh, my gosh, I never dreamt there was an inland harbour in Hay River like this. It is there; it's exciting; it's wonderful; but it's soon not even going to be able to take a fishing boat, a recreational boat, or a Canadian Coast Guard vessel out of the harbour in Hay River because we haven't done the dredging. Again, the government says, hey, not our issue, not our problem.

So, yes, thank you for the good things you do. Thank you for the government jobs. Thank you for the government infrastructure. But we need some help with the underpinning foundational things in Hay River that make it what it is, and that is the transportation hub of the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize the Austin family: Dad, Andrew Austin; mom, Kim Austin; sister, Maggie Austin; and brothers, Lachlan Austin and Malcolm Austin. As you know, Saturday night was the 9th Memorial Cup Challenge between the RCMP and the Yellowknife firefighters, and I'm pleased to announce that over \$40,000 was raised, and the Austin family is going to Disneyland tomorrow.

---Applause

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce, to you and through you, as we just heard from the Premier, the Austin family, but I don't believe I've ever in the history of the Legislature introduced a superhero to our

Legislature. I'd like to introduce The Incredible Malcolm.

---Applause

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are joined here today with some individuals that graduated the Dechinta program, Dechinta alumni, as well as staff, and I'd just like to take the opportunity to recognize all those who have gone through the program: Ms. Cheryl Mandeville, Savannah Lantz, Justina Black, Rebecca Grooms, Charlotte Overvold, Trisha Smith, Mande McDonald, and some of the staff as well, and Jimmy Billard and Erin Freeland-Ballantyne.

Just to note that of the 100 percent completion, 49 percent of those individuals pursue further education post-secondary, 57 of them are employed and 90 percent of these also are in the NWT labour force. Good job on the work that they do.

I'd also, at this time, like to welcome the Austin family and want to recognize the great support that this community has done over the weekend, as I attended the hockey game as well.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take a second too. I'll start with recognizing the Austin family. I understand they're off to Disneyland tomorrow and I wish you safe travels.

I also want to recognize a constituent, one of the chief organizers of the Memorial Cup Challenge this past weekend, Chris Johnson with the Northern Safety Association. Welcome, Chris.

I know MLA Dolynny was also organizing the event on Saturday and I want to thank him for that as well.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I have a constituent in the audience. I would like to recognize Cheryl Mandeville.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to recognize the Dechinta students here and also to the special family here, the Austin family. I want to say thank you to all the people who made this event happen for the family on behalf of the Sahtu. Congratulations.

I also want to recognize two of the elders from the Deline leadership, the elders Andrew John Kenny and Leon Modeste.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess Minister Beaulieu and I will share recognition of constituent Cheryl Mandeville who actually lives in Yellowknife Centre but is from Fort Res, so we'll share the constituent.

As my colleagues Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Moses and Mr. McLeod, I too wish to recognize Malcolm Austin. The Austin family has been going through a terrible challenge and I think they deserve to be recognized for their strength and I admire very much how they've come together for this fight. I also recognize how much this community has come together to help support them. I was at the community fundraiser with Mr. Dolynny at Sir John some time ago and the community is truly behind you 100 percent and we all wish you very well on your trip to Disneyland. Enjoy every moment of it. Thank you very much.

---Applause

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] I would like to also recognize students from Dechinta. We've been working with them for many years now and they have been working with us in Education. We've been working very well and moving forward with education.

Also, I would also like to recognize the Austin family in the audience. I realize that they are in a situation, but we are going to support them, also with prayers for them.

Also, Dave Roebuck, NWT executive director. I would also like to thank him for being in the audience. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I'd like to welcome everybody here in the public gallery today, especially Mr. Malcolm Austin. Welcome to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Blake.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 16-17(5):
CANADA WINTER GAMES MEDALIST
ANNAH HANTHORN

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, one of the highlights of work in our communities is celebrating success. Today I want to acknowledge Annah Hanthorn from Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories.

Nineteen-year-old Annah has captured gold in the 7.5 kilometre cross-country skiing at the Canada Winter Games in Prince George.

Annah has trained in the Yukon for the past few years and is at the Canada Winter Games representing Team Yukon; however, we share in her accomplishments as her roots are in the Northwest Territories.

Her younger brother is competing for Team NWT. Judah Hanthorn is at the Games for cross-country skiing, and her mother, Lynn Hanthorn, is a manager for Team NWT cross-country skiing. So, with a family gathering, this was a wonderful experience to share for Annah.

Fort McPherson is a very proud and excited community celebrating the success of Annah and her gold medal achievement.

Mr. Speaker and Members, please join me in giving Annah a huge round of applause and in sending congratulations and best of luck for future races. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 687-17(5):
DECHINTA BUSH UNIVERSITY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off with questions today in follow-up to my Member's statement about the great work that the Dechinta University is doing. I know our government does partner with them in terms of getting research brought up to the university and also in terms of some of their programming.

In my Member's statement I talked about the 100 percent completion and not having enough funding for all the applicants. What concerns me is the number of applicants that don't get into the university. What options do they have and are they able to get into Aurora College or another program? Even the enrolment rate at Aurora College has been declining over the years with more interests going into Dechinta University.

One way that we can offset this and support such a strong program that not only focuses on achievement but focuses on the traditional knowledge and culture, as well, is to increase some of this funding and actually look at ways that we can create core funding for this university and the work that they do.

Would the Minister be willing to commit and willing to look at the work that this university has done and commit to higher core funding moving forward given the success of this program? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. With Dechinta Bush University, it has been successful to date, since 2009. I was just there last fall and I wanted to meet with the staff, meet with the students, and it was a very well-experienced visit. I've always been supportive of the Dechinta University Program and I will continue to do so.

When I met with the staff at the Dechinta Campus, they highlighted some of the challenges we are faced with. I expected the proposal that's coming down, so this is an opportune time to discuss some of these aspects. We will be entertaining a discussion on this. Obviously, Aurora College will be a partner as well as U of A. Those are some of the discussions we are currently having. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: I'm glad to hear discussions are in the works and moving forward. I haven't seen government work so hard in terms of education and developing this Education Renewal and Innovation, working with Aurora College and making changes in our education system. We've done a lot of work in the last three years. Rather than reinventing the wheel, I'm looking at ways we can move forward.

We have already got a very unique university looking at unique ways to educate our people. One of my colleagues mentioned Canada not having a university. When we met with the Norway ambassadors for NWT Days, they mentioned they have the most northern university in the circumpolar region. They are doing a lot of great things as well.

Would the Minister not only work with the organizations here but look at how Norway has worked and created a university and help promote Dechinta at the same time and get those talks underway as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Most definitely. I believe Dechinta is a foundation we can build on as well as working with other partners. There are other countries that have established universities, even in a small population. So we are currently exploring those areas and doing a thorough research because we want to compile the information, sit down with Dechinta, the college and see where we can fit it in. U of A is part of the process as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: Yes, one of the highlights that Dechinta University does is they have relationships with the U of A, U of Vic, UBC and McGill and have brought millions of dollars of research to the North. I know the Minister is aware of that as they've also worked in partnership with Dechinta. Within the Education Act, would the department look at committing, possibly by the end of this term, to making an amendment to the Education Act to recognize, along with leading universities in Canada, the Dechinta Bush University Centre for Research?

Would he look at amending that act so we can recognize the work that Dechinta is doing and all the research they are doing and keeping that here in the North? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: There are a lot of things on the go right now, a lot of discussions happening. There are also Skills for Success within my department that Dechinta is engaged in as well. We want to engage them. We need to find those individuals with the talent. Not only that, but if we need to change within our Education Act, obviously that will take some time. Those changes have to reflect our engagement with the general public as well. We are currently in discussions with the Dechinta and also the president of Aurora College and the U of A. There is a proposal that's been discussed and we are moving forward on that. I will be updating the standing committee in due process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, 90 percent of the alumni go into the NWT labour force. I made a comment yesterday about the NWT Labour Force Framework.

Will the Minister work with Dechinta University and work with our alumni to get them into the labour force within the Northwest Territories as well as create jobs in our small communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Not only the Dechinta alumni but others as well. We have a great deal of graduates coming out of our college in the Northwest Territories. The Skills for Success will highlight those individuals and what kind of credential and qualifications industries or GNWT or the private sector needs. We want to train those individuals as well. Yes, those are the tools that we need to deliver to those individuals. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 688-17(5):
DECHINTA BUSH UNIVERSITY

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement as well as Dechinta University.

When the organizers began Dechinta University, probably more than five years ago when they were dreaming their dreams, they were focusing on establishing a university in the Northwest Territories.

What is our strategy, our position on establishing a university in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When I first met with Erin Ballantyne in 2009, I believe, or even sooner than that... No, when I first was elected as Minister of Education, she presented to me and I told her you had me at hello.

---Laughter

This was a very exciting project at the beginning and I still have a vision of where Dechinta University is going. It is before us now and we are currently discussing it. We have to work with all the partners as well. There is also the Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik with Skills for Success as well. All the different initiatives have to come into line with the Dechinta University and the programs they offer and all the stakeholders we need to engage with. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm glad the Minister has a working relationship with the Dechinta University since its formation. Where they are heading these days is they've proven themselves in the last five years and their name is out there, not only in the Northwest Territories but right across Canada and internationally, as well, in that people are interested. They are saying you've got a university, but I think, yes, it's a university in name but I think the request is to get the name, Dechinta Bush University into the Education Act so it can be accredited to offer their own major and/or minor diploma to our northern students or anyone who is attending.

I asked the Minister earlier about the strategy for getting a university and now this question is about recognizing that we can and should be the Dechinta University into the NWT Education Act so that they can be accredited in issuing their own diplomas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I stated, there's a variety of parties that we need to work with. With the college campuses we have in the Northwest Territories, obviously we deliver degree programs, we deliver master's programs and Dechinta also offers university programs. So we are doing very preliminary work with the work that Dechinta has done to date and what programs the college is offering at this point. There is a variety of partners that we have in southern institutions and how can we best put that into perspective as a northern university program deliverer. Those are some of the areas that we are currently discussing today and we are involving the Dechinta team as well. They will be part of the process along the way because they provide valuable information as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I know the Minister is talking about it being a longer process than we expect. Of course, it's like many things in government, it takes a while to change initiatives or steer the ship.

In terms of that, what's the department's position on increasing support and funding for the Dechinta Bush University programming that's out there? Mahsi.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Within our Education department we have contributed, over the last three years, our contribution, because I feel that Dechinta can go places with the program that they are currently delivering. They are very unique compared to other programming that we currently deliver in the Northwest Territories. So we will continue to subsidize them; we'll continue to support them. In 2013-14, obviously, we provided \$153,000 as a kick-start. In 2014-15 it went up to \$415,000. So these are the discussions that we are currently having, what kinds of resources that are required. Again, they're very different. They're very unique. So, those are considerations that we are talking about, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Also, since we're also talking about representing Canada with the Dechinta Bush University program, I'd like to ask the Minister on his next visit to his federal counterparts, or if there are any others – perhaps CanNor can be approached – about having a federal investment in our Dechinta Bush University and federal supports.

I'd like to ask the Minister, can he do that the next time he meets with his federal counterparts? Mahsi.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Most definitely. These are discussions that we need to have at a higher level as well. CanNor could be a partner in this. They have been a partner in various initiatives within the GNWT. So I will be presenting that, as well, where they stand with a northern university.

I believe it was around 2008-2009 when we presented the idea of a university in the North. Obviously, they want to focus on the program delivery, the federal perspective. We need to get an updated status on that. If we can expand on that, by all means, I'll be pushing that Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I'm going to remind the Members today on the clock, we had eight sets of questions in 15 minutes. So I want to make sure the Members that are going on a preamble for your questioning, shorten it up and let's get rolling here. Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTIONS 689-17(5):
INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and I want to follow up on my statement and talk a little bit about daycare and subsidies and funding for daycares.

Late last fall the Department of Education undertook a review of the Early Childhood Program, and they advised licenced daycares and day homes last August that they would be undertaking this review and that they would want to get these day homes and daycares involved.

I'd like to ask the Minister right now... Sorry, the review was to be completed in October. So, I'd like to ask the Minister for an update on the status of this review. Was it completed in October as was scheduled? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. There's been a review that's been undertaken and I believe my department, since October, has been finalizing their input as well. So, I'll have to get the latest status on that. I don't have that detailed information in front of me as we speak. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: To the Minister: Part of the review, as I understand it, was to look at the review, to review child care costs for parents and to particularly look at the impact that child care has on their cost of living and so on.

I'd like to ask the Minister, is that part of the review that either has gone on or is going on? Will the review be looking at costs of child care for parents? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That particular review, I'm just getting some information here that it is due in March. Obviously, since we're discussing that the overall review, we want to be on the right track.

Also, within the review process we want to touch on all funding aspects as well. What the Member is referring to will be captured. We've been hearing from the day home and daycare operators their concerns and opportunities that we may consider. Those are discussions that we are currently having.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for the information on that completion date. I guess since the daycare operators, day home operators were advised that this would be done in October and now the Minister has just said it's going to be completed in March, I'd like to know why there was a delay. I would also like to know from the Minister if he can provide me with a list of the daycare and day home

operators who have been contacted for input into the review.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The review will be due in March, so that's within the next couple of weeks. During the review the department obviously engaged the licenced daycare operators and also the staff, licenced family day home operators. Also, part of the process is Education, Culture and Employment regional early childhood consults. Those are the parties that have been involved along the process.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am hearing from residents that are involved in day homes and daycares that I don't think they've heard from the department to provide input into this review.

I would again ask the Minister if he would commit to provide me at a later date a list of the people that have been contacted to provide input into the early childhood program review.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We will provide the latest update of all those we have engaged because it's very important that we hear from the day home and the daycare operators from their perspectives and their concerns that are brought to our attention.

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

QUESTION 690-17(5):
EDUCATION RENEWAL AND
INNOVATION ACTION PLAN

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the ECE budget tabled recently, it's hard not to notice that the balance between forced growth and new initiatives is disproportionately balanced within the department's budget plans. A question many of us have asked is, how is it possible to initiate such a monumental shift in program design with no new funding such as the Education Renewal and Innovation Action Plan? Moreover, with high school graduation right around the corner, many are still concerned with our territorial student outcomes.

My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I wish to ask the Minister about his budget for the upcoming year, which is relatively flat. Actually, when you factor in forced growth, he is dealing with fewer dollars than last year, yet we continue to hear how much change is forthcoming with the ERI Action Plan.

Can the Minister inform the House how is his department funding this new initiative?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When the Finance Minister presented the mains and the business plan for 2015-16, he made it clear the financial realities of this government and as we move forward it's going to be a very tough position to be in. The three-year Education Renewal and Innovation Action Plan was created to use internal and existing funding as much as we possibly can. We know that's coming with other departments, as well, not only ECE.

In addition to the \$150 million that we contribute to education boards across the Northwest Territories, we have identified \$6.2 million over a three-year period. In 2014-15, \$2.4 million; 2015-16, \$2 million; and also 2016-17, \$1.8 million. Those are the monies that we identified that will be well spent and invested into our education system.

MR. DOLYNNY: I guess the devil will be in the details when we finally see this in action. We are being made aware that the Alberta Achievement Test, the only real assessment tool to gauge how well or poorly our students do in language arts and math skills, is being phased out.

Can the Minister tell us what tools will then be used to monitor a baseline for assessing student outcomes across the NWT?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We are closely monitoring the Alberta AATs. There have been some changes that are happening and we are working very closely with them. My department is currently looking at replacement of the assessment and including Alberta's new tools for student learning assessment. That's a new tool that they have developed which was piloted in several schools in the NWT this fall as well. We're working very closely with Alberta. It is too soon to know if the new Alberta assessment is a good fit for the NWT, but those are areas that we will continue to push forward with Alberta and see what's best for the Northwest Territories to develop our own assessment tool.

MR. DOLYNNY: There is a feeling that the phasing out of the Alberta Achievement Test was a direct response to the continued low scores year after year in some of our smaller communities and that any new standardized test will only camouflage the real issues facing these struggling students.

How can the Minister guarantee that any new tools in standardized testing will be equally representative for all northern students?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The phasing out of the Alberta Achievement Test is an opportunity for our government to find other methods that we can work with that have a northern perspective. Tools that assist in student achievement are an appropriate way that takes into account our students' realities and also their northern context. My department staff, ECE, is working to determine

what is the best tool for the Northwest Territories along with working with Alberta and the standardized tests that are most applicable and suitable for our northern context for our small communities as well. Those are just some of the discussions that we are currently having.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the pathways to high school graduation rates, what does the Minister have, or in place, to improve these student outcomes?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We are being challenged in the Northwest Territories. We know that NWT students are graduating from high school significantly below the Canadian average. We're fully aware of that, and our system is not meeting the standards. The whole Education Renewal and Innovation will definitely capture that. We're fully aware of that and we're developing tools to capture that as well. Along the way, it's a three-year mandate, a three-year action plan, and we will be keeping the standing committee up to speed while we're making changes along the way.

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

QUESTION 691-17(5):
GNWT WORKPLACE SAFETY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions for the Minister of Human Resources right now. We've all been made well aware of the experience and certainly the security issues that have happened around Stanton Hospital where many of our staff have come under some scares due to a security issue. My fear, of course, is that Stanton may be more of a symptom of problems as opposed to a particular one. Rather than focusing strictly in on Stanton, which would probably be a mistake at this particular time, I want to look broadly across our public service and ask the Minister of Human Resources what would his department be doing, knowing that, I believe, in 2013 we've had a couple assaults on health and social services staff, and I know we've had some assaults late in 2014. What we're noticing is a bit of a trend across the continuum of the public service, and I just want to make sure our staff are certainly safe and we're doing the proper assessments.

Specifically to the Minister of Human Resources is: What type of assessment is being done to ensure our staff across the territorial government are working in safe environments and they have protection and access to resources to ensure their safety?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'm going to remind people in the public gallery to turn

your cellphones off. The Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These types of incidents can be brought up to the occupational health and safety committees. Each department has an occupational health and safety committee, so those would be vetted through those committees.

MR. HAWKINS: With this recent trend of incidents at Stanton or even downtown in some of our offices or anywhere else, for that matter, there's been a bit of a trend. Has this not stimulated the need for this type of discussion to ensure that our employees are safe, and as such, what about the government taking initiative on doing an assessment to ensure our staff are not only safe but have the proper resources at their beck and call as and when necessary?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. As we do here in the Assembly, we go through a safety drill. My understanding is that each of the departments through that committee can do safety drills for their own departments or their own floors and offices. I'm not sure how recent or how often these safety drills occur. I can check with the Department of Human Resources who, in turn, will have to check with all of the departments and we can get an update on that. But that would be the process. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Again, I appreciate the answer from the Minister, but we've got a bit of a trend here where some of our employees, be it at Stanton or at some of the downtown offices, and not only recently but there has been over a number of months in a couple of years that the staff have been in jeopardy or some type of peril because of these types of incidents. Rather than waiting for the occupational health and safety committee to make its recommendation or even to meet for goodness sakes, what proactive approach is the Minister of Human Resources doing and directing through policy to ensure our employees are safe rather than waiting until an incident happens and then figuring, well, maybe we should talk about it? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As I indicated, it would be something that does go through the Occupational Health and Safety Committee. However, I can touch base with the deputy. I believe that Human Resources holds responsibility in the safety area of all employees in the public service. I'll ensure that I hold discussions with the deputy minister, who in turn will discuss with the other deputies to see what type of safety plans are in place for the safety of our staff across the entire public service not only here in Yellowknife but across the whole territory. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for that because this lack of safety trend is quite alarming and it's not just about one facility, it's about all our territorial staff. I'm going to quote Minister Abernethy's comment the other day, "Our staff are the most valuable resources. They are the backbone of our system and we need to ensure that." I want to make sure that the Minister is very clear on exactly what he's going to do and when we're going to do it, because I don't want to wait for yet another incident to happen for anyone to be standing by and saying I told you so. We don't want to be talking like that. We would like to be speaking from a proactive point of view of how we've done this, how we've approached this and continue to be relentless for the safety of our employees. Seeing news reports that the employees only find out about these particular plans via Hansard is not a right approach. I want us to be as proactive as possible so we're not talking about this in the future. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. I agree. I will contact the deputy minister of Human Resources as soon as I am able to do so, most likely tomorrow morning. We will have that discussion and she, in turn, will contact the rest of the departments to see what type of safety plans are in place for the safety of our public service. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 692-17(5):

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions for the Minister of Education today following up on my Member's statement. The questions that I have are about the junior kindergarten review.

Can the Minister indicate where that review currently sits in the review of junior kindergarten? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We are currently going through the review process. We've hired consultants to engage with the general public, the DECs, Aboriginal leadership, Aboriginal Head Start program in the communities, the licenced daycare and family day home operators, and more specifically on how the JK is being delivered in the communities. Also, there was an Arctic Aboriginal Head Start Council. Their programming, Aboriginal governments and the NWTTA is part of the process and the public engagement.

We're expecting that report and the overall review to be completed by July 2015 and then we will sit down to figure things out from there, how it will look,

and I will be sharing that with the standing committee. Mahsi.

MR. BOUCHARD: Can the Minister please provide us with the information of who the consultant is? Can we publicly display who that consultant is, how they can be contacted for the public and DEAs to provide their comments sooner than later? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes. We will provide that to the standing committee, who the actual contractor is. It's a contractor that's well known to deal with these matters in other jurisdictions as well. So they're more specifically on the junior kindergarten area. We also have Dr. Andre Corriveau who's working very closely with us on this particular file, especially when it comes to the health and social services area. This is a joint initiative between my department, Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services. So we're doing what we can to capture everything within that review. Mahsi.

MR. BOUCHARD: As of yesterday the Hay River DEA had not heard from this consultant. The South Slave District Education Authority had meetings just recently and nothing on their minutes indicated that they had a meeting with the consultant.

Can the Minister indicate to me when this consultant will be in the South Slave area or the Hay River area? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we first initiated this discussion, obviously the terms of reference were shared with the standing committee and it's also on our website. I will be getting back to the Member more specifically when they're going to be visiting his community, along with other Members' communities, as well, to gather their information and do the overall review. Mahsi.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister has talked about their website. Will the consultant have a link to their website on how to contact them directly to provide their input through the website and through public process? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. If the information is not there at this point, we will make sure that it is available. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 693-17(5):
ABORIGINAL STUDENT LITERACY
PILOT PROJECT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Government of the Northwest Territories did a needs assessment in the Sahtu region, the number

one issue with the results of that assessment was the literacy skills of our young students either in school or who have finished school.

What is the Minister doing, what is this department doing to improve the literacy in our small communities in the schools that can show great results by giving some resources to the teachers? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to educating our community members, obviously literacy plays a key role at the community level. We work closely with our partners, as well, the NWT Literacy Council. We provide funding on an annual basis and they work very closely with the community. They're always in the communities promoting literacy, whether it be in schools or at the community level.

We also work with the DEC's and DEAs to promote that even further, providing resources, providing funding available to them. So we continue to monitor where we can improve our programming. I'm always open to improving our programming as well. This is an area that I feel we need to invest in continuously. So we'll continue to do so. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: In the Globe and Mail article it talks about the Aboriginal Literacy Pilot Project that dramatically improved the test scores in Ontario. I wonder if the Minister is aware of this First Nations reserve school in Ontario. It was struggling with the basic literacy test scores, and they have done a pilot project in that community that has greatly improved the results of these test scores for the young students.

Is this something that the Minister would be interested to investigate and to see if this could be done in the Northwest Territories in looking at a pilot project in the Sahtu communities?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When it comes to literacy, we've made some changes. We've had some pilot projects in the South Slave region. We've had literacy coaches. It's been very successful to date and we continue to use that as an example for other schools as well.

The pilot projects we've done over the years, so we've seen some results out of that. Within our Education Renewal and Innovation, this will obviously capture the literacy component, and we'll be discussing further with our key stakeholders where we can best invest in certain areas, whether it comes to DEC's or DEAs. They are our true partners, so we will continue to work with them.

MR. YAKELEYA: When the government did a test in the schools, we found out, shockingly, that in our schools in our small communities, 50 percent are operating below their grade level. That's shocking.

So, I want to ask the Minister again, with him probably not having the privilege of reading the Globe and Mail I received, to look at a pilot project in our communities that would increase these numbers here. They're doing it at the Hillside School on the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation and Walpole Island Elementary School.

Is the Minister willing to look at this, investigate it and say yes, this could be done in our small communities? Because we've got to do better than 50 percent of our students. We're failing.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I fully agree that we have to do better. That's what we're eyeing and focusing on in the Educational Renewal and Innovation. We want to make some changes along the way. Literacy coaches, as I stated before, have been very successful, and we want to capture that in other schools, as well, because we want our students to succeed throughout the Northwest Territories. Those are the discussions that we are currently having. We'll continue to do so with our key stakeholders and our partners. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, it says in the paper, kids are not learning to read and write by Grade 3, and if you don't learn to read and write by Grade 3, you're handicapped all the way through. That's what I'm talking about, and the results show that 50 percent of our small schools are operating below their grade level. We are failing them.

I'm asking the Minister again, is he willing to look at the pilot projects that are done in Ontario to see if these pilot projects can be implemented in our Sahtu communities as a pilot project to improve the literacy skills of our students? Will he be willing to commit to look at that?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We're always looking for opportunities and ideas and suggestions. What the Member is referring to is a document that, if we can get our hands on – I'm assuming that he'll be tabling the document at a later time – we can access and work with it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 694-17:
SOCIAL PASSING

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my statement earlier today, social passing is a huge issue in my riding. Many parents would like to see their children having more homework, more projects that they have to do and trying harder. Right now it seems that their children don't have to try and yet they're put up one grade

higher every year even though they're not at that level.

So, I'd like to ask the Minister, why did the department move towards social passing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the process is that we have heard over and over from the parents, the grandparents and the educators that we need to have those individuals along with their peers. At the same time, we are currently working with the parents. We have to deal with attendance and various areas of improvements within our educational system. We are doing what we can as a department. We need to reach out to the parents. If students aren't attending schools, they fall behind. When they fall behind, they fall behind in the curriculum, the areas of study and way behind in their homework as well.

This is an area where we want to improve through our Educational Renewal and Innovation. We are doing what we can to improve in those areas, along with working with the district education councils and district education authorities because we need their support as well. Mahsi.

MR. BLAKE: Just thinking back, you know, one of the reasons I believe that social passing was brought into play here was because of our graduation rates. In the past our graduation rates were much lower. This is no reason to have social passing in our education.

When will the department review and revise the Education Act to deal with social passing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We are doing a three-year action plan on education renewal. Part of that process will capture attendance and the challenge we are faced with. The peer passing has been brought to our attention on numerous occasions and how we can deal with the matter. There are mixed feelings about that particular subject. It depends on who you talk to. We need to have all the stakeholders have a discussion on the best approach to deal with this particular matter. This is part of the discussion we are currently having as part of the action plan on ERI. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 695-17(5):
STUDENT ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if he's talked with his department... There was a young student I talked with a few

weeks ago. I wanted to ask the student what the best thing about going to school is. Do you know what the student said to me, Mr. Speaker? He said, "Leaving." I just went, "What?"

What is the Minister's department doing to keep the students in the school rather than to leave right away?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I'm not sure what leaving right away would mean in the school system, whether that is during class or when they leave school. We want each and every child, 8,000 students across the Northwest Territories to graduate with the credentials that they can move on to further education with. There are some challenges we are faced with today. That's the whole reason we are developing Education Renewal and Innovation, so we can capture those individual students who may be struggling, whether it is with issues at home or personal issues they have encountered. Part of the ERI is to capture the wellness of our students and deal with those matters, so we have to work with the district education councils or authorities. They have the ultimate decision when it comes to students in their jurisdictions, whether it is the community or the region. We will continue to deliver that message to them as well. Mahsi

MR. YAKELEYA: I do apologize to the Minister. I was talking about hoping the student would say something that would get them to stay in school or something exciting, but he was looking forward to leaving the school every day. So I want to know what type of programs are in place in the schools, such as sporting events, that make students go to school and stay in school and have their school be a fun place to go to.

Has the Minister looked at any type of program such as sports and the days of the TEST program where there were sporting events that kept students in school and measured their success by also having them perform in sports?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Obviously, there are all kinds of extracurricular activities that are happening within our school systems throughout the Northwest Territories. There are 49 schools. Some may not offer full-fledged sports programs, but we continue to work with Municipal and Community Affairs dealing with sports and also the youth and how we can best deliver programs. We have been dealing with some of the community leadership. They take on the task, my department, of working with DEC's and also MACA to deliver some of the fundamental sports programs that youth can be engaged in, especially youth who don't have anything happening in their community. So, there are various programs within a community that can be highlighted through my department. I

can share some of the highlights with the Members when it comes to sports and other activities, programs that DEC's and DEAs offer. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I have looked at some of the activities going on in the small communities, extracurricular activities that could support students in their education, also their health and wellness. Some of the small communities are doing very well at the territorial level in sports such as basketball, volleyball and soccer.

Is this part of their school programming that can be supported with their educational goals in the small communities?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, these are some of the additional activities, extracurricular activities that the coaches get involved in, and the teachers, volunteers at the community level. The after-school physical activity program is also part of the GNWT Healthy Choices initiative. Obviously, there is some funding attached to it to provide schools with after-school physical activities, upwards of \$765,000. That is \$650,000 for after-school physical activity programming and \$150,000 for the healthy snacks component of the program. We feel this is very important for students to be actively engaged in sports and extracurricular activities. We will continue to support those activities as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Has the department ever come to the point where they do a pilot project such as they've done in Inuvik with the TEST program, with students in sports or on-the-land activities within education so these students can develop into world-class athletes? Has there ever been a program since they did theirs in Inuvik with the TEST program? Has there been any thought to that?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I will have to find out exactly when that last occurred. I will follow up with the Member on the detailed information. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 696-17(5): STUDENT GRADUATION RATES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question. My question will be to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment just to help build a little further on our theme day for education, Mr. Speaker. First I should say, once again, thank you to the Bureau of Stats for their great assistance in helping me with this question because their details, I couldn't live without.

In 2012-13 in grades 10 to 12 we had 2,582 students enrolled. However, current details tell us that only 437 students graduated. That's approximately 50 percent if we just work the math through and divide the three grades into that first calculation. What it's basically saying is we have a 50 percent graduation rate in the Northwest Territories.

We all know how important education is. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment as to what his department is doing to create incentives for children to go to school so that they ensure that they graduate, so that they do have a future that is so promising for them, we have a future that they can engage in.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Again, I have to reflect on the whole Education Renewal and Innovation. It is a very broad sector. This will obviously capture the graduation of our students across the Northwest Territories. Some of the areas of which we are aiming and also our goals and objectives are obviously to improve the overall academic achievement of all students, 8,000 students, 49 schools across the Northwest Territories. We also want to increase the number. The Member touched on the 50 percent. Obviously, we want to reach 80 percent or plus, but that will take some time.

Also, improving literacy. Mr. Yakeleya talked about literacy and numeracy skills of all students. Also, helping them gain employment or even further post-secondary, improving achievement and employment through student wellness and student engagement. These are just some of the key components that we currently will be delivering with the Education Renewal and Innovation and I'm looking forward to making those changes.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister just said he would hope for 80 percent. Well, actually, I hope we have 100 percent graduation rates. Unlike the Minister had just said, I hope that every child has the future and that they work through graduation. You can't get a job with the military or the RCMP these days that people used to go through with grades 10, 11 and 12. You need a minimum of Grade 12.

The specific question to the Minister of Education is: What incentives are put in through the education program to encourage our youth to fulfil their obligation by getting through the education system and all the way to the end by graduating?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The Member is referring to 100 percent. Obviously, I agree with that, but it takes a whole community. It just takes the Department of Education to graduate these individuals. We have to gain support and a push from the parents, a push from the community

members, the leaders. We've had some challenges along the way. Yes, we're at a 50 percent margin right now, but obviously our goal is to increase that through the Education Renewal and Innovation. I have just captured some of the key points that we will be delivering, working with our stakeholders. We can't forget that the district education council and authority are our key partners, and also the parents and grandparents as well.

MR. HAWKINS: The Minister says it takes a community, but it also takes leadership at the Minister's office. What is the Minister doing to engage the students to find out what types of incentives they need to be partners in their own future? Not just the parents, not just the district education authorities and not just everybody in the ivory tower at the buildings downtown.

What are the students being talked to and engaged about? What it would take for them to want to graduate? Is the Minister doing that outreach and what is the outreach determining?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: There are so many initiatives that my department is working on. When we were at NWT Days in Ottawa we also met with university students from the Northwest Territories. Obviously we want them to come back to our Northwest Territories and work for us. It was a very productive meeting and we're going to continue to do that. Every time we travel to other provincial jurisdictions, we want to meet with the students. We care for the students. We want them to come back. We support them. There is the Education Renewal and Innovation that's happening that will capture three years of action plan. Also, the Skills for Success is another prime initiative that our students should be fully aware of, and we are promoting that, as well, into our school system. The Aboriginal Student Achievement was the start of our engagement with the youth and students. That was a few years back. Now we continue to push that forward. The whole Education Renewal and Innovation will certainly capture that.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not hearing anything from that last answer that specifically points to what they're doing. The Minister said there are so many initiatives. Name clearly one initiative that is engaged with the students to find out what's important to them to encourage them to proceed towards graduation.

This is such an important thing that our students get a graduation certificate, because their future counts on it. We can only go backwards so far and hope and dream and pray and plead with them that they graduate, but we must get them involved in this solution.

Name one clear thing that the department has done, the Minister has done to build engagement with the students so that we work towards 100 percent graduation.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The Education Renewal and Innovation has engaged students in a wide variety of ways. We want to hear their perspectives, their experience, what they're faced with, whether it be in high school, whether it be in post-secondary, because from their feedback we want to make productive choices and make some changes with our Education Act and programming. We'll continue to push that forward. This is not the only time. There will be plenty of opportunities to engage our students across the Northwest Territories, the 8,000 students. We want them to be successful. We are creating all these different initiatives along the way, and as part of the initiatives the ERI will be creating incentives for these students to return to the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, colleagues. Once again, I'd like to recognize the Deline leadership, the negotiating team on these past couple days, a historical day for them. Welcome, and good to see you guys again.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Moses.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 36: HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROFESSIONS ACT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Social Programs has reviewed Bill 36, Health and Social Services Professions Act, and wishes to report that Bill 36 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole as amended and reprinted.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Yakeleya.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 202-17(5): ARTICLE FROM THE GLOBE AND MAIL: ABORIGINAL LITERACY PILOT PROJECT DRAMATICALLY IMPROVES TEST SCORES

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the Globe and Mail article, Aboriginal literacy pilot project dramatically improves test scores in Ontario.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 203-17(5): TWO ARTICLES REFERENCING DECHINTA CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND LEARNING

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a couple of news reports here. The first one is from Northern Journal, October 27, 2014, and it's entitled "Cultural resurgence at core of the Dechinta studies – all women cohort attends fall semester out on the land."

The second one is from the Globe and Mail, entitled "Learning from the land in the North," and it's referencing the work that Dechinta University has done as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 15 notices of motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 37-17(5): EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO MARCH 2, 2015

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, February 26, 2015, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, February 26, 2015, it shall be adjourned until Monday, March 2, 2015;

And further, that any time prior to March 2, 2015, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 46: DELINE FINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT ACT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act, be read for the second time.

This bill approves, gives effect to and declares valid the Deline agreement, which is a self-government agreement among the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Deline, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada.

This bill also gives effect to the Deline Tax Treatment Agreement, which is an agreement in relation to the tax treatment of the Deline Got'ine Government.

This bill provides for the legal recognition of the Deline Agreement, the Deline Tax Treatment Agreement and laws made by the Deline Got'ine Government.

Finally, this bill also provides for consequential amendments to the Waters Act and for the repeal of instruments pertaining to the establishment of the Charter Community of Deline.

I also request a recorded vote on this historic day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand proudly to second this bill and thank my colleagues from the other side to allow this to happen.

I do want to say, in keeping with the spirit of the Deline Got'ine people, that what they have done is historical. The visions of the people are coming to realization. We don't know what's going to happen and it's because of the elders in their wisdom and the guidance of us young leaders that they tell us how to go about and how to live our life. Sometimes we don't quite understand from our culture, but our elders have guided this team for over 18 years or longer to this place here. You are setting a government, a model, for all of the other communities to look at. Nobody said it was going to be easy, but you stuck together and you worked as one, one people, one vision, one voice. It is like you're drumming. Sometimes our songs are not quite the same until you play for a long time together and then it comes to be one song, one drum beat, and that's what the Deline people have done. They worked hard together. This is for their children now to take these tools and for this government to work.

In life you have to negotiate what you want and you stick strong to your beliefs, strong to your faith. It

takes all kinds of people, governments, our government, the federal government. There are people that are no longer with us who are in another world who we think about.

So I want to say to the Deline leadership, to the negotiators, to our negotiators, to the federal government negotiators and to the people of the Northwest Territories that anything worthwhile is not easy. Anything good like this is very, very difficult, very, very hard. Like an elder said, "Whoever said life was easy, come over and tell me that. I want to talk to that person who said life was easy." Then they talk to that person.

So for the Deline government, you've done it, you've shown people, you're the trailblazers, there's hope for our people. You've given us hope. Twenty years ago we never thought this would be possible.

So I want to say again, thank you very much to the Members of the Assembly here for this historical day, going through this process. You have done it, you have set the trail for us, you have set the standards. God bless you. Work hard as you continue to make your government strong, make it strong for your young grandchildren, their children and all your people.

In closing, continue to listen to your elders and to your prophets. It will be a good life. So, mahsi cho. It is a good day today, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the principle of the bill, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of Bill 46 and I'd like to extend my congratulations to the Deline Got'ine First Nations as they see one of the final steps in their self-government negotiations. I do want to say that when I visited there, they're only building on their prophets and what they want for their people. I wish them every success as they exert their independence and yet they can still exist in this great Northwest Territories of ours. All they're seeking is to better the lives of their people and control of their future.

Once again, I want to extend my congratulations and mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the principle of the bill. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too stand here in support of the Deline Got'ine people.

Back in 2008 as I worked with the Gwich'in on their self-government agreement, I recall the negotiators saying that the Deline people have decided to have a stand-alone agreement. That is the first agreement in this territory, much like the people in the Yukon who have this style of community government. It is working in the Yukon. I see a great opportunity for the Deline people.

I believe that this process that they have set up was the right decision for their community and I look forward to the progress that they make. I'd just like to congratulate them. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. To the principle of the bill, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise, too, in support of the bill. I'd like to congratulate the people from the Sahtu for this long haul. I've been in a leadership position and it's not an easy task. But what's very inspiring is having your elders there with you along the way and it's very important that you carry along with you your elders, their involvement, at the same time, their wisdom, their patience, and at the same time showing us the humility in terms of not knowing everything, but trying to learn from them as well. So it's a very important path that you've taken. I congratulate you. It's a proud moment for the people of the Sahtu, of Deline and I wish you well, and I'll be in full support of this legislation. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the principle of the bill, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's really important to express how important this issue is, I guess I'd say it that way. This is really a hard, a long path that has finally come to fruition and I am certainly excited to see it happen for the people of the Sahtu. The Deline Self-Government Agreement has my support and my heartfelt congratulations for the many hours, many days, many years that the people have struggled through to bring this together to where it is today.

Their future is in their hands right where it belongs. They will join other governments such as the Tlicho Government who we have all seen move forward with great success in managing and cutting the trail for their people with their vision on getting things done. They have fought for this respect and they have rightly earned it and they are getting it here today. I congratulate them for this.

The Deline Final Self-Government Agreement Act is one for the history books. I was actually quite touched, believe it or not, to hear when the Premier read it into the record that the MLA for the Sahtu is seconding it. It's not a usual practice, but it represents not only how important our Assembly is through consensus government but it also marks the moment in time the Sahtu helped play a role in this and this Assembly took special note of that.

I want to finish by saying, as a young boy who has grown up here in the North, I can tell you how deeply important the vision of all elders are from every region. I may have grown up in the Deh Cho, but I know your elders are so important to the vision and provide the strength and the future of the youth. I have no doubt that the Deline Self-Government Agreement will do that.

Again, my heartfelt congratulations and my wholehearted support.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please rise for a recorded vote.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Blake, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. Those in favour, 18; opposed, zero; abstentions, zero. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and have Bill 46 moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 46 is moved into Committee of the Whole.

---Applause

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'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order for today and ask what is the wish of the committee. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We wish to continue with Tabled Document 188-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016. We want to continue with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and, time

permitting, Municipal and Community Affairs and the Department of Lands. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will commence with that after a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We were on Environment and Natural Resources. I'd like to ask the Minister if he has any witnesses he would like to bring in. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister Miltenberger, if you could be kind enough to introduce your witnesses for the record, please.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Deputy Minister Ernie Campbell and director of finance and admin Susan Craig. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Ms. Craig, Mr. Campbell, welcome back to the House. Committee, we are on general comments. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a few comments. I know I did provide some earlier, but as I mentioned, the community of Tsiigehtchic once had a suppression crew and the forest fires are a big concern in the coming year with a possible dry season coming again. I think it's very important that we go back to the past agreement that we had with the community and the department to re-enter that agreement and make sure that we do have a crew on hand this summer to be prepared to transfer to any region that may need their assistance over the summer.

As we discovered last year, as we rushed around for a number of volunteers throughout the communities, it's very important that we have all this training on hand early and have our workforce prepared in case of an emergency. I really look forward to that in the coming year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's been since 2007 that there's been a fire crew there. So yes, we will have our folks and the deputy will arrange to make sure there are

discussions with Tsiigehtchic about the upcoming fire season. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have a whole lot to add in terms of what other Members had said yesterday, but just a couple of comments.

I'm really glad to see the investment in the traditional economy programs. I know that some of our residents who used to work in some industries that used to be up and running and don't have that opportunity anymore because the economy is pretty slow have looked at going into the traditional economy, whether it's harvesting or trapping, and even though the investment is there, I'm not too sure how much of it is new dollars. I won't get into the detail as we'll get into that later. But of this \$2.3 million, is that new dollars on top of what was allocated last year? Are these new dollars going into that program? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is money that is just being transferred over from ITI that was previously administered through that department and flowed into ENR. So it's not new money. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. I know I've asked questions in the House at one time or another about the need to invest more into our traditional economy and into our harvesters throughout the Northwest Territories, especially up in some of the regions where we did have some development going on and possibly some work that has been going on in terms of having some of the animals migrate in different routes than they used to. In some cases our hunters and trappers have to travel further now to get either fur or to get the animals that they're hunting. That needs to be addressed.

We do forced growth in a lot of programs and services. I'm not sure this one has seen any increase in that area. I'm just wondering if the Minister has taken that into consideration, considering that our harvesters are travelling a lot more, which means a lot more food and a lot more money for gas. In some cases, chatting with some of the guys back home, they say it costs a lot of money to go out on a day or two hunt, and if you get skunked and get nothing, that's money that's lost. Whether or not that's taken into consideration, and if we can start to see some increases in this area considering that other areas of our economy are not even active the way they used to be in terms of they used to employ some of these local residents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: This is an important part of the economy, as the Member

points out, that and the traditional knowledge. We're committed to carrying on the good work that was done when the funding flowed through ITI. I'll ask the deputy to just give a bit of a rundown on the various programs we do have that we've been administering now for some time both in terms of hunters and trappers assistance, Western Harvesters Fund, community harvester assistance and Take a Kid Trapping and such, with your agreement, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Yes. Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell, go ahead.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of the existing programs that are coming over to Environment and Natural Resources, as the Minister pointed out, are the existing grants and contribution programs, Community Harvesters Assistance Program and local wildlife committee funding. There's also the Take a Kid Trapping Program and, of course, the revolving fund for the guaranteed payments to trappers.

We've been playing a large role in the past, working with ITI on administering these programs. We don't feel it will be a major impact as we transition. However, internally we are doing a review of where things are at.

We do want to have a strategic approach going forward for this program. We do recognize the challenges with the finances, the fiscal challenges. We want to seize on the opportunity to look at partnerships going forward to increase the funding available for the promotion of the traditional economy. So it's at the early stages and we really want to see where we can improve the program here come April 1st and beyond. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: I appreciate the response. I think that's something that really seriously needs to be looked at in terms of increasing the incentives and the grants to our harvesters because they are spending a lot of money and I'm not sure what their return on investment is for going out on the land.

I just want to speak to this Energy Efficiency Incentive Program. I know we talked in the House about that Net Metering Program kind of developed about a year ago today I guess. For businesses, the Net Metering Program is limited at five kilowatts and it's not feasible for some businesses to invest in their own infrastructure and put that back into the grid. I guess the question is it's not an incentive for our businesses who want to go that route with the Net Metering Program. So I'm just making a suggestion here on whether the department would look at this and change some of their policies under the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program and maybe changing the policy to give that incentive to

business owners who want to be more energy efficient, whether it's solar panels, is one that comes to mind, and whether this policy has been reviewed and whether it needs more funding.

What I've been hearing is businesses want to get into that area of cost savings and put what they produce in terms of energy efficiencies back into the grid, but there's no incentive for them with the limit that we have. If there's no incentive and the limit is not going to change in net metering, can we provide an incentive under the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program to provide a better, bigger subsidy to these businesses?

In some regions, like my region of Inuvik, is the high cost of heating these buildings because of the LNG when they were running on natural gas before. Now they're having a hard time just maintaining their, I guess, profits, and they're not really making a profit in terms of the business that they were doing before, alongside with the economy slowing down. I want to get the Minister's perspective on it.

Will the program be reviewed, the policy reviewed, and whether or not more funding can go into them and a bigger subsidy for some of our small and even big businesses that want to do this energy efficiency but the net metering isn't allowing them to do that?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have had a change to that five kilowatt. The Power Corp has gone to the Public Utilities Board to eliminate the standby charge for solar photovoltaic systems over five kilowatts in size, allowing the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to proceed with up to 75 kilowatts of solar installations in five diesel communities over the next two years.

One of the other things that's happened, as it was announced earlier in the House, we've consolidated our energy functions now into Public Works and Services, and they're now going to be looking after those types of issues and building on a lot of the skill and expertise that they've developed in the installation experience. Those kinds of questions are very legitimate questions. A lot of the systems, we've designed them, so if there's a need to have a discussion about amending or fixing, then we have processes to do that. But there's nothing in any of these processes that are carved in stone. We want to be as supportive as possible. Public Works and Minister Beaulieu will be coming to the table here, I believe, in the not-too-distant future and have that discussion. But we have heard the concerns about the five kilowatt cap.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Continuing on with general comments, I have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a few general comments for this department. Obviously, I think almost everybody has spoken of the disastrous fire season and we talked about in the past and business plans and stuff like that about the base, and I guess it's the cost of fire suppression is going to be the cost, I guess. Has there been any consideration in this budget to up that base of fire suppression? We know over a period of time there have been expenditures, and obviously last year was an exceptional year. Obviously, we wouldn't want to set that as the benchmark, but is the department looking at increasing its base for fire suppression over the next little while? I think we talked about a three or a five or even a 10 year running average of what we did for fire suppression and going from that basis for future years to budgeting suppression so that we actually have a closer to an average amount, obviously, maybe excluding some of the exceptional years like last year. I would like to hear what the department has to say about our base for fire suppression.

I'd like to know what this department's involvement has been with the fracking regulations and where we are going forward with regulations on fracking. Obviously, I would think this department would be highly involved as far as a baseline study to finding out what areas where we may potentially be doing fracking. Let's say in the Sahtu area, getting involved in the baseline study. We need to have that baseline to know, going forward, what the effects of any activity would be. We know that some of the oils and stuff like that in the Sahtu are naturally occurring right now, so obviously we'd want to know what the base is before industry gets in there too far and gets too involved, obviously, for comparison.

Like my colleague, obviously, the energy that was there before, I'm not sure if everything has been transferred over to Public Works and Services for energy. Obviously, the funding of the Arctic Energy Alliance has been very effective. I think since we've gone to the Energy Charrette, one of the big questions there and discussions was about efficiencies and people taking action to make their homes and their appliances more efficient and trying to alleviate cost of living that way. I'm not sure if everything is transferred over there, going from some history notes that we had at business plans, but some of them may be dated now that we've transferred some of that to Public Works and Services. Again, if there's any of that stuff still in ENR.

Obviously another project of interest is biomass, where we are going forward with biomass. The forest industry, from my understanding, we finally actually have maybe an opportunity to actually have a forestry industry that will require a forest management team there in place. That opportunity

is obviously very exciting for the South Slave. I'm looking forward to maybe seeing what the department is doing to linking that opportunity with some of, maybe, the fire suppression as far as smart communities. I know the department is going around to communities right now and talking about how to make your communities fire smart, and maybe there's an opportunity to do some of that forestation in communities and maybe tie it in with our biomass potential project.

I know we are close to signing some of the transboundary water agreements and if the department could just give me a little bit of an update where we stand. I think we've just about dotted all the i's and crossed the t's with Alberta. I'm not sure where we're at with BC and Saskatchewan, so if I could get a little bit of that information, it would be very interesting.

I guess we're dealing with operations, but the whole budget has capital included in it, and I guess I am concerned that we didn't evaluate that much more the 802 versus 215 units and even the option of privatizing some of the fire suppression. I'm still getting reports in of some of the assessment of the 802s, concerns with them, incident reports, capabilities for fire suppression in heavy, dense areas. I know we've used some of them lately, but I still continue to get some reports from other jurisdictions that they're finding them to be ineffective in some areas, so obviously a concern in an area of the Northwest Territories especially after the fire suppression system that we just had. I think those are most of my comments.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. We'll go to Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The fire suppression budget for this year, the base budget remains as it's laid out in the main estimates. We are looking at next year probably a five-year average approach that would see a change, especially if one of the five years includes the \$60 million. We'll see what this fire season brings. The assurance to the people of the Northwest Territories, of course, is that we will, as a government and as a Legislature, put the resources that we need to to protect the homes, people and the safety and property values that we hold dear in the Northwest Territories. We will put the funds there to make sure that we do the job necessary. We will be doing that again, as we do just about every year, through special warrants when the need arises or as the need arises.

The fracking regulations, ENR worked very, very closely for the last couple of years with ITI. ITI and Minister Ramsay have that file. They are moving forward with the regulatory update and I think we'll find that as we move forward with that, that the best practices will be clearly evident. We have been and continue to be involved. We work with all the other

involved departments, with ITI, along with ENR, and I think, Lands and such, so that we are there at that table.

Energy programs, rebate programs, incentive programs are part of what's been moved to Public Works and Services. We have a continued role to play on the supply side of the biomass initiative where we're working with communities on their forest management agreements. We're playing a role with not only the communities but the proponent for the Aurora Wood Pellets, in this case, trying to navigate through the challenges of starting up a brand new process. We know that there are interested communities, as well, that are watching, and Kakisa and Jean Marie River are too.

As we look at the areas and the forest management agreements and inventory that are there, the Member mentioned the possibility of fire smarting being integrated into this biomass industry. If possible, I think that's not out of the realm of possibility. I know in Fort Smith, for example, the community and the government worked to make the whole area around the airport right by town a wood harvesting area for regular wood burners and folks that use wood, and it's been a great boon for everybody. You're five minutes away from your wood supply and it's definitely helped fire smarting the community. So I think those kind of options are there to be looked at.

Transboundary updates. We have, for all intents and purposes, concluded the Alberta agreement and we're working on the logistics, trying to nail down the signing date and time with Alberta. BC, we expect within the next few days to conclude the final discussions on the last i to be dotted and t to be crossed. Saskatchewan, we are confident that, if all goes well in April, before the May/June session we may have an agreement with Saskatchewan, as well. As we sit here today, the folks are over in the Yukon meeting with the Yukon officials in, I believe, Whitehorse, in terms of modernizing, updating the only bilateral agreement that exists, and that's the one with the Yukon.

In regards to the 802s, the decision was made. We're moving forward with the purchase of the 802s as we've laid out in the plan. We're in the queue. In the meantime we will continue to use the 215s. One of the big issues, of course, has been affordability, quality, fire protection and the air force that will give us that capacity at a level that is affordable within our fiscal parameters. Anyways, that decision has been made and we're moving on the purchase of the eight 802s. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. As we continue with general comments, I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to first of all say to the Minister and the staff that there were a lot of really concerned people last year

because of the fires that happened in the south part of the Northwest Territories and the situation that called for additional dollars and resources to be used in the North to fight the fires.

So, my first point and my first comment is the ability of having well-qualified firefighters prepared and ready for any situation that might be in a similar situation as last year. I want to ask the Minister if he's looking at the firefighters training program this year. It's quiet now, and we can have some qualified, certified, trained firefighters using the Aurora College campus as having firefighters training while it's really cold outside. Do you know what I mean? So, you know, you have some qualified people in the community ready to go when they're needed and called upon. I think we can use, through some agreement with Education, Culture and Employment, people who are on income support can go to these, you know, and learn. That's what we want to do. We want to get them off income support, and maybe some of them want to, and maybe learn further as they learn about firefighter training. That's something I wanted to mention to the Minister.

The other one, Mr. Chair, I wanted to mention to the Minister, also I heard it from the Minister of ITI, is that the Sahtu and the other communities have a really strong fur trapping program and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Ramsay has mentioned that the Asian countries are really keen on the northern furs and our people are also very keen on what the outside people are saying. I wanted to look at a program in the communities as an out-of-the-box concept as maybe implementing a trappers certificate program in the Northwest Territories. I know they do that in Saskatchewan and other areas. They could take a program and that may have many benefits to attending this program and you have whole bunch of good things that could happen with this trapper certificate program. You would be a certified trapper and I think that might be something that is worthwhile to look at again. Again, it's a concept that could do a lot of good things for our people in the communities. You know, people can be a certified trapper with many benefits. So that's something I want to ask the Minister to look at.

The point I want to make, also, is that especially in the Sahtu there's a lot of young men and women who like to hunt. A lot of families take their children out to a spring hunt. Last year I understand close to 400 people were out during the spring hunt, the ceremonial hunt, and even during the winter seasons here. I want to ask if the department would be willing to look at a gun safety program in the schools as part of that safety for the young ones.

I do want to raise a couple of concerns I have with the waste management, especially – and it might be down on the list of waste management recyclables – the old vehicles we have in our

dumps right now. I think that's a good program, a long-term program. I think the Minister mentioned something about looking at this in the future and that was a couple of years ago, so this is now the future. So I want to see if there's still an appetite to look at how to get rid of these old vehicles that are sitting in our dumps through a program. So that's something that I want to ask the Minister about in my comments.

Mr. Chair, I wanted ask the Minister in regards to the trapping program for the kids. I just talked with an elder outside, from Deline, and he said that it's good to have education within the schools and that, but you also need to have a strong educational program on the culture and on the land and using our own language in that program. I know kids get really excited when they go on these one or two day on-the-land programs, but it's not long enough. They really get excited when an elder goes out with them and starts teaching about the land. I know it requires some coordination and some work from other departments, so I want to raise this with the Minister.

I wanted to raise some more concerns from the Sahtu leadership, specifically from the Renewable Resources Board they had on caribou, but I don't have the information in front of me so I won't be able to say very much. But the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board had some concerns on the caribou issue. I just want to let the Minister know that once I get the information, I will raise it with him on this one here.

I want to say to the Minister and his staff to continue to work hard on the transboundary agreements that we have with the other provincial governments. I'd certainly like to see some progress in that area.

They have really good staff up in our region. They work well with the people and the community. I noticed that when one of our ENR personnel has to go to Colville Lake and they have to either drive or fly to buy furs... Again, I'm going to make another request to see if we can put some type of personnel in Colville Lake, either a patrol person or someone who can look after the furs, because a staff member has to leave Norman Wells and has to drive. Do you know how long it takes to get to Colville Lake? Eight hours by truck. Maybe they need to look at adding an ROI in there because it's valuable time taken away from the regional office. I just ask if that can be considered to monitor other issues and to help the community.

I want to leave it at that, Mr. Chair. I want to say that to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the firefighting issue, we

started training Northerners very seriously last year, so we have at least two levels. We have an elite level trained to the national standard that can be exported if they have capacity as part of our agreement with all the provinces and territories. So if they need to go to Alberta or any other province, they can go just as they ship firefighters up here. They are trained to the national standard, the elite firefighting contingent. Then we have emergency firefighters and firefighters trained not quite to the same stringent standard but can still successfully operate in the environment in the Northwest Territories.

I'm going to the deputy to talk to a whole host of very specific issues here about the trapper training and the gun safety and your concerns about the Take a Kid Trapping Program and more evidence in our curriculum and our schools. When you are ready to talk about the Renewable Resources Board – I am assuming it's the Bluenose-East – we'd be happy to have that discussion.

In the life of this government, we expect to be concluding just about all the transboundary agreements we had on our to-do list, which will be a huge, huge accomplishment. We are prepared to sit down with the folks in Colville Lake to talk about your suggestion of a renewable resources officer I even on a part-time basis to see what needs to be done not only with furs but other monitoring issues. Mr. Chairman, with your agreement, I would ask the deputy to speak to some of the specifics, fur trapping certification, issues that Mr. Yakeleya raised. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With regard to the training of harvesters, as I mentioned, come April 1st, working towards April 1st, we are doing a review of the programs and we want to figure out a plan going forward on some of the areas where there are potential gaps that the communities have been identifying in the past. The Member is right about the trapper certification program. Absolutely those are types of areas we want to look at.

You mentioned the gun safety program. We recently completed with our partners in the Northwest Territories, including the Aboriginal governments and stakeholders, et cetera, a hunter education program which has the firearms safety component in there which will allow youth and others to acquire their possession and acquisition licences. We want to link it to the traditional economy stuff, to the larger initiatives such as the partnerships, as you mentioned, opportunities where these types of things can be delivered.

Spring hunts you mentioned, but there are many other forums out there where we can collaborate with others. We have already started some

engagement on a pilot project in the Northwest Territories, on-the-land funding collaborative. So that's one area where we've started, but there are other areas that we want to build on going forward. The Take a Kid Trapping Program is a link to this as well. There is \$312,000 coming over for that program. Again, we want to explore the Take a Kid Trapping Program.

On the caribou with the renewable resource boards, the numbers we had last spring from the reconnaissance survey were alarming for Bluenose-East and Bathurst herds. Through the process we started in August and ended recently, we've landed on an approach for the interim for this harvesting season. That included working with the renewable resources boards. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Deputy Minister Campbell. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I just noted I didn't respond to one specific question with regard to waste management and old vehicles. The answer is still the same. It's on our list and we are going to work our way down there. We have been focusing on getting a territory-wide electronic waste recycling program on the go as our next big initiative. So, once again, it's a question of time and capacity. There are old vehicles. Mr. Hawkins mentioned tires. We've had, as well, the issue of thousands of 45-gallon drums that are littered across the landscape. We know there are a lot of things we need to get to and we do have that list, but unfortunately I am not able to give any kind of affirmative response on that particular question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, we are on general comments.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Is committee prepared to go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 89 we will defer until after the activity detail. That being said, I will have you turn to page 90, revenue summary, information item. Any questions? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just noticed our licences, rental and other fees, water use fees are the same as they were last year. The Minister has said those would be going up. I am just wondering the status of that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll go to the director, Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The budget is for the water use fees that the boards collect on behalf of the department for water licences. It's just an estimate that we're carrying through from what

was used by the federal government prior to devolution.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that response. I see what's happening is not in line with what's been said is going to happen. I think the Water Strategy recognizes that we're undervaluing our water. The Minister's on record as saying we'll be working to correct that situation. I guess I'm asking where we will see that and when we will see that reflected in this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you for finishing up, Mr. Bromley. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The work is going to get done, and the Member is correct that this does need looking at. We spent the first many months now, over nine months since devolution, getting things up and running. We are looking at a whole host of things that need to get looked at, fees, mirror legislation hasn't been raised in this House and all that work is underway and starting to manifest itself here in the coming year. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I'll leave it at that, other than noting that it's 11 months. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I didn't hear a question in there, so we'll actually go to Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just really briefly under the timber permits and licences. I know it's starting to be a concern here in my riding with people having to go to their renewable resource officers for timber permits for driftwood. I recall when this item came to the RRCs quite a while back here, that it was supposed to be just on a volunteer basis, but now it seems they're turning this over to mandatory. You know, it's more or less to see what volume of driftwood was taken just for needs was what they were telling us at the time. It's starting to be an issue that now it's mandatory for people to go and get the timber permits for driftwood which is all along the river. It's not like it's standing wood. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. We'll go to the deputy minister, Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The free timber cutting permits are, again, used as a management tool to assess what fuel biomass in the Northwest Territories is being used by residents. It absolutely is not a mechanism to infringe on people's right to gather fuel wood, including driftwood. Driftwood has always been part of free timber cutting permits. Again, it's a management tool for us to use in planning purposes for not just the government but for our

partners, as well, going forward on what's being used for fuel wood in the Northwest Territories.

It is, no doubt, an area where we've been very, very flexible over the years. Our officers do carry them with them and work with the residents. Again, it's to manage that resource. It's to identify where people can harvest fuel wood for personal use so there are no conflicts with private landowners, leaseholders, et cetera, and we recognize that going forward we always want to manage the fuel wood that's being used in the Northwest Territories.

Going forward the intent is to update our forest management legislation, and we're hoping in the life of this government we will come forward with a legislative proposal. Again, we'll undertake that exercise, hopefully in the life of the next government, in the same manner that we've done with the Wildlife Act, Species at Risk, et cetera, with those partners of ours having a major influence on how our legislation is crafted and we'll get into areas such as free timber cutting permits, et cetera. But at this point it's a management tool that we use to manage the use of the fuel wood in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Committee, we're on page 90, revenue summary, information item.

Sorry, before we do that, I apologize, Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the timber, I just wanted to make the observation, similar to wildlife or anything else that we do, is you can't manage what you can't count. So it's a challenge in all areas. It's a challenge, for example, with hunting and reporting. We're working out ways we can get those numbers because it's absolutely critical, as we see, when you look at managing any kind of resource like that. So, that's the fundamental goal, not to infringe but on a conservation basis to be able to manage. You can't manage what you can't count. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, again, page 90, revenue summary, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 91, active position summary, information item. Any questions? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My first question is on... I note the division is responsible for regional land use planning and I know through our Aboriginal government partners we've got a lot of land use plans in place, Inuvialuit, Gwich'in, Sahtu, Tlicho, I believe even the Dehcho have done some work there. But there are two major areas,

the North Slave and South Slave, where there hasn't been much work done.

Has the Minister initiated processes there to get that work done? For example, this government is talking about a road to resources, Slave Geological Province highway. Where's the land use plan that would put some context around a project like that? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, that work has yet to be done and the Lands department is going to be picking up that coordination and lead in terms of pulling together the various pieces, working with all the other, once again, appropriate departments and will work at that context. The Member's correct; there's work done and the Dehcho Land Use Plan is quite a ways along. The two areas are the North Slave and South Slave with the NWT Metis as well as Akaitcho, or what's there of the Akaitcho. Salt River is no longer part of that. But the Member's correct; that work has yet to be done. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I guess a couple of things. It sounds like the statement now is incorrect and needs to be updated. The first line on page 92, "responsible for regional land use plan," I guess that would now be Lands that's doing that with the participation of ENR. Maybe the Minister could just review that.

Second, I think the responsibility of the Minister is with regard to conservation of lands. How can this government be pursuing something like the Slave Geological Province highway without doing the conservation and planning work beforehand? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'll take the Member's advice and review the text to make sure that it's accurate.

Mr. Chairman, at this point we are putting out that particular project, along with the section of highway, for example, on the Wrigley/Norman Wells, the potential road through the Tlicho, extensive generation work that needs to be done. As ideas, part of a plan, a vision of going forward and that should the borrowing limit be adjusted and allow us to make those investments, then we will be moving forward on whatever projects are going to be funded with all the detailed work that is necessary. At this point it's been identified as a project that is worth considering, just as we considered looking at transmission lines initially. A good idea, but the cost is prohibitive. So, too, is the road from Tibbitt to Contwoyto, the North Slave Geologic Province. It's of great interest to the people of Nunavut as well. Should we be in a position to pursue that, then we'll follow the process to the letter. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Mr. Bromley, we're actually on page 91. You might be ahead of yourself a little bit on the conservation assessment monitoring. So we'll just finish page 91 and then we can go back to you if you have more conservation questions.

Page 91, active position summary, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Page 93, conservation assessment monitoring. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reason I see a difference here is because there are land use plans in place for the Mackenzie Valley Highway and we don't have those for the area for the road that's being discussed. As the Minister knows, those things take in the order from five to 20 years to do. To do it right, we need to get started yesterday in land use planning in this area.

On the establishment of protected areas and development of an ecological representation network, where are we at on ecological representation? I know what we've done on the cultural representation side, working with our Aboriginal government partners, and it has highlighted the need for ecological representation. Is that something the Minister can speak to off the top or provide an update on? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: A lot of work has been done in this area and we're in the process of getting a document ready to bring to Cabinet and then on to committee that will show all the work that's been done across the Northwest Territories. In terms of the ecological representative areas and the mapping and inventory that's done, I would ask the deputy, Mr. Chairman, with your approval, to add a little bit further to that, if he would. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ecological representative network plan that is in draft form at this point is part of the overall approach to managing land in the Northwest Territories. It falls under the umbrella of the Land Use Sustainability Framework identified here as a tool for land management in the Northwest Territories. It's also a part of an action plan that we will be bringing forward here in the near future to address the existing candidate areas that are out there in the Northwest Territories that need to be finalized. It's part of the overall land management process that's being undertaken over the next while. The plan is not that far away from being a public document. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that information. I will look forward to that.

My last question is: Have we advanced any new conservation areas under the Territorial Parks Act in the last two or three years? Where are we headed with that? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not that I recollect. We are currently at work with the folks in Lutselk'e on Thaidene Nene. We are looking at northern tools, our first big initiative post-devolution. We also have the five candidate areas that are there that have been waiting for us to put our attention to them post-devolution that were identified through the Protected Areas Strategy, but there haven't been any other specific conservation areas. I will ask the deputy if he wants to add anything further in case I may have inadvertently misspoken.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The process over the last year, of course, we've paused on some of the existing candidate areas that are close to completion here in the Northwest Territories. I don't think my Minister has missed too much there. We're doing the exercise with Thaidene Nene here. That's going to set the context again for northern approach to identifying these protected areas. We do have the Parks Act and we have tools there. We have work to do in some of those areas in building things like management regimes, regulations, et cetera. Again, the process with Thaidene Nene being undertaken at this point is going to inform the processes, including the action plan that I just mentioned here, on the approach that the existing candidate areas that are out there at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, thanks for that update. I'm just getting a little concerned that this pause on protected areas could last for years upon devolution. I'm just finding there are all kinds of costs to devolution that weren't discussed before. Here's another one.

Is the Minister in touch with Lutselk'e people on the northern tools and are they at least privy to the Minister's thinking on this more than those few words? Are they looking at northern tools?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, Thaidene Nene has been

identified as a priority that we want to move on as a government post-devolution with northern tools. There's been significant contact with the federal government indicating our interest in a small federal footprint complemented and supplemented by an array of northern tools that may be there, things like territorial parks, conservation areas, wilderness areas, special study areas, those types of options. We've been actively working with Lutselk'e now for a number of months. We've compressed, I believe, about 18 months or two years of normal previous negotiating into about six months. There is another negotiating session here in a couple of weeks. We will be going back to Cabinet next week for a briefing. We have a briefing scheduled, as well, with committee that will inform everybody as to where we are with the first step of getting our thinking clear both as a government and in our initial negotiations with Lutselk'e. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, that sounds good. It sounds like there are good discussions happening there. Will there be a public process to make sure that... As you know, the public regards this area as of extremely high interest and it's a high use area. Will the Minister be going to the public for discussions as well? Or perhaps he already has.

Again, I will leave it at that. That's my last question. I look forward to the document that's coming forward on protected areas. I'll be looking for an update on ecological representation in that document. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, as we move forward then through the subsequent phases, we will be working in arrangement with the public to make sure that folks have a clear idea of where we're going. We'll have a capacity for feedback. The timelines are very tight that we're aiming for, which is before summer to have, hopefully, a northern position between ourselves as public government of the Northwest Territories and the Aboriginal governments that are involved in parks about the size of the federal footprint location and what type of potential northern tools would be there. As we move forward, the issue that Mr. Bromley raises is one that we're factoring in to make sure that we pay the appropriate attention to. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, we're on page 93, conservation assessment and monitoring, operations expenditure summary, \$8.039 million. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just real quickly here, possibly under conservation planning. As we all know, the Gwich'in have a forest management plan. I'd just like to ask the Minister, as they developed the plan, did they take into account foreign species that have lived here over the last year or two? I've noticed a lot of wood

coming in from either the Yukon or even further down to Inuvik and distributed to the communities. I just think of our management plan and are these sorts of things taken into consideration.

Quite a while back there was a lot of concern, whether it was pine beetles or other things like that affecting the ecosystems. I'd like to ask the Minister if there is anything in place to protect us from this. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. For that we'll go to Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, absolutely we've taken that into account as part of the invasive species issues we need to address. Part of the consultation that's underway right now with updating three or four pieces of the regulations includes that area, which is the requirement for an import permit. We're under consultation at this point to land on having that requirement in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Committee, we're on page 93, conservation assessment and monitoring, operations expenditure summary, \$8.039 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 94, conservation assessment and monitoring, grants and contributions. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just under the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program budget, I believe the federal government bumped this up quite a bit. They committed about \$8 million or something to it just before devolution. It just seems like a modest amount to that, but I don't know that for sure. It just seems like it from my hazy recollection.

Could I get some understanding of where that ended and how that's being carried forward? I think there are some very pithy issues. The defining thresholds seems to be a big research topic and so on with which to interpret things that we're monitoring. If I could just get some more information and understanding on that, if possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that we'll go to Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Within the Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program in the operating expenditures for that section there is \$3.3 million there, then their grants and contributions portion is what is on page 94 for \$1.5 million, so a total of over \$4 million in this program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That clears it up for me. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Again, committee, we're on page 94, conservation assessment and monitoring, grants, contributions and transfers, total contributions, \$3.335 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 95, conservation assessment and monitoring, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Seeing none, page 97, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$14.113 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just had one question. I'm wondering what the contract services are for, the \$625,000. I see that's up from \$343,000 a couple years before, and if I could just get an idea of the sorts of contracts that are being budgeted here for contract services. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that we'll go to Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have some contract services under the French Languages Initiative as well as operating ongoing contracts that we have within the division of corporate management. Sorry, I don't have the detail of all of them, but that was the increase to the contract services, was under the French Languages Initiative.

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

MR. BROMLEY: That's fine, Mr. Chair. I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Committee, again, we're on page 97, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$14.113 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 98, corporate management, grants, contributions and transfers, total grants and contributions, \$2.854 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 99, corporate management, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Seeing none, thank you, committee. Page 101, environment, operations

expenditure summary, \$4.539 million. Does committee agree? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I have a number of questions on this page. I note the intent of this division is to prevent and reduce the impact of human activities with a conservation goal. Yet, when I read about the climate change program section, there's not a word about prevention in there, there's not a word about forecasting the impacts of climate change and providing expert advice to our government on the likely costs and impacts of that. I'll use, for an example, forestry. We heard a forestry expert interviewed this morning on CBC, and he noted that the average area burned... I can't remember; I didn't catch what geographic area it was in, whether it was Canada's or North America's increase by 100 percent since the '70s and that's expected to double again over the next number of years.

Again, just looking ahead to the forestry section, I don't see that sort of awareness and planning. I wonder if the Minister has any thoughts about the need for a more proactive role. Prevention, first of all, has to be part of our gig on climate change, but also I say there's a real need throughout government for expert advice, which I believe would come from this division and this section specifically. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree that we're going to be challenged more and more to try to anticipate the plan for the future. Prevention, as the Member indicates, is one thing; mitigation and adaptation are going to be the other two. So this particular division has a role to play, but if we're going to link all the pieces not only in this department but other departments that have that prognostication function and as we move through Managing this Land and other committees that we have, that type of work and the budgeting side as well as we project our fire costs, for example, and costs that we're going to need to just try to stay ahead and deal with some of these extreme weather events are going to be a challenge. I agree that we are going to be put upon more and more to try to anticipate more accurately. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's thoughts on that. Right now we're dealing with things sort of in an ad hoc way, and I think it would be great to see a very defined role which recognizes the things that the Minister has mentioned.

I wonder if the Minister would commit to getting that sort of thing into the transition document we're contemplating or into the policy of his department if that's more appropriate. I realize he's not the only one that would be doing that but it needs

leadership. I appreciate the leadership he's provided on water. I'm not seeing the same thing on climate change, and as a result, I think we're paying greater costs and perhaps not doing the prevention activity we might otherwise do on a more progressive basis. I'm looking for that sort of commitment if the Minister is there.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I appreciate the Member's comment. I think if you look at all the things we're doing as a government, we're doing, I think, a very significant amount of work as it pertains to climate change. However, I take the Member's point and we would look to the advice, as we move towards transition, to the Member, to committee as to their suggestions as to things that should be flagged. We will look at this to make sure there is a more fulsome reflection of the things we are doing. We are fully committed to doing a whole host of things as a government and ENR in terms of the climate change, the greenhouse gas emissions, the renewal of the strategy, all the things we're doing with alternate energy, construction standards and those types of things, but post-division there are a lot of things more to do, and I agree with the Member that we should probably be looking at flagging those right from making sure we do the review of fees to what kind of expectations we're going to have with use of alternate energies not only as a government but in industry and other areas. Those are all things that need to be dealt with, so I'll make that commitment.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for those comments and the commitment.

My last thing was just on the contaminated sites side of things. I recognize the statement that these liabilities increase and decrease based on the remediation of contaminated sites and the booking of new contaminated sites, and being a guy that's always looking at prevention whenever I can, I'd say the biggest factor is the success or failure of preventing the development of new sites. I'm sure that's part of the department's overall goal, but again, other sections may deal with the prevention side. I just want to make sure that that loop is closed and managed for prevention as opposed to just managing it once it happens.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Once again, it's a point that I would not disagree with the Member that the idea would be that yes, we have a long backlog of contaminated sites that need to be remediated and on a go forward basis we want to design our processes to avoid the creation of any new ongoing costs that are going to weigh us down, which is why we have invested the money we have in terms of securities and managing all those arrangements and making sure that as we do the project planning and assessment that there are the proper counterbalances in there to accommodate

and prevent the type of contaminated sites by being created.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, we're on page 101, environment, operations expenditure summary, \$4.539 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 102, environment, grants, contributions and transfers, total contributions, \$463,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 103, environment, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 105, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$32.632 million. Does committee agree? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Obviously, we've had some major issues in this activity in the current year and the forecasts are for at least a possibility of similar-scale challenges in the coming year for which this is the budget. I recognize that the budget is not adjusted; in fact, it's even down considerably from a couple years ago. How is the government handling this? Are we going to again borrow dollars or plan on saving dollars somewhere else if we do have another \$60 million forest fire year?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intent would be to use special warrants and short-term borrowing.

MR. BROMLEY: Obviously, there's a lot of planning and whatnot, preparation that takes place as things develop, and the short-term borrowing and warrants. Would that still cover off the cost of those sorts of expenditures?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The planning work is going on and has been going on now since the end of the fire season. We will have a compilation of all the feedback and responses and recommendations on a go forward basis by the end of March. That work is being done and funded through the forest division and the staff we have on our payroll. With an internal exercise, as well, we've been going out to the regions. I'd ask the deputy if he would want to add a bit more information about the work that's been in done in anticipation of wrapping up last year and lessons learned for next year.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Over the past number of months after the 2014 fire season we've been doing a lot of assessing of some of the challenges that we faced in 2014. Some of it is doable, no doubt to make some changes going forward for this season, but most of it, because of the business planning processes, we will have to come in with the next cycle in some of the areas where we're challenged with fiscal resources, et cetera. But as I mentioned yesterday, we did an internal review shortly after the season and it landed on half a dozen themes that we felt needed a closer look at. Over the last short while here continuing over into the end of this month we are doing, of course, the public engagement in the regional centres, and some of the things, again, we're hearing is aligning with some of the themes that we looked at internally. We are going to be working back from the end of March with a report that will hopefully address those challenges that we faced and just identify some of the items that we looked at internally and some of the stuff that we're hearing from the community engagement.

Of course, we're looking at the safety aspect. We recognize we need a safety management plan on reporting and tracking of incidents, et cetera. The work, the rest, the guidelines, we need to have proper procedures in place. Some of the human resource challenges that we were faced with, some of the financial challenges and practices, some of the stakeholder engagement and communications. We absolutely have to look and review our Wildland Fire Protection Policy. Although we do recognize it is a sound policy, we will look at that as well and, of course, the overall operations of the fire programs looked at.

The public feedback we're hearing, and I had mentioned some of the stuff, is aligning. It's in relation to improved communications before, during and post-fire events, emergency response, planning, working with other departments, governments in that area, the values at risk on the landscape approaches to protecting values at risk, the human and financial resource allocation again, and of course the big part on communication, educating all the homeowners on fire smart practices, et cetera. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and the deputy minister for that. It sounds like a very comprehensive look. It would have been very nice, of course, to have had that in hand as we review this budget and as the department develop the budget. I understand that the Minister will bring this to committee at the end of March. I guess I want to confirm that.

Is that the intent, that committee will hear about that at the end of March and discuss any budget implications at that time?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that's the intent. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I look forward to that. Will we see some policy gaps being identified, and if they have, will we be seeing some proposals to address them?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, we want to identify if there are gaps, be it in policy or procedures or standard operating procedures as well as any broader structural issues, equipment issues. This is a very comprehensive review, so we will be seeking to address those in anticipation of being ready for the upcoming season. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I'd like to ask the Minister if he's aware of a policy gap associated with the compensation for fire losses only being available to trappers and not to others that live on the land and make their living off the land and through important roles in remote locations.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have one specifically designated pot of money. The maximum is, I believe, about \$30,000 for trappers' cabins. We have no compensation fund or policy for any folks that choose to live in the hinterland. It could be a policy decision. If that's going to be the role of government to compensate everybody that lives out on the land, then we need to have a very careful look at that because I'm assuming it would be very expensive. Is that our role? It's been identified because of some of the occurrences last fire season, but clearly, as a government, we're not in a position nor do we have a fund that will allow us to do more than provide very modest compensation that is now available to those folks that are trapping. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Would the Minister commit to doing an inventory of the number of people that live out on the land? I don't recall suggesting that the compensation would need to be more than a trapper receives, although perhaps there would be consideration for that since trappers don't typically live on the land these days. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, yes, we'll look at talking to our colleagues from Lands and such. We can probably get a number of folks that live outside community boundaries. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, we're not talking about people that live outside community boundaries; we're talking about people that live on the land away from civilization and make their living on the land. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, we'll see what numbers we can get, how specific a listing we can get from recreational cabins, I suppose, to a full... I'll see if we have the information on full-time inhabitants that live outside of community boundaries full time in abodes in the hinterland and those that do it full time and commute into work or those at full time living off the land. I'm not quite sure the designation that the Member is asking for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you. Mr. Bromley, your time has expired. If you need to come back, just let the chair know. Continuing on with forest management, I have Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under community protection research, last year one of the communities wanted to do some fire protection in the community and put a fireguard around the community, which is Fort McPherson, but because the season got so busy here, they never did get around to that work. Also, Tsiigehtchic is really at risk because we live right close to the forest there. If we ever had a large fire in these areas with a big south wind, these communities would be at risk.

I'd like to know if the department is going to be working with these communities here over the spring to make sure we have this in place and also possibly do a back burn before it gets too dry. I think that it's better to be prepared in case anything happens. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As part of the review process from last fire season, as we go into the communities and into the regions, that discussion is taking place. We don't have a big pot of money set aside. We would work with communities. We would work with individuals. We would look at putting the fire crews to work, for example, if they're not otherwise occupied in communities, to help doing some of that work. Once again, we are encouraging individuals to fire smart all their own properties and whatever resources that communities may have, as well, to add to that. We will work with communities on looking at how we can collectively move ahead on those fire smart plans in the communities. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Chair, over this past summer here we spent in the neighbourhood of \$60 million, so I think we should have, as a department, put more funds into this. We know the dry season is upon us. I think that we should have budgeted for that. To spend, whether it's \$100,000 to get all the communities in the NWT prepared, I think that's good planning. That should be undertaken this spring. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As far as I'm aware, all the communities have their fire protection plans, and it's just an issue now between the communities and ENR and individuals in looking at implementing them. Once again, we are fiscally challenged, as well, so we don't have a big, significant amount of money put aside that's going to allow us to go and take on that full cost of going to every community in the boreal forest on our own as an ENR initiative. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Many times we always hear that we don't have funds, but when an emergency arises, all of a sudden, whether it's \$2 million, \$10 million or \$60 million it just seems to pop out of nowhere. I think it's very important we set aside... You know, it's not a large amount of money. Fifty to 100 thousand dollars is a small price to pay to have these communities up to speed and prepared. That's the main thing that we have to be for this coming season. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. For that we'll go to the deputy minister, Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a small amount at this point. My understanding is it's around \$30,000 that's available to work with communities on fire smarting their communities. Of course, we have to partner, so it's a limited amount.

We did do a program review in 2010 which identified this area as a gap. Again, of course, there are fiscal challenges. It is something that's come up again as part of our internal review and our public engagement, and we definitely have to look at creative ways here to increase and use our resources to mitigate risk to communities to fire. But at this point, again because of the business planning process, we're going to work with our existing dollars and try to maximize those resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BLAKE: Just one more thing there. The lookout tower at Shiltee Rock, is the department going to work with the community to ensure that it's built and in place before the fire season?

MR. CAMPBELL: It is on the capital plan for this year to build that tower. We want to work with the community. Absolutely, we will be following up. We did put out a tender recently. There were no takers. Again, we're going to go back and work with the Gwich'in to see if we can land on an approach going forward so the tower is built in the upcoming season. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BLAKE: I know last year the community was very interested in negotiating this, so is the Minister willing to either sole source it to the community or negotiate with the community to ensure this is in place before this spring season? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, as the deputy pointed out, there were no takers last go around, so we will go back in and see if there's any interest at the community level to get this tower built. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: I will be willing to work with the Minister and also the community. I know they have shown interest in getting this work and making sure that it's done and in place, whether it's early June. If the department is willing, we'll make sure that happens. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. I believe that was more of a comment, unless the Minister wants to conclude. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to the Member for his offer of working with us in the community. We will be following up. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we are on forest management. Continuing on with questions, we have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The first question I have for the Minister and department is just in terms of the fire suppression budget. The actuals in 2013-14 were about \$20 million, and the revised for last year was \$54 million. In a news article that was in one of last week's papers, the Minister said that funding for the wildland fire management is based on a 10-year average of suppression expenses. With these numbers that are in place, especially with the revised estimates coming in this year, you would think the budget for the '15-16 year would be increased if he's, in fact, going by the 10-year average.

Can I ask the Minister, based on his funding formula, why hasn't this budget increased for fire suppression? In fact, it went down by about \$118,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe I wasn't quite as clear as I could have been, but the intent is to move to a 10-year moving average. We haven't done that yet. That says when we move into next year's budget that's what we're going to be looking at doing as we come forward with the budget plans.

In regards to the \$118,000, I'll ask the deputy to clarify that one particular issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reduction of just over \$100,000 in the suppression budget is a result of ENR working with Public Works and Services on procurement shared services. We, over the decades, had a system in

place where we utilized six individuals at our Fire Centre to undertake different aspects of the procurement area for fire suppression. So, the dollars are still in fire suppression, but instead of moving a PY out of ENR to Public Works, we provided the funding under the suppression budget to cover that. They have committed. That resource will be working in our facility during fire suppression times, the fire season, and working on procurement shared services with that. So, the reduction of that \$118,000 is a result of that process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you for the explanation. Also, I know that discussions have already been going on in the communities. Just referring back, because we don't have the report in front of us so we have to go by what has been quoted in some of the papers, it talks about some of our experts who have been in the field a long time, stating that in some of the cases a personal opinion is that this is going to be a fairly dry season, if not drier than last year. As I mentioned in briefings before, I've talked to people in the fire suppression division and they're saying the same things.

It's also mentioned here that usually drought cycles are, on average, about three years. It was mentioned that last year was their first year, so we can be expecting two more summers of something similar. I think that needs to be taken into account when we're passing a budget, instead of having to come back to committee with these special warrants to get funding to fund our fire suppression crews, especially when it's also noted that there were a lot of fires but a lot of severe fires that I think put about seven communities at risk last year.

There have been some really good questions from Members during this exchange here. I'm glad to hear that we're going to be getting a report and maybe a debrief in March and that will be going to committee and that were about a half dozen themes that were discussed. It will be interesting to see what those are.

I know, from last year, the department was actually putting call-outs for people to come and volunteer to fight fires. You know, when we have management and guys that need to be on the fire line and yet we're getting people off the streets to come and fight fires, there's a significant amount of training to protect the safety of these emergency firefighters, as they're known.

Would the department look at creating some type of emergency firefighter training at the beginning of the season and creating a database from that so that at the end of the year we're not grabbing people off the streets and that we can have a database that we can rely on, rather than, I wouldn't say frantically looking for people to come jump on

the fire lines, but it would be a good planning tool for another dry season that we're looking at. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're in year four of drought, and cycles could go four to five years. So I agree with the Member, I've been making the same observations based on just what we've seen from lack of major fall rains to the snow pack this year and the fact that we're in such deep drought, it will take a significant amount of snow to affect that and we anticipate it could be a long, hot summer.

We learned last fire season, which was by far and away the biggest we've ever had, on the need to recruit internally in the Northwest Territories. We can't rely on southern resources because they, as well, are facing extreme weather events. So we have learned from last year, we've put those lessons into play and I'll ask the deputy to lay out what we've done and it in fact addresses the issue that the Member is talking about.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to touch briefly on the drought conditions and some of the folks that are looking at what we're facing over the winter here and some predictions. We, of course, have our snow monitoring stations in the Northwest Territories. We also work with NTPC, work with Environment Canada, and those surveys, the big survey anyway of that data, the collection of that data is in late March. However, we're monitoring the snow conditions, of course, at some of the airports in the Northwest Territories and I've got to say at this point, at the initial glance at that information, that we're looking at snowfall at this point equivalent to the total snowfall we received last year. So we're a little ahead, but still we're in drought condition and we need a lot of snow from here on in to have an impact on the drought conditions.

Regarding emergency firefighter training, the commitment is there to start early this year training emergency firefighters. We did a lot of training last summer. I mentioned yesterday we were close to training 600 firefighters over and above our crews. So we do and have always had a database on emergency firefighters, certified firefighters and we do use that database. We did use it again last year. So, again, we've built it up considerably after last year. However, we are going to continue training this year and we are committed to starting the training early. Thank you

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm glad to hear that that database does exist and now we've increased it by about 600 new emergency firefighters and that we're still looking at starting that training early on in the season.

It was mentioned earlier about compensation for equipment lost to hunters and trappers, or even property, cabins. I'm not sure how many cabins or property were damaged during the last fire season, but rather than looking at increasing that budget and providing compensation to those that live on the land or those that keep their equipment on the land for hunting and trapping I think the department would be better suited moving forward in terms of creating an awareness campaign.

Based on last year, everybody knows what happened last year in the Northwest Territories and if they had a list in terms of how many properties were damaged, how many people lost equipment and that, putting, not a call-out, but just awareness of the people who live on the land or do their harvesting on the land, that they should start taking precautions early on in the season of their own so that should a fire spark next to their property that they're not rushing out there to try to do some clearing or do some saving of property and putting other lives in danger. I think the department could be projective on this and create awareness before the dry season. Has that been discussed? Is the department looking at doing something like that early in the fire season? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is one of the issues that have come up during the ensuing discussions post-fire season, and it's one of the themes in terms of the education, prevention and preparation. Yes, we are following up on it. We do it as a matter of course, but there's added emphasis on it now this year, both in the communities getting individuals to fire smart, take their matters that they can into their own hands, and then we will try to be there as well. So, yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we are on page 105, forest management, operations. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I ran out of time there as the Minister was wondering about how to define people who live in situations that I was trying to describe. I just thought I'd make the offer to work with him on that. Some of the things that come to mind is they get most of their food off the land from hunting and gathering. If they have children, the children are either home schooled or they have to leave home to go to school because schools are not accessible on a daily basis. The residents themselves rarely get into town and that sort of thing.

Again, I offer to help the Minister to help the Minister on that definition. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We accept. We'll follow up with Mr. Bromley. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, page 105, forest management, operations expenditure summary, \$32.632 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I have a question for the Minister. When we have tourism outfitter lodges and that, is it part of their requirement to have a sort of fire management sprinkler system? From last year's fire situation, have we as a department been lending our fire sprinklers to the lodge owners? They don't have that when they are in that situation. Is it part of their licence? I know it's part of ITI, but the Minister has responsibility also for the fire protection.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We encourage all folks that live outside of the community boundaries, if they can get it, to get insurance. If they can't, then they have to make sure that they take every step to protect themselves, fire smarting their own property, investing in sprinklers, investing in all the things you need in the event that there is a wildfire. Other than that, we don't have much involvement in what would be in their licence in that regard. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: That's something to maybe take a look at when renewing their licence is that these things are checked off. Certainly, we want to encourage them. We want to encourage everybody. Some people don't do something unless it's typically as a requirement as to an operating licence. With the resources that we have, some of these operators are using our resources for the fire sprinklers around their operation. It's something that I would be interested to see, if that could be part of the review of their whole fire situation. Did we use a lot of our own fire sprinklers for tourism outfitters in the area here?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, I will ask, with your indulgence, the deputy just to speak to the practice of assisting wherever we can with equipment, fire hoses, sprinklers and pumps as a matter of practice and convention when we have them available.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We, as the Minister points out, do our best to assist homeowners in protecting their buildings,

infrastructure, et cetera. There, of course, has to be that balance, and it's back to the education and the promoting of fire smart principles to mitigate risk. We can't protect every structure on the hinterland. We can certainly work with them on educating them on the mitigation measures that they should be undertaking. But again, if we do have additional resources that we can use to help the people on the land, we've done it in the past and we did it extensively last year. However, there will always be, I guess, gaps and we need the homeowners themselves, absolutely, to take some of that responsibility on themselves as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand what the Minister and the deputy minister are saying. I want to point out that I'm not talking about homeowners. I'm talking about operators who have lodges that they've invested half a million, a million dollars, and these are fairly expensive lodges for the outfitters. If there is part of their licence requirement that if it's a season like this, you make sure it's there because these sprinklers can be used somewhere else in the area for homeowners who are living on the land. We can't mix apples and oranges here. We've got to put them apart here and say as a consideration under the review of the fire season last year. That's what I'm asking if they're going to look at it. With the time left on our time to look at this department here, I just want to make sure that this is something that we can look at. I don't know. I can specifically ask, how many sprinklers did we lend to the outfitters, to the lodge owners? Were they used? How come they're not getting their own? I don't want to go there right now.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'll flag this issue for discussions with ITI to make sure it's clear as we look at this. As the weather conditions and drought continues and the extreme events happen there are going to be hard choices to be made when people choose to live great distances away from fire protection. As the deputy said, we do our absolute best to be there for all the people, but as the number of people living outside of community boundaries proliferates, it's going to be more and more problematic, but it's an issue that we will flag at the lodge level with ITI.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, noting the clock, I will now rise and report progress. I would like to thank Deputy Minister Campbell and director Susan Craig for joining us and, of course, the Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out of the House.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

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

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 25, 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
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act
 - Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act
 - Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act

- Bill 43, An Act to Amend the Borrowing Authorization Act
- Bill 46, Deline Final Self-Government Agreement 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, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 25th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.