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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	6021
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	6021
178-17(5) – Our Elders, Our Communities: Advancing the Framework (Abernethy)	6021
179-17(5) – 24-Hour Airport Weather Information (Beaulieu)	6022
180-17(5) – Canada Winter Games (R. McLeod)	6023
181-17(5) – International Women’s Day 2015 (B. McLeod)	6023
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	6024
Recognizing the Contribution of Women in the Legislative Assembly (Groenewegen).....	6024
Supporting Equality and Gender Parity (Dolynny)	6024
Hay River Kamba Carnival (Bouchard).....	6025
Cellular Service in Small Communities (Nadli).....	6025
International Women’s Day (Bisaro)	6025
Recognizing Women Leaders in All Communities (Moses)	6026
Support for Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren (Bromley).....	6027
Changing Role of Women (Yakeleya).....	6027
Recognition of Social Workers in Nahendeh Communities (Menicoche)	6027
Women’s Shelter for Tsiigehtchic (Blake)	6028
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	6028
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6029
ORAL QUESTIONS	6029
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	6033
NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS	6033
Bill 49 – An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act.....	6033
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	6033
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	6058
ORDERS OF THE DAY	6058

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Friday, March 6, 2015
Members Present

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

The House met at 10:02 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good morning, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 178-17(5):
OUR ELDERS, OUR COMMUNITIES:
ADVANCING THE FRAMEWORK

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, last May we presented Our Elders: Our Communities, a strategic framework outlining the government's commitment to support elders and seniors who wish to live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible, and ensure that services are available when this option is no longer viable.

As the backbone of our communities, elders and seniors should be supported and given the best care possible. Seniors are the fastest growing population in the Northwest Territories. Over the past decade, the seniors demographic has grown at a rate of more than 5 percent per year, and this trend will continue. Meeting the health care and social needs of elders and seniors is a high priority for our government.

Our Elders: Our Communities gives us a framework to identify gaps in our system, and where we need to take action. Priority areas include home and community care services, integrated and coordinated service delivery, caregiver supports, elder-responsive communities, accessible and current information and sustainable best practices.

The guiding principles within Our Elders, Our Communities strengthen the development of programs, services and supports to seniors and elders. There are seven key principles:

- Choice means knowing that seniors can make or be an active participant in making ones' own choices.

- Respect and dignity means that we treat elders in a manner that imparts value, importance and self-worth.
- Equity acknowledges and celebrates the unique characteristics of elders.
- Awareness, promotes community, regional and territorial programs and services aimed at keeping elders in their communities.
- Access ensures elders have access to culturally appropriate services and support, and access to information that allows individuals to be knowledgeable and to make informed decisions about healthy options available.
- Safety stresses safe, supportive and secure environments free of fear, exploitation and violence.
- Empowerment, which refers to providing opportunities for elders to continue to reach their full potential, with access to educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources, and to continue to make a positive contribution in their communities.

These principles align with the rights set out in the Northwest Territories Seniors Charter and, together with our priority areas, provide a roadmap for the development of programs and services to support healthy and active aging within elder-responsive communities across the Northwest Territories.

By taking action in areas identified in the framework, we will help elders and seniors remain in their communities as long as possible. The Department of Health and Social Services continues to engage the Health and Social Services Authorities and Avens – A Community for Seniors, to advance shared work in areas such as training in palliative care and approaches to care that focus on the needs of the elder, and developing policies to support the implementation of new continuing care standards. We're also planning for new long-term care beds across the Northwest Territories, including Avens in Yellowknife.

The department is also working with the health and social services authorities to enhance home care services. Currently, home support is available in most NWT communities and home care is available in communities with nursing staff. Elders day programs are available in several

communities, which provide an opportunity for elders to socialize and have a nutritious meal as well as participate in Elders in Motion, an active living program offered by the NWT Parks and Recreation Association. Keeping healthy, active, and connected to each other is critical to well-being, and programs like these play an important role in elders' lives.

I am pleased to report that new facilities are being built and resources are being developed to help seniors achieve a high quality of life. The Department of Health and Social Services is working with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to address independent housing needs in our communities and incorporate space for home care and elders day programs into the designs for new seniors housing units.

Any improvements to our programs are not possible without partnerships. The Department of Health and Social Services has also been working with the NWT Seniors' Society and the departments of Justice, Municipal and Community Affairs, Education, Culture and Employment, and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to update the Seniors' Information Handbook. We are also developing a companion booklet for caregivers.

The Seniors' Information Handbook provides a comprehensive list of government programs and services that seniors and their caregivers can access to help them make informed decisions and remain independent and active in their home communities.

The companion Caregiver Booklet will provide information to assist families caring for their loved ones. The plan is to release these documents this spring.

Another example of collaboration is the Aurora Research Institute's recently released report, titled "Influences on Quality of Life of the Older Adult" in the Northwest Territories. Working directly with the NWT Seniors' Society and communities, Aurora College faculty and students gathered valuable, current information on the quality of life of seniors and elders across the Northwest Territories that can help support informed decision-making and direction for leadership, advocacy, education and research. Later today I will table this report.

Taking action in priority areas to improve the programs and services for elders will not be a short-term undertaking, Mr. Speaker. The Department's work is ongoing and will continue through transition. We have established numerous partnerships to help ensure seniors receive the support they need. As we move forward, we will continue engagement with Aboriginal governments, nongovernmental organizations and community members to ensure our programs and services are delivered in the best way possible.

Together, we are working toward our vision of aging in place, and best health, best care and a better future for residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 179-17(5):
24-HOUR AIRPORT WEATHER INFORMATION

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the recent and ongoing improvements made by NAV Canada at 17 of our airport sites with community aerodrome radio stations and at Wekweeti and Colville Lake airports.

NAV Canada is the private corporation responsible for civil air navigation services and weather within Canadian airspace. It has recently invested in the weather observation systems at 19 of our airports in the NWT. This improved weather information, now available 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, will support safer and more effective air transportation services for our communities and residents. The Department of Transportation has assisted NAV Canada in these installations by providing land, material, and construction and coordination assistance.

Mr. Speaker, reliable weather data is critical to airport and air carrier efficiency and safety. Airline operators make decisions on whether to fly or not based on available weather information. In a potentially critical situation, such as a medevac flight, the availability of current and accurate weather information allows operators to make flight decisions quickly.

The changes made by NAV Canada mean pilots can now rely on improved data and tailor their flight schedules to respond to weather conditions with a higher degree of confidence. The new weather observation systems can operate in an unattended mode to deliver sufficient, real time, accurate weather 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This information will be accessible even when community aerodrome radio stations are closed for any reason.

In addition, the new automated weather observation systems in Colville Lake and Wekweeti provide cameras which can be accessed remotely to provide airline operators with views of the airport and runway without ever leaving their offices.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that all 27 airports in the NWT now have access to weather information that is no more than 75 nautical miles from their sites.

The real-time, accurate weather data provided through these investments to the weather observation systems will benefit our residents and communities through improved air services

between communities and allow for improved decision-making and faster response times by the medevac service contractor.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Transportation continues to work with our partners, such as NAV Canada and airline operators, to make improvements to our air transportation system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 180-17(5):
CANADA WINTER GAMES

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to recognize the members of Team Northwest Territories who represented our territory at the 2015 Canada Winter Games in Prince George, British Columbia, from February 13th to March 1st. The 139 athletes, coaches and mission staff were from 11 communities in the Northwest Territories including Aklavik, Deline, Fort McPherson, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Ndilo, Sachs Harbour and Yellowknife.

They participated in the sports of badminton, biathlon, cross country skiing, curling, hockey, figure skating, judo, shooting, speed skating and squash. I know that each and every one of them trained hard and did their very best to represent the NWT and their communities at this premier national event. I would like to make special mention of Brent Betsina of Ndilo, who brought home the silver medal in judo, the NWT's first medal at the Games since Brendan Green's win in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to report that the City of Yellowknife and officials from MACA were in Prince George to gather information related to the consideration of a bid by the city to host the 2023 Canada Games. Earlier this year Mayor Mark Heyck and I launched a public process to inform and advise the citizens of Yellowknife of the benefits that hosting the Games could bring to the city and the NWT. The mayor is also leading a task force to develop a business case for City Council's review that will examine what resources will be needed to successfully host the Games. I am looking forward to assisting and expressing our government's full support for hosting the Games in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories will also be hosting the 2018 Arctic Winter Games. Just last month the Arctic Winter Games International Committee visited Inuvik and Hay River/Fort Smith to review bids from those communities.

These will be the first Arctic Winter Games held outside of Yellowknife since the 1978 Hay River-Pine Point Games.

I am confident that, regardless of the community that wins the bid, the real winner will be the sport community and youth in our communities. Ensuring NWT residents are able to participate in and experience these important multisport games is one way we are supporting healthy, educated people in communities across our territory.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and recognize the parents, coaches, managers, sport officials and Sport North staff and volunteers for their tireless work in preparing our Canada Games team. I also want to thank and recognize the City of Yellowknife, the towns of Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik and the communities in those regions supporting the 2023 and 2018 Games events. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 181-17(5):
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2015

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, all around the world International Women's Day represents an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater equality.

Each year International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8th. The first International Women's Day was held in 1911. Thousands of events occur to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women. Organizations, governments, charities, educational institutions, women's groups, corporations and the media celebrate the day.

In the Northwest Territories we have made great strides for women's equality. We have many powerful women leaders who have not only contributed to their communities but who have shaped the future of the Northwest Territories. More and more women are employed in jobs that historically only men have done. The Government of the Northwest Territories continues to promote capable women to senior management and other positions of influence within our government.

The Status of Women Council continues their good work to support more women to run for election. I was pleased to attend the 2015 Campaign School and speak with many of the women and their supporters who will be running in the next territorial election. Having balanced representation in this House and in other leadership positions allows us to be stronger and wiser together.

This weekend the Status of Women Council will host the annual Wise Women Awards and I will be attending to offer my congratulations to the many wise women from across the Northwest Territories.

Other organizations in the Northwest Territories like the Native Women's Association contribute to women's equality through their support programs

and advocacy work. I would also like to recognize the new and dynamic organization Dene Nahjo who recently held a circumpolar women's leadership here in Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, when we support equality for women, we support equality for all our residents, strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories.

Make It Happen is the 2015 theme for International Women's Day, encouraging effective action for advancing and recognizing women. I encourage all Members of this House and those listening today to consider how they can make it happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As our Premier has just so eloquently outlined, International Women's Day is coming up this Sunday and you will see that many Members in the Chamber today are wearing purple in recognition of International Women's Day. Today I would like to talk a little bit about elected leadership at the territorial level.

As the Premier said, we have strong women in leadership at all levels in all of our communities. Mr. Speaker, 1975 was the first fully elected Legislative Assembly. It was the 8th Legislative Assembly and since that time, in that past 40 years, I would like to recognize some of the women who served in this Chamber, starting with Lena Pedersen, who represented the Central Arctic for four years, elected in 1970; Lynda Sorensen, elected in 1979, representing Yellowknife South for five years; Eliza Lawrence, representing Tu Nedhe from 1983 for four years; Nellie Cournoyea, representing the Western Arctic and then renamed Nunakput for 16 years, starting in 1979; Jeannie Marie Jewell, representing Slave River and then later renamed Thebacha, from 1987 and spent eight years in this Legislative Assembly; Rebecca Mike, from Baffin Central, starting in 1991 representing for four years; Sandy Lee for Range Lake, elected in 1999 and served in this Legislature for 12 years; Manikot Thompson, elected in 1995 from Aivilik riding, and she served here for four years prior to division and I believe may have served in the Nunavut government after that; and, of course, in 1995 I was elected and honoured to be elected to this

Chamber, and we won't talk about how long I've been here.

---Laughter

There have only been 10 women ever elected in 40 years of elected government, and number 10 is my colleague Ms. Bisaro, who was elected in 2007 and has served two terms in this Legislative Assembly.

I also had the honour, along with Ms. Bisaro and the Premier, to attend the Campaign School that was put on by the Status of Women Council and had a few words to say there. With an election coming up, Mr. Speaker, if I can seek unanimous consent, I'll have a few comments on what women might think about the upcoming territorial election. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'm pleased to see that there is interest from women. May I say that even if you've run before, don't be shy to try again. You can look through history and see that many, many people did not get elected the first time they ever ran and they should think about doing it again. If you do want to serve in this House, it is good to have the support of families and a close network of support. It is challenging being away, and that is for men or women, but you would think about the support of your family and a close network of people supporting you. It doesn't hurt to be a little opinionated and it certainly helps if you've got a lot of energy.

So with that, to any women considering running for this territorial election this fall, I wish them all the best. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORTING EQUALITY AND GENDER PARITY

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. International Women's Day on March 8th presents an opportunity for all Northerners to draw attention to women's equality and gender parity. We celebrate this opportunity with many strong political women leaders in this room and from around the territory. We are here today to give meaning to greater transparency of leveraging balance within ourselves and humanity.

As a male politician, I have the opportunity to set an example for men everywhere to support the rights of women and by giving credibility to what this day really means instead of what people think it means. No matter who you are, everyone should be in favour of equality of genders, because it's about the justice of being treated as equal that's at stake.

Fighting for gender equality is not about money and power; it's about basic human rights, nothing more.

When women are empowered, they measurably improve the lives of everyone around them, their workplace, their families and their communities. If we truly care for a better society and believe that everyone has a fair chance to be what they can be and do what they want to do, then we must do away with institutional privilege and support a society that is gender just, equal and democratic.

So, although we have come closer to achieving parity between men and women in areas of health and education, we still have much to do in the transparency of leveraging balance in our economic well-being. With a slumping economy, we are at a significant crossroads. Our population is aging, the fertility rate has fallen and our future workforce will be smaller. Now, more than ever, we need to leverage our gender diversity where the talents of both men and women are in full force. We can no longer afford to leave so much potential behind, as our economic future depends on it.

So on March 8th, I ask all men, if you care about this future, then give this day its due consideration and contemplate without fear of judgment, a society free of gender bias and inequality. As we heard from our Premier today, let's make this happen. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER KAMBA CARNIVAL

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's Kamba time! Mr. Speaker, this weekend is Kamba Carnival, one of the first carnivals in the Northwest Territories, and obviously the travel with the carnivals are starting this spring. Obviously, it's the first sign of spring.

I look forward to going back to Hay River this weekend and partaking in some of the events. Last night they had a youth talent show. Obviously, we have a lot of people coming in from throughout the North; actually, sometimes we get Alaska. A bunch of people come in for the dogsled races. We have pancake breakfasts coming on. This afternoon is an official half day off for the community of Hay River. There's going to be a bingo, obviously. There's going to be hand games. I'm looking forward to not participating but actually seeing it. I've never really seen it take place, so I'm going to get there. Saturday night there's a talent show and obviously there are many events going on, so I look forward to it.

Some of the people are travelling – I know Mr. Nadli and Mr. Blake are considering coming for this big event – and we look forward to seeing a lot of people from the Northwest Territories and throughout the northern area.

It's Kamba time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CELLULAR SERVICE IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The recent rollout of cellular service to communities that didn't have such services was exciting. I understand that both governments supplemented the overall cost of establishing the network and also cellular power in some communities.

Now people in those communities that have cell service can enjoy keeping connected through their mobile phones and also keeping up with Internet technology. Some people now cannot live without their mobile phones.

Mobile communications enables greater communications and access to the Internet and is very convenient. Having this kind of technology bodes well for attracting tourists and also gives those visiting the NWT an enjoyable experience.

Advances in cellular expansion to small and remote communities are a step forward. Such services mean a more confident travelling public and also, at the same time, it makes communications more possible.

We're stepping closer to the reality of having 911 services across the NWT. There are limitations, however. Because of limited subscribers in some communities, there is limited coverage. As an example, the radius of coverage in Fort Providence is limited in some areas. That was discovered recently when a few people who were stranded were unable to communicate home. What happened was that the search and rescue was dispatched, and the people made it home safely. But if we had expanded cellular service, then it would have been possible to communicate to the home base and encourage people that, yes, we're okay.

The corporate view is that because we have limited subscribers, we will have limited coverage in communities. I think those corporations that provide cellular services have to have more than a corporate view; they need to have a community perspective and a sense of community in providing those services. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we've heard already, Sunday is the 104th International

Women's Day. Sunday is also the 24th celebration of the NWT Wise Women Awards.

International Women's Day is March 8th and it's a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women, past, present and future. International Women's Day honours the work of suffragettes who marched and fought for the right for women to vote, and the women who continue to fight for women's rights today. In many countries across the world, International Women's Day is a national holiday.

On International Women's Day we all need to spread the message of women's empowerment, to the friends, family and men in our lives. It's a day to celebrate the women in our lives and our communities, to honour the advances women have made but, at the same time, remember the need for continued action to ensure that the equality fought for and gained by women who have passed before us is maintained in all aspects of our society.

Gloria Steinem has said, "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights." How true that is, Mr. Speaker. Until all of society accepts responsibility for and achievement of women's equality, it will not happen.

Of the world's 1.3 billion poor people, nearly 70 percent are women. Between 75 and 80 percent of the world's 27 million refugees are women and children. Of the world's nearly 130 million children who are not in school, two-thirds are girls. On average, women earn between 30 and 40 percent less pay than men for the same work. Women, more than men, continue to be victims of violence. Rape and domestic violence are significant causes of disability and death among women worldwide.

This year's theme for International Women's Day, as we heard, is Make It Happen. Everyone is encouraged to "paint it purple," as we all have done, – thank you very much, colleagues – on March 8th to show support for International Women's Day.

Sunday we will honour five NWT wise women who each in their own way have contributed to changing our world for the better by making it happen. I'd like to name those ladies, Mr. Speaker.

- Annie B. Gordon from Aklavik, for the Beaufort-Delta region;
- Caroline Bonnetrouge from Fort Providence, for the Deh Cho region;
- Pertice Moffit of Yellowknife, for the North Slave region;
- Judy Lafferty, Fort Good Hope, for the Sahtu region;

- Maggie Sikyea from Fort Smith, for the South Slave region.

Congratulations to this formidable group of women, and thanks to each one of you for your work to better your community and the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNIZING WOMEN LEADERS IN ALL COMMUNITIES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am honoured to take the opportunity to appreciate and show respect to the women across the Northwest Territories for their dedication, their hard work, their persistence and compassion to the people of the Northwest Territories. We all know women in our communities who take that role on, who are leaders, who are protectors, who are caregivers, who provide for the community. We do have a strong history in the Northwest Territories of female leaders past and present. In fact, we have two of them that sit in this House today. I appreciate working with them and the experience that they bring into the House and to the committee meetings,

As we celebrate the economic, political and social achievements and continue to work to empower women in the Northwest Territories, we've also got to understand that there are women out there that support people in the communities. As I said, they're mothers, they're caregivers, they're grandparents who take care of their grandchildren, they're single mothers who take the role of the father and the mother who provide for their young children, and we have strong elder women in leadership who continue to carry on the cultures, the traditions, the stories and the languages of the past as passed down to our generations and generations that are yet to come.

I just want to take the opportunity to also recognize, as we sit here in session for six weeks, the women who support our staff and support Members who sit in this House for long hours during the day and support them during these, I guess you'd call them hard times because they're long meetings. We have to recognize those women who support our Members of this House and the staff of this House when we have these long days.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize one special lady and that's my mother who is a very strong lady in her own right. I know she's watching and I just want to say thank you for all that you've done for me. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUPPORT FOR GRANDPARENTS
CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The most vulnerable people in our communities are children. They have little control over their circumstances and often are affected by the poor decisions of others. It often falls to the elders, the grandparents, to assume care of the wee ones in the hopes that the parents will return to good health.

Keeping families together this way is something we can all get behind. When grandparents take over care of their children before the kids are apprehended, they get no financial support because they are family. If children are apprehended and then grandparents are allowed to foster them, they are eligible for remuneration at foster parent rates. Yet formal involvement of child and family services is scary, adversarial, traumatic, expensive to everyone, and leads to a high rate of apprehensions. This forces grandparents to seek support through income assistance, a stigmatized program known for its red tape and poor treatment of clients despite their noble efforts and intent. It penalizes grandparents who are taking proactive steps to prevent apprehension of the children and makes no provision for grandparents whose earnings disqualify them from income support. Nor does it recognize the housing issues when the addition of children increases family size beyond the suitability of the grandparents' home. Often, being retirees on fixed incomes, these are huge and frequently insurmountable burdens for the grandparents. While they desperately want to keep their families together, they often suffer from shortages or are unable to manage it financially.

A new approach is needed if we want to keep families together. The department needs to engage in non-adversarial outreach so that grandparents feel safe approaching child and family services for help. Such a process may increase the number of grandparents eligible for help and will also improve outcomes. Collaboration between families and the system reduces trauma for all and exemplifies the Child and Family Services Act's principle of least intrusive measures. Revising the policy on voluntary agreements and assisted fostering so that struggling grandparents can more easily qualify for aid as foster parents would be steps in the right direction.

We know it's better for all concerned if children whose parents are going through a rough patch could stay within their families, communities and cultures. Grandparents are frequently willing and capable to provide the care needed, but they need support to do it. Let's meet them halfway with a policy that this situation demands and make it happen. I will have questions. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This being International Day for Women, I thought every day was a day for women.

I want to say a few things about our women. No, I'm not going to sing the Shania Twain song, titled "Man, I Feel Like a Woman."

---Laughter

Our women have come a long way in today's society. From the traditional roles of raising and guiding our precious little children to becoming world leaders in our country, there has been a cultural change. As a matter of fact, it was a woman who helped save a nation of Aboriginal people in the Southern Plains tribe legend, according to the elders' story about the white buffalo woman.

In our small communities, growing up, our aunties, our grandmothers, our mothers, our elderly women, our cousins, we were given instructions by our grandmothers, how women were to play a role in our men's lives in our communities.

Change has happened and our women have adapted to that change and life changes too. Our women have become community leaders, regional leaders and Canada's leaders. We have two sitting in this House right now. We have Ms. Ethel Blondin-Andrew, we have Ms. Nellie Cournoyea, as Mrs. Groenewegen eloquently named a lot of good women who are in the political life, and we also have community leaders. All made a choice to better their families and communities, and the families are the seeds of the future.

It's time to reflect on the role of our women today as they continue to raise their children, work today in government, private business or just volunteering their time. At the same time, they have time to cook, wash clothes, shop and, at the end of the day, to be a good partner. Surely today is their day.

I want to say women have a role in life. As my late grandmother would often say, they have a role in life. Respect them.

I'll have questions later today about how women have a role our government. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
IN NAHENDEH COMMUNITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think today there was an outstanding shout out for women on International Women's Day

by my colleagues here and I, too, share the recognition, but my shout out today is to express my thanks to social workers for all the hard work they do in our communities.

While I have chosen to say thank you during National Social Work Month, their work is really appreciated in Nahendeh communities all year round. The reality is that our social workers are on the front lines of changing history for the better. Many of the problems they help people with stem from residential school experiences, racism and substance abuse. Being a social worker is one of the hardest jobs out there. I'm sure it is very rewarding each time someone or a family does well with a little bit of caring help and counselling, but it is tough when hard decisions have to be made, sometimes unpopular decisions. The day-to-day workload is unpredictable. You just never know when you'll be in the middle of a crisis.

Last year's Auditor General report noted that very thing. In the course of daily duties, social workers are exposed to traumatic and stressful situations and they are tasked with making life-altering decisions about the welfare of children. So it takes real courage, strength and good judgment to be an effective social worker. They are key people in our communities. I am not sure what we're paying them, but it's probably not enough.

This leads me to another point: retention. Given the challenges of the job, social workers deserve strong support and training to succeed wherever they work, but especially in the smaller communities. We need to offer cross-cultural training on a regular basis. New social workers, if they are also new to the region they service, should receive a thorough orientation when they arrive, coordinated with the local leadership. This is not asking too much.

We expect a lot from our social workers and they have a lot to offer. We owe them all our thanks and all the tools they need to succeed. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WOMEN'S SHELTER FOR TSIIGHEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the new year I met with the leadership in Tsiighehtchic and they expressed the need for a women's shelter in Tsiighehtchic. Like many small communities in the Northwest Territories, this facility is needed. There is no safe place for women to go when they are faced with violence, yet in the regional centres we have these facilities.

It's time we start working in the small communities to ensure that women in violence have a safe place to go.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later today.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize the hearts of my life, Ms. Lucyanne Kendo and Miss Brittany Jewel visiting us here in the gallery today. I'm glad to see you here, watching me at work and all my colleagues. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a few different individuals. First, I would like to recognize Dr. Pertice Moffit who is the manager and instructor of health research programs at the Aurora Research Institute as well as at Aurora College and also the recipient of the 2015 Wise Women Award for the North Slave. I would also like to recognize Brianne Timpson who is an instructor in the Bachelor of Science in the Nursing Program here at Aurora College. Just for the record, both Dr. Pertice Moffit and Brianne Timpson are co-authors of the report of Influences on the Quality of Life of the Older Adult in the Northwest Territories that I will be tabling later today.

I would also like to recognize Barb Hood, who is the executive director of the NWT Seniors' Society; Wanda Roberts, member of the NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults; Amy Mercredi, president of the Enterprise Seniors' Society; and Sandra Taylor, board of directors of the NWT Seniors' Society and president of the Yellowknife Seniors' Society. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Amy Mercredi, who is the president of the Enterprise Seniors' Society. Welcome to the gallery. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to recognize the NWT Wise Woman Award of the North Slave region, Ms. Pertice Moffit. Along with Pertice is Linda Golding and next to Linda is Barb Hood, as we've heard, the director of the NWT Seniors' Society. To all the other ladies up there, welcome on the two days prior to the International Women's Day. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to join my colleagues in recognizing Ms. Moffit and her award of the Wise Woman of the Year. Fantastic. Also, I would like to recognize Barb Hood, resident of Weledeh and also NWT Seniors' Society executive director, and of course Sandra Taylor and all of the ladies in the gallery who are clearly leaders in our communities and in the House today. Mahsi.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: I would like to recognize Ms. Barbara Hood, also, and the other ladies and the recipient of the Wise Woman Award for the North Slave in the House here.

I would like to recognize again the two young Pages from Deline on this historical week for them, Miss Faith Gaudet, daughter of the chief negotiator, Danny Gaudet; and Miss Hannah Beyonnie, whose mother is Rita Beyonnie who is shadowing the students from ?ehtseo Ayha School in Deline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I would like to welcome everybody here in the public gallery. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings here today. Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Nadli.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 19-17(5): CAROLINE BONNETROUGE – WISE WOMAN AWARD

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to acknowledge the recipient of the Wise Woman Award for the Deh Cho region, Caroline Bonnetrouge.

Caroline Bonnetrouge was born at Tathlina Lake in 1932. As a young child she was taught traditional skills by her parents, Madelaine and Philip Simba. She loved to hunt, fish, trap and sew.

She married her husband, Albert. They had eight children and many grandchildren.

Caroline is a Deh Gah Gotie Dene elder who helps her people who need guidance. She believes in working with the sick and provides traditional beliefs such as spiritual praying and feeding fires.

Caroline passes on her knowledge and skills to the youth at Deh Gah School and, when required, to teach at traditional youth camps. She loves to dance to jigging tunes and enjoys travelling by boat.

Mr. Speaker, if we could all take a moment just to congratulate and acknowledge Caroline. Mahsi.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 758-17(5): ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I talked about women in general, and specifically in our communities, and the changing roles that women have with today's society. I want to ask the Minister of Human Resources in regards to women in government positions specifically in senior management. I want to ask the Minister, in regards to the number of women in the Aboriginal Development Management Program, what type of percentage do we have in that program?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The indigenous Aboriginal women in all of management constitutes about 12 percent of all managers in senior management in the GNWT, and for senior managers it's 8 percent, and for other management, middle management it's at about 14 percent. Of course, the Aboriginal Development Program also includes women. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: In the Aboriginal Development Program this is something that programs choose to support women into senior management, and I'm speaking more for the senior Aboriginal women into the programs.

Does the GNWT have a succession program planning to help the Aboriginal employees move into management or senior management positions?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Each department in the GNWT is responsible for developing human resource plans. In each human resource plan there is succession planning. So, each of the plans actually identify positions in which they would complete a succession plan for successful individuals within their departments. It is also possible for using transfer assignments to move individuals from one department to another and put them into a succession plan which is intended to move individuals from lower levels into management positions and from management positions into senior management positions. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: What's the strategy for filling vacant positions in small communities in regions outside of Yellowknife?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: On a semi-annual basis, the Department of Human Resources prints out the vacancy rates in the GNWT. Inside those vacancy rates we break it down by department. We then work with the departments on vacancy rates, not only in the regional centres and the small

communities but also in Yellowknife. So there's a plan and a strategy to fill those vacancies.

As I indicated earlier in the House, there's been a considerable drop of about 180 vacancies between the last two printings, which are about six months apart. We're trying to maintain that pace. The strategy essentially is once the report is out, then we approach the various departments through HR and they have to determine the positions that are vacant. Regional recruitment is one of the tools we're asking the departments to use to fill the positions. It's a very good tool for filling vacant positions. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to ask the Minister, how many Aboriginal women do we currently have in management, and what is our plan to increase the number of Aboriginal in senior management?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Counting both senior and regular management, we have about 80 Aboriginal women in management. The corporate nature of the GNWT, we have lots of women in management. Fifty percent of our deputy ministers are women.

What happens is when we become specific to how we're going to fill positions, we always have affirmative action. The Affirmative Action Program looks at indigenous Aboriginal and also looks at women, who always have a priority. So, indigenous Aboriginal women would have the highest priority, and women also have a priority 1 or priority 2 category in this government. Using the Affirmative Action Program is how we hope to increase that number of Aboriginal women we have in management and senior management. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 759-17(5):
SUPPORTING GRANDPARENTS
CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my Member's statement, keeping children with their families is the best way to support and build stronger families, the ultimate goal of child and family services. We need to work with families right when they are struggling, and apprehension needs to be a last resort. Increasing financial support to grandparents to enable care for their grandchild is an appropriate policy goal.

How will the Minister direct the department to reach out to grandparents caring for children not their own, to make it easier for them to accept help? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member indicated, we're making fundamental changes to the way we provide child and family services here in the Northwest Territories with a focus on the family. Our goal is to keep children with their parents. Raising children is, first and foremost, a family responsibility. I understand when individuals are having difficulty, they often turn to their parents or their siblings or other family members.

If a child enters the system, whether it's through a voluntary means or whether it's through an apprehensive means, we do try to engage families to keep their children in a tight knit, and we do have extended family foster placements. We are changing the way we do business. We are trying to create a more supportive environment, and that includes extended families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. When young parents have problems and grandparents fill the gap, often informally, sparing their grandchildren the trauma of apprehension and interaction by child and family services, this often brings a financial burden beyond their capacity.

Will the Minister immediately and specifically begin a process of non-adversarial outreach to grandparents who are fostering informally, to begin recognizing and meeting their needs? There are lots out there. Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Where there's no involvement of the child and family services of the requirements under the act for engagements, grandparents are, absolutely, free to welcome their grandchildren into their home, but the GNWT is not responsible for the financial costs of those individuals coming in unless the child and family services has been engaged.

If grandparents choose to take a child into their care and they do run into financial difficulties, as the Member indicated, they are available to go to income support if they are having financial challenges as a result of bringing those children in.

We are modifying the way we provide child and family services here in the Northwest Territories with a focus on the families. Our goal is to keep them with the parents or extended families as much as possible, and that's the direction we'll be taking.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. Obviously, we know the policy and it's not working. I'm asking the Minister to do some outreach and make sure that the grandparents know what options are available to them. Just saying that this is available to them does not do the job. Some grandparents who are fostering grandchildren informally have incomes that disqualify them from

receiving support either financially or for housing issues that arise as a result of the unplanned expansion of their families, consideration needs to be given to revising voluntary agreements so struggling grandparents more easily qualify for support. Will the Minister commit to exploring alternate revenue streams for these grandparents who have fixed incomes above the threshold for help?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Not all grandparents who take children are going to run into financial difficulties, but where they do run into financial difficulties they are able to go to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and income support. We do recognize that addressing the issue that the Member is talking about, those individuals who have not gone to child and family services but are taking care of their grandchildren and they do need some supports, it's going to take an interdepartmental approach involving integrated case management. It's going to take a number of departments, because the issues are crossing a number of departments, Education, Culture and Employment and income support, the NWT Housing Corporation with public housing, as well as the Department of Health and Social Services under child protection.

The department's position has been that when the director decides to place an at-risk child with their grandparents, the grandparents do receive foster care payments. They do get money. However, the department does not pay for foster care payments when the decision to place a child with their grandparent was actually the family's decision. They never came to child and family services. The department has always been working collaboratively with other departments to resolve complex matters requiring an integrated approach. A fully integrated approach is somewhat challenged by the NWT Housing Corporation policy that considers foster care payments as income when calculating eligibility for public housing, and Revenue Canada does not consider foster care payments as income for tax purposes. We are discussing these between the three departments, trying to find resolution and trying to break down the silos and the barriers to support our families here in the Northwest Territories. We are doing a number of things to find a way.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's comments on the interdepartmental confusion which clearly is a barrier to grandparents accessing the support they need. Currently, ECE is the route for grandparents who are informally fostering grandchildren to receive financial support through income assistance while apprehended children are the responsibility of

Health and Social Services. I appreciate the Minister's look here, but I ask the Minister to hark back to when he was part of a group of MLAs that revised child and family services and highlighted the needs to support grandparents who are fostering informally. I'm glad to hear the department's position of things. We know that, and we know it's failing our grandparents who are informally fostering. Now I'm asking the Minister to step out of that and hark back to the conservation we've had with real people and think about how we can come up with new ways to address this real issue.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I support the extended family fosters. I support grandparents becoming foster parents when there is a risk of abuse or neglect within a family. But there are situations where families are making choices regardless of whether there's risk of neglect or abuse. I want to find ways to support and we are working, but we do need to be cautious. Paying some grandparents to look after grandchildren when there is no risk of abuse or neglect would open the door for all grandparents to expect payment when they agree to look after their grandchildren. We need to ensure that we're focusing on grandparents who are in financial need or difficulty, and the integrated approach that I talked to trying to break down the barriers to find support will provide those grandparents who are in financial difficulty, but still taking on children, some opportunities. In the meantime, if there is an issue of finances and they do want some money, they can come to the Department of Health and Social Services and actually fully engage within the child and family services division in a voluntary capacity and receive foster support. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 760-17(5):
WOMEN'S SHELTERS IN
SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services following up on my Member's statement. I'd like to ask the Minister, what is the department doing to meet the needs of women's shelters in small communities like Tsiigehtchic? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I actually haven't had any discussions with the Member on this and I was not aware that Tsiigehtchic was looking for a women's shelter. When it comes to domestic violence and abuse here in the Northwest Territories, we work closely with the Department of Justice and other community organizations to try to find local

solutions. But I would be happy to have discussion with the Member and the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you. Is the Minister willing to work with the community of Tsiigehtchic to identify a shelter for women and violence? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We have five different regional shelters that are available to women and I know the RCMP are working closely with communities to try to find solutions that work with them. I'm happy to have a discussion with the community to hear their concerns and their desires and bring it back to Cabinet and committees. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: I mentioned in my Member's statement that we only have one in each regional centre and that's the five he referred to, but it's time that we start working with the communities to ensure that we have this type of facility in our smaller communities. So if there's no space available, is the Minister willing to work with the Minister of Housing to identify a unit if needed in Tsiigehtchic? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are multiple things going on here and I would encourage the community to continue to work with the RCMP to explore options and solutions for their community.

We, as a Cabinet, know that there are many solutions in communities. A lot of communities are stepping up with creative ideas and options for their people and we want to support that as much as possible. So I look forward to hearing what the community has to say. Thank you.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems like every time we bring up issues related to what's needed in the communities we get the same answer, "We need to hear what the communities need in the community." Well, the communities are telling us as their representatives what is needed in the communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. That's more of a comment; but, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Member's point of view and his concerns. Absolutely, as a government we're committed to working with our communities and finding solutions that work for all people, but I do also have to remind the Member, as well as everybody else in the House, that we do have 33 communities, we do have fiscal limitations with what we can do and it might prove to be fiscally impossible to have individual women's shelters in every community in the Northwest Territories. But working with the communities, finding solutions within the communities, by the communities, for the

communities, I'm sure we can find ways to start meeting the needs of the residents in this particular area. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 761-17(5):
EXPANDING TELECOMMUNICATION
SERVICES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. The department is involved in working with other departments in trying to amass a ground ambulance and also a highway response system.

What steps has his department taken and other departments to address the areas of limited cellular coverage in some communities? Mahsi.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'd like to see all of our communities have access to cellular service. I think it's improved quite a bit in the last couple of years. As far as what we're trying to do, we would obviously work closely with those that are providing the service, have them inform us as to what their future plans are. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Thank you. The overall idea in terms of the goal that the departments are undertaking is to establish an overall and a long-term 911 system here in the NWT.

What immediate steps has the department and this government taken to ensure that there is at least a sequence of events that will happen before we get to a 911 system? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Improving our telecommunications was one of our challenges when we first had the discussion on 911. Since then, telecommunication has improved quite a bit. We have had a report commissioned. The report is done and we are looking forward to having some time before committee to give them an update on some of the work that we are doing and some of our plans going forward. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: I would like to thank the Minister for his reply. The Minister has stated that there have been some improvements and there are other parties that are involved.

To what extent have discussions been undertaken with companies such as NorthwestTel that have a community responsibility to ensure communities have sufficient and at least adequate cell coverage? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We will have discussions with all those that provide the service to see what their plans are and see where we can go from there. Obviously, as I stated before, telecommunication is improving across the Northwest Territories. It is getting to a point where you go out on the land now and you still have cell phone access, so that part of it is improving, and once we do that work we will take the next step in the work that we are doing around the 911, the update that we are giving to committee on our way forward. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister ensure by this spring hunt that those communities that have limited cell coverage out on the land, that efforts will be made to increase the services? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That is not our call as to improving the cell phone coverage. Obviously, that is the providers' plans. We can work with them to see what their plans are and we give committee an update on some of the work we are doing. If we have conversations with providers, we can pass some of that information on to committee. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 215-17(5):
INFLUENCES ON THE QUALITY OF LIFE
OF THE OLDER ADULT
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Influences on the Quality of Life of the Older Adult in the Northwest Territories." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Beaulieu.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 49:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
DEH CHO BRIDGE ACT

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 9, 2015, I will move that Bill 49, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 12, Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act; Bill 36, Health and Social Services Professions 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), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016; Tabled Document 205-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2014-2015; Tabled Document 206-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2014-2015; and Tabled Document 207-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016, with Mr. Dolynny in the chair.

By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 10-17(5), I here authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider business before the House.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Good afternoon, committee. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We wish to continue with Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016, with the Department of Education and, time permitting, Public Works and Services.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. We'll commence after a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I'll call Committee of the Whole back to order. I'll ask Minister Lafferty if

he has witnesses he'd like to bring into the House. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Minister Lafferty, would you please introduce the witnesses, for the record?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. To my left is deputy minister of ECE, Gabriela Eggenhofer; to my immediate right is Olin Lovely, assistant deputy minister of corporate services; and to my far right, Dana Heide, associate deputy minister with ECE.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Ms. Eggenhofer, Mr. Lovely, Mr. Heide, welcome back to the House. Committee, we last left this department on page 66 of the main estimates. Education and culture, grants, contributions and transfers, total grants and contributions, \$209.153 million. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a few comments. Under the healthy food for children and youth, the \$650,000, I made a statement in the House and asked questions of the Minister earlier this week about the East Three gardening program and the success that has been had in terms of engaging our youth, increasing attendance, as well as providing an opportunity for students to learn something that they're not really accustomed to doing in terms of agriculture and the work that they're doing and how it spills out into the community where they contribute to soup kitchens and other feasts.

I was wondering if the Minister, in future budgets, would be looking at this program as a framework where we could build into other schools, especially maybe some of the remote schools where they don't get all the fresh fruits and vegetables, and even some of the unique ideas that they're going to be pursuing here in the future.

I just want to ask the Minister if he'd be looking at contributing to that program and taking it out into the communities as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I believe this is a great idea and we need to start talking not only with Inuvik but other regions as well. The more healthy food that we can have into our school system, the better for our children to learn. Having dedicated resources towards this type

of initiative, obviously that would be considered as we move forward. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: You know, this program, coming from one of the highest communities in the Arctic, was recognized nationally from right across Canada out of seven recognized programs. I read them all. They're all really great, innovative projects to enhance education in the youth, and I think that not only the growing program but I think that the department might need to look at this Ken Spencer Award through the Canadian Education Association and see what programs we can use to implement and get a better way to educate our youth.

Would the Minister also be willing to look at that as an option? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we talk about bringing the agriculture programming into our school system, I need to work very closely with ITI since they have that portfolio. But by all means, this is an area that we need to explore further, to see what's out there in the regions, in the communities, and present that idea to the school boards as well. So, most definitely this will be our topic of discussion. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: I've spoken to the coordinator over the last couple of years on the success of that program, and I was mentioning that it would be great to take it out into the communities. His expertise, working in the North, working in the schools, and the climate and environment that he does work in has been successful. He did mention that he'd be willing to, if the funding was there and the framework was there, that he would work with other schools and help purchase equipment. You know, do the proposals and get the program in the schools. I think it would be great if the Minister could follow up with the staff on that and support him in the successful program.

Just one other quick question here was on the literacy funding. I see there's \$2.3 million contributed to organizations to deliver literacy programs, and we do know that there are high rates of speech pathology within the Department of Health and Social Services of clients and working with children who need to have better development of their speech.

Can I just get an idea of what kind of literacy programs are being delivered in the communities, because that's quite a bit of money going into these programs. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Obviously, literacy is one of our top priorities within our department. We've heard over and over from committee members that we need to focus on developing literacy programming and having partners involved. So, this is involving NGOs from across the Northwest Territories, working with Aurora Collage as well, and again NGOs, to deliver various

programs from K to 12 equivalent courses and having the NWT Literacy Council actively engaged in this, as well, because they represent all the communities as well.

I believe that more investment in this area will be seeing positive results. We have seen the results already and we want to continue that trend and work with our true partners such as the NWT Literacy Council and NGOs across the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Continuing on, grants, contributions and transfers, I have Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a quick question here under the education authority contributions. It's been brought up a number of times in the past, the home boarding issue in Tsiigehtchic. We're constantly finding ways for parents to find people in Inuvik that their children could stay with when they reach Grade 10 level for three years. What is the department doing to make sure that we have good homes for these students to stay in while they're going to school in Inuvik?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. This is not the first time that this has been brought to my attention. Not only Inuvik but other regional settings, as well, even the Sahtu and other places. This has been brought to our attention where we need to have a secure residence for our students that are attending at the regional high school level coming from the small, isolated communities. We need to have a suitable place for them to study and to have shelter. We work very closely with the DEAs and DEC's to make that a priority for them, because we want every child to be successful as part of their education programming.

It is the district education authority and also the district education council, we provide funding to them and they provide housing or residences available for these students, and we support them at that level. We will continue to support those areas and, again, work very closely with the authorities.

MR. BLAKE: Just on another issue. Under the Aboriginal languages broadcasting, a couple Members mentioned last week they had a huge storm up in our region, and while we had that, wind took out the antenna at the Tsiigehtchic radio station. Is there funding available for cases like this to get the local radio station up and running to help out the community in a case like this?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Again, the Aboriginal broadcasting, even at the local level is very important for the community and also my department. We've heard Mr. Blake's challenge. There have been some issues with the tower. We

are working with that. We do have program funding, but we don't necessarily have infrastructure funding. We're seeing what's the best solution addressing this within my department and working very closely with the community, and we will continue to update the Member on this particular matter because we want it up and running again along with others such as CKLB and important Aboriginal broadcasting across the North.

MR. BLAKE: I'd like to ask the Minister, do they have a list of who accesses this funding? Does it all go to just one station or how is it set up? Is it based on communities, regional centres? How is this set up?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: It's by community. Obviously, a community has to access and apply through the application process for funding. The funding is available, it's just a matter of a community applying for it, so I would highly encourage those communities that have not applied to apply for the funding that's available for them.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Continuing on with questions, education and culture, grants and contributions, I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had a couple of questions on this page. I see the Early Childhood Worker Grant Program is increased over last year, and I'm happy to see that. How has the uptake been on that so far this year and what sort of increase does this mean for workers? I know that early childhood workers' salaries are typically much lower than the value that we put on them, so I support this program. I'm just wondering about the update and how that's working.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Since we introduced the Early Childhood Worker Grant Program we had just around 200 applicants from across the Northwest Territories and we're almost at 100 percent in the approval process. It's been very, very successful to date even though it's very preliminary. But over 200 applications came in and most of them will be approved, so we should be close to, if not 100 percent, close to 100 percent. We're very happy with the progress that we've made on this particular matter.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Committee, before we continue, I'd ask Members to please check their phones and their iPads. I'm hearing some background noise and ringing. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for that information. I'm glad to see an expansion of that. It seems like there's an obvious need for it and I appreciate that. On the other hand, I see a reduction in the grants to early childhood

programs of almost \$800,000 and I'm wondering why the drop there. I know the Minister is aware that Members put this as a very, very high priority, this area for investment, and yet we seem to be going the opposite direction in terms of our net investments in early childhood.

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

MR. LOVELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Last year when we loaded the budget we had not fully fleshed out how we were going to spend those dollars. This year we've reallocated those within the early childhood program so it is not actually a reduction in the Early Childhood Development Framework. It's just a reallocation from grants and contributions to other expenses.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's always hard to penetrate the smoke and mirrors, as I've said before, but I appreciate that. I'm glad to hear it's staying within early childhood.

I'd like to follow up on my colleague's mention of the healthy food for children and youth and just ask the Minister if he's been aware of this excess of tens of thousands of goose eggs in the Beau-Del and the potential availability of them for consumption by residents, and the geese for that matter. A wildlife management problem where there are excess birds and eggs that we could be taking advantage of. Is he aware of this and would he work with the Minister of ENR to see if this source of food can get into our communities, into our schools? This is an income support thing. I won't repeat it when we get there but I'll mention it now. I see this as a real opportunity, a significant food source that happens to be local and extra nutritious.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Any opportunity that arises, obviously, we like to take advantage of it. We've heard about this particular area, whether it be a traditional food that's available. Again, it would have to be at the discretion of the schools to allow that into their facility. We are, as I stated, working very closely with BDEC, the Beaufort-Delta Education Council, if this is something that they want to explore and have that available to our students. This is just recent news to us, so it is being discussed at BDEC level with my officials. Mahsi.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that and I will look forward to what comes out of that.

My last note is I see we are not really making much adjustment to the arts investment in the grants and contributions. That is just something I really support. I think we have gradually done a better job since the early days of the 16th Assembly, but I think there is more room for achievement here and investment. It has a very well-demonstrated impact on local economies and helping people realize their full potential, obviously, their personal and community identities and cultural aspects. I just raise that as a comment. I would love to see those adjusted, as most of the items are on this page, recognizing increasing costs and so on. I will leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I will treat that last statement as a comment. I will continue on with grants, contributions and transfers. I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have probably about four major items that I want to talk to the department about.

The first one has to do with the college contribution to the department and the contribution to our small communities. You know that I want to thank the Minister for two things. First, to conducting the needs assessment in the Sahtu region for our students, the number one issue of that needs assessment has to deal with the literacy issue in our region by the younger people. Listening to them on CBC Radio and reading the article in the Globe and Mail, there is a pretty good indication as to how we can overcome our literacy issue in our small communities. The First Nations in Ontario have done some good work, and it also needs to be looked at through our Aurora College contribution.

The other one is to deal with the Sahtu technical institute and the study that has been happening. I look forward to the end of this month. We are on deadline with time frames that should be coming out and going forward into the planning process. Thanks to the Minister for moving that through the various stages of the planning of the Sahtu feasibility study and looking to see if that is something that we could implement in the Sahtu region in the future, because this will help with our Aurora College facilities in our small communities.

The second point I would like to ask the Minister is in regards to the Healthy Children Initiative, healthy food for children and youth. A lot of communities rely on that, especially for the morning breakfast programs. There are kids that take advantage of that and they have very good people working in those programs. I want to ask the Minister, are we the sole providers of that program, the healthy breakfast program in our small communities? I know there was some cause to see how much money these programs are valued at and then we have extra dollars support from industry or other organizations to support our programs in the

school. I want to ask who our funding partners are, or is this solely a GNWT initiative? If we are, is that enough in regards to healthy foods for our children in our schools?

I want to talk about the school in Colville Lake. I know the Minister is looking at the school and its programming, the programs that are being taught in Colville Lake. There is a school there that is a log building that was constructed in 1991 and there was a modular classroom added in 2006. These buildings are from the days of Little House on the Prairie where you have one classroom and four or five different grades. Teachers are doing their best to educate the children. There are 50-some-odd students, maybe more, in these classrooms.

I have visited Colville Lake several times. I have noted the school atmosphere and the challenge that the teachers have in the buildings. There are several deficiencies noted in these school buildings, such as lacking storage space or there is lots of noise. With kindergarten to grade 4 or 5, there is just... How do you keep the little kindergarten or Grade 1 students quiet? So, there is lots of noise. There are partitions that are separating a Grade 3 and Grade 4 and kindergarten/Grade 1, so it's not a very conducive learning environment in Colville Lake.

I want to ask the Minister, due to this typical learning environment that Colville Lake has had ever since they had schooling in Colville Lake, the community is really appreciative of the work that has been done; however, they are now asking if the department is willing to consider an idea to have the community be partners in building the new school for them. They have the means; they have the companies; they have the resources. Looking at the department they say, we know you don't have the money. They always say...[English translation not provided.] They are saying that we have partners, we have companies. Can we build a school for you? According to GNWT specs, can we do this for you? Are you willing to look and sit down with us? Look at a new concept, a new idea. Otherwise we are just putting a bandage on an old issue.

As much as I appreciate the Minister going to battle with us and the department trying to fix the school up, fix it so that it is conducive to an educational environment. It is not doing what we want to do. So the leadership, through an e-mail, is asking if the department will look at a meeting where we can get together and say, is this possible, can we do this, what are our challenges, what are we up against? Can we build it and can the government lease it off us? Build it to their specs. The people in Colville Lake are asking for that and they want to provide the proper place to learn.

I know the department has made trips into the Sahtu. Can the department and staff come to

Colville Lake and look at the school environment? Take a visit and say, yes, maybe we should talk. I am asking for that. They want to know if they can do that. They also see that there are other schools that are getting the attention of...other communities are getting the attention of new schools, so I want to ask the Minister these questions. I know this is an O and M budget because this section deals with programs. School programs are very difficult to have in a community like Colville Lake where recently they have been graduating Grade 12 students there, so I want to raise this concern with the Minister. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. When I speak to the college, obviously we work closely with that community's learning centre so we have them in the communities, most of the communities. Yes, the Member is quite correct about...and we've been supportive along the way on the needs assessment in the Sahtu region and it's going really well. We have all the stakeholders involved, all the parties from the Sahtu region and various industry members. So, there is a lot of discussion and opportunity for us to move forward on this, and obviously this will possibly lead to a Sahtu institutional discussion that the Member is referring to. There is a current feasibility study and there's a lot of work that needs to be done in this area. We're interested in how that's going to pan out. My department is going to be working very closely with the Sahtu region on this particular matter.

Another area, obviously, is literacy. I totally agree with the Member that literacy should be a prime focus in the small, isolated communities, and we are doing that right now. Obviously, we need to do more in this area. So, that will be my push from my department's perspective.

The Healthy Food Initiative, there are various parties involved in this, various departments. There's MACA, there's Health and Social Services. But primarily for schools, we contribute \$650,000 towards the schools and they manage the funding. The funding should be going directly to the students for their programming, for their breakfast program. We've heard over and over that this is a need, so we are pursuing this now. We're getting a lot of positive feedback from the community schools that they very much appreciate the money that's been identified for this, because a lot of our students are going to school on an empty stomach and we don't want that. So we are doing the best we can to support those students.

The Colville Lake programming that the Member is referring to, we've looked at the building, as well, and obviously my department will be very interested in what the community has to offer. It's not only

Colville but there are other communities that also showed interest potentially looking at these opportunities of possibly building and then leasing back. But it is an area that our government has to look at where we're going against a borrowing limit but how can we best approach it, because we don't have the capital infrastructure to date to deal with all those communities that want to build, whether it be the college or the schools or health centres in our communities. I'll be interested in what the community has to offer and bring it back to my Cabinet colleagues and have some discussion on what's the best approach. So we're quite open to those ideas as well. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Committee, again, we're on page 66, education and culture, grants, contributions and transfers, total grants and contributions, \$209.153 million. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Committee, page 69, education and culture, active positions, information item. Any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have questions here with regards to the increase in positions in the regional offices. I see that it increases from nine to 12 positions. Could I hear what those three positions are, please, and what communities they're in? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Those three positions are two linguists within the Aboriginal Languages Secretariat and one registrar, teacher certification is from headquarters to the Beaufort-Delta and also the South Slave region.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's good.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, again, page 69, education and culture, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Committee, page 71, income security, operations expenditure summary, \$43.424 million. Does committee agree? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions here. I've been asking the Minister questions about income assistance and trying to highlight some of the inconsistencies that exist with the income assistance/income security division. In his response, as the Minister has talked about possibly making some changes, it's not been clear

to me what sort of changes the Minister is talking about.

I'm advocating for a comprehensive review of all of our income support or income security programs. The Minister has advised that there have been some changes in 2015 already, and I'm not clear on what those changes are. We have an Anti-Poverty Action Plan which is progressing. I know that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is working with Health and Social Services and other departments on that plan.

I've got a number of questions in here, but the changes that have been made, are they tied to the Anti-Poverty Action Plan, and in terms of a comprehensive review of all of income security programs, is that something that the Minister would see to happen in the 2015-16 year?

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

MR. HEIDE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to respond to the Member in saying that the number of changes within the Income Security Program are meant to exactly address the ability of clients and recipients to purchase a healthy, nutritious food basket based on a market basket rate. If I can just explain that, that's about the true cost of buying a healthy, nutritious, full basket of goods and food for a family in any community. What you see in this budget here is a proposal to increase the food allowance, the clothing allowance and the incidental allowance across the NWT to bring that rate up to the true cost of those goods and services.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to Mr. Heide. I agree, there have been some good changes, and an increase in allowances and evaluation of the old one and increasing it to make it a reasonably useful amount in the allowance has been a good thing. The other good change that I've noted is that some income assistance clients are being evaluated less often, and that's a very positive step as well. I appreciate that I've got a handle on the changes that have been made, but in terms of the programs in general, and in terms of the contradictory nature of some of the policies and programs that exist in income support relative to other departments, is there an appetite on the part of the department or the Minister to look at doing a comprehensive review of income security any time in the near future?

MR. HEIDE: To answer your question very directly, yes, there is an appetite to look at policy conflicts across the government. That work is currently underway under the social envelope deputies and Social Envelope Committee of Cabinet to identify and attempt to resolve some of the conflicts between various departments.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to Mr. Heide. I appreciate that there's an appetite. I appreciate that some stuff

is being looked at. But apart from conflicting policies, there still needs, in my mind, to be a review of how we provide our income security programs, all of them, whether they are in step with the rest of the country, whether they are serving our clients to the best that we can do. I think there are certainly areas where they are not. Some of them are contradictory policies, but some of them are policies which don't conflict with anybody else but they're just probably not up to date, and they're probably not fair, although the Minister seems to think that everything needs to be fair.

To the question of a comprehensive review of income security programs, yes or no?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty first.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We did a comprehensive review in 2007, and since then we've been making changes to our Income Security Program. It's been eight years now. Obviously, this is an area that we need to seriously look at. As I stated in this House, in 2015 we're making changes when it comes to subsidy. We're increasing our overall subsidy programs. It may not be comprehensive to date but this is an area that we need to discuss as a department to move forward. It could be part of the transitional document to have very comprehensive security programming. That should likely take place within the next few months, like, within the transition document.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister. It gives me some comfort that at least the department is going to look at it. I have to again say that eight years is a long time and things, particularly these days, change very rapidly. I would encourage the Minister to not wait for the 18th but to start planning now, put the money aside now for a comprehensive review of income security programs. Thank you. That's a comment not a question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Encouragement noted. Continuing on with income security, I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know the Minister has heard me speaking in a similar vein by suggesting examination of an alternative model that has not been well used but has a record of success where it was tested and that's the guaranteed basic income. I appreciate the Minister's agreement to look at that and perhaps consider something like that for a regional model if the economics worked out. I think right now we are doing not too bad a job of holding people where they're at, but I don't think that's the goal of our government. We want to help them out of poverty and into employment and better

health. I appreciate the review and I hope the review really does take a close look at the guaranteed basic income.

I did have a couple of questions. The Minister's opening comments sounded like there's 1.7 million new dollars to look at increasing benefits for food, clothing and other incidental expenses, \$150,000 for the cost of delivering the Income Assistance program. I mentioned it's about 20 percent. Yet when I look at the numbers on the page, I don't see that reflected. I see an increase of \$1.3 million, which is substantially less than the \$2.25 million of increases that the Minister mentioned. I wonder if I could get some explanation to show me where I'm going wrong with these numbers.

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

MR. LOVELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The amounts that were mentioned in the opening comments are found under fees and payments, and that includes \$2.9 million for the increases associated with bringing our market basket measure up and for an increase resulting from inflation, but that's also offset by a \$1.6 million transfer to the Housing Corporation as part of that initiative.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. That explains it right there. I appreciate that. I support both of those initiatives. Updating our food basket, I know the Minister is aware of my support for that and also this transfer to the Housing Corporation. I understand that the food basket and so on is part of an increase over four years, \$6.6 million planned increase, so I appreciate that very much.

Just on the income assistance housing clients being transferred to Housing, this hardly touches the need as far as I can detect from my constituents. Is this sort of a test case and is the department contemplating expanding this programming? I don't know the degree in other communities, but I know the Minister is aware that our affordability issues have gone up 60 percent over the last five years in Yellowknife and over 1,000 families now with affordability issues in housing. Many of those are income assistance clients that are not being well served through the IA program. Is the department looking at expanding this transfer to Housing which is a specialist in that field?

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

MR. HEIDE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you have rightly pointed out, we are transferring and doing 75 units across the NWT. The large percentage is in Yellowknife. We hope to move clients over the next few months, with soft hands, hopefully, but at the end of the day we will see if this is a good model,

and if it works well, we will continue to work with the Housing Corp to identify new opportunities.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is basically all I had. I think I will leave it at that with one last question, Mr. Chair.

Would the Minister commit to telling us, or getting back to us through committee, what the standards are that will dictate whether it was a success or not, whether it is working and how we can expand it if it is? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I will certainly commit to that. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Continuing on with income security questions, I have the Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to ask the Minister, in regards to the Income Security Program for my region, can the Minister provide a breakdown for the last year or two years as to this program? Due to the lack of oil and gas activity this year, we have seen the numbers increase and I would like to get a breakdown. When activity was happening there, oil and gas was booming, people were working, businesses were in operation and people were taking advantage of that, to now where we have a minimum, very little activity and the government is now being the main supporter, funder to our income support programs. What is the government doing at the same time to the recipients of the income support so that they are being a contributor to the North's economy and society? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We are seriously looking at the Sahtu region, especially with the downturn of the oil and gas operations in that region and what will be the implications on those community members. Are they going to be accessing income security programming? How many individuals are we talking about? We can definitely give you the detailed breakdown for the last two years and going onwards because we need to monitor this. This is part of our Skills for Success, as well, the needs analysis that we have done, the needs assessment, how can we integrate those individuals to be trained for future projects.

I will get Mr. Dana Heide to elaborate a little bit more. There have been some changes that we have made as well. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Heide.

MR. HEIDE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I can use Colville Lake, a family of four, as an example of our food increases projected over the next four years, moving from \$1,061 today to \$1,435 April 1st; \$1,744 April 1, 2016, and ending in '17-18 at \$1,996. That is just the food allowance for a family of four, reflective of the actual cost of food in Colville.

The clothing allowance will move from \$226 currently for a family of four up to \$293. The incidental allowance over the four years will move from \$129 for a family of four in Colville Lake to \$229 for a family of four in Colville Lake.

The way we have implemented increasing the food allowances across the Territories by every community was a different distance from a true market basket measure, and so we have moved the communities that are farthest away from a true market basket measure up quicker than those that are closer to the market basket measure. Colville is a good example of a community that was farthest away and we are moving it closer at a quicker pace than other communities, but we can provide all the communities and all the changes at all the communities in all the different areas for the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the additional information and thank the Minister for the commitment to look at the issue in the Sahtu. I realize that there is some work that is needed to be done, and certainly through the assistant deputy minister, you guys have come through with some good numbers for us in the communities. We appreciate that.

I guess the point that I want to make, there are certain individuals in our communities that certainly look forward to the help in seniors' heating subsidies or the early child benefit or even student financial services and the income assistance as required by some of our people. The main point that I want to close off, is that we want to contribute to our own well-being in the region. We appreciate that government is there. It takes a lot of money every year for our government to commit to the needs in our region and we want to have them move off a dependency type of an attitude and so we want to pay our own way in society, contribute to society. That is what happens when you don't have economic development happening in our region. We become dependent on government. They become our bank, so to speak. We would like to move away from that and pay our own way through society. I am going to leave it at that. I have no questions for the Minister. I just wanted to make note of that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I will treat that as a final comment. Committee, income support. I think I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have one other question that I forgot earlier around the Student Financial Assistance program, and certainly it has been mentioned a number of times over the years that I have been here. It seems to be, up to this point, the department has basically said no, we can't do it, but I am referring to students who leave high school, who are not ready yet to go on to a post-secondary institution, no matter what it might be, whether it be a technical institution or whether it might be a college or a university. They require some upgrading of the courses that they have taken in high school. My understanding, to date, is that student financial assistance is not available for students who happen to be doing upgrading.

I would like to know from the Minister if that is the case, and if that is the case, is there any appetite on behalf of the department, as Mr. Heide put it and hopefully there is, is there any appetite to open up financial assistance to those of our NWT residents who wish to do upgrading so they can get into the program of their choice? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For that response I will go to Mr. Heide.

MR. HEIDE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently the SFA program is restricted to post-secondary studies only. If a student is doing upgrading of high school classes, they wouldn't be eligible for student financial assistance. Currently, under the Skills for Success, one of our areas that we are looking at is supports to learners. One of the suggestions we've had over time is adult ed upgrading should have a student financial assistance-like program attached to it, and we'll be exploring that as we move forward with the Skills for Success.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Heide. I am very glad to hear that there is something being considered. It doesn't have to be under Student Financial Assistance. So, if there is an opportunity for a student who needs upgrading before they can go on to a post-secondary institution and there is financial supports available to them through the Skills for Success or whatever other program, that's a great thing.

When might people expect that that support, that program would be up and running? Thank you.

MR. HEIDE: Our current schedule for Skills for Success would be to table the framework in June of this year. Following that and following discussions with Members and input from Members, we will develop an action plan that will move forward on a systematic basis as funding is available.

MS. BISARO: Thanks. I'll just confirm there's no money in this budget, I presume, for this kind of a program, and is the department aiming for money to support upgrading students in the '16-17 budget? Thank you.

MR. HEIDE: As always, we will be looking across our department to spend our money we currently have wisely, before we come back for more money, but we are definitely looking at providing adequate supports to students and learners.

MS. BISARO: When?

MR. HEIDE: As I stated, we will have the framework by June of this year and an action plan that will detail when following that.

MS. BISARO: Thanks. I guess I have to wait for the action plan. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, we're on page 71, income security, operations expenditure summary, \$43.424 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 72, income security, grants, contributions and transfers, total grants, \$11.136 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 73, income security, active positions, information item. Any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see an increase of five positions here. Can I be advised what they are? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We made some changes to our income security area where we want to have people entering the workforce as part of our target initiative, and we have five employment services officers into the regions. We have slated one for each of these communities: Fort Smith, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson and Behchoko. So, five in total. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: That's good. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, again, we're on page 73, income security, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 75, labour development and standards,

operations expenditure summary, \$10.195 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Labour development and standards, grants, contributions and transfers, total contributions, \$565,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 77, labour development and standards, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 78, Student Loan Fund, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 79, education authorities, programs and services, information item. Any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just curious that there is an increase in this budget, about \$400,000 or so, \$500,000 maybe. Could I get an explanation as to what this increase is attributed to? Thank you

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. The overall increase, obviously, is a Collective Agreement that we have to abide with, and it's an area that we need to work with. So, it's a Collective Agreement. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So the impact of junior kindergarten is not reflected in these education authority contributions? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We'll go to Mr. Lovely.

MR. LOVELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the junior kindergarten, the impact of junior kindergarten is included in these figures. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: We've been advised that there will be a reduction probably in the cost of the implementation of junior kindergarten in the '15-16 school year. So I can anticipate, then, that the Collective Agreement increases are larger than the comparison of one school year to the next. It would also include, because there's a reduction in JK. So it's gone down because of JK, but it's gone up because of? Maybe I'll ask what the Collective Agreement increase is in dollars. That would be easier. Thank you.

MR. LOVELY: The amount that we provide to education authorities, the total pot is \$149 million. Of that \$149 million, we're internally funding junior kindergarten. So there is no reduction to the total pot because of that. It's just how it's reallocated among education authorities. In terms of what we provide for forced growth for a Collective Agreement, it's \$846,000. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks. I thought I understood how JK was funded, but now I'm confused again. Mr. Lovely said that it's funded internally. Can I get an explanation of what he means by that? Thank you.

MR. LOVELY: The total pot is limited. We have \$150 million. It's how we reallocate that internally from one education authority to the others for junior kindergarten. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: That's good. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, again, we're on page 79, education authorities, programs and services, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 80, education authorities, programs and services, active positions, information item. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just noticing that there's a decrease in the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council of six positions. Can I get an idea of what's going on there? Why are we losing positions with the education council? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Every year we go through these changes. It's all based on FTEs, enrollment total and if that changes then obviously the budget changes and that reflects on the total enrollment. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: Can I get a breakdown of which communities are being affected with loss of positions? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. It's not actually positions. It's full-time equivalency. If the enrollment is down it goes back to the school boards and they decide where. It's up to the school boards to decide how many teachers or janitors or teacher assistants to be hired. So, it's based on the actual overall budget that we provide to them. Maybe if I can get my deputy to elaborate a bit more because she's involved with the FTEs and enrollment. When the enrollment numbers go down, my team has to work with all the school boards. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Ms. Eggenhofer.

MS. EGGENHOFER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, caution needs to be exercised because these numbers are full-time equivalents. They don't equate one FTE to one PY and education authorities have considerable flexibility in determining the number of staff they hire with the funding that's provided to them. So, one needs to exercise caution not to say there is a decrease of eight or six PYs. It's a decrease of FTEs that may not have resulted in the same reduction in positions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Eggenhofer. Committee, again, we're on page 80, education authorities, programs and services, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 81, Aurora College, programs and services, information item. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Quick question here. Members and committee have asked the Minister a number of times if we could have a bigger involvement in Aurora College and in knowing about what they're doing with their budget. I believe we were advised, I believe the college budget came out in the fall, November or December perhaps. I would like to ask the Minister if a copy of that budget could be provided to Members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Most definitely we can provide that information. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Committee, we're on page 81, Aurora College, programs and services, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 82, lease commitments, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 83, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Any questions? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see that Right from the Start for our early childhood development programs, funding is being provided by Chevron – Chevron – to purchase the materials required to fulfil the commitments the department has in early childhood education. I would like to ask, why is the department going to a multi-national fossil fuel company, an industry that is at the greatest foundation threat to civilization ever, for money?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. When we first talked about iPads for new parents, we sought out potential investors, key partners on this very important matter. There was a request by Chevron. The funding is available to purchase iPads. It's not only Chevron. We have done this with others from the private sector, the business sector, as well, over the years. My view is that it's an investment into our overall educational system where there are key partners.

As the Minister of Finance stated, our financial situation now is very tight within our overall territorial budget and we have to explore these areas of opportunity. So, Mr. Chair, we are in the process of having all these iPads at the end of this month be distributed to the parents, the new parents, so they have access to the different programs. In the fall of this year, the remaining iPads will be distributed to all parents, the new parents. It is an investment from the corporate sector, similar to what we have done with Rio Tinto, BHP and others that we have partnered with over the years. This is nothing new that we are exploring. There will be others, as well, down the road. We are always open to these types of investments so we can have very important initiatives on the way into the communities. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: What is the investment from this multi-national company that's partly responsible for the greatest threat to civilization that we are choosing to partnership with, this public government is choosing to partner with? What are the contributions that we are on our knees for, despite our responsibility to fund these programs from tax dollars for our public this year and next?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Chevron has made a total commitment of \$410,000 towards these different iPads for new parents. We as a department are contributing \$750,000 towards this initiative, as well, as our contribution. This is an initiative that has been in the works for a number of years now. Finally it's here, so we are moving forward at the end of this month and in the fall, as well, for new parents. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: This is a complete injustice. Putting logos, companies like this, looking for partners like this to put into the homes, at the dinner table, logos, at an impressionable age aimed at children in their early years when they are most impressionable, a fossil fuel company, the basis of the greatest threat to our civilization, when in fact we are a public government responsible for providing education through our tax revenues. If Chevron is to contribute, if any company is to contribute to the basic fundamental provision of required services like education and health, et cetera, in Canada, they should be doing it through

taxes. Why are we not taxing these fossil fuel companies according to what we should be for the damage that they do and the requirements that we have for public education?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Taxing them is a different subject. There is funding available to us. As I stated, it's not only Chevron. There are other companies that came forward. A basic example would be the multiplex and others. I think, in my view, we need to take advantage of these potential investors. As I stated before, there will be plenty more that will be up on the horizon and we need to work with them. We need to work with all stakeholders across the Northwest Territories. Any opportunities that they provide to us as a true partnership, then we need to take advantage of those opportunities.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, I'm absolutely disgusted that we would be partnering with entities like this when we are responsible for providing these basic services from our own revenues. I completely disagree with this and I would ask the Minister to closely examine the basis of this partnership and others such as this and the impacts. I would ask him to research the impacts of putting logos from multinationals like this into the homes of our youngest and most impressionable as supposedly part of our early childhood development programs.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We will be closely monitoring those areas to the best of our ability within my department and there will be other departments that I'm sure will be doing the same thing as well.

MR. BROMLEY: Nothing further.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Committee, again, we're on page 83, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask about the Older Workers program and if the Minister could share with me the projects that may have impacted in the North here and if he can do some with me on a region-by-region basis. This is a good program. It's targeting older workers and it's very creative. I've seen some of the work and it has involved some of the elderly people. This program has somewhat of an impact on the old-agers who are receiving pensions from the federal government. Sometimes it cuts into their program, so I just wanted to know also if this has been an issue from our communities on implementing this program. It's a good program. I like it. I just want to make sure that some of the challenges to it are removed and we can use these services and knowledge of the older people in our communities.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Over the years we've been working with the federal government on having an identified Older Workers funding program. We just signed off an agreement with the federal government just recently in April 2014 for a three-year agreement. It is being spread out to the communities and it is those individuals who are 50-plus years of age, 55 years of age and older that can access this funding. So far we've implemented nine of the NWT communities as a start, Tuktoyaktuk, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Aklavik, Ulukhaktok, Deline, Hay River, Fort Smith and Behchoko. I will just remind you that this is just the beginning and we want to spread out to other communities such as the Sahtu region, the Deh Cho and others. We will be exploring those areas. This is the money that's from the federal government and we want to take full advantage of it to be spread out to all 33 communities as best as we can.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to the additional information the Minister can provide to us just to continue supporting this program in our communities in our region.

I just want to conclude that from the support that we received from oil companies, I know that in the Sahtu with the breakfast food program, I know Husky Energy has contributed to their communities for a breakfast program, and I want to state for the record that some of these oil companies have done some good in our communities such as the breakfast program for the families. As children, they don't know. Food is food. They don't know which food is coming from where. The oil companies also contribute to the communities for hand games and other functions, search and rescue for our loved ones who are lost in the Mackenzie River, building of a cultural moose skin boat.

I just want to be very careful and tell this government here that if we're going to look at something, I guess we need to look at all industry, not just companies such as fossil fuel companies. We need to look at mining companies, look at technology companies, look at fast food restaurants. Everything. We need to look at everything if we're going to do it.

I know there are some very strong feelings for some people on oil companies, but we need to be careful, especially in our region where we depend on them. I'll leave it to the good people on this side here of the government to look at how we go about it, because Mr. Bromley is right that young kids are very impressionable. We've seen some of the stuff that we've given in school or whatever, especially with sports...(inaudible)... I just want to state to the department that our industry in the Sahtu is oil and gas and they're not all bad. We certainly benefit

from them supplying our school, also for additional support in education and food.

I wanted to make a comment. I don't need a response from the Minister. That's all I wanted to say.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I'm sure the Minister appreciates that comment and we'll treat it as such.

Committee, we're on page 83, work performed on behalf of others, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. If I can get you to turn to page 57, Education, Culture and Employment, department total, \$309.786 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is completed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I'd like to say thank you to the Members. This is the last budget process for Dana Heide and Gabriela Eggenhofer. I would like to thank them and wish them the best of luck. They will be retiring in 2015, so mahsi cho.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Again, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication over the years. We enjoyed working with you, Ms. Eggenhofer and Mr. Heide, and thank you for joining us and, of course, Mr. Lovely. Thank you, Minister Lafferty.

Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses.

Committee, according to committee's wishes earlier today, we are going to continue on with Public Works and Services. With that, we are going to turn it over to the Minister responsible for opening comments. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the 2015-2016 Main Estimates for the Department of Public Works and Services. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$5.1 million, or 4.4 percent, over the 2014-2015 Main Estimates. These estimates continue to support the objectives of limiting expenditure growth in order to sustain the long-term sustainability of the fiscal framework.

Highlights of the proposed estimates include:

- an interdepartmental transfer of \$6.1 million associated with the consolidation of the government's energy functions, along with associated positions within the Department of Public Works and Services;
- the creation of two new positions in Fort Smith, one as part of the final phase of government-wide implementation of procurement shared services, and one to support the IT support services required for those health authorities transitioning to the Technology Service Centre;
- the continued investment in operations and maintenance for new and aging building infrastructure to ensure its availability in the delivery of government programs and services will continue to be a focus for this department in 2015-2016.

The proposed Department of Public Works and Services' estimates continue to support the priorities of the 17th Assembly. Specific activities in support of these priorities include:

- assuming responsibility for coordinating, developing and managing energy policy, planning, conservation, alternative energy solutions, energy service delivery and monitoring programs. Consolidating these activities within the Department helps support:
 - the development of comprehensive energy policies and strategies; and,
 - improving efficiencies in the planning and delivery of energy programs and services.
- continuing with the focus on energy and the efficiency programs in support of our priorities of effective and efficient government and building a strong and sustainable future for our territory. With the consolidation of energy functions in Public Works and Services, we expect further opportunities to improve upon our success of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and operational costs as well as new avenues to share this knowledge with the public and private sector businesses.
 - By the end of 2014-2015 our annual savings in utilities directly associated with the department's energy efficiency activities is expected to grow to \$1.7 million dollars a year.

The Deferred Maintenance Program remains an essential part of this department's overall strategy to address the building infrastructure essential to the delivery of our government's programs and services. This program continues to be coordinated with the capital planning process, energy conservation investments and our regular Preventative Maintenance Program to maximize its effectiveness. The current backlog is calculated at

\$290 million, which has reduced significantly from the \$470 million identified in 2007-2008.

- As infrastructure projects in progress today are completed they will replace aging buildings such as the hospital in Hay River, the old health centres in Fort Providence and Fort Resolution as well as the surplus student accommodations in Inuvik.
- While the department anticipates continued pressure on deferred maintenance in 2015-2016 and beyond related to the normal aging of our asset base, investment in the Deferred Maintenance Program coupled with the timely disposition of surplus assets is projected to reduce the current deficit to \$277 million.

It is through these and other department activities that Public Works and Services will continue to provide its many clients with the high quality of services they have come to rely upon and assist the GNWT and the 17th Assembly in achieving its goals.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Minister Beaulieu, do you have any witnesses you'd like to bring into the Chamber?

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

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you would be kind enough to bring our witnesses into the Chamber.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my immediate right is Paul Guy, deputy minister of Public Works and Services. To my immediate left is Steve Lewis, director of corporate services; and to my far right, Laurie Gault, director of Technology Service Centre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Ms. Gault, Mr. Guy and Mr. Lewis, welcome back to the House. Committee, we'll open up the floor to general comments. With that, I have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make some brief opening comments. Public Works and Services has been working on the shared services and procured shared services and we've been trying to work out some of the details on this process. I guess overall I support the concept of centralizing or regionalizing some of this purchasing. You know, in the Hay River area we've been able to get some of those positions and do some of that stuff.

I guess I've been hearing some concerns, and there are some growing pains of going back to this process. I say "back" because I think the government used to do this a long time ago, centralized purchasing. I guess there are just some growing pains between the link between Public Works and Services and the departments and some of the people supplying the products, whether it be northern manufacturers, which we recently had a meeting with as well as some of the people who supply it. I've heard the Department of Health from the people that supply equipment to the health service.

I guess I'm giving a little bit of time to Public Works and Services to deal with the growth and the learning curve of learning these departments and how those people have to learn some of the specialties of the individual departments. I understand there's a link between the department and shared services, but I'm not sure exactly how that works with the department as far as the specs. Some of these people that have been supplying to the health field have been training some of those departments, some of the health departments, some of the people in the regions that this is what they need, but this is what we provide, this is what's available, whether it's a hospital bed or whether it's a specialized tub. Like, there are a bunch of specs that they need.

So I know there's a learning curve for shared services to get up to speed on some of the specialty stuff from each department. When we deal with Transportation, for example, of a plow truck, what's required in a plow truck? Because I think some of the stuff has been there for years as far as the Department of Transportation knows what they want, but now they have to go to shared services and explain that. So there's a little bit of a learning curve, and if the Minister could just talk about where the shared services is going in learning and getting up to speed in that link between departments and the procurement side of it.

I'm glad to continue to see the deferred maintenance slowly going down. I don't know the actual number when we started in this Assembly, but I know the number has been going down pretty steadily. So, obviously, we're happy with the new health centre in Hay River and I think that alleviates some of the deferred maintenance.

Just looking through my notes from the business plans, one of the things was e-waste. I know we continue to look at ways of dealing with the e-waste. I know the government goes through a lot of e-waste and I know we've been trying some pilot projects, but I think we just need to commit to fixing it, to taking it on. I know, through my private side, a lot of that e-waste is being shipped south now. I think they're doing that in Fort Smith. So, I mean, I

think the government needs to come in on getting rid of some of that e-waste and not letting it go to the landfill and not letting it go into surplus, because most of the time it ends up in the landfill after a few things have been taken from it. So I think we need to commit, as a government, to getting rid of the e-waste, get a full recycling program going on it. I know Public Works is dealing with a lot of that because they end up with the surplus assets.

The other one that I know Public Works and Services I've been trying to send them notes whenever space comes available and decentralization, and I guess if we can get a little bit of an update on where Public Works is doing assessments in the communities, the smaller centres of their office space available. I even recently heard of Simpson, looking at opportunities there for more office space. Where does the department see that going forward? I think the department is one of the key links in decentralization as far as office space is concerned. Obviously, Housing is for housing issues and other departments as far as getting their positions decentralized. So that's an area of concern, and I know Public Works is engaged with that decentralization.

So, those are my main concerns with this department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. We'll turn it over to the Minister for a reply at this time. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to give a few comments on each of these areas and I'll have the deputy minister provide some detail.

The procurement shared services from the government's perspective is something that is very positive. We consider it to be very positive for industry as well. It does consolidate the contracting, tendering and so on. We have offices now in the various locations across the North that handle the procurement services for all of government and all the departments, plus the NWT Housing Corporation. We feel that it's going to improve the quality of our contracting and our tendering process, something that the government looked and felt was the way to go to bring efficiencies to the government and effectiveness.

The Deferred Maintenance Program, yes, each time we bring new assets into the government and dispose of older assets, our deferred maintenance comes down. We also do major mid-life retrofits on buildings and reduce the deferred maintenance in that way. So, as I indicated in my opening remarks, deferred maintenance, seven or eight years ago, started over \$470 million and it's down to about \$270 million. So we are bringing our deferred maintenance costs down, but immediately as we introduce new buildings into the government

inventory, the deferred maintenance on that building starts to accumulate until which point we do either a mid-life retrofit or do a replacement.

As far as e-waste with the GNWT itself, Public Works and Services has been dealing with the electronic waste of the GNWT, our own employees, for the past 10 years. We have had relationships with organizations in Alberta. We take all of the computers or any of the electronic waste that comes from the public service and we deal with it. We send it down south. We have an organization down south that deals with our electronic waste. The bigger e-waste program for the general population is going to be something that the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources introduces now as part of the recycling program that is run by ENR.

Specific to office space and housing, I could talk about the amount of market housing that the Housing Corporation is going to put out there in the communities for market housing not necessarily targeted specifically at decentralization but for office space. I will have the deputy minister, if need be, provide a little more detail on these four areas and also some specifics on the office space. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On the questions around procurement shared services, this is really our first year up and running with procurement shared services fully implemented. It started April 1st of this fiscal year. To date, we have handled approximately 1,250 procurement requests. These are everything from supply arrangements, standing offer agreements, procurement requests and we have awarded contracts of a total value of approximately \$209 million to date. So we have been very busy this year. We also had to provide a lot of support to the forest fire season that added to the volume of transactions that we dealt with. So procurement shared services is fully operational now. It's up and running. As the Minister said, we have staff in regional centres to provide support and to handle regional procurement initiatives.

With vendor engagements and specifications, there were questions around how we handle specifications through procurement shared services. We're not responsible for developing the specifications through procurement shared services, but what we do is we work with the client department. No specifications are developed by the subject matter experts in the department. ... (inaudible) ... for example, are developed by the experts in the Department of Transportation. They developed the specifications and we work with them to incorporate them into the tender documents and we had the procurement process. Many of the specifications, we also helped departments with the

technical aspects, updating, modernizing them because many of them are dated.

In terms of educating our own GNWT staff, since we have been in place with procurement shared services we have had 70 employee information and training sessions where we trained 700 GNWT employees across government on procurement practices and procurement shared services. That's how we are working towards improving our internal approach to procurement. On the vendor engagements side, we have held a number of sessions as well. So we've worked with the Chamber of Commerce in some regional locations to provide information sessions to businesses and contractors to improve the interest and engagement on government tenders.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Continuing on with general comments, I will go to Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My comments will focus around three major things for us in our region. I want to make comments to the Minister. The first one is around Sahtu, which is a stand-alone region within the department, DPW. Our regional office is up in Inuvik. There are plans to have a manager of some type in the Sahtu region. We have employees in the region, yet we still have to call Inuvik, to the higher levels of authority. I want to not only talk to this department but other departments within government. My region wants to become a stand-alone region. With all the challenges our region has, I think it is high time that we stop having other regions take care of us by having the regional office outside of the Sahtu.

I certainly have had an earful from people in my region asking why this still continues today, having our region call outside to do things within our region. I'm looking forward to some type of reason other than to hear reasons why they can't move positions or create positions in the region. We have to get away from that type of message and say, yes, we can do it, let's look at it. Is it a possibility? Yes, we can, type of attitude. If it can be done in that direction, I'd like to see it. Hopefully, within the life of this government and the 18th government, the Sahtu becomes a stand-alone region with the proper positions of authority and the proper support from this government to look at a stand-alone region in our area. I want to say that's a big one for me within DPW.

I want to thank the Minister for working with the contractors in the region on the new health and wellness long-term care facility in the region. I see a little bit of activity happening there now, so it must be that things are happening. I look forward to that project continuing and moving to a place where we would look at cutting the ribbon and having the facility open and see people moved into the facility.

I appreciate the Minister's effort and the department's to complete Tulita's tank farm. It's working well and I look forward to seeing an overall evaluation, almost an audit on the project. Where did the expenditures go? Did we support the community in having those dollars go into that project? Accommodations, vehicles, and basically how it went. It's more of a look at the project itself.

I certainly appreciate the new biomass projects going into the communities in the North and the schools in Tulita and Fort Good Hope. I look forward to those biomass projects with the support of the contractors knowing they can do the work in our communities, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope and Tulita. We have some pretty good contractors and I certainly support our northern contractors being flexible enough to see if they can do the work. I think our government recognizes doing business further north does cost a bit more; however, I think we have provisions in our work that allows for additional cost. Sometimes we need to just be a little more flexible with regard to getting more northern contractors on board. I think it'll take some negotiation to make that happen. I wanted to say that to the Minister. These are my comments. I don't have any other comments in the details. I just wanted to make comment to the Minister that I'm looking forward to a time where the DPW's office and the project are finishing off the new wellness and long-term care facility.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have had discussions internally on how the Sahtu region operates in as far as Public Works and Services goes. We would strongly look at placing an area manager into the region. We have other areas where the activity has not been as high as other bigger regions and we have placed area managers into these other areas. An example is Deh Cho. We've placed an area manager in Simpson who actually reports to the regional office from the South Slave; however, it becomes quite independent. This is what the Member wants to see, that the Sahtu region become more independent and less reliant on going to other regions in order to get their support.

Right now, we have only 10 PYs in the Sahtu out of I believe it's 57 total PYs for the Beaufort-Delta/Sahtu regions. Looking at a position as area manager we see as step one giving us a look at how a region could look in the future. As the volumes increase, as the Member said, there have been lots of activities with new schools and now the new health centre, and we're bringing people down from Inuvik. If the volumes increase in the Sahtu, we could look at the next step of moving to maybe an area manager that reports to Yellowknife or something into the future. Not necessarily going to

a regional superintendent but maybe giving an area superintendent with more authority and more independence.

The new health centre and long-term care in Norman Wells. A lot of the material is arriving on the winter road so the activity is picking up. We also are gearing up for very heavy activity in the construction of the Norman Wells Health Centre long-term care facility this summer. The Member should see this building going up fairly quickly this summer. I don't have the exact schedule with me as where we're expecting to be. The construction will occur this year, then it will be closed, and then they will be working on the inside of the building, and the building would be substantially completed and ready for occupancy in August of 2016. That's something that we're shooting for.

The expenditures on that building and where the expenditures occurred, who benefited from the expenditures is something we can do. We can track that. It's a negotiated contract.

On the other question about the project that was completed with PPD, a tank through the PPD tank farm, again, we would be able to look at the expenditures. I think the Member is asking that we audit the expenditures and so on, on that project, and we can provide that info.

Comments on the biomass. We are seeing that it may be feasible to have biomass in the Sahtu. We're looking to turn some of the buildings that exist and putting biomass boilers into, I believe it's the schools in Good Hope, Norman Wells and Tulita. Then, of course, the new long-term care health centre is also going to have a biomass furnace as the primary heat source.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a few opening comments here. It's been brought to my attention that the communities that I represent, specifically Aklavik and Tsiigehtchic and even McPherson, would like to see a lot of the contracts that are through Public Works, whether it's for maintenance or work that needs to be done in the community. In many cases, I see a clause under the contracts that state that it has to be within 50 kilometres of the community, and that's what the communities would like to see on a lot of these contracts specifically for maintenance. A lot of this can be done within the community and that's what the leadership would like to see in the future here. It gives opportunities to the people in the community who have small businesses to get some of these contracts here, because that's something that the people would like to see, is to try to keep some of these funds in the community to give the residents the benefit.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will look at ways to increase the local content in our contracts in those three communities that the Member represents. There are some as and when contracts as well. We'd look at trying to get as much local involvement as possible. We're not sure about the geographical restricted tendering process. We have some MOUs in place as larger government with the Gwich'in, and so in addition to that maybe we may not want to do the geographical restricting on the contracts because it also benefits the government to have as much of the as and when's and the smaller contracts done by local people because of the response time and so on, and we support that and we will look at all ways to increase the local content and those contracting from this department.

MR. BLAKE: Just one more thing. The garage and office space in Fort McPherson. It's been in the same location for over 20 years now that I remember. It's possibly even longer. What are the plans to replace that building and have a new up-to-date office space and workshop for the employees?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We are going to have some detail on that for the Member. I just want to give the deputy minister an opportunity to get some of the details here. We usually follow a process ourselves. Public Works is usually pretty up to date on their own warehousing needs and office needs, so I'm sure that if it's a building that, as the Member indicates, is well over 20 years old, that we have it in the queue for possible replacement or a major retrofit, but we don't have the details with us, unfortunately, Mr. Chair.

MR. BLAKE: So, if you will get that information for me, is that what he's saying?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We would be pleased to provide that information to the Member.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to welcome the department here today. It's nice to see some familiar faces.

I do have some general comments, and if I have the time when we get to detail, I might drill down a little bit more.

There are a couple of areas, just as observation, to wet my whistle, so to speak, in terms of department performance in the last year.

One of them is under the procured shared services. This is basically one year under our belt on this consolidation of buying and savings. The concern I have is have we seen any type of significant savings by consolidating this under one roof? It may be a difficult question to answer, but it was one

of the pillars or guiding goals of the department in making it a bit more cost effective for the government. So at this stage, if there are any preliminary cost savings for having this consolidation of procurement, that would be of help to this Member here.

The only other comment I have with respect to how the year went, from an MLA's perspective, as an MLA, of course, if things go astray or off the rails, we are probably one of the first people who get notified as to if there are other issues. One of the common comments that I got from a number of different companies was that they were quite unsure what happened in this last year. We tried to consult with a lot of our stakeholders. Some of the arrangements in the past were that some of the businesses were given a heads-up for RFPs and stuff like that, and during this year some of that did not transpire. Of course, we as a government put our ads out in the paper and everything else. But some of the processes that a lot of the companies had in place, they were given a heads-up that an RFP was coming, "keep your eyes open for it" and everything else. So we may have upset a few businesses out there that may have had a traditional heads-up that RFPs were coming their way. I am assuming it was lessons learned in a lot of cases, that they are going to tune in more as to how we are going to be opening up procurement. But it was an observation that I had to share at this juncture with the department here.

Occupational health and safety has always been a huge part of what I do here to make sure this government has a strong safety culture. Whether we want to answer in general comments or not, I will bring it up in the directorate again, is what strides have we taken to augment our Health and Safety Program, moving it to the next level, which I know there has been a desire to do so from department to department? But quite frankly, Mr. Chair, we know full well that we have had some issues in some of these areas and they end up in the court system, and the courts have been dictating themselves where we are as a government with respect to our safety and safety culture. So, again, any update as to what our progress has been in the last year on occupation health and safety would be appreciated.

With the new energy functions coming up here, and I have spoken in the House under the term of fuel services, which is the old petroleum products division, and I do applaud the department for recently announcing the decreases in fuel in our communities, eight to nine cents respectively. I think that is a marketable goal and attainable success, and I do want to applaud the department for doing that. My question is the transparency around that. How do you come up with those calculations, and how are those calculations derived? More importantly, how transparent is it to

the public and Members on how those changes come about and when the changes are the other way, when we start seeing increase? How does this new fuel service division, how will they be communicating with Members of the Legislature as well as members of the public?

We know that there has also been a recent RFP that was issued for the complete replacement of our phone systems. Again, we can talk more in detail when we get to the TSC function. I have been reading anecdotal reports in media that there were going to be significant savings for us to do this, and I have heard things in the media that up to \$6 million in savings over 10 years, which I thought was a bit on the high end. But maybe I could get some clarity as to what are the perceived savings in replacing our government phone systems in the long course.

You know, Mr. Chair, for lack of better words, these are just some of my opening observations with the department, and of course, if I don't get enough reply in general comments I will definitely be posing them in detail. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The procurement shared services is a process that I described previously. We received a lot of positive comments from the decentralized tender desk, the regional desk. We intend to continue to monitor the procurement shared services. We believe that we have increased the quality of tendering. We work with all of the departments. We will be doing internal audits on the procurement shared services so that if there is anything that we think we could improve on in this type of procurement, we will do it.

The occupational health and safety, I will have the deputy minister provide a little more detail.

Energy functions we have done for many reasons that we talked about. We have the conservation, the developing of the policy, the programs, energy programs for the communities and for businesses through the Arctic Energy Alliance. Again, if the Member is wanting to get more specific details on the energy, the consolidated energy division, then we will have the deputy minister provide that.

Fuel services is posted how we come up with our prices. Whether or not we are going to determine buying forward, if we think it is the thing to do, there is a certain price of fuel... Right now we could determine what we would pay if we bought fuel for July, as an example. We would go to a company and buy fuel for July, and if that fuel... It's called hedging, as the Member knows. So we can hedge up to 70 percent of our fuel purchases for what the government purchases. It's something that we have our people watching the price go up and down and what the rack price is for fuel when we purchase it,

when we ship it in and so on. It's quite a complex process, but we post it, how our prices come about. If we think the prices need to be brought down in the future, we will bring them down. If we think the prices need to be brought up, we will bring the prices up. It's all on the fact that we don't profit on the prices. It's the cost of the product, the transportation of product and community distribution. Of course, our staff that are needed to purchase the fuel and get the fuel into the communities are all charged to the fuel price that we sell at the end.

After the deputy minister provides some more detail, I will have the director, Ms. Gault, provide the information on the new phone system, including what we think the savings will be. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I'll go to Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The issue on the tender of the procurement shared services, one additional thing that we are doing is we are working with the Department of Finance on the procurement modules under the financial system. Those modules have a feature in there that will allow for vendor registration, so all the vendors that we do regular business with, or business that are interested in government contracts or tenders will be able to register through that website and they'll get automatic notification of upcoming tenders, addendums and other matters related to our procurement. We are looking to see that as a significant improvement in making people aware. Because in addition to posting on the website, as we do now, and putting it in the newspapers, this is an enhanced form of providing notification to vendors. So that's a new feature that will be available going forward.

On OHS we have quite a bit of activity in the department, and in OHS we are working closely with Human Resources on the work they're doing, the Department of Human Resources. Also, we've done a lot of work internally to ensure that our managers have completed the supervisor training modules through the Northern Safety Association sponsored by WSCC. We have developed a lot of material. In fact, we have developed material that has now been adopted by WSCC and the Safety Association for asbestos management for all of our projects which we do and available to all the contractors and other governments and individuals involved in working with asbestos.

We have done a lot of work for our front-line trades folks on fall protection training and confined space entry training. An area that is emerging for both ourselves and the Department of Health that we have put a lot of effort into, both in the new facilities and the existing health facilities, are managing issues and OHS around infection control in health facilities. We have trained 68 of our staff members

in that area. Our workplace and general purpose office space, we have made sure we have all the standard First Aid training, CPR training that we need.

We've also been working closely with the Northern Safety Association to look at how we can improve our relationship on safety with the contractors and the contracting community to make sure that the safety requirements are incorporated into the contracts that we put to work on the government facilities.

We also have our regular joint occupational and health safety committees for each PWS worksite in the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Guy. I will go to Director Gault to talk about the phone system. Thank you.

MS. GAULT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With regard to the new phone system, the current system is almost 30 years old and is very close to its end of life. The current contract with the GNWT ends in the fall of 2016. So, we did the business case to look at our options, and it was determined that we could foresee increasing costs to replace phone sets and make changes of moving the phones around, et cetera. Those costs were only going to continue to increase.

The new system will run over the GNWT data network, and the hardware costs are dramatically reduced, the long-distance cost will be reduced. The system will be supported by the TSC, so we will be able to do those internal moves within our current staff. So, all of these contribute to an approximately \$6 million savings over 10 years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Director Gault. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a few brief comments. I know there has been a transfer of energy, \$6.1 million into this department, which is significant. I am looking forward to discussing this. I am sure there is forced growth, yet those seem, relative to those amounts, a modest increase. In other words, probably a net decrease to the department's budget in a sense. I am curious about that.

I wonder if I could just get a general comment on carry-overs and how we are doing with that with our infrastructure, specifically maybe how climate change is rearing its head. I know about some shipping issues with the Mackenzie River low water levels and so on and how those are being handled and a general sense of what the costs are becoming as we deal with that. That's it. I am going to reserve any detailed comments for later. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The details on the increase being lower than the amount of money we've got from energy, the consolidation of energy services. I'm going to have Director Lewis give the details on the ins and outs. Like the Member indicated, it was a bit of a net decrease once you consider we had an increase in the collective bargaining and then we took on the energy function at \$6.1 million, but the overall increase was lower than that. So we'll have that explanation.

We don't have the details on carry-overs. All of the carry-overs are based on capital items. So we can provide the anticipated surplus for O and M, but we don't have carry-overs for the capital with us.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Carry on.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, the Public Works and Services capital, if that's what the Member is referring to as opposed to capital in general, we handle a lot of the construction for most of the departments. If the Member is looking for just carry-overs on PWS projects, we can probably provide that information.

Climate change, yes, we agree that did have some impact on the shipping this year. Water levels were extremely low and could possibly be attributed to that. We try to get our product in very early. Generally as soon as the waterways are ready for shipping, we try to get our product in, so we have a very good working relationship with the shipper. We have a price that's probably a very competitive price for shipping our products in. We try to get our products in as early as possible. In the last shipment that was unable to go past the ramparts, we did have some product there, some fuel. However, it wasn't essential fuel. We were just putting some surplus fuel into one of the communities and maybe some surplus fuel in other communities. There was an impact on private companies where their fuel didn't get all the way up the river, but not on our fuel services at the department.

Maybe I will have the deputy minister provide some... No, first I will go to Director Lewis to talk about the ins and outs to come up with the moderate increase that we had in our overall budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Director Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Without going into too much detail, at the end of the day the change was about \$1.8 million in target reductions that we're netting off of that. On the plus side, we had about 1.9 million to do with asset inventory adjustments in maintenance, costs associated with

that; there was about another \$1.5 million to do with utility increases; and part of the energy money coming over, while there was \$6-some-odd-million that was transferred, there were some sunsets as part of that funding. At the end of the day, we netted out at an increase of about \$5 million over our previous year's main estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Lewis. Where are we going? Deputy minister.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of carry-overs for our own PWS capital, I think this year was probably going to be one of our lower years for us in terms of carry-overs. Many of our projects are coming to completion and the carry-overs have been a little bit less than typical on our PWS projects.

On our client-managed capital, I expect the carry-overs on the projects will be similar to previous years, maybe a little bit lower, but we are just at that point right now in the fiscal year where we're starting to calculate those and provide that information to the Department of Finance to forecast. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. I think there's clarification for you, Mr. Bromley, about whether you are talking about PWS capital or the overall GNWT capital. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for all the response. I am happy with that. I didn't express it well, but I was interrelating whether climate change impacts were having an effect on carry-overs. I think we are starting to get at it: the water levels on the river, the smoke has had an effect on some construction in Yellowknife, delays with the highway shipment and so on. Those sorts of things that, as the Minister said, are not known to be climate change but certainly very consistent with it and possibly related. I think I started to hear a response there. Sorry for the confusion. If there are any more comments, great, but that's all I had for now.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the clarification, I understand. None of the particular projects we are managing had a significant impact around delayed barge schedule, or any shipment of materials for projects were not impacted last fiscal year or the work that we have underway right now. As the Minister said, on the marine resupply side and low water, we do work our hardest to get our order of magnitude in early. For example, for this shipping season, order of magnitude has already been placed with the carrier, so they can make their plans and plan the shipping schedule and get our stuff, our fuel delivered early into those

communities that will most likely be most impacted by low water.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I am just going to touch on a few things I raised in the past couple of weeks. One was the delivery of fuel to the small communities. One Member may have asked, but have the tenders gone out and is the fuel being delivered as we speak? Is the purchase as anticipated? Hopefully that means the communities will get cheaper fuel for the upcoming year.

As well, I was wondering about the RFP for the Fort Simpson Health Centre planning study. I was wondering about progress on that front. Generally, I raised in the House about Nogha Enterprises building a new office space, potentially breaking ground this summer. I wonder if the department has had contact with them to discuss current and future office needs in Fort Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have two communities in the Deh Cho that we are delivering fuel to. Nahanni Butte diesel fuel is currently 25 percent complete. The diesel order is about 384,000 litres. We've delivered 98,000 litres. In Trout Lake the diesel fuel is 55 percent complete. The order is about 140,000 litres of diesel, and we've delivered 62,000 litres of diesel and 49,000 litres of gasoline. We haven't delivered any of the gasoline that was ordered into Nahanni Butte yet, but we aren't anticipating any problems at all delivering all of what was ordered.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I will just have the deputy minister talk about the RFP and the office space and Nogha Enterprises. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are aware of the initiatives about the proposed office space development. We are looking at our needs right now in that community and how it would fit into our existing leases. We have been working with them and talking to them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased they are moving forward and beginning the dialogue. I think if they can go further and identify some office space they need for the future, that will go a long way in firming up that project. As well, I think I asked about the RFP on the Fort Simpson Health Centre planning study, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Deputy minister.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is that RFP is out for bidding right now. It's out to tender and I believe it closes on March 20th. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Committee, we are on general comments for Public Works and Services. Does committee agree to go into detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): We will come back to page 417 after we have gone through the detail. Page 418, Public Works and Services, revenue summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could I just get confirmation about the capital transfers? Are there just no capital transfers this year and no Labour Canada agreement? Was that transferred over to another department?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Director Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With regard to the capital transfer, that represents a depreciated replacement cost value of the asset that was transferred through devolution. So it's a one-time identification of value.

In terms of the other item, the labour, it has actually been moved down under the boiler registration. It doesn't really represent a payment; it represents recovery of work we do for boiler inspections for the federal government. So, it's more accurately represented where it is. So it's not a loss, it's just a movement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Director Lewis. We are on page 418, revenue summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 419, Public Works and Services, active position summary. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 421, Public Works and Services, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$98.885 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know asset management is obviously a huge program for the government. This division has been doing a lot of work on the utilities and so on. Where are we at on the utility side for asset maintenance, or is that in another division? The intent of moving it all into this department was to be able to see where the

opportunities for savings were and act on those. I'm just wondering where we are on that.

Also, there is a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions element to that, which is in this division. If I could just get general comments on where we're at with respect to our assets and opportunities to shift them over to renewable energy and increase efficiencies. I know we have been very active for at least seven or eight years. How are we doing? Where are we at? Thank you.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's a large question, but our utilities are shown on this page. We did consolidate utilities a number of years ago in this department and that was primarily driven with the intention to better manage and track our utilities and seek opportunities to reduce those costs. We have done a lot of work in that area. We have an energy management specialist in that department who analyses the building consumption on all building assets. That information is what we used to develop our work plan for the Capital Asset Retrofit Program, so we look for projects, energy investments that can provide a payback through the utility savings that you see here. So that's been working well for us.

We do publish the results in our annual general report, so we provide a lot of detail on the utilities and where we spend our utility money and how we've recovered and made those savings through the various projects.

As we move forward, we continue to look to biomass as one of the biggest opportunities for us to achieve both the greenhouse gas savings and the reduction in utility costs. We had a number of biomass boilers come on line this year that are doing exactly that for us. The boiler in the new office building in Yellowknife is up and operating, and now that is heating that facility as well as the Stuart Hodgson Building and the Laing Building. So, I think there's about \$297,000 litres of fuel that will be offset through that boiler alone.

Other opportunities we're looking for is there continues to be leaps and bounds in some of the technology that we discounted a number of years ago, so we have to go back and look at things around lighting. We can do a lighting upgrade. Five years ago it may not have been economical, but this year it is. So we go back and revisit those decisions that we've made in the past. LED lighting is probably one of the biggest opportunities for us going forward. We're starting to see some technology there that we may be able to use in general purpose office space and we're starting to do some demonstration projects around that. We will have some LED lighting in the new building, as well, to test its performance and we're trying some in other places.

Those are some of the activities we have underway in that area.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I get the sense that there are still lots of areas for investments and pretty positive payback periods and returns. On the utilities side, I'm just a little bit surprised at the increase of \$2.5 million given our focus on this, especially when our fuel costs are down. The deputy minister has mentioned LED lighting and so on, and I have to say I've just put that into my kitchen and I'm pretty amazed with some efficiencies and still some very good lighting.

Is this simply new assets that are being brought on stream and if I can get an update on that? Like I say, \$2.5 million given reduction in fuel costs and some of the new technology, we know what's happening on that front. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. The majority of those increases are forced growth: \$838,000 funding for new electrical rate increase by NWT Power Corp, \$1.2 million in funding for a new YK office building, the Norman Wells Health Centre, the Hay River Health Centre and the new trade shops in Fort Smith and Fort Simpson. So when all of those are online the next fiscal year, we're going to start to see that we're going to need that money for the utilities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair. I know there are many efforts around the world now for zero consumption, zero net consumption buildings and I know this department is interested in making progress in that direction. So, I'll look forward to further gains there. I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Page 421, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$98.885 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 422, asset management, active positions, information item only.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 425, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$11.874 million. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to again zone in on the responsibility of the directorate under the Occupational Health and Safety Program and its activities. Through procured services, a lot of the contractors now go through

this division for various functions and cross-departmental initiatives. So, to the question, do we have, or does PWS, under procured shared services, have a contractor management system in place? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Madam Chair. At the moment we don't have anything that would be considered a contractor management system. I'm not 100 percent sure what type of system is being referred to, but as I said earlier, the new procurement modules have a registration process where we can track and register contractors. So it would be one opportunity for that type of system in the future. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: The reason for my questioning is that I'm fully aware that the department and the government do not have a contractor management system. We've got a voluntary system where, as you've heard, companies will come and register themselves. So, what are the minimum standards that we are asking these companies to have in terms of requirements for safety? Thank you.

MR. GUY: Contractors are required to register with WSCC to meet the requirements of the Safety Act of the WSCC. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: The requirements of a WSCC or actually being an active participant with the WSCC in good standing, all that means is that you're paid in full. That's all part of having a WSCC certification. It doesn't preclude the fact that you're supposed to have minimum levels of standards.

Let me liken our sister province to the south of us here. Alberta has numerous programs in place. It has what is referred to as a Health and Safety Management System where the requirements, the company has management leadership and organizational commitment, has hazard identification and assessment hazard control, worksite inspections provided, worker competency and training, incident reporting investigation, emergency response planning and program administration. These are the basic requirements that anyone wanting to work for the government as a contractor has to have, including what is referred to as partnerships in injury reduction programs, which is a voluntary program. These are just various tools that other jurisdictions have in order to have the competencies in place so that when the Government of Alberta is working with contractors through its shared services and procurement, we know that these companies are up to par and have a full, engaged Occupational Health and Safety system.

So, to the question: if the government is acting as a principal contractor and we may be obligated to indemnify agents or contractors while working for

the government and their responsibilities, by what virtue do we have to guarantee that these companies are living up to the level of safety standards that we would think they'd have?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. We are beginning to move into a lot of safety areas as we continue to work with the Workers' Safety Commission. We have contracts in place where when a contractor gets on a site, they would have to have a safety plan for the people on site. We don't believe that WSCC is only there to collect premiums. Actually, we believe that people who are in construction are different than individuals who may be in retail and the requirement for having some safety plan in place on a construction site versus something that just may protect employees against some lighter duty injuries. I know that there are more stringent rules surrounding what we, as this department, monitor are heavy construction sites, building construction sites, large buildings. Aside from that, I'm going to ask the deputy minister to provide more detail on what we need in order for a contractor to get on site and before a contractor is able to have an actual contract for constructing one of our buildings. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Through procurement shared services our standard contract documents lay out what the requirements are on all aspects of the contract including roles and responsibilities for the contractor around safety. We are looking at the working around the principal contractor. I think that was raised in part of the question, and that's one of the things we are doing on our contract template, is to review the application and that wording to address those issues that the Member has raised.

We're also working closely with the Safety Association to strengthen the wording in our contract documents and with the Construction Association around requirements for contractors to have safety plans in place while we do our work. On our large construction projects and our buildings and works projects we do have requirements for safety meetings and site meetings, and we do have those requirements in the administration side of the contract.

Procurement shared services also covers goods and services and contracts other than construction contracts, as well, so it's responsible for the tendering, the procurement and the template documents.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm hearing that we're working towards something, but

we don't have anything. That's what I'm hearing. To me, this is a huge concern. I've brought this up on the floor of the House many times. The court system has also indicated that the government is lacking, if I may remind the department and the Minister here. What is it going to take if we're going to do this right and if we're going to get a proper contractor management system in place where requirements are clearly spelled out in a very firm policy, much like we see in every other province in Canada? Why is it a year later – we've had procured shared services for one year now. Why is that we cannot have that level of detail so that we can, by virtue, be very clear to anyone who is doing contractual obligations, who is signing up on RFPs, who is doing any type of site work whether it's on construction on a road or in a building, that we have a policy in place that deals specifically with what our requirements are, especially if we're the principal contractor? When are we going to get this in place?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. This is a process. If we were to introduce, say, an association of some sort and say that all contractors must be certified under this system as of today, we would be eliminating the majority of our contractors in the small communities. We would be eliminating the majority of our contractors in the NWT, period.

We need to work with the contractors. We need to move into this process. Eventually we do hope to have everyone covered under some sort of certification indicating that they do have safety certification to be on any job site, but how we introduce that does take some time. We need to ensure that we're in touch with all contractors that work for us.

When you consider that anybody that could be cleaning our offices and cleaning this building, right to individual contractors that are on site on our biggest jobs, if we're going to make sure that every one of those people are certified before they get on site, like I said, we will be eliminating a lot of people.

We need to work with our contractors. We've developed these contractors over the years. Now, the safety is an important issue and we're moving towards that. We're moving into that direction, but to have a drop dead date and say everybody has to be certified at this point would not work. We would essentially eliminate too many of our contractors and we would almost come to a standstill unless we're bringing contractors up from the South.

We will commit to having the majority of the individuals safety certified to be on our sites by the end of the next fiscal year. If we have the majority of them done and it's not going to affect our

business at hand, then we're able to move beyond that. We're able to say then that if most people are certified, then we're able to put in the contract that you must be certified in order to do this job.

Just as an example, if we have a building under construction and we indicate that the principal contractor, which could be us, but the principal contractor, the main contractor, the general contractor on site has to be certified, then every single individual contractor, big and small, that goes on site has to be certified. We have to be aware of that as well.

Once we move into this area and we start making this a hard and fast rule for contractors in the Northwest Territories with government programs and we make that decision, there's no turning back, so we have to move cautiously to make sure we're not leaving people out in the cold.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Dolynny, your time is up. Directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$11.874 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: I don't see it here but I believe this division would deal with legislation. Am I correct in that assumption?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I know the Minister and I had a conversation in the House here about developing an energy efficiency act, and I know the Minister is aware that the most recent Energy Charrette once again recommended both in the short term and the medium term that we get in place an energy efficiency act. Can I ask, is that budgeted for in this budget?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That legislation would be done through the directorate through this division, and any work on a specific piece of a legislation, such as an energy efficiency act, would be done through the policy division or the policy section in the energy division, so it would be an energy policy that would be developed there and then we'd run it through the directorate.

At this point, the response to the charrette is still being completed and then out of that response it would become a work plan for any of the initiatives that are identified in there, including an act. At this point there is nothing in this budget for an energy efficiency act.

MR. BROMLEY: Of course, that report is due any day. It's a bit of a chicken and egg thing here. I

think we're talking about cost of living and so on for our people. Is there the flexibility, should the report confirm what we have hired experts to tell us, and I assume it would, that we would have the capacity to get going on that legislation pronto?

MR. GUY: As we work forward with the response to the charrette and initiatives that come out of it, we would have to seek the resources to implement those. Depending on the priority of those initiatives or findings of the charrette or the response, then this would have to be weighed against those and then we would have to seek the resources to do it through the usual methods.

MR. BROMLEY: I believe I've heard our Premier say repeatedly that this is a priority to get these recommendations from our country's best and pursue them quickly, so I guess I would ask the Minister if he would, the week after the report comes out, if it does confirm an energy efficiency act, that he would be prepared to come forward and seek very expeditiously the resources required to get that legislation in place.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. Perhaps I could get some support in responding to that from the Premier.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I can confirm to the Member that this will be a priority. As we've laid out the timetable, the government will be preparing a response to the recommendations of the Energy Charrette report, and at that time, for those recommendations that are accepted, we will identify the sources of funding accordingly.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: That's all I had on this page. I appreciate that response. I guess the lead on this is transferring to this Minister next April 1st, as I understand it, but I will look forward to that and moving forward with whatever our priority recommendations are.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$11.874 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to get back to what I was speaking about earlier regarding the occupational health and safety. Just if I am getting this clear, we are not wanting to do a contractor management system which is pretty much status quo in every other province in Canada, and again I didn't get a chance to look at unedited Hansards, but we don't want to leave companies

out in the cold. That's what I'm getting. So, I guess we are okay. From what I'm hearing, we're okay to lower our standards on safety and it's okay to put people at risk because we don't want to put people out in the cold here. We want to roll the dice with the taxpayers' money, because the courts have already told us we have been doing that already. So, am I getting the clear picture here from the department?

"We are working towards something; we don't want to leave people out in the cold; it's okay that we're going to roll the dice with taxpayers' money; with every court challenge we are going to have a failure." Again, these are not my words. These are words of courts and judges. I can provide copies and transcripts if the department wants them. We are doing all this because we don't want to put companies on out in the cold. Is that the genre? Is that the response from the department? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, that's not what we're saying. Safety is still an important part of our work. We are not going to abandon all of the safety programs or anything we have in place for safety. That's not what we're saying. What we are saying is, if we develop hard rules saying that individual contractors have to have certain types of specific safety certifications in order to be on our jobsites today, then we will have eliminated the majority of people that are doing contracting in the Northwest Territories today.

So what we are doing is we are working with industry to roll out this process and determine what is acceptable for the government and what's acceptable for industry and the contractors, and we are going to come up with something that will prevent the issues that we have encountered in the past.

The Member is correct; we had received a couple of hefty fines on safety issues and we're not interested in continuing to pay those types of hefty fines as well. We're not gambling with taxpayer dollars, but taxpayers are the ones who would be adversely affected if today we were to make this rule and we eliminated half of the industry in the Northwest Territories from working in the Northwest Territories and from working for the government. That wouldn't be wise either.

What we are trying to do is we are moving forward in a safe manner and trying to get certification off of everyone, safety certification of everyone that is going to work for us. I am just saying we can't make that decision today. We will move into that decision once we are comfortable that the majority of the contractors...and a large majority of the contractors that have consistently done work for the GNWT are certified. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am listening to the Minister's reply. I am not sure I agree 100 percent. You know, it is government's job to set that bar. We set it with legislation, we set it with regulations, so why wouldn't we set it for safety? I don't get it. What makes safety the Achilles heel of trying to do what's best for everyone that's involved with the government in terms of making sure that we are compliant, even ourselves? I don't get the fact that we are lowering those expectations because we don't want to leave companies out in the cold.

I can assure the Minister, if the government sets the bar and says these are the minimum requirements you have to apply to a jobsite, to apply for a construction contract, to build a road, I can assure the government, I can assure the Minister companies will comply. There are programs out there that can meet those standards. We just don't know what those standards are because we don't set any standards. That is the concern, Madam Chair.

This is a very unorthodox way of doing business. This is a very unsafe way of doing business, and quite frankly, I can only expect we are going to be finding ourselves in the courts and getting tongue lashed by court judges, Territorial Supreme Court judges, saying, "Where is your safety program? Where is this culture of safety?"

Again, I am going to leave it at that. The Minister has responded to my concern. I just think that we're failing, and until such time as we set that bar, as our duty is and is incumbent on the people we serve. To do otherwise is sacrilege. Sorry. Thank you, Madam Chair.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We are not lowering the bar. That's not what we're doing. We have an obligation to continue to be in the business of constructing public infrastructure for the Government of the Northwest Territories. What we are saying is that if – I am going to repeat myself – if we were to put in a rule today that eliminates most of the contractors, it just would not be wise.

At the same time, we're not dropping all the safety programs here. We are on site. We are saying individuals who have had safety plans, any large projects, any renovations, any opening of older buildings that we are expecting asbestos, as an example, we want to make sure that our staff who are going to be on site are trained in those areas. It's not like we have thrown all the safety rules out until everybody has been notified and everybody has been registered to be considered safe. We are moving through the process with safety in mind, and at the end of the day we are hoping that we have the majority of the contractors that wish to do work for the Government of the Northwest Territories have some sort of safety certification and we move forward from there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Thank you to the Sergeant-at-Arms. If you could please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: Good afternoon. Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Mrs. Groenewegen.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Do I have a seconder? Mr. Menicoche.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK, CORPORATE AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (Ms. Bennett): Orders of the day for Monday, March 9, 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. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions

- Motion 38-17(5), Establishment of a Special Committee on Transition Matters
18. First Reading of Bills
- Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Mental Health Act
 - Bill 49, An Act to Amend the Deh Cho Bridge Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act
 - Bill 36, Health and Social Services Professions 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
 - Committee Report 11-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of Bill 12: Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act
 - Committee Report 12-17(5), Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of Bill 36: Health and Social Services Professions Act
 - Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016
 - Tabled Document 205-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 5, 2014-2015
 - Tabled Document 206-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2014-2015
 - Tabled Document 207-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, March 9th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

