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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Monfwi)

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(Great Slave)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, June 14, 2016****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Julie Green, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. McNeely, Hon. Alfred Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. O'Reilly, Hon. Wally Schumann, Hon. Louis Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Vanthuyne

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Masi. Good afternoon, colleagues. Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 50-18(2):
INVESTMENTS TO ADVANCE MINING**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it has been 25 years since Charles Fipke and his team discovered diamonds near Lac de Gras and brought the largest mineral rush in decades to our North. This year our diamond mines surpass \$50 billion in total mineral value produced in these 25 years. The Government of the Northwest Territories' mandate document highlights the fact that benefits from non-renewable resource production enable investment in many priority areas. Over \$11 billion has been spent to date on Northwest Territories businesses and service providers. Over 22,000 person years of employment have been created by diamond extraction, half of which have been held by Aboriginal residents of our Territory. Through our socio-economic agreements with industry, we have seen over \$100 million contributed to our communities through scholarships, benefit for participation agreements and donations, each bringing new opportunities to our citizens.

Last but certainly not least, federal, territorial, and Aboriginal governments have all realized fiscal gains from resource, royalties or taxation on mining activities which are enabling us to improve the lives of Northwest Territories residents, through our investments in the health and well-being of our communities, and the expansion of our territories' economic horizons. It is through the responsible and equitable approach demanded by our government and taken by industry that our mineral industry has built a trust and support of the vast majority of our citizens. We see this in a recent third-party poll, completed by Abacus Data, which shows 85 per cent of Northwest Territories

residents support the mining sector, a tribute to the quality of corporate citizenship that we have realized from our world-class partners in this industry.

Mr. Speaker, with this in mind, we as a government must continue to facilitate the strong mining and exploration industry in the best interests of our citizens. Our government has made a commitment in its mandate to evolve the legislative, regulatory and policy system to advance a territorial vision of land and resource management, guided by the Land Use and Sustainability Framework. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is beginning work to advance the development of a made in the Northwest Territories Mineral Resources Act, a key post-devolution commitment, identified by this government to deliver on the priorities of our Assembly.

New, responsive jurisdictions specific regulations will provide for more effective oversight and enforcement of the Northwest Territories Mining Regulations, create more certainty for the mining industry and bring the Northwest Territories in line with Canada's provinces and the Yukon. Our aim is to increase our competitiveness in the marketplace and create legislation and regulation which is sensitive to northern deeds with a respect to protection of land, wildlife and water. More immediately, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment continues to implement the Mineral Development Strategy, another one of our government's mandate commitments. We are providing support to grassroots mining and exploration with successful strategic investment through our mining incentive program. Our investment in this program last year, resulted in a 3.8-to-1 return on investment, with each dollar invested resulting in \$3.80 investment in exploration activity.

Once again this year, Mr. Speaker, we have seen the demand for this program outstrip its \$400,000 budget and we have every reason to believe that this year's results will provide similar success. We also look forward, this summer, to the opening of our new geological material storage facility, which will house core samples for industry use. This facility will offer a practical method for supporting greater exploration in our territory and create cost savings for industry. We have introduced a two-

year Assessment Work Incentive to encourage more exploration activities in the Northwest Territories. Under the Unlocking Our Potential brand, we have increased marketing and promotional efforts to attract more private sector investment in mineral exploration and development and through the proposed Resources and Energy Development Information campaign, or REDI, we are preparing to offer increased information and awareness about resource development to Northwest Territories residents.

Mr. Speaker, this is Mining Week in the Northwest Territories and we have much to celebrate. I would encourage all Members of this House to seek out and participate in events taking place around town and to take some time to acknowledge the opportunities, mining as afforded our territory historically, and particularly the last quarter century, of our territory's diamond history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 51-28(2):
MACKENZIE VALLEY HIGHWAY FROM
WRIGLEY TO NORMAN WELLS

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to capture opportunities for investment and transportation infrastructure, by working to secure funding to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway. Mr. Speaker, the construction of the Mackenzie Valley Highway is also part of our long-term transportation strategy. The northernmost part of the highway between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk is steadily advancing towards completion. At the same time, our government is also focused on another critical section of the Mackenzie Valley Highway. In August of 2015, the Department of Transportation submitted a detailed business case to the Government of Canada proposing a \$700 million investment, an all-weather highway from Wrigley to Norman Wells, under the new Building Canada Plan. We continue to provide additional information requested by the federal government in support of that business case. Mr. Speaker, this project is a cornerstone of our plan to achieve economic prosperity in the Sahtu region and the Northwest Territories. To maximize opportunities for Northerners, effective partnerships with project stakeholders are essential. I believe we can only achieve these goals by working closely together.

The Sahtu leadership have taken initiative to create the Mackenzie Valley Highway working group. This group includes representative from the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, various communities in the Sahtu region, industry and political leaders.

Additional support from these interested parties will emphasize their critical importance of this project to the lives of Northerners and highlight the benefits to all Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, the construction of this project will hold significant opportunities for communities along the Mackenzie River: allowing goods and materials to be transported by road, year round, will reduce the cost of living and make housing more affordable in the Mackenzie Valley. Increased mobility between communities will create new social, cultural and educational opportunities. New business opportunities will arise as new markets become available and tourism opportunities increase. Improved access will foster economic diversification as well as supporting those industries that are already significant contributors to the territorial economy. The highway would reduce costs to industry to move equipment and staff to the Sahtu, the region that holds a wealth of potential of petroleum and mineral resources. This would provide incentives to these communities, who have said their exploration and development costs could decrease by 30 to 40 per cent. The highway will replace the existing winter road system where many permanent bridges are already in place. Converting to an all-weather highway will help to adapt to effects of climate change, supporting the more resilient transportation infrastructure. Readiness projects such as the construction of the Canyon Creek access road, south of Norman Wells, will provide an opportunity for residents to gain training experience and experience that will benefit them in the future construction of other segments of the highway. It is clear that the Mackenzie Valley Highway will result in significant prosperity for the people of the Northwest Territories. The success of this project relies on our ability to work together, to achieve our mutual goal of being better connected and positioned to capture opportunities. With support from Aboriginal governments, northern communities and industry, we can create a bright and prosperous future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 52-18(2):
SKILLS 4 SUCCESS: LABOUR MARKET
INFORMATION

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to take steps to close the skills gap using the Skills 4 Success strategic framework. I am pleased to provide Members with an update on this initiative and to share an important milestone that this government has achieved. Later today, I will be tabling three

documents that contain important labour market information about the Northwest Territories including the jobs that are forecasted over the next 15 years. This work is the result of a partnership with the Conference Board of Canada which produced the Northwest Territories Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment and accompanying Labour Market Information Resource, which contained data describing our current and future labour force needs for the next several years. This is vital information, critical for making decisions on our adult and post-secondary education and training supports. We want to be sure that we are making the right investments to support NWT residents to obtain the skills, knowledge and attitudes for employment success. The labour market resources tells us what the in-demand jobs are going to be in the NWT and we want to prepare Northern residents for those opportunities. The Conference Board of Canada examined the NWT's forecasted job demands over the next five, 10, and 15 years. We have learned that out of the potential 28,000 job openings anticipated, approximately 78 per cent will require college, apprenticeship, or university education. Of those potential jobs, less than 10 per cent will be open to people with less than a high school education. This is a significant issue for us, Mr. Speaker, where a high proportion of the current NWT labour supply has low skills, according to the highest level of schooling. We know that the demand for skilled labour will intensify in coming years when more people retire and exit the labour market in large numbers. Focusing on the skills acquired beyond high school and gained through higher educational achievement, training and experience is paramount to the overall success of the NWT. We must carefully choose how and where we make our investments. Education, training and youth development is critical to the future of the NWT and its people and we are responding with the Skills 4 Success Initiative's four foundational goals:

1. Increase skill levels through relevant education and training;
2. Urge education and employment gaps through targeted supports;
3. Grow the NWT workforce through partnerships;
4. Improve decision making with the relevant labour market information.

We now have the labour market information which tells us what the in-demand jobs are and where our focus needs to be. We also heard from more than 700 people who have engaged with and contributed to the Skills 4 Success initiative and voiced the collective call for change to build a strong culture of education linked to employment. Their feedback is

included in the Stakeholder Engagement Report, which we will use along with new labour market data to develop a four-year action plan that supports this Assembly's priority to foster lifelong learning, skill development, training and employability. We are now working on the action plan which contains a number of clear and measurable goals. As we progress, we will continue to solicit advice from our key stakeholders and partners in adult and post-secondary education and skills training.

Mr. Speaker, early childhood development through junior kindergarten to grade 12 to Skills 4 Success, these are our continuum of education strategies. Throughout all of these strategies, we are looking at ways to innovate, to tailor our education system to the needs of our learners, to provide opportunities and truly have a system in place that responds to education and training needs of northern residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the presence in our gallery here today. We have Mr. Thomas Palaia, the United States Consul General for Alberta, Saskatchewan and Northwest Territories. Welcome. Also we have Carmen Moore that's here with us as part of a GNWT protocol. Masi. Item 3, Members' statements. Member from Nahendeh.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL CHALLENGES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today Mr. Speaker, I'm standing in front of you and the other Members to speak about medical travel and the issues that seem to be of continuous concern in my riding. I'd like to share with you a few stories that I have heard and witnessed firsthand over the last 15 years. This past March, one of my constituents told me about two experiences that happened this past year. One was when a doctor recommended an exam that needed to be done in Yellowknife. While the constituent felt this was great, let's try to arrange it during conferencing all night that the constituent was attending. To me, this made a lot of sense. It would be more efficient, a cost-effective way to arrange for follow-up appointments if the doctors wanted while the constituents are already in Yellowknife. It would save the cost of travel for an extra trip, the hotel, the per diem and extra days involved in not being away from work. This didn't happen. I was disappointed to hear this, but what's worse is that this happens a lot. I've heard similar stories, but the best ones are when potential patients are on scheduled business in Yellowknife or Hay River or Edmonton and appointments come up a day after

they're already on their travels and the books, and they're already on their way to the community. Instead of medical travel willing to pay for the hotel and meals for the day, patient needs to go back to their home community and then come back or they pay for it themselves. Now, it is very sad to see this but this is what is even more disappointing is that person sometimes needs to get off the plane and then get right back on the same plane to go to the appointment. Now, this defies logic in my mind. However, it seems the department has to spend all this extra money because of department policies.

The other story I hear about is booking appointments at the nearest center for necessity and appropriate insurant health services outside the NWT. While I agree with the concept, but when costs involve large amounts of funds, does it not make sense to see if savings can be made and help the patient at the same time? I struggle with what the policy is about. It doesn't seem to be about saving money and caring of patient. I know this is not true, but this is what it seems that way.

There are other stories that I could share with you, but I only have two-and-a-half minutes for my Member's statement and I'm trying to call in with the time, so Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Health later on today about medical travel. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DISTANCE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Internet has revolutionized our society. Even in the past few years, advances in social media, portable technology, and telecommunications have radically changed how governments operate and how citizens participate, and how we live, work, and learn. Earlier this year, CBC reported on a story in Tuktoyaktuk, where a voice teacher from Alberta was able to teach students at Mangilaluk School using FaceTime. From thousands of kilometers away, this teacher was able to deliver lessons and communicate with students, without the extreme expense and complications of flying in specialty teachers for special sessions. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment also delivers a program that incorporates new technology into our curriculum. Through the Beaufort Delta District Education Council's e-Learning Program, students are able to access classes they wouldn't normally be able to take, thanks to video conferencing and information sharing programs like Moodle, students can access the classes they need without having to leave home. Just this past year, 11 students in the first semester and 15 students in the second

semester were able to access classes unavailable in their home schools. Through distance learning, students from Ulukhaktok and Tuktoyaktuk, as well as Fort McPherson, Fort Liard, and Fort Resolution were able to broaden their school experience. In the years to come, both high school and post-secondary education will be essential in learning and holding jobs in the NWT and beyond. We must help as many students as possible pursue their full learning potential especially in isolated communities who do not have access to curriculum as a student may have in the larger centers in the NWT. I look forward to watching the distance learning program continue to grow, and also to the completion of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Line, when better quality internet will improve services like this. Quyanaanni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PLAN TO ADDRESS THE HIGH COST OF POWER

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the issue of power generation and cost in the Northwest Territories. Power generation, how it's done, what it costs, and who pays for it. These questions affect every aspect of life across our territory. Every individual, family, home, workplace and business have a stake in the decision about power. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation is the agency that's charged with this task. Its job as a public agency, owned by NWT residents, is to make sure that all residents and businesses have the power they need at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers. In communities with a big enough population, power is delivered by Northland Utilities, according to franchise agreements with the municipalities. Northland is able to do that on a successful, for-profit basis. As it should, NTPC activities demand a high level of public scrutiny, so some of the recent events relating to NTPC are puzzling. Without discussion or consultation in this Assembly, the Minister recently replaced the board of NTPC with deputy ministers, claiming this would reduce costs. Even so, he announced that a planned rate increase would remain in place in addition to millions in fuel subsidies that taxpayers have covered for NTPC in recent years.

Mr. Speaker, if the government is moving toward operating the Power Corporation like a department, taking a further step and dissolving the PUB, the Public Utility Board, for example, this should be open for public discussion and debate. In Hay River, NTPC has announced a plan to compete with the private sector. Mr. Speaker, I question what impact this may have on the cost of electricity

in other markets served by NTPC. Northland Utilities has approached the government to consult on ways to reduce power costs, recognizing that high rates are a deterrent to industry and economic growth. Northland even took out ads highlighting some solutions to high power costs. Northland also requested meetings with this government to discuss power cost solutions. But I do not believe this meeting has taken place. Mr. Speaker, the high cost of power affects everyone in this territory. NWT taxpayers deserve to have an open and transparent management of their power corporation, and to understand how it's working, and that the power they rely on is delivered at the best rates possible. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER SUPPORTS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today would be to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on graduation season. We are into the middle of the season of graduation. As a matter of fact, I'm going to one here this coming Friday in Deline. Just recently went to some others including the Aurora College graduation here which seemed to beneficiary residents of the Sahtu in Yellowknife here. It comes to make me think, is there any support programs more referring to post-graduation career seminar supports in place after the students or the youths have graduated from their respective school? Later on today, I would have questions in that regard of support systems for our community youth, if they want to progress in institutions in the South, for example. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member's statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE FARMERS MARKET 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The 2016 season of the Yellowknife Farmers Market kicked off its fourth season last week at Somba K'e Park, in the heart of my riding. The market is an economic, social, and environmental marvel that all Yellowknifers can be proud of. Here are the top 10 things you need to know about it.

1. The Farmers Market has an impact of up to \$1 million in the City of Yellowknife because vendors purchase locally.

2. Fifty-seven vendors are taking part this year, half of them new.
3. There are vendors selling food harvested in the wild, produce, and preserves, as well as food that's ready to eat. There are also 17 artisanal sellers.
4. This year, vendors are arrayed across the park lawns, reducing congestion at start time.
5. A major compost and waste reduction program, funded by ENR, makes it mandatory for vendors to use compostable containers and utensils.
6. A grant from the NWT Arts Council is bringing back Music at the Market performances for seven weeks and a partnership with Northern News Services provides a weekly map and list of vendors in the Friday Yellowknifer.
7. A City of Yellowknife Sponsorship Grant provided funding for operational expenses. The City continues to provide in-kind help through supplying an organic waste bin on site, use of public washrooms, access to drinking water, a children's activity table, and garbage collection.
8. The Farmers Market continues to offer tables for community organizations wanting to promote their programming.
9. The Farmers Market continues to work on the development of a just and sustainable food system through the Yellowknife Food Charter, and most importantly of all,
10. The Farmers Market runs every Tuesday right through to September 20th.

I'll see you there in the heart of Yellowknife at the market. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REDUCTION TO SMALL BUSINESS TAX RATES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, supporting small businesses is one of my number one priorities. Northern entrepreneurs work hard for their success. My riding of Kam Lake is home to many of these successful enterprises that directly contribute to our economic well-being and create jobs for our residents. We have an obligation as leaders of this territory to expand employment opportunities and grow a resilient economy that can withstand the boom and bust cycle of resource development. The best place to start is by investing in our local economies through support for

entrepreneurs and small businesses. Mr. Speaker, our businesses contribute so much to the NWT and they are critical to our future growth. This government made a commitment to lower taxes for small businesses. The cut in the tax rate by as little as one per cent will make the NWT the most tax competitive jurisdiction in Canada's North.

Mr. Speaker, I have not seen such a commitment from this government in its recent budget and I'll be asking questions of the Finance Minister today to find out when a tax cut will come for businesses and when they can expect to see some of that money flow back to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Hay River North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SERVICES TO SUPPORT SENIORS AGING IN
PLACE

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the mandate of this Legislative Assembly, states that we will take action so that seniors can age in place. There are good reasons we made this a priority. Aging in one's own home provides a sense of comfort and independence. Financially, it makes sense for the government to support aging in place, considering the costs to provide a long-term care bed is about \$130,000 a year on top of the initial million dollar capital cost. We are taking some action right now, offering homecare services, a senior's home heating fuel subsidy, and funding for renovations to help seniors make their homes more age-friendly. These programs are a start, but they don't address the full suite of services needed for a truly successful aging in place strategy. We want to allow seniors to remain in their homes but we don't want to confine them to their homes. Most communities in the North, Hay River included, have no public transit or handi-van service. Many seniors and persons with disabilities in my community, who don't have access to affordable transportation, are forced to either take taxis, or rely on the kindness of friends and family. A study from the United States found that seniors who can't drive make 15 per cent fewer trips to the doctor, 60 per cent fewer trips to go shopping and to restaurants, and 65 per cent fewer trips to visit friends and families. This study included communities with public transit, so I can only imagine how dismal our statistics are. This imposed isolation results in a reduced quality of life that can lead to negative physical and mental health outcomes. I don't want to just allow our seniors to age in place. I want them to be able to fully participate in society. Leading an active life and participating in social activities promotes good health, has been shown to help the immune system work better and lowers stress hormone levels. The lack of transportation for seniors and people with disabilities is an issue that many constituents have

brought to my attention and is one we need to begin addressing. We have long winters and even seniors who are relatively mobile in the summer can become housebound most of the year. I have constituents who have to pay for a taxi to the health centre and back three times a week to receive dialysis. I know people with disabilities who've had to miss medical appointments because of the lack of transportation. We need to do more, and we can do more. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Seniors at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT LIABILITIES FOR CANTUNG MINE SITE
REMEDIATION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. With devolution, GNWT inherited the management of the Cantung Mine operated by North American Tungsten Corporation. There was a substantial shortfall in the amount of financial security that should have been posted to reclaim the site. Our government had and may still have surface leases covering the mine and its infrastructure, and there was insufficient financial security under those leases and the water licence to ensure an adequate remediation of the site. As a result of the shortfall and our failure to ensure full financial security of the Cantung Mine, GNWT has now purchased the Mactung property using the \$4.5 million special warrant that did not require any oversight of this Assembly. The new water licence was issued for the Cantung Mine in January of this year and calls for \$28 million in financial security, an increase of over \$16 million. Sadly, this has come too late as North American Tungsten is now in creditor protection and unlikely to go into production again. This mine does not have a good environmental track record, as reported in the media recently, with 42 spills over the last ten years. In May of this year, more spills were detected and a notice was issued to the company to install erosion-control structures and report spills in a timely fashion as required under the GNWT spill contingency planning and reporting regulations. Although GNWT was able to turn back the Cantung Mine to the federal government under the provisions of the devolution agreement, it is my understanding that we still hold surface leases for the property. It is not clear why we still hold such leases and whether we still retain any residual environmental and financial liabilities. Later today, I will have question for the Minister of Lands. Merci, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GWICH'IN TRIBAL COUNCIL LEADERSHIP
ELECTIONS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as of May 23, 2016, election for the Gwich'in Tribal Council President and Vice President have been underway. Mr. Speaker, as of today, we have Joseph Carnogursky, Bobbie Jo Greenland-Morgan, and James Wilson running for President of the Tribal Council. Also, Mr. Speaker, running for vice president we have Wilbert Firth, William Koe, Bridget Larocque, and Jordan Peterson. Election Day is June 27th, 2016, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to wish all the candidates good luck, and I look forward to a productive working relationship in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PROACTIVE FUNDING SUPPORTS TO
ADDRESS ALCOHOL AND DRUG HEALTH
ISSUES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker.

[English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the Department of Health and Social Services' budget, just briefly. I have indicated a couple of times with this 18th Assembly that we have a huge budget-sucking issue with alcohol and drugs. I have talked about this, about the amount that alcohol and drugs is costing every person in the NWT, yet, Mr. Speaker, the budget for community mental health and addictions has stayed the same as last year. The budget for Health Promotion and Community Wellness has also seen no increase.

Mr. Speaker, I know how much alcohol and drugs and mental health issues have cost our communities. Mr. Speaker, without alcohol, our correction facilities potentially could be only 10 to 20 per cent full. That, of course, is that all the people that committed crimes under the influence of alcohol did not commit those crimes.

Why, Mr. Speaker, would this department not see that to help the people get off alcohol and drugs would be a huge savings to the government by:

- not having inmates in corrections at over \$300 per day per person to the government;
- not having alcohol abuse-related hospital stays at thousands of dollars per day;
- having children attend school every day, giving them a better chance of success and growing

up to be tax-paying people with their children in school.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the reasons why the Department of Health and Social Services must begin to put more money into the area of alcohol and drugs. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 3, Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the public in the gallery today. We have a group of students who are here with us, attending Corpus Christi College in Vancouver. I'd like to welcome them to our Assembly. Masi.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, acknowledgements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 8-18(2): ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS RECIPIENTS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge Yellowknife North constituents recognized last week by the NWT Disabilities Council for increasing accessibility for disabled people: the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities Award to Mr. Anthony Whitford, the Disabilities Council Award to Ms. Jeannie Rocher, and the Council of Canadians with Disabilities Award to Best Buddies of Ecole St. Patrick High School. Colleagues, please join me in congratulating these winners. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 215-18(2): DISTANCE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about distance learning, and my questions are for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: when will the department complete an evaluation of the distance learning pilot project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that an accountability plan has been in place for the e-learning, the distance

learning pilot, since 2014. The pilot has run for four semesters currently, and we're continually getting feedback from all participants as well as instructors that are teaching the class. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Mr. Speaker, my second question is: will the distance education program be expanded to additional communities in the NWT?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Currently, we have six communities that we're offering the program to. The department is reaching out to all regions to seek interest from some of the communities that don't offer similar secondary programming. In our next academic year we will be adding two more communities, moving forward. Hopefully as we see more success, we'll see more communities added, especially the rural and remote communities that currently don't provide some of the distance learning classes.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Mr. Speaker, my final question: is the department gathering the feedback from students and teachers on an ongoing basis to improve the distance learning program?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Earlier, I said that we continuously are getting feedback from our participants as well as our teachers. It does help us. It's very critical that we get that feedback so we can make adjustments to the program to make it a lot better, a little bit more efficient. We've learned a lot of things already. One thing that we've seen as a strong success is the in-school monitor. We've also learned how the courses are being taught, which ones are being more effective. But one great success out of this program is the relationship-building between communities, participants that are in different communities. One of the great things that this program does is they bring them together for one time out of the year. I believe we had our participants from Resolution and Liard go up to Inuvik and meet with the teachers that they've only seen through video conferencing. We're continually getting feedback and hope to expand the program and build on its success moving forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 216-18(2):
MEDICAL TRAVEL CHALLENGES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about medical travel and some of the challenges we're facing. For the record, I know the staff are doing a great job in implementing the policies the department has in regards to medical travel. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health and Social Services please tell

the House when the last time the department reviewed the Medical Travel Policy and who was involved? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Medical Travel Policy was revised on April 1, 2015 to remove some program-level details. This detail was moved into three ministerial policies, one on eligibility criteria, one on escort criteria, as well as one on benefits. A ministerial policy on appeal process was also created at that time, which is a new feature within medical travel. In order to ensure that the ministerial policies reflect the needs of residents of the Northwest Territories, a review of the policies is ongoing. To assist with this review, a consultant, DPRA, was contracted by the department to hold public engagement sessions across the Northwest Territories from December 2014 to March 2015. A number of different stakeholders were consulted as part of this review, including residents and patients in communities of varying sizes across the Northwest Territories, Aboriginal governments and organizations, NGOs like the NWT Seniors' Society and the Canadian Cancer Society. A report was prepared as a result of this engagement, called "Patient Escort Supports: A Report on What We Heard," which was made publicly available. One of the key recommendations that came out of this public dialogue was the creation of a medical travel navigation booklet for patients and escorts, which we hope to release soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us if medical travel staff get together yearly to discuss their issues and share their success stories to help improve this service?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I don't believe that we actually have a formal process whereby they get together on an annual basis, but we did bring some staff in, and we do engage with our staff to get their feedback on different aspects of medical travel. The staff across the Northwest Territories actually had a lot of input in what this handbook that we're going to release shortly is going to look like. Medical travel staff work in collaboration and on an ongoing basis to improve medical travel here, in the Northwest Territories.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell the House if each regional office has a 1-800 number that the patients can call if they need immediate assistance? And if we do not, why not?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we don't have a 1-800 number for every region, but we do

have numbers available for our medical travel staff in all of the regions, and that information is going to be provided to our residents who are travelling on medical travel as part of this new booklet that's going to be provided. It's going to show them the numbers they can call, who they can call, in particular, the medical travel staff in the regions. It's also going to include the number for our system navigator, which is, actually, a 1-800 number, should they not be able to get in touch with their local medical travel staff, the staff they've been working on to help coordinate their travel.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his answer. The Minister spoke about this policy was developed and reviewed ongoing. Could the Minister actually look at getting the staff together, the medical travel staff together, so that they can actually share their success and challenges so that they can work together and enhance what they have? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the staff are already being engaged on this particular project. We're doing, as I indicated, different pillars. We're looking at the escorts. We're looking at the costing and funding. We're looking at a number of different things. We are bringing staff in. It's not always the same staff. We can't always bring in all the staff. But we certainly do our best to engage different staff at different times to make sure that we're getting a really well-rounded opinion and input as we move forward. I commit to continuing to engage staff as we move forward, and I mean delivery staff, not departmental staff but delivery staff, as we move forward on all the pillars of medical travel and modernization.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 217-18(2):
PLAN TO ADDRESS THE HIGH COST OF
POWER

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. As I said in my Member's statements, recent events pertaining to NTPC raise more questions than answers about the government's intentions regarding the Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain, since high power rates are known to be a deterrent to industry and economic growth, why NTPC has been allowed to increase their power rates by more than 40 per cent in the last four years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there have been increases of the power rates over the last few years. These were driven by increases in costs, many of them unavoidable by the Power Corporation, such as the increasing costs under collective agreements, increasing costs of fuel. Also, too, the actual amount of power that is distributed each year by the Power Corporation has not been rising to meet these costs. Therefore, increases were asked for of the PUB and granted. Thank you.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, since NTPC is the agency charged with providing the most reasonable power costs to all northerners, can the Minister explain why it's planning to go into competition with the private sector in Hay River even though that may make it necessary to overcharge customers in other communities to provide the promised lower rates to Hay River?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The franchise in Hay River, the decision to seek out another provider was driven by not the Power Corporation alone, but rather by the Town of Hay River. They made an announcement in late 2014 that they would be seeking other providers. The Power Corporation has put in a bid which, as I understand, has been accepted by the Town of Fort Smith. The Town of Hay River, I'm sorry. They already supply power to the town of Fort Smith directly. We are anticipating that should this negotiation be completed or when it is completed, rather, Mr. Speaker, that this will result in lower power rates to the citizens and businesses in Hay River, and there will be no extra costs borne by other rate payers.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I think that that ultimately is going to lead to more questions at another time. However, I move on. Can the Minister explain if it is the intention of the government to remove third party accountability of NTPC and make it a department of the government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, there is no long-term changes of that nature presently contemplated by the Government of the Northwest Territories. We will, Mr. Speaker, of course be tasking the new board of directors. We're looking at the whole operations, and we're hoping they'll come up with creative solutions that will continue enabling the corporation to provide cheap, affordable power to the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, what is the government's long-term plan to work with constituents, communities, and the private sector including Northland Utilities to stabilize or even reduce power rates for all Northerners? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Of course, the new board is tasked with, as I mentioned, providing power at the cheapest possible rate that is reliable and safe. All applications for increases, of course, go through the PUB, which is an onerous process which enables the public utilities board to look at the operations of the corporation and either grant, modify, or refuse the application, so the government will be working with the new board. Hopefully, we can achieve even more savings than we currently have. Ongoing, we will be looking at new solutions, new ideas with the new board.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

QUESTION 218-18(2):
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL AND
CAREER SUPPORTS

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned earlier in my statement here, my questions would be to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I am really encouraged when I first read the material published by this government, Skills 4 Success. I think if there's more material published like that, it would be very encouraging to the reader and the students out in the small remote communities. There's a broad horizon out there, and a welcome knowledge to be accumulated in preparation for the career of choice. My first question to the Minister is: what post-graduation programs are available currently? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, Aurora College institutes that we have throughout the Northwest Territories, Fort Smith, Yellowknife, and Inuvik is an opportunity to develop skilled development as well as further education. We do have a lot of partnerships and provide through our Student Financial Assistance program which we made improvements to, provided to anybody that wants to further their post-secondary education. If students are wanting to get through some specific programs, or any resident for that matter, they can go through our regional Education, Culture and Employment service centers. It's for all NWT residents, and there's a lot of programs that we've provided in terms of resumes, filling out applications, counseling, career counseling, education counseling and other things like interview

skills, and I encourage everyone to go visit the regional service centers if they're looking at getting into post-secondary programs or filling out student financial assistance programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: In particular, there's one course requirement for the students if they wanted to go to, say, NAIT or Grant MacEwan, for example. It's referred to as 30-1, 30-2, in preparation for that, and I understand it's not being offered in our northern institutions. That's just one challenge that could be placed on the agenda for this post-graduation seminar. Is that correct in saying that? There is those course requirements down south?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I will have to get more specifics on the 30-1, 30-2. We do have a lot of 30-1, 30-2 courses varied, whether it's math or chemistry, but I have to get specifics on that one that the Member is bringing up. However, we do offer programs in the K-12 system. All grade eight, grade nine students in the NWT have opportunities to take a 25-hour career awareness course that involves developing a personal career program, so that's starting them very early, and then when they get into the high school, all high school students must take a three-credit course, which is 75 hours in career and life management course in order to graduate, so we are starting early. I have to figure out what specific 30-1, 30-2 program the Member is referring to. He might be referring to the CALM program, but one other thing that we are doing as he mentioned in Skills 4 Success program is you are going to get a handbook out into the schools in the fall time. As students are looking at their career developments, we wanted to show them what the in-demand jobs are going to be over for the next 15 years, as mentioned earlier in this session, when somebody brought up the same questions in terms of getting that information out into the schools.

MR. MCNEELY: Would the Minister support financially through a pilot project process on the Sahtu graduates recently and going to be graduated from their respective home school on a seminar a post-graduation seminar held in one of the Sahtu communities to provide orientation and mentorship guidance, should the individual choose to go down south?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: All of our communities or in schools have guidance counsellors that will help students who want to go into post-secondary, give them all the information that they need. We do have that information at the Aurora College centers as well if you want to apply to some of our institutions that we partner up very closely with, such as NAIT, University of Alberta, and we make sure that the student has the right information wanting to go into post-secondary. We also have career development

officers and most recently, employment transition officers getting out and doing this kind of work to create awareness on the programs that we have at ECE. I know a lot of communities also have career fairs throughout the year, and I know that our regional office in the Sahtu is very proactive in getting that information out to the students, and I believe they had a good one not too long ago in Norman Wells.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question to the Minister is: if the Minister would commit to 50 per cent of the costs for the students that graduated in one of the Sahtu communities for this summer to explore options of career choice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We can't commit the financial amount at this time, but we can get our regional office, contact the regional office and have them speak with the student to explore the options of what's out there in terms of wanting to get out and further their education, and that's something we support. We made a lot of great programs, enhancements to the student financial assistance program, and we know that students are really happy about those improvements.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

QUESTION 219-18(2):
PROACTIVE FUNDING SUPPORTS TO
ADDRESS ALCOHOL AND DRUG HEALTH
ISSUES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I talked about the lack of increases in certain areas. I'd like to ask the Minister: why was there no increase in area of mental health and addictions, health promotion, and community wellness work for starts? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are discussing the budget in Committee of the Whole, and yesterday I did point out that there is actually a \$500,000 increase in mental health services in the Northwest Territories as a result of the new Mental Health Act. This is going to help us facilitate things such as the assisted community treatment that is a key component of the new Mental Health Act. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, we also know that we have to examine our programs and look at our programs. We need to figure out how to modernize our programs, make sure they're making best value for

money. To that end, we are moving forward with a Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Framework which is going to help us set our direction moving forward, and it's going to build upon the good work of the last assembly and the former Minister of Health and Social Services, and his forum on mental health and addictions, which helped actually set the direction that we've been taking over the last couple of years. This new strategic framework is going to help us take the next step, help us make sure that we're spending our money wisely, help us target our money where it needs to be targeted, and it may also help us identify additional spending we may need. We really need to make sure that we're doing things right with the best value for money at this point, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if the Minister is expecting initial sort of measurable results with the budget as it is with no increases, and in the \$500,000 increase in mental health, although for me, it's more of an alcohol and drug issue rather than a mental health, but I also know that they're very closely linked. I would like to know if the Minister has any measurable results that the department will be looking at, and at this budget year. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that we are doing to help individuals who are suffering from addictions here in the Northwest Territories. We have put in \$1.2 million into addictions programming, which is a direct result of the Minister's forum in the last government. As we discussed yesterday in Committee of the Whole, we are actually in the process of developing a comprehensive evaluation framework working with our partners so that we can have some long-term assessment on these programs to see how effective they are over time. I did commit to providing the Members with the immediate detail, how many people have attended, the general feedback they have provided us, those types of things. That will help us determine the effectiveness of these programs moving forward. We also have contracts with four treatment facilities in the south, and we have actually included and put in an expedited referral process. What we have seen in the last year and a half is actually a rise in the number of individuals who were choosing to utilize those facilities. For years in the Northwest Territories, we had a fairly static number. There was 12 people in treatment at any given time. We're starting to see that rise as a result of the expedited referral process. I certainly can provide those details to the Member, and we do have some evaluation frameworks in place to try to monitor those in the long term. There are a number of things we are doing to track the results of the good work that was done in the previous Assembly.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I agree, I think we're going to see very positive results in the treatment facilities in the south. I'd like to ask the Minister if the Department of Health and Social Services has done any work with the Departments of Justice and Education to start with in the area of how the alcohol is impacting the budgets of those particular departments.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're always trying to break down the barriers between the departments. We have formed individual ministries or committees and one of them is community wellness and safety where we meet and we discuss how we can work together better and address the issues. We need to do more, obviously. I mean we're on the right path as far as providing services, but we need to do our additional work around the mental health and addictions strategic framework, and we need to do that in cooperation, and we are doing that in cooperation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows the old saying, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I'd like to ask the Minister if there is any sort of concentrated effort by the department or any of the departments that he would do some work with in that area? If there's some sort of an effort to move to spending more money on prevention rather than cure? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the Member's right. There's certainly a lot of value in focusing on prevention, but we can't focus on the prevention at the expense of providing somebody acute care services that we have to provide here in the Northwest Territories. Having said that, we are partnering with the federal government who is flowing significant community wellness dollars through the GNWT to the individual communities around the Northwest Territories who have all developed their own individual community wellness plans. Many of them are focusing on the prevention aspects, working with youth, working with families at risk and individuals at risk through different on-the-land programs, community services, and our Aboriginal Health and Community Wellness Division is really focusing on supporting these communities and people across the Northwest Territories in the area of prevention.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 220-18(2):
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH
ABORIGINAL GOVERNMENTS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Regular Members have received some information on the Premier and Executive Council's meeting with our various Aboriginal government partners, but it seems we're also forced to rely on public media releases to learn of some apparently major developments. I'll first refer to the Executive's media release of April 26th which says that, "in meetings with the Tlicho Government the topic of, 'establishing a joint working group on housing,' was discussed." Housing is one of the foremost priorities of this 18th Assembly and a huge element of our mandate, so can the Minister tell us what those talks were about? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have intergovernmental MOU with the Tlicho Government and as part of the formal arrangement we meet on a semi-annual basis with the Tlicho leadership and they raise issues of importance to them and we raise issues of importance to us. I believe in those discussions that the Tlicho wanted more presence of the government of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation in their communities and they wanted to work much more closely together in the riding and looking after the housing needs of the Tlicho and they suggested that we could possibly look at having some sort of a joint partnership in doing so. We're very open to exploring all possibilities of improving the effectiveness of the efficiencies of this transparent government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi to the Minister for that answer. I'll turn to the Executive 'department's media release of the same date on a meeting with the Northwest Territories Metis Nation which contains reference to discussions on the Taltson Dam on Cabinet taxation and on, "negotiation issues such as generalized interest and early land transfer." Again, developments on topics that are news to me. Could the Minister please give us a few highlights on those discussions? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: For the benefit of the Member, the discussions with regards to Taltson Dam have been going on for at least three or four Assemblies and certainly there has been discussions about expanding the Taltson Dam in partnership with Aboriginal governments and we went to bring the power to the diamond mines and the diamond mines would buy the power and it went as far as going for environmental assessment

and part of the recommendations was to work more closely with the Akaitcho Government with regards to crossing some portions of land that was being negotiated and that has been stalled from there on and there's certainly significant interest by the NWT Metis Nation to see additional work undertaken in that area.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for the response. Then there's the April 20th Executive department media release on meetings with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. I was particularly intrigued by the reference in that release to, "offshore revenue negotiations." Could the Minister give us a brief overview of what this refers to?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. As the Member may know, the offshore in the Beaufort has very significant resource potential in the area of oil and gas and this is an area that has been identified for negotiation. It was part of the oil and gas negotiations of devolution. There as a trigger in the devolution agreement that six months after devolution came into place that the trigger would be pulled so that negotiations could start with the Government of Canada for management of the offshore in the Beaufort and also collection of royalties and the whole regulatory process. We have indicated in conjunction with the Inuvialuit, the Inuvialuit have had land claims for over 30 years and joint management of the Beaufort has been a very important priority for the Inuvialuit and they want to get on with it. We want to get on with it. We think at this juncture where there is no oil and gas activity going on in the Beaufort and very little likelihood of it returning in the near future that this is a good time to do those negotiations and get it done.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Despite the talk-down answers, we concede that these are all quite significant matters in which all Caucus Members would genuinely have an interest. The guiding principles in consensus government in the NWT by which we are all bound says under Principle Five, "Except under extraordinary circumstances, Members of the Legislative Assembly should be made aware and have opportunity to discuss significant announcements, changes, consultations or initiatives before they are released to the public or introduced in the Legislative Assembly." Can the Minister tell us why the input of all Caucus Members was not sought on these significant matters and whether he will commit to seeking the direction of Caucus prior to future consultations with our Aboriginal government partners? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: These are matters that are raised by Aboriginal governments in their own right and when they raise it at the meetings we can't take the time to say, well, we're going to go back and check with all 19 Members before we can have this discussion, but we do have bodies. Like I said, every one of the instances the Member referred to is part of longstanding discussions and negotiations.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 221-18(2):
GNWT LIABILITIES FOR CANTUNG MINE SITE
REMEDATION

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I've made several statements in this House about the need for our government to put in place a sound and robust system for financial securities from non-renewable resource development and its part of our mandate as the 18th Assembly. Earlier today I spoke of the financial security shortfall for the Cantung Mine and its poor environmental track record. Can the Minister of Lands tell me whether GNWT still holds surface leases covering the Cantung property? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the administration of control of the site is not being transferred back to Canada; therefore, the GNWT still administers surface leases on the Mactung site. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: As I understand it, GNWT was able to turn back most of the responsibility for the Cantung Mine to the federal government of the devolution agreement. Why do we still have surface leases covering the property? Can the Minister tell this House what his department is doing about turning those leases over to the federal government and what residual financial liability GNWT still has for the Cantung Mine?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the transferred administration control will take place if Canada requests a transfer. As far as the liability goes through the devolution agreement, Canada took responsibility for the remediation of the Cantung Mine.

MR. O'REILLY: If I heard the Minister correctly, if Canada requests the surface leases they can be handed back. I'm hoping that we would actually do that. You know, in the interim we have these surface leases covering the property. We still have a duty to carry out inspections, especially in light of the poor environmental track record of this operation. Can the Minister tell us how many

inspections have been carried out on our Cantung surface leases since devolution, what the findings have generally been, and how much those inspections have cost this government?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, with the Department of Lands in the GNWT now holding the lease on the Mactung Mine and through devolution we feel that we're in a better position to try and adjust any of the liabilities, identify any liabilities and make sure we have adequate securities as has been mentioned in the past. As far as the actual inspections that have happened since then because it's a non-operating mine inspections weren't really required. I'll have to follow up and see how many we've actually done, but I could tell the Member in this House that ITI and Lands are planning on having boots on the ground this summer at the Mactung site to do some inspections out there. I would be more than pleased to give Members opposite an update as to the work when it happens.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the answer and the commitment from the Minister on the Mactung property, but I've been talking about Cantung. It's a nearby former operating mine, but I'd be happy to chat with him about this. Now that we have authority under devolution to bring in our own legislation regulations policies and processes for setting financial security for non-renewable resource development, we've had this authority now, Mr. Speaker, for over two years. Can the Minister tell this House what steps he has taken to engage the public and bring in a sound and robust financial security system for non-renewable resource development in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. Mactung is the property; Cantung is the mine. It is the remediation of Cantung that Canada has taken the responsibility for. I hear the Member's point on the securities. It is a responsibility that we take very seriously because we are ultimately, at the end, responsible for it. We are holding approximately \$562 million in security within the Department of Lands. I think there is about \$5.5 million of that on the Cantung Mine. We will continue to fulfill our role in making sure that the environment and Northwest Territories and the liabilities are up to date. As we move forward, I will make a commitment that we will work with Members, keep them up to date as to the work that we are doing, and also keep the public informed and up to date as to the work that we are doing and the amount of security that we hold.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 222-18(2):
REDUCTION TO SMALL BUSINESS TAX RATES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Finance inform this House where, in the government's budget, are there tax measures to lower taxes on small businesses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is nowhere. This is the first budget since this Assembly has taken office. We have three budgets to go before the end of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, I don't think our businesses can afford to wait much longer to see some real economic growth and progress. Is the Minister committing to doing this any time soon? Is it going to be budget two, three or four?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as people across Northwest Territories know, we are going through an exercise right now where we are trying to identify a lot of savings within the budget. Part of the reason for that is to pass those savings and be able to invest in new initiatives that our small businesses across the Northwest Territories can take advantage of. As far as looking at the corporate or small business tax, this is a discussion that we can have. We have a business planning process coming up in September. I am sure the Members will raise it at that time again.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, Members in this House did discuss it when we set this government's mandate and were fairly insistent that this needed to happen. In fact, it was the Members on the other side of Cabinet that voted against this resolution. I will ask the Minister again if he will make a firm commitment to see this roll out sooner rather than later.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I would like to ask the Member to refresh our memory and let us know where we voted against this particular initiative? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask the Minister to answer the question I previously asked. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Member makes a comment that we voted against

something. My answer to his question is I wanted to know where that happened.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 223-18(2):
REMEDICATION OF AKLAVIK POWER PLANT
SITE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, we had a project in Aklavik, the remediation of an old NTPC site in the community, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister: why has the remaining work been put on hold to the old site that is located in the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, in 2015 the Power Corporation began a remediation on the old site. Certain issues have been identified. There was some work that was done last year, and I understand that field work for the remediation of the site, or further field work, is scheduled to begin on August 20th of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure why we have to wait until August. We have two months here that this work can be completed and possibly ship out the contaminants. Will the Minister ensure that the clean-up continues to ensure no contaminants are spread with the rain over the summer?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned previously that field work for the remediation will take place in August of this year, August 20th. This is part of a multiyear program to make sure that there will be no damage to the community left from the former site. We are moving as quickly as we can on this project. The corporation has many activities including remediation of various sites. This is probably the earliest we can do it. It will be done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once the site has been completed and finished, I would like to ask the Minister: will the Minister ensure that the site is filled in with gravel to ensure that there are no big holes left behind? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I don't have all the details of the plans for remediation of the

site, which was the site of the former power plant. I am sure the Power Corporation will live up to its obligations and return the site to as pristine a condition as is possible.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

QUESTION 224-18(2):
SERVICES TO SUPPORT SENIORS AGING IN
PLACE

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, according to the World Health Organization and the Government of Canada and countless other organizations, access to affordable transportation is a key element of aging in place, which is also one of the mandated priorities of this Assembly. Unfortunately, it is an issue that no department or level of government wants to tackle. However, I think I may have found the man responsible for this. Because this is so intricately related to aging in place, I believe that the Minister of Health and Social Services, whose department is committed to ensuring seniors age in place, improving access to services for persons with disabilities -- and he is also the Minister responsible for Seniors and the Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities and the chair of the Community Wellness and Safety Committee of Cabinet, which coordinates policy on aging in place as well as mental health and community wellness, all of which are relevant to the issue as I stated earlier. I think that he is the man that is finally going to get this dealt with. Does the Minister agree with the World Health Organization and the Government of Canada that affordable transportation services for seniors are a key element of aging in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the ability of patients, residents, clients of the Northwest Territories, regardless of where you live, to get to healthcare facilities is an incredibly important aspect of their being able to maintain health. At the end of the day, public transportation is the responsibility of communities and that includes transportation of seniors, non-seniors, persons with disabilities. When it comes to residents that are actually under our care and control, people who are living in our facilities like our long-term care facilities, we are responsible for transportation of those individuals. We live up to that commitment and we make sure they get to their appointments when they need to get to their appointments and get to other public events when necessary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: I think the issue here is that the department doesn't take a holistic look at aging in place. It is not just having a home with wider hallways and a bathroom you can walk into. There is much more to aging in place. Is the Minister aware of any studies which have looked at the feasibility of providing the service, not just the cost, but the potential benefits?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, "Our Elders: Our Communities" is a holistic document. It is focused on trying to improve residents' experiences with aging, particularly aging in place. We work closely with the NWT Seniors' Society as well, trying to ensure that our residents have access to a wide range of programs and services to ensure that they can stay in their homes for as long as they can and in the communities as long as they can. As far as a specific... Have we in the GNWT done a specific review into the transportation and the ability for individuals to get to appointments? I don't believe we have done that focused attention, but we are looking at a holistic approach for aging in place.

MR. SIMPSON: I hate to make additional work for the Minister, given all his responsibilities I listed earlier, but would he make a commitment to look into the feasibility of providing the service and the benefits that it would provide?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, local governments actually have the responsibility to provide public transportation options for citizens including seniors or persons with disabilities. We do know that throughout the Northwest Territories, many communities have stepped up and are taking on this responsibility. The town of Hay River purchased a handi-van through the gas tax funding and transferred that vehicle to the Hay River disabilities council, who in turn applied for some money under the antipoverty fund to help them to provide operations for that. We provide handi-vans for residents who are living in our long-term care facilities. The City of Yellowknife I think has some programs for accessibility and transportation. I will certainly commit to looking at what is available in the Northwest Territories now and provide a bit of a summary of what is out there, so we can help our residents know what is available.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am aware of what is out there in Hay River. There is not enough out there. That is what I have been told by my constituents, by quite a few of them, and they want me to bring this issue, and they want me to press this issue. I will ask again. Will the Minister commit to looking into the feasibility of providing these kinds of services I described, not just the

services we have that are inadequate? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, as the Department of Health and Social Services, I want to be cautious about taking over the responsibility that is actually somebody else's jurisdiction. What I will commit to do is work with communities across the Northwest Territories to find out what other revenue sources might exist for providing these types of services and work with partners who are already providing these types of services to see how, together, we might be able to expand these services to meet the needs of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 225-18(2):
MEDICAL TRAVEL CHALLENGES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the second call of questions about medical travel. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services does a great job of ensuring our elders and seniors are treated with respect and dignity. The department ensures that, where needed, an escort is provided, and they have an interpreter on site in Yellowknife. My concern is for day trips, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister please advise this House if the department has a place where they can relax or even nap during the day after their appointments? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, as far as day trips, we don't have that service available for residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister for his answer. I have heard many concerns regarding this issue. A lot of elders that come in do not have a place to go after their appointment and end up walking around a lot. It wears them out and tires them out. Some actually need naps. We have to give them the dignity and respect. Will the Minister work with his department to establish a place where they can rest or even nap after their appointments?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we are always looking at ways to improve the patient experience during medical travel. However, it has to be done within some limits. What we do now is we try to ensure the comfort and safety of patients during the course of their travel. Medical travel staff will actually work really hard with them to find a suitable itinerary that will minimize wait times and

time between visits. Recognizing that individuals do come in from communities and have to spend time in airports for extended periods of time, there can be some frustration. I will work with the department, as part of our medical travel review, to see what other options are available as far as where people might be able to stay and what other opportunities are available in communities for them in between appointments and during travel.

MR. THOMPSON: I really thank the Minister for his answer, and I know the elders and seniors and escorts do travel with them. Thank you for that commitment. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to medical travel, can the Minister please advise the House what the rates are for meals and accommodations are for patients and escorts who are not government employees and not able to stay at the boarding home?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, patients and their non-medical escorts that don't already have access to an employer plan with medical travel benefits are not eligible to stay in boarding homes, I think the Member is aware of that, and are reimbursed a daily allowance at an established rate. Currently the rate is \$50 a day for accommodation and \$18 a day for meals. Many residents are eligible for the boarding homes; these include non-insured health benefits clients; those who are eligible for Métis health benefits; those that are eligible for extended health benefits; indigent health benefits and individuals with low family income, which is around under \$80,000. Those individuals can use the boarding homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, it seems to be a very small amount for patients and escorts to buy food or something to drink: \$18 for meals does not go very far especially if you're trying to eat healthy and ensure that you follow a strict diet. As well, it's really a challenge if you're on fixed income or you have to take time off your work to escort these people. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure when this was reviewed last time, I think maybe April 1st, but can the Minister commit to have this department review the amounts provided and look at increasing it to reflect the realities of the cost of living for our residents of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, earlier I commented on the three pillars that we're working on: the eligibility criteria, the escort criteria and the benefits criteria so we are doing the work the Member is requesting us to do. We are looking at the rates. We are exploring possibility of changes or

amendments to those. Everything that we do, Mr. Speaker, has to be done within our current fiscal environment and we have to be conscious of the fact that there are limited funds available, and if we're going to put more money in, the money has to come from somewhere else. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh

QUESTION 226-18(2):
PROACTIVE FUNDING SUPPORTS TO
ADDRESS ALCOHOL AND DRUG HEALTH
ISSUES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to continue on with the questions for the Minister of Health on my earlier questions. I just want a couple of more questions for clarity. The Minister indicated that he cannot take away from the acute care services provided to the people. I'd like to ask if the Minister is aware of how much of the people that are in hospital or being served, the acute care people, how many of those people's health issues are preventable? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to residents of the Northwest Territories, if a resident is sick or has acute health problems, we don't say no to them. If someone shows up at a health centre we don't say no, we're broke, you have to leave. We're not able to really control some of the acute care costs; they're driven by demand. Certainly we're not going to be in a position to reduce them to roll those dollars into prevention, which is, I think, what the Member was asking. We are doing a number of things around prevention. It's an interesting question that the Member asks. I can't tell you today that five per cent, 10 per cent, 20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent of our clients are there as a result of addictions issues or health complications as a result of addictions issues. Anecdotally we know that in the Northwest Territories there are many people who are struggling with addictions and that those addictions do compound their health problems and they end up becoming regular users of the healthcare system. I take the Member's point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I would, I guess, suggest that it would be a very high percentage of people but I can understand that the Minister is not going to have that information at his fingertips. But I wonder, I'd like to ask the Minister if it would be possible for the Minister to provide us with that information where the number or the percentage of people that are in the hospitals are in there with

issues that are 100 per cent preventable, and that there can be programs put in place to address those particular health issues?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: No, I won't commit to doing that. I think trying to determine that data would be incredibly time-consuming; it would be near impossible because there are multiple reasons somebody might be sick. Somebody who has addictions might be sick but their sickness may not have any addictions. It would be almost an impossible question to answer. We have in the Northwest Territories a number of criteria, a number of evaluation criteria that we use to determine the effectiveness of our health system and track the health conditions of our residents. We've got that information; we brought it forward in the last government. We've started collecting statistics on those data points and I'm happy to provide that information to the Member and all Members so that we can make informed decisions. But I'm not prepared at this point to invest a significant amount of resources and time to answer a question which, you know, for most part would be almost impossible to make 100 per cent determination on whether or not that is why somebody is sick.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I totally disagree. This is not an impossible thing to do; this is an easy thing to do. If the Minister had talked to the people in the communities, as an example, those nurses as our people are walking in the doors could determine why that individual is sick. They actually send people home because they think that their issue is 100 per cent preventable by stopping drinking. That's an example of what's going on right now. This is not rocket science here. This is a simple thing. You go in the hospitals; you look at the records why individuals are there. Why would the Minister not commit to it? It's not impossible to do. It's not just about impossible, it's a simple thing. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would take a look at it. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, obviously we're going to have to disagree. I've been around the healthcare system for a while; I've had an opportunity to talk to health practitioners throughout the Northwest Territories, across this country, around the world, there's no question that alcohol and addictions have a huge impact on healthcare and the health results of people across the Northwest Territories, the country and the world. I'm not denying that. I'm saying investing a significant amount of money to go out and determine why every resident of the Northwest Territories is sick and whether or not their condition was preventable if they did not drink is not good value for money. We have acute care needs. We know there's a huge problem with mental health and addictions in the Northwest Territories. We've got the results from the Mental Health and Addictions Forum

ordered by the previous Minister of Health and Social Services. We're doing our work on the Mental Health and Addictions Framework. We've got our reporting mechanisms on the key factors to help determine whether or not we're meeting the health needs of residents of the Northwest Territories. I'm not arguing with the Member that addictions is a problem, what I'm saying is investing significant money to determine the exact reason why somebody is sick is not going to add value to this system when we already know that alcohol is a factor.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked that question to see if the Minister could move away from almost reacting to individuals once they're sick, but actually do something in the area of prevention. I'm not asking the Minister to give me a presentation of every person's ailments across the Northwest Territories; I'm asking the Minister to look at the hospitals. I don't care if he takes a two-month example and extrapolates the numbers from there. I have no reason to say that every person has to have a head count either. I'm saying there should be some work done in that area. I'm asking the Minister if he would stand up, do the work in that area and try to lessen the costs to the health system. That's what I'm here to try to do, try to lessen the costs to the health system. The Minister says no, I can't do it, it's too much work. That's ridiculous. Asking...

MR. SPEAKER: Member, I believe you already asked those questions so I'll allow the Minister to answer the question. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not here to save money for the Government of Northwest Territories on healthcare; I'm here to provide the best healthcare possible to the residents of the Northwest Territories through the systems and mechanisms that we have available. I also need to do that in a fiscally prudent and responsible way... The Member is obviously leaning towards prevention. I'm not arguing with the Member, I think prevention is absolutely necessary, and we've made investments in prevention and we'll continue to make investments in prevention. But I'd rather spend the money on prevention than spending a whole lot of money to do an assessment as to why, you know, what resulted in everybody being sick in the Northwest Territories. We already know we have poor outcomes for Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories, poor health outcomes. We know we have high rates of addiction. We know we have challenges. These are the things that we need to address and we're not going to address that by doing a study. I think ultimately I'm agreeing with the Member; I'm just saying I'm not prepared to spend a whole lot of money to do a study on why people are sick when

we already have a significant amount of information out there. I'm also indicating that we are working on prevention. We need to do more around prevention. I think I've agreed to everything the Member has said, so I'm not sure where the Member is going with this other than suggesting we need to spend a whole lot of money for something that's not going to give us any benefits.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 62-18(2):
SKILLS 4 SUCCESS: NWT JOBS IN DEMAND: 15-YEAR FORECAST

TABLED DOCUMENT 63-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LABOUR MARKET FORECAST AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT BRIEFING: APRIL 2016

TABLED DOCUMENT 64-18(2):
LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION RESOURCE: NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LABOUR MARKET FORECAST AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESOURCE: APRIL 2016

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Skills 4 Success: NWT Jobs in Demand: 15-year Forecast," "Northwest Territories Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment: Briefing April 2016" and "Labour Market Information Resource: Northwest Territories Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment: Resource April 2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Public Works and Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 65-18(2):
NORTH SLAVE RESILIENCY STUDY FINAL REPORT – ATTACHMENTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 66-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION 2016-2017 CAPITAL ADJUSTMENTS

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "North Slave Resiliency Study Final Report: Attachments" and "Northwest

Territories Housing Corporation 2016-2017 Capital Adjustments." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation. Item 15, notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 19-18(2):
ADDRESSING CORE HOUSING NEEDS IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to amend the notice of motion I provided yesterday regarding addressing core housing needs in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Yellowknife Centre is seeking unanimous consent to amend the notice of motion she gave notice of yesterday for Motion 19-18(2): Addressing Core Housing Needs in NWT. Are there any nays? There are no nays.

---Unanimous consent granted

You may proceed with your motion amendment.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I hereby amend the notice of motion which I gave yesterday by deleting the words "within 120 days" in the third section of the resolution portion and inserting the words "at the earliest opportunity." Further that the following words be added as the fourth section of the resolution portion of the motion, "And furthermore that the government provide a comprehensive response to this motion within 120 days." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion will be amended accordingly. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Member for Hay River North in the Chair. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 18-18(2), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider business before the House. Masi.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee, Mr. Beaulieu?

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to continue considering Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main

Estimates, 2016-2017. Committee would like to consider Health and Social Services and possibly Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We'll take a short break and resume with the consideration of the document.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We are back to order. We've agreed to consider Tabled Document 50-18(2): Main Estimates, 2016-17. We're going to consider the Department of Health and Social Services. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister Abernethy, would you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with me today on my right is Debbie DeLancey, the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, and on my left Jeannie Mathison, the director of finance.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. I believe we finished yesterday on page 185, community health programs, grants, contributions and transfers. Were there any further questions or comments on this page? Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wanted to highlight the Disabilities Fund. For three consecutive years, it's been fairly consistent at \$335,000. I'm just trying to understand and realizing from the first-hand knowledge of people that live with disabilities, namely people that have autism or else have severe brain injuries or else spina bifida, those services are very lacking, and I'm just trying to understand whether the \$335,000 is intended as a program funding, just to get some clarification. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. You're referring to the disabilities fund on page 184? Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, these are funds that we have been providing to groups like the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities, and the NWT Disabilities Council to support programs that they are

providing. This also, I think the Member's question goes to the fact that, in the mandate, we have been directed to develop a comprehensive disabilities action plan. We're going to be working with stakeholders that will help inform how we move forward with disabilities. We may have to have some future discussions about funding levels if the action plan shows that we need to invest some additional money. Until that work is done, we aren't in a position to insert new money until we know where we need to be spending it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister had stated that the NWT Disability Action Plan was the development of the initiative to ensure that various initiatives, perhaps maybe with programs or services that could be directed to disabled persons.

The question that I wanted to ask is: if, indeed, we're going to go down that path, how do the department plans respecting persons with disabilities reflect the discussion and commitments made through Motion 13-18(2) in the previous Assembly, the Northwest Territories Disability Action Plan? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was making, actually, exact reference to the work that has been directed to us through the mandate and the motion. This is the work that we're doing. We will be preparing the terms of reference. We'll be partnering with organizations like the NWT Disabilities Council, and we will be developing that document. We are relying on some of the work that's already been done by groups like the NWT Disabilities Council, who have actually identified a number of pillars they would like us to be working on. We are going to move forward in partnership with groups like them to develop an action plan for the Northwest Territories in direct response to the motion and the mandate.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair, understanding that, of the \$335,000, would that cover ongoing program initiatives for disabled persons to access this funding? Over and above that, it's going to cover the costs of the development of the NWT disability action plan? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again, the \$335,000 is money that we provide

to those organizations for their programming and services. There are a significant number of programs and services that the Government of the Northwest Territories is providing, whether it's through Education, Culture and Employment, Health and Social Services, or any of our other departments, like Housing, to support individuals with disabilities. Housing Corp. has a number of programs designed to help people modify or customize their homes. Education has income support; they've got the employability work that they're doing. We have services that we provide through Health and Social Services, money for things like respite, respite that we're providing in some of our health facilities. There's a wide range of services that are currently provided. The \$335,000 is not affected in this budget, and those aren't dollars we're using for the development of the plan. The plan, the action plan, will be developed using internal resources.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: My final question, Mr. Chair: the Minister states that the government has very significant resources and programs directed to meet the needs of disabled persons. Can the Minister outline, perhaps as an example, how those services can be met with a person that has autism? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. I'd like to ask the Minister when he's finished his statement, if he could, just indicate, say, "Thank you, Mr. Chair," just for the benefit of the audio guys. Thank you. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of the development of the action plan, we're actually developing a comprehensive inventory of what we provide to date so we know where we're starting from. We haven't completed all that work. The complete inventory isn't complete. But, as soon as we get that inventory done, I'm happy to share that with the Member and committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Perhaps the follow-up question is: okay, well, if a person is afflicted with autism, again, what are the services to meet their needs? What are the services the government provides currently, right now? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I would have to say that some of the services available for children with

autism are limited in the Northwest Territories. I think that's one of the areas that we certainly need to have some additional conversation. I have had an opportunity to meet and have some discussions with the National Autism Society, and we talked about ways that we might be able to work together moving forward. I know that there's a representative here, in the Northwest Territories, on that committee, on that association. Much of what we provide is case-by-case, dependent on the needs of an individual, and we would work with families to develop plans that worked for them. More needs to be done, Mr. Chair. We know that. That's one of the reasons we're moving forward with this action plan. And autism is an area where we have, I would say, not provided as many services as some people would like us to. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I would just like to remind all the Members... I'm not just picking on Minister Abernethy, but if they could all indicate when they're finished talking, it just makes things run a little smoother. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Just a second. I'm having a technical difficulty. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have some questions about the grants, contributions, and transfers, some detail on page 185. I wonder if the Minister could talk about how the Healthy Family Program in the Tlicho area works. Is this something that is based on health professionals visiting families where they live? Or do they have families come to a central location? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Healthy Family Program in the Northwest Territories is present in most regions, most communities but not all communities. With respect to the specifics on how the Tlicho runs, I will go to the deputy minister, Debbie DeLancey.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And the reason this is reflected as a separate contribution is because, in all the other regions, the Healthy Family Program is delivered through the Health and Social Services authorities by staff and, in the Tlicho region, the Tlicho Government has drawn down this jurisdiction as one of their first programs that they are taking over under their self-government agreement. Most of the Healthy Family Programs involve a mix of home visitations and activities that parents can come to, healthy

cooking kitchens, and so on. The Tlicho program is actually evolving. We're just in the early stages of the Tlicho Government having drawn it down, so I expect that there will be some changes in the approach they're taking. Right now we don't have full details on how they're contemplating changing it, but we can certainly provide that information as it rolls out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering where else this program needs to expand in order to cover all of the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we currently provide the program in all regions of the Northwest Territories, but, as I indicated, we haven't rolled out onsite delivery in every community. We do provide outreach to the communities so that they have access to it, but it isn't necessarily located in every community, as far as a location those services can be provided in every community, but, for the detail, I will go to Ms. DeLancey.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The program, the communities where the program is currently available and staffed include Yellowknife, Ndilo, Detah, Hay River and surrounding communities, Fort Smith, Behchoko, Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Tulita, and Colville Lake. As the Minister mentioned, some regions have implemented pilots, looking at how a program in one of those communities can act as a satellite program, working with either a band council or a CHR in the communities that don't yet have a staff position to deliver some of the programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That list went by me quickly, but what I noted was that the smaller communities in the Tlicho, I didn't hear that they were on it, and maybe that's because the services are centralized in Behchoko and the IRC. Could the Minister please confirm that there are services available to the IRC and all Tlicho communities? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tuk and Behchoko are acting as satellite communities for this program in those regions. They are doing outreach. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm wondering if there has been any evaluation done of the Healthy Family Program by the department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe the last evaluation of that program was about four years ago, and it's probably time to do another one. We'll do another evaluation of the program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am appreciative of that answer from the Minister. I think that evaluation is an important way of figuring out how to more particularly target services. This is a very key population. If they receive the right services zero to three, they are less likely to need services at later points in their lives, so I really encourage the Minister to plan on that evaluation in the life of this Assembly. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Ms. Green?

MS. GREEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions about the Seniors Fund. First of all, who are the eligible applicants for this fund?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the \$205,000 flows to the NWT Seniors' Society. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that. That is all.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Next on my list is Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to follow up on Mr. Nadli's questions regarding disabilities. I heard the Minister say that there are a number of programs across the departments. Does the department collect this list? I guess that is the first question.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, late in the life of the last government, early in the life of this government, the desire to move forward with the disabilities action plan became, I think, a pretty strong will of the Assembly, both Assemblies. To move forward with the action plan, it was felt that we needed to understand where we are today, so we started pulling together an inventory of the programs and services that are available for persons with disabilities. It is mostly done. It is not all done. We are pulling that together. When it is final, I will absolutely share it with the Member and committee. That will be an important piece moving forward with the development of an action plan, understand where we are starting from. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank the Minister for that answer. It did help answer this next question I am having. Are we looking at the realignment of the various departments to actually put all our, as part of the plan, I guess, to be streamlined so it is within health? It is not all over the place? I guess leave it at that, and I will follow-up with my next question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, there is no intent at this point to realign departments to meet the needs of the individuals that we are talking about. Those individuals might have a variety of needs. Some of it might be more education based. It may be more appropriate for those services to be provided there. The important thing will be to provide a solid inventory of what programs exist, so people can understand what exists and how to access them and where they are. As I said, it will form a starting point for where we need to move forward, in partnership with groups like the NWT Disabilities Council to develop a meaningful action plan for this government and for moving forward.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that answer. Is the department

going to be the lead and be able to get the inventories or you are able to get all the documentation and the programs together in a document that we can then promote it to the people with disabilities? One-time shopping, I guess. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Department of Health and Social Services will be the lead in the Government of the Northwest Territories on the development of this action plan. It must be done in collaboration and cooperation with other departments and other stakeholders. I would like to get the deputy minister to talk briefly about the interagency sort of work that is happening as we move forward with the development of this plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have just finalized a terms of reference that will set up an interdepartmental working group. We have sent that to the deputies for final sign-off and asked deputies to confirm participation on the working group. We really have an all-of-government approach. Our intention in this review, as the Minister said, is to do a complete, updated inventory of services that are available, but also to look at are we marketing them well enough? Are people taking advantage of these? Do they actually know that they are there? We also are going to do a best practices review of what other governments are doing to see if we are missing anything. We are going to, as the Minister said, be doing that in partnership with the key disability organizations in the territories like the NWT Disabilities Council. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the deputy minister and the Minister for the answer. That is great to hear. I struggle... When we are sitting here looking at our budgets and things are not being accessed and sometimes it can be the promotion of it. I also like the fact that... It is music to my ears that you guys are actually looking at best practices out there. That can really help this. I am looking forward to this. Again, I guess I understand it is a collaborative approach and you need all these other departments, but will Health be the lead on promoting the document that will be out there for everybody? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson. Nothing further. Having no one else on my list, we can continue with the detail on page 186, community health programs, active positions. Any comments or questions? Page 186. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Again, we see some changes in staffing here. Can the Minister explain those for us? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we went through these numbers yesterday, but I will go through them because now they are specific to this page. We have one sunset in this area. It is an Environmental Health Officer in Norman Wells, vacant. We have two initiatives as a result of the Mental Health Act. Two positions full-time, one part-time. Then we have one internal reallocation, one position, a project assistant was moved from community and social programs, which we looked at the other day.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. We will have to keep asking these sorts of questions until we get the consolidated information that I have requested earlier in the week and at the beginning of the budget process. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Seeing no further questions, we can return to page 183. Community health programs, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$152,585,000. Committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: A couple of questions on this page, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Thompson, you had your hand up before I called the page, so I will let you ask your questions. Continue.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I respect your leniency on this. Just a couple of questions regarding residential care for adults and children. I see a reduction of almost \$3.9 million. How is that cut coming about? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You will notice from the Main Estimates, 2015-16, where the budget was \$45,889,000, it has gone up to \$48,660,000. It is actually an increase. You will notice that the revised main estimates show a higher number. Those are as a result of supps that came forward for residential southern placements for adults and children.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I apologize right now. I am looking at your revised estimates. We have to come back for supps for southern placement. Are we going to be having to come back for supps in the future, because if you look at the numbers... I know we have seen an increase from the mains from 2015-16, but you look at actuals and they keep on going up. Are we going to have to come back for a supp on this? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in this area we actually were able to get a forced growth increase of about \$3,050,000 for residential southern placement for adults. Having said that, even with that forced growth we anticipate that we will likely have to come back for some supps, but we base the supps on actuals and actual utilization, which does vary a little bit. We did get an increase. We hope that the supps in the future will be much smaller than they have been in the past, but I think it is fair to assume that there will likely be some supps. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you and I thank the Minister for his answer, Mr. Chair. That makes sense. I am just trying to understand the process a little bit better. In regards to contract services, going from the revised estimates, there is a reduction of \$3.5 million. I know there is an increase from the previous, but there is a \$3.5 million reduction. Is there a rationale for this? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is the exact situation that we just described. It is just how it is reported in the expenditure category.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for now clearing it up a little bit better. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Anything further on this page? Seeing none, I will call the page again officially. Community health programs, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$152,585,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Agreed. We will continue on to page 188. Community social programs. We will defer the operation expenditure summary until we have discussed the detail on page 189 and then 190. Beginning with page 189, are there comments or questions? Are there questions on page 189, grants, contributions, and transfers? Is committee agreed we can move on to the next page?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Seeing no comments or questions, we will move on to page 190. Active positions. Comments or questions? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't have the most up-to-date response on the child and family services, but there was an audit from a couple of years ago. I would just like to ask the Minister how the response to the audit report is coming along at this point.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. This is in relation to the item on page 189, child and family services. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as a result of the audit, as well as the recommendation from the 16th Assembly, we moved forward with Building Stronger Families, which was a fundamental change in how we are providing childhood family services here in the Northwest Territories. We have brought forward changes to the legislation that passed late in the life of the last government. Those changes have gone live. I mentioned them here in the House the other day by way of a Minister's statement. We responded directly to a number of the recommendations in the audit immediately as far as accountability, tracking, and reporting. We changed it so that the directors or the CEOs of the health centres are actually accountable under the legislation. They are associate directors, which requires them to provide additional data information for tracking purposes. I do believe, Mr. Chair, that we are going to be providing a briefing to committee on where we are with building stronger families. It is a significant amount of detail. We have come a long way. We are in a five-year implementation plan, and we are halfway. I think we are starting to see some good things happening out there. Still, a long way to go. We are turning that ship. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I recognize that a lot of the recommendations are long-term and difficult to carry out. On the question of foster homes, I would like to ask the Minister if there is progress made in the area of having Aboriginal foster homes, more Aboriginal foster homes, presented into the process or more Aboriginal homes allowed into the process. As we know, about 95 per cent, or in that area, maybe 93, I don't remember the exact number, of the children in care that were actually receiving services out of their own home were Aboriginal. I just want to get a feel from the Minister if there is some progress made in approving some Aboriginal homes for foster care.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I just want to remind all the Members just to let us know when you are concluding your statements so the audio guys can switch us over. Just a "thank you, Mr. Chair" would work. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we do provide money to the Foster Family Coalition of the Northwest Territories, who actually does a lot of work to encourage and get people signed up and vetted to be foster parents. The number is constantly changing. It literally changes weekly, monthly, the number of the individuals and the individuals who are officially on a list to be fostered. We recognize that in some of the smaller communities, someone might not have put their name in to be a foster, but then something happens in a family, a relative... We have a bit of an expedited process where family members can be quickly vetted. It still needs to be appropriate vetting. We still need to make sure that people are safe so that they can become foster parents. One of the things that we are working on right now, we are almost done, is arranging for insurance for foster families, working with different groups to figure out how to actually provide insurance for foster families. We have heard from some people that that is an issue; that if they don't have insurance, they are cautious or nervous about being foster parents. We are addressing that. We are really close. What we can say is, as we move forward with Building Stronger Families, the number of children who are receiving care outside of their parents' home or outside of their parents is actually decreasing. We have actually had an increase of the number of children who actually were able to receive care in their family home. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no further questions in this area, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Back on page 189, under contributions, child and family services, this year, the budget is \$128,000, but if I look back to 2014-15, it was \$173,000. Can the Minister explain why there's been this reduction in funding from 2014-15? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there has been no reduction in this area. That might have been a one-time expense or one-time cost. I will get that detail and share with the committee and Members.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: That's it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Further comments or questions on page 189 or page 190. Seeing none, we can move back to page 188, operations expenditures summary. Comments or questions on this page? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am wondering if the department can give a little explanation on what adult support services for the amount of \$1,289,000 consists of? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will go to Ms. Mathison.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That budget of \$1.2 million is comprised of \$219,000 for compensation for two staff members, and it also is comprised of almost a million dollars that goes to the Beaufort Delta Health and Social Services Authority, and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority for adult services program delivery, as well as some O and M money of about \$72,000 for various contracts and materials and supplies.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the detail. I wonder if the Minister can

maybe explain a little bit on what those services actually are. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, adult support services include programs such as day shelters, transitional housing, life and career development, skills for adults, and the Office of the Public Guardian. The majority of the money is going into the Office of the Public Guardian which is governed by the Public Guardianship and Trustee Act here in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: That's good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is the HSS authority funding of \$25,025. My question is this targeted as core funding for the regional authorities? Thank you, Mr. Chair

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. It looks like you're looking at page 189, the HSS authority funding, but I'll let Minister answer that. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that's core funding to the authorities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My next question is do these authorities have any authorizations of the funding available for the various programs within the department? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, they are required to provide programs in compliance with legislation, Child and Family Services Act by way of example. I'm not sure exactly what the Member is asking. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll use an example. If the community of Colville Lake or Fort Good Hope or Deline was to forward a proposal underneath a program within the department to the Sahtu authority, does the Sahtu authority have the

powers to grant approval of that proposal application, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it depends on the proposal being submitted, what program it is being submitted under. The authorities do have some latitude to make customized programs to meet the needs of the residents, recognizing that there are differences across the Territories. This is true in the past and it is true in the new authority as we move forward, but there are some dollars that are tied to specific tasks. Much of these dollars that we're talking about now are actually salary dollars, so it does limit their ability to utilize them for other things. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely, nothing further. Any other comments or questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Just want to get a couple clarifications on the support services. Right now, my understanding is the Beau-Del and the Yellowknife authorities that access this funding for day shelters. Is it application based or is it just the government has an agreement or contract with them? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's based on where the demand is at this current time as well as where the facilities happen to be located. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does it flow to the department or through the non-profit, or does it go to the authorities and then to the non-profits, or does it go directly from the department in Yellowknife to those non-profits. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, based on our current structure, it flows from the department through the authorities to the appropriate NGO or provider. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair there's only these programs in these two regions, and

there's nothing else out there in the other regions. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As far as funded day shelters, no, those are the two regions at this point in time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. Just final follow-up, is the department looking at expanding this to the other regions if there are day shelters that are in operation? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're always keeping our eyes and ears open. The MLA is certainly going to share thoughts from his region. If it looks like there's an increase in demand, we're open to having those discussions, but it also depends on what's also available in the community where people could be safe and warm during the day. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: No. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that clarification.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Are there further comments or questions on community social programs, operations expenditure summary? Seeing none, I'll call the page. Community social programs, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$27,418,000. We will now move on to diagnostic and therapeutic services. We will defer the total at the operation expenditure summary on page 192 and discuss the detail on page 193. Comments or questions on page 193. Seeing no comments or question. We will return to page 192. Comments or questions on the operations expenditure summary. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note that pharmacy spending has decreased by a little more than a million dollars since 2014-15. Can the Minister comment on that reduction? Is it savings found through efficiencies or has there been a change in the cost of pharmaceuticals? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. There have been some changes in the

referred-out lab services in the Northwest Territories. There has also been a change in demand of blood and blood products that have lapsed traditionally. As a result, we have reduced our budget to be more consistent with our actuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at the diagnostic services line here, and there's fairly substantial reduction of over \$300,000 from 2015-16 to 2016-17. Can the Minister or his staff help explain the reductions there? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll have to go back to Mr. Testart's question because I gave him the answer with the wrong one. Sorry about that. The changes in this particular line are there are some increases in northern allowance. We had some increase in supplies of about \$219,000, and then the answer I give Mr. Testart, which was not the answer he was supposed to get, is we actually had a reduced usage of blood and blood products of about \$650,000. We reduced that to be more consistent with our actuals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister, you want to direct... Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, and to bring clarity to the question Mr. Kieron Testart asked and I give the answer to, the wrong answer, I'll go to Ms. Mathison, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister Abernethy, are you going to answer Mr. O'Reilly's question?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did. I totally answered that one already. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. O'Reilly, your response to the Minister.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. You look almost as confused as I am. Maybe we could get the Minister to help us get unconfused here. I was talking about the reductions in diagnostic services and he seemed to be talking about blood products, but maybe he can help clarify. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Minister Abernethy, would you like to clarify Mr. O'Reilly's questions about diagnostic services?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I sure would, Mr. Chair. Blood and blood services is in diagnostic services, and I was answering Mr. Kieron Testart's question previously. He was asking about a different line, but I gave him the answer that I just gave you. The answer I just gave you is the right answer. The answer I gave him is the wrong answer. We have a reduction and the need for blood and blood services because of demand. We aren't utilizing as much, so we reduced the budget accordingly. Mr. Chair, do you want me to get her to answer Mr. Testart's question?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): No thank you, Minister. If Mr. Testart has a question, he can get in the queue. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I'm going to get out of this queue before I get more confused. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Yes, I'd appreciate getting the right answer from the Minister for a change. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly, or Mr. Testart. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I would like to get Ms. Mathison to respond, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under pharmacy in 2014-15, there were increased actuals there in compared to 2015-16. What happened in 2014-15 and a few years prior to that was we had increased money in the budget to pay additional costs for referred out laboratory services. That money was approved for a period of time, and the money sunset which allowed us to overspend in 2014-15, but didn't allow us to have the budget available for 2015-16. We are currently reviewing to determine whether or not there continues to be a shortfall and a need for increased funding for an outlab at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Can the Minister provide more details on the referred out laboratory services? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are going to Ms. DeLancey, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Jeannie.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will go to Ms. Mathison.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Mathison.

MS. MATHISON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The expenditures for referred out labs are actually contracts we have for southern providers to provide our laboratory readings. I am not sure of the official terminology, but our lab samples get sent south for analysis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Mathison. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Is the Minister then saying that there actually could be a need for an additional million dollars of spending here based on this review the department is currently undertaking? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Potentially, but we do need to do our analysis to figure out what the actuals are so that we can build a business case for that. Potentially, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. I just want to encourage the Minister and all other witnesses and future witnesses to answer the questions of the Member who has asked and go back to previous questions when that Member raises them again, just for the sake of clarity. Do we have further questions or comments on page 192? Seeing none, I will call the page. Diagnostic and therapeutic services, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$24,302,000. Committee agrees. We will continue on to page 195, nursing in-patient services. We will defer the activity total until we discuss the detail on page 196. Comments or questions on page 196, grants contributions and

transfers. I will give committee a moment. I see no comments or questions, so we will go back to page 195, nursing inpatient services, operations expenditure summary. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. This is where I get to go back on the train. Earlier, the discussion about the budget, I was asking questions about midwifery and was referred to this page. The last question I think I have on this is there are a number of midwives in Yellowknife. They would like to be able to practice midwifery. Are there any obstacles to them doing that professionally? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Midwifery Profession Act has allowed for the licensing of registered midwives since 2005 in the Northwest Territories. The act establishes a licensing and complaints discipline regulatory framework. The act does not prohibit private practice. Currently, registered midwives in the NWT work within the health and social services system as employees, so their services are covered by the NWT healthcare plan as a core program. This is similar to a number of services such as vision exams, physiotherapy, occupational therapy. These services are not covered if they are provided in a private clinic, and that's true for physiotherapy and occupational therapy and those services as well. If a registered midwife was willing to assume the costs of private practice such as insurance, overhead, staffing, those types of things, they are free to do so in the Northwest Territories, but a registered midwife would have to bill their clients directly, and their services would not be covered by the act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I take it from the note that the Minister was reading that there's no support provided through Stanton for midwives to actually practice; that they would have to do it on their own; get their own insurance, their own office or whatever. There's no support through the existing system for midwifery in Yellowknife? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if a midwife wanted to have a private practice here in the Northwest Territories or in Yellowknife in particular they could seek privileges at Stanton; that's something we'd certainly be willing to have a conversation about. If they wanted

to start a private business they would have to have their own insurances and whatnot. Having said that, and I've said it before and I'll say it again, we are looking at developing a territorial midwifery model based out of Yellowknife. We have the one-and-a-half positions, finally able to fill them as of last February; we're moving forward with the design. We have to build a business case so that we can bring it through our business planning process, through our financial process, to see if we can get the money, but we have to have a plan before we do that. That's the work that we're doing today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the response from the Minister. This is just more of a comment, but there's a number of people in Yellowknife that are quite frustrated at the lack of services when it comes to midwifery. I mentioned the other day how one family actually had to go to Hay River at their own expense for a couple of weeks to avail themselves of the service. I appreciate the response from the Minister but I look forward to seeing that business plan as soon as possible. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are committed to developing the plan. We're committed to expanding the midwifery services that we have here in the Northwest Territories. We've been committed to this for a while. The expansion has been slow but we've gone from providing about \$775,000 worth of midwifery services in 2013-14 to \$1.5 million, so it's not that we haven't been doing anything. We had a plan in the Beaufort Delta which was modified. We have midwives in Fort Smith and Hay River and we are looking at a territorial model. At the same time, and as I said yesterday, as we build our facilities, our larger regional facilities, we actually planned space for midwifery services. If you look at the health centre we're building in Norman Wells there's a dedicated room properly plumbed to be a midwife's room with birthing tubs. We're planning ahead even though we haven't done all the work for the final design of a territorial plan, but we are doing the work that is necessary to build appropriate plans.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly, nothing further? Next on my list I have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not to belabour this particular point, but I would like to ask the Minister then as it relates to the roll out of

the territorial model, is there the ability to put some type of, I don't want to refer to it as a preference, but kind of immediate attention to maybe what we would call the Yellowknife component of the territorial model and be able to prioritize that portion of the model and maybe even possibly start midwifery programming based on getting that model done sooner rather than later? I mean, it just seems to me that the reason why Members continue to raise this point over and over and over again is because they're struggling with the difference between why a territorial model versus why not just start midwifery services in Yellowknife. I guess if there's a question in there it's can we prioritize the Yellowknife component of the territorial model sooner rather than later and actually look to roll out Yellowknife midwifery services? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as we move forward with the territorial model it will be based out of Yellowknife, located in Yellowknife, and will be able to provide midwifery services to residents of Yellowknife. But as with anything that we do we have to be able to show cost effectiveness. Currently, although it's not midwifery services we have high quality obstetric services available to the residents of Yellowknife. In the meantime, we don't have complete obstetrical services to individuals outside of Yellowknife in some of our regional centres and our communities. As a result, all those people do have to travel into Yellowknife for birthing purposes. There's been a suggestion that midwifery is going to save us a whole significant amount of money, but for the individuals in Yellowknife they don't have to travel out now; the people from outside from Yellowknife do have to travel in. We aren't going to be able to downgrade or limit the number of physicians we have in the Northwest Territories by bringing in midwifery services so we're not going to save any money on physician costs. I understand there's a significant amount of challenges around understanding some of the financials and we've got some analysis, but what I'll commit to do is retaining an external health economics expert to do an update on our analysis of whether it would actually be cost neutral to-- or achieve efficiencies to bring midwifery services into Yellowknife. Ultimately, we want to do this but we have to make sure we build a proper business case and that way we can demonstrate value for money in doing so. I'll commit to retaining an external health economics expert to update our analysis and provide us with some more clarity on cost-saving measures if there are in fact any. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ultimately, Yellowknifers are actually having to leave Yellowknife to have this service provided, and so now all of a sudden dollars seem to matter to the Minister. That didn't seem to be the case earlier; it was prioritizing healthcare. Anyway, I won't belabour this point any more. I'm looking under line item "medical and surgical nursing," it seems to have nearly a \$2-million increase. Can the department maybe just provide us an explanation as to why there's a-- every other line item there seems to be relatively status quo and this one seems to have a significant increase. I wonder if there's some clarification on why the jump. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Member's comments. I will point out that, you know, we do have to be conscious and aware of the bottom line and we have to ensure that we're spending money wisely. We are committed to moving forward with the midwifery services but we have to make sure that it makes sense and that we cost it appropriately. For individuals who choose to go outside of their home community for midwifery services because they aren't here, that is a choice people can make. At the end of the day, we do have high caliber professional obstetrical services in this community and birthing could have been facilitated, granted not with a midwife. The increase the Member is asking about is actually directly related to Hay River and the opening of the new H.H. Williams and the increase in staff to fund that building appropriately. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, nothing further at this time on this page. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next I have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under "mental health and addictions nursing" the description of the expenditure mentions beds that are designated for services for adults with psychiatric/psychological disorders. I'm wondering if the Minister can let us know if any of those beds are designated for youths or youth, alongside the adults, and how many of those beds are available if so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not at this time, but this is one of the issues that

we're trying to address through our mental health and addictions framework with the focus on the child mental health component. We have also made sure that the new building that's being constructed, the new Stanton building, actually has designated areas for adults and youth. The future building will have that. The action plan is going to address that; these numbers don't address that today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note this activity also includes unit beds for withdrawal management. How many detox beds are currently available? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, we provide those services in Stanton and in the Beaufort Delta health and social services regional hospital. There are no dedicated beds per se, but we make beds available for that purpose in those hospitals. We have to make sure that, you know, if we have a rush on beds that we're able to fill them. We can't say oh, you can't go in there because it's a detox bed. We do provide those services in Stanton and we do provide those services in Beaufort Delta regional hospital. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If these aren't dedicated beds, is there a reason they're kind of included in this expenditure activity as... Like, if it's just general beds and we're providing the service, is there a better way to communicate that? Because this makes it seem like there are detox beds and there are mental health beds, right. If it's just there are beds and then there's money that goes to supporting these things. I'm just looking for capacity really, Mr. Chair. If we can get a sense of what the capacity is for our healthcare system to handle mental health cases and medical withdrawal management. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the description describes the range of services that are being provided under this particular budget category and it does include detox or, you know, withdrawal management beds, and it does include beds for mental health. Any facility is going to have to do bed management and make sure that they're flowing beds or making beds available based on the change and demand, and demand changes every day. These dollars are

dedicated to making sure that we can provide certain services and we do provide withdrawal management in those two facilities and we also provide beds for our mental health unit. There are dedicated mental health beds within Stanton Territorial Hospital.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister for his answer. Given that there's a new mental health framework coming out and some of these needs are going to be reassessed, including this issue of youth services, is this an area of the budget that may change in the future out of forced growth issue perhaps or as we assess there's more capacity needed? Is the department anticipating we'll be spending more on mental health services as a result of the new framework? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The first thing we have to do obviously is finish the framework and get a sense of where we need to be going, then we need to obviously assess the programs and services we're providing. It may mean that we have to change some of our programs radically and spend money in different ways. It may mean that some of the things we're doing we shouldn't have been doing and maybe we should be doing something different. It may mean changing the way we're spending. It could also mean spending some more. We're not there yet. As we move forward with the framework we'll all have an opportunity to discuss that framework and figure out what future costing might be and what reallocations may be necessary to make those new realities effective. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Minister's comments. I'll just conclude by saying I think the lack of designated youth services for psychiatric and psychological disorders should be a priority for our healthcare system. There's been several high-profile issues around youth mental health and it's a problem we're only becoming increasingly aware of, it's not going away, and we definitely need to tackle that. I'm hopeful that the new framework will do good work on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I agree completely, which is one of the

reasons we moved forward with the interim action plan as a result of the case study that was reviewed last year. We're already moving forward with that action plan. We believe that action plan will form an integral part of the future framework and more comprehensive action plan with a focus on children and youth, absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Mr. Testart?

MR. TESTART: Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Next is Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd just like to ask a couple of questions on midwifery right now. What happens if the residents in my riding wish to access this service instead of coming to Yellowknife to deliver the children in the hospital here in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the service isn't currently available in Simpson, so you would have the same challenges that we have in Yellowknife, but this is why we're developing a territorial midwifery implementation plan which will hopefully answer those questions. I don't have those answers today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I guess I should rephrase my questions because I didn't ask the question properly. If a resident wishes to access midwifery services in Hay River instead of delivering her baby with a doctor here, can my constituent go to Hay River and give birth to their child with midwifery services? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the system doesn't eliminate choice, but medical travel costs would likely have to be borne by the resident. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm kind of disappointed to hear that, so we've kind of -- you're expecting if -- especially with low income people, they have no options. They just have to come to Yellowknife. They don't have the opportunity to access the midwifery services. I'm concerned that this is the approach. Will the Minister look at this so

we can allow residents the opportunity to choose how they want to delivery their babies? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's the exact work that we have our midwifery consultants who are working on the development of the territorial plan. That's exactly what they're doing. They're working on developing a plan and how it can be utilized across the Territories as a territorial model. That's exactly the work we're doing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for the answer. I understand we're working on a plan. I totally appreciate that; however, right now they have no option unless they want to pay for it themselves. My colleague here talked about an individual going from Yellowknife to Hay River to access the service, but they had to pay out of their own pocket. That doesn't seem to be fair. Will the department look at this as they work on the plan to see if people wish to access the services that they can without having to pay out of their own pocket? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know how many times I can say, yes, that's exactly what we're doing, but, yes, that's exactly what we're doing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we're doing, but you're planning it right now, you're planning it, so right now if my daughter wishes to have her child, and God forbid she's pregnant right now, but if she wishes to have her child delivered in Hay River, she would have to bear the cost because right now we don't have the ability to allow that to happen without the healthcare system covering it, am I right in understanding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The cost of the birth and the services provided by the midwife would not be borne by the resident. The medical travel costs, the costs of getting to Hay River because medical travel currently would be bringing you to your physician in the obstetrics program that has been facilitating the birth up to

this point. They would cover all the costs except for the medical travel, that wouldn't be covered at this point, but that's one of the issues that we're trying to address with the territorial midwifery action plan, the implementation plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for the answer, but we still have to do the medical travel. We still have to get there, so that there is going to be borne out of the individual's pocket. That there is a challenge for me. We're not going to be able to solve it here today, I realize that, so I'll go onto my next question. Is this budget for all four hospitals or strictly for the Yellowknife hospital or Stanton Hospital? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: All the hospitals.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister please provide rationale why they just lump it all together and they don't break it out into the four hospitals there within the Territories. I believe Fort Smith has a hospital, Hay River, and Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do have that level of detail, but it's not provided in this particular budget document, but the Member's right. It's Beaufort Delta, Fort Smith, Hay River, and Stanton. We can provide that detail to the Member and Committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for the answer. Is there a rationale why we don't have it in the business plan? I'm just trying to understand why it's not here in this document. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we're presenting as indicated within the territorial template. We can provide that information but within the budget template. It's not broken up that way. We can absolutely make that information available to you and committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for the answer. I'm just trying to understand when I'm looking at the budget here, is it just the common practice or has this process always been this way? Because I'm just trying to understand it better so when I have questions I can look at where our challenges are, our issues are I guess back to the Minister. Is this the practice that did not include the breakdown in the business plans? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the budget's presented as a territorial budget and it's presented as a territorial outline. If the Member were to look at page 200, it actually shows every one of the authorities and the total allocation that is provided to the individual authority. Each of the lines that we've gone through, whether it was community health services or community social services have had a contribution amount to the authorities. Those are all added up and included in this showing the total amounts going to the individual authorities, page 200. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Thompson, would you like to wait until we reached that section to discuss that?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I realize that Minister Abernethy has seen that, but I'm asking you for the breakdown in these areas. I mean on page 200 it's lumped together, so I'm just trying to understand this so I can make a better decision. I thank the Minister for this information and I'll move on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson, and the Minister has committed to providing you with that information. Next on my list, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you. Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, does the department agree that under all circumstances that midwifery saves money for the system? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our analysis demonstrates that in all situations it doesn't save us money in the Northwest Territories. In some situations it may. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could advise the House under which situation does midwifery not save money.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If we were to have a dedicated midwifery service in Yellowknife focused just on Yellowknife, it would not reduce the number of physicians that we are required to have here in the Northwest Territories, in particular in Yellowknife. It certainly wouldn't reduce any medical travel costs. It would be an additional cost in our system to cover all the O and M costs and the costs of the midwives that are providing the service. It would not be a cost saving as far as the birthing is concerned, but that's not the point, Mr. Chair. Midwifery services provided a holistic approach to birthing including significant benefits, long-term to families in early childhood development through pre- and post-natal care that the midwives are able to provide. I'm not sure that we're ever going to win an economic analysis, but what we will win and what we need to focus on is the high quality care and the benefits to pre- and post-natal and early childhood development that midwifery services can bring. There's no question of the values that midwifery service can provide to mothers and families and children as we move forward. We still have to build a case for it and we still have to be able to demonstrate the benefits, and we need to develop a territorial model that'll allow us to have a territorial model with those services provided here in Yellowknife, but also the services available to the communities that Mr. Thompson has raised his communities where we want to be able to support that important pre- and post-natal work as well as birthing if possible. Fort Simpson, Norman Wells. We want to be able to do these things. We do have to build a case. As far as cost saving in every case, it doesn't exist. But there are definite long-term advantages to moving forward with the midwifery program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the early childhood development practice nurse would probably disagree with that that I think there is a lot of significant cost savings to having midwifery in the system throughout regardless if you have the physician services there or not. Mr. Chairman, I'm going to ask about the, you know, context of the health transformation. Will the people from Fort Resolution be getting the majority of their

medical services out of Hay River once the new health centre is up and fully functional? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I think some residents of Fort Resolution are already receiving a significant amount of services in Hay River and they will continue to do so, but depending on their particular individual health issues, they may still be required to come to Stanton for certain diagnostic tests or other clinical tests. I mean the system we're moving to is about moving forward together to have a united system that meets the needs of our residents which means that some people might receive services in communities they don't today or they have today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd assume that with the health transformation that the services of the doctors or specialists could also be brought into Hay River to lessen the amount of medical travel that would be needed for people from Fort Resolution or the immediate area around Hay River. I was thinking there was a new hospital and there would be an opportune time for the people in that area to go there and bring the specialists there. But I guess I don't have anything further unless the Minister wants to make a comment in what I thought was there and maybe what is actually going to be, I guess, delivered out of the new hospital in Hay River.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There were no new programs added as a result of the creation or the development of the construction of the new hospital in Hay River. What we got is a building that meets our Canadian Standards Association standard requirements for health facilities in this country. The rooms are bigger. We've got some bariatric rooms; there is a respite room. No additional services, but as a result of the bigger layout the changes and how we have to provide services to meet the standards it did require some additional positions. The nice thing about the facility is because of the operating room that was put in there, we can have other people come down and do things like scopes and other procedures. Because we are going to be one system, there's nothing stopping some of the professionals from coming down to Yellowknife to provide a service in Hay River from time to time. There's absolutely

nothing that's stops us from doing that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu, anything further?

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I apologize. I may not have heard the Minister correctly. I thought the Minister said there was no change in services in Hay River as a result of the new hospital, and my assumption was there was and the Minister sort of confirms that maybe there will be people coming down there, specialists coming from Hay River to Yellowknife to deal with it. I guess my question would be, I recognize that you can't describe every possible medical situation that would be available, but I'm trying to get a feel for what reason would we continue the residence out of Fort Resolution, continue coming to Yellowknife for medical travel, like under which type of circumstances would that become the reason for somebody coming to Yellowknife for medical travel?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again, no new programs were added to Hay River as a result of the construction of the new health centre, but as a result of the bigger footprint, the new codes that we're trying to meet, it did result in some additional positions. The building is also much larger than it was, larger physio, larger TO, more equipped surgical rooms which means we have the opportunity to have some individuals come down to Hay River from time to time to provide services that may not currently be delivered there. We're not there yet, but that opportunity is certainly presenting itself to us. As far as residents from Fort Res, why they would have to come to Yellowknife as opposed to going to Hay River, CT scan, certain other diagnostic procedures that aren't in the capacity of the new building. Certain specialists that come up from the south. They might only be able to come to Yellowknife if they're coming from route two or three, all sorts of reasons why people might still have to come to Yellowknife, but there's a lot of reasons for them to go to Hay River as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. Beaulieu? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I have to get back on the midwifery train again. My colleague had asked some questions about midwifery services for people in the Dehcho, families in the Dehcho. I think I heard the Minister say that medical travel would get families to Yellowknife but not to Hay River, where midwifery

services are available. I'm not sure I heard the Minister right, but can I confirm that, number one? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Medical travel is used to get the person to the closest point of where the service can be provided. For example, if somebody in Yellowknife was having a baby, we provide obstetrics services in Yellowknife, fully comprehensive state-of-the-art obstetrics services in Yellowknife. Therefore, we wouldn't be using medical travel to transport somebody to another community where the service is actually available, when birthing services are available in Yellowknife. I do take the Member's point that, in something like a location like Simpson, you know, the cost of going to Simpson is probably no different than the cost of going to Yellowknife we've already committed that we're going to develop a territorial model which will address this question. But, in the meantime, I will have the department do a quick analysis on how we can actually facilitate for other communities that may want to have birthing services and/or utilize some of the birthing services in that community, recognizing that, if those services exist in the community where you live, medical travel wouldn't make sense. But for Simpson, maybe Providence, maybe it does. Let me get the department to do some analysis on that. There might be some short-term opportunities here until we can actually finalize the development of a territorial midwifery action plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think we might be getting confused in terms of geography here, but I think the Minister meant that, if families in the Dehcho, like from Simpson or Jean Marie River or Kakisa, wanted to go to Hay River for midwifery services, they would look into this and have that medical travel cover that rather than sending families to Yellowknife, where the service isn't even available. I think that's what he was getting at, and I just wanted to confirm that because I think there was some confusion about geography. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'll commit to looking into that as the Member has described. I will point out one challenge, that the midwifery budget and the number of positions allocated to Hay River were based on the average birth rate in Hay River, and, by having other communities, like Fort Simpson,

Fort Providence, the Deh Cho, also adding to that birthing number, it changes the make-up of the requirement and it could actually rapidly overburden the existing midwifery complement in Hay River. But I hear Mr. Thompson's point; I hear your point, and I see Mr. Nadli nodding I hear you, and I'll look into that. I'd be cautious, though. We don't want to set up a situation where we'll set Hay River up to fail by having them overburdened. But, ultimately, I mean, I believe in midwifery services, and we want to do what we can to support. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly, nothing further? Are there any further comments or questions on page 195? Seeing none, I will call the page again. Nursing inpatient services, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$35,939,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We will now move on to supplementary health programs. The operations expenditure summary is on page 198, but we'll defer that until we look at the detail starting on page 199. Comments or questions on page 199? I'll give committee a moment. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, I don't know where this is in the budget, but I think I saw somewhere that the NIHB program is being reviewed. Is this where I should be asking questions about that? Thanks, Mr. Chair... Or where I can ask questions about it? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As always, I am happy to answer any question anytime. That particular question should probably be asked on page 202 to 204. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks for the tip from the Minister, and I can wait and ask NIHB questions there. I did have questions about extended health benefits, as well. Presumably, I can ask them here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, I'm glad we have such a cooperative Minister. I've heard, I guess, that

there's going to be some sort of extended review of health benefits. You know, when we look at the costs of these, obviously our mains are not covering all of the costs. We have to go for supplementary appropriations. Can the Minister tell us if there are plans to review extended health benefits and how that might roll out? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have no defined plans at this point in time, but we do know that the cost of extended health benefits, our budget is certainly not meeting our need. The costs are increasing rapidly in this area. We've got, by way of example, an aging population, more and more people being eligible for extended health benefits. The cost is going up. We're going to have to have the conversation at some point on how we're going to address that shortfall. We've made some indication to the Seniors' Society that we probably want to have some conversation. We don't know what the solutions are at this point, but, you know, we're going to have to have that conversation. We're going to have to have it in this room. We're going to have to have it in committee room. We're going to have to have it in public. I can't say what that looks like at this point. We haven't made that. We haven't done that work on it yet. We do recognize that these costs are growing a lot faster than we anticipated and they're exceeding our budget pretty much every year and growing rapidly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, and I'm sure that the Minister is fully aware of what happened last time extended health benefits was up for review, so my only advice would be to approach this very cautiously. I'm glad to hear that he's prepared to work with Members on this side of the House and standing committee, and so on. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comment, and I agree. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is on page 199. I note that there is a contribution, there was funding to the NWT Metis Nation that has since been eliminated. Can the Minister provide

some details on what that funding was for and why we're not seeing it this budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, that money was for a pilot study, the use of a system navigator for Metis. The pilot concluded and we didn't continue the funding.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: With the with new benefits we spoke of earlier in this review on Metis health benefits and the possible role of the federal government, is it likely we'll need something like this again? Or are there any lessons learned that can help shape our policies moving forward? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We did get a report from the Metis on this. There were some benefits, but we had to do a value of money analysis on it, the number of clients that were being served. We have a system navigator in the Northwest Territories that does the same type of service or provides the same type of service as this was doing for a select population. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to this HSS authority funding of \$22,761,000, is this actually medical travel costs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. Now I know I'm on the right page. In regards to medical travel, we have different travel for government staff and other people, outside. Is there a rationale for this switch and it's not in these mains or part of this business plan? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the medical travel benefits that are provided to GNWT employees, by way of example, are a negotiated benefit to our employees. It determines what they'd get for per diems. They arrange for airfare, accommodations, et cetera, et cetera. We don't pay those as a Department of Health and Social Services. Those are borne by the Government of the Northwest Territories. I believe it's through the Department of Finance and accounted for in the Department of Finance. These costs are the costs that we're spending on medical travel for individuals who don't have third-party insurance or other coverage. If we were to actually, you know, quantify what the true costs of medical travel costs for residents or for the GNWT is, you would have to factor in what's being spent through Finance on GNWT employees and others. We do have some sense of that number. The \$22.7 million you see here is what we provide through the health system. This \$13.6 million is from other revenue, including federal NIHB funds, so they do cover some of the medical travel costs. \$1.7 million is funded from the Federal Territorial Health Investment Fund, the THIF, and \$1.3 million is from supplementary funding, the 2015-16, to mitigate some program shortfalls. Then there's also the GNWT medical travel costs, as well, for GNWT employees. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that answer. As you heard in my Member's statement and you probably hear this all the time, there seems to be some challenges of working when people are on travel. Is there a rationale why they don't-- you don't work with the patients if they're travelling down there or down for business, and if the medical travel has been appointed? Is there a rationale for not working with them to... Instead of having to make them come back and then fly down? To me, again, it's about cost savings. I'm trying to figure out the rationale for why we don't do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A lot of the medical travel challenges that we're facing, those are the things that we're trying to address through the medical travel review that we talked about earlier today, and we're trying to have a more compassionate system but we also have to have a more logical system, which means we have to recognize some of the cost savings that are out there. Having said that, we also do have some

liability issues. Individuals travelling on our behalf or when we're actually responsible for their travel we have to provide insurance. If someone was to go down for another reason it gets a little convoluted about the insurance and the coverage. Those are the types of things that we're trying to work out during our review of medical travel; trying to make it a little bit more common sense as opposed to some of the things we see today. Insurance and liability. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that answer. It clears up a bit of things. You used the magic words insurance and liability so you got my ears perked on that, so I understand that and I'm glad to hear that you're looking at the flexibility. I guess my big challenge is that even though we talk liability and insurance and all those challenges, I have a constituent that's got to go back two or three times during a two-week period, and for them to fly down to Edmonton come back, go back down, come back it just costs a whole bunch of money. I know, even though we have a deal with the airline it's still... I know how much it costs to get out of Fort Simpson to Yellowknife, so again, I hope that there is some flexibility within our policy that when this has occurred that the constituent can potentially save money for the department and the government. I'm hoping that there will be some compassion in this policy and some flexibility that allows your staff to make some good decisions to save money, but I also understand that there's risk and liability to it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we can all share significant horror stories around medical travel, I'm sure. I've heard lots of frustration in medical travel. People coming into Yellowknife or even down south and finding out their appointments were cancelled before they even left their home communities. You know, the same thing you're talking about, someone coming down three weeks in a row for, like, a 15-minute appointment. We need to be able to utilize our resources better. We need to be able to use the Telehealth we have better, and these are the types of things that we're trying to address. Through the use of EMR and other things we should be able to coordinate more appointments more effectively. Get people down for two or three appointments at one time rather than having them come down for one then a week later come down for another and have them come down for another. Once we get into a single system, we'll be able to coordinate and put in some policies and procedures to ensure that date flows a

little bit better and that patient bookings are easily accessible for those that are in the circle of care so that we can make sure that we're taking maximum advantage of these trips that people are going to have to take. That's where we want to go, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Music to everybody's ears, and I thank the Minister for that answer. That comes to the other concern or issue that when government staff are on duty travel and they have to fly back home, I know this is a finance issue but can Health and Finance get together to try to address this so that there's some flexibility that, you know, an airline ticket has already been paid, if the health department pays, you know, or Finance pays for per diems and accommodations and that's all the cost is, again, it's an opportunity for cost savings. I'm asking... I don't know if it's your department or Finance I've got to ask this question on, but again, to me, it's just about making better usage of money and people's time. Is it something I have to address with you or do I have to address with Finance? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Department of Health and Social Services doesn't pay for any of the medical travel costs for GNWT employees who are travelling; that is a Department of Finance issue. As I indicated previously, the medical travel benefits that are covered for GNWT employees are covered through their insurance and they're negotiated accordingly. We're probably best to talk to the Minister of Finance on that one. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson, anything further?

MR. THOMPSON: No, thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for that answer and I'll put it in my questions for the Finance Minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Looking at the \$22.7 million in the program detail, then on page 199 it's inserted into the HSS authority funding for the same amount of \$22.7 million, is that kind of like an in-and-out number or in-and-out entry? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$22.761 million is money that flows to the authorities for the delivery of medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That figure, if it goes to the regional authorities, does it include the locum staff travel? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Sorry, Mr. Chair, I think I confused the issue a little bit. The \$22.761 million goes to the authorities that are providing medical travel, which is Stanton, Hay River, and the Tlcho Community Services Agency. Of the \$22,761,000; \$22,000 goes to Hay River for the administration of medical travel; \$22,281,000 goes to Stanton for the administration of medical travel; and \$458,000 goes to the TCSA. As far as locums, this is not money that is used for locums. Locums are the individuals coming in to provide services like nurses. This is medical travel for individuals who have to go out for appointments, procedures in a community outside of their own, including Yellowknife or Edmonton. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Nothing further from Mr. McNeely. Do we have further comments or questions on page 199? Seeing none, we can move on to page 198, the operations expenditure summary. Comments or questions on page 198? Operations expenditure summary. I'll give committee a moment. Seeing no comments or questions I will call this page. Supplementary health programs, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$33,484,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Moving on to page 200, we have a few pages of information items. Are there comments or questions on page 200, funding allocated to health and social service authorities? Seeing no comments or questions, we will move on to page 201, lease commitments. Comments or questions on page 201? Seeing none, we will move on. Page 202, work performed on behalf of others. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just reading through the pages here, I recognize that we've had some contributions from the Canadian Partnership against Cancer, and we've had, it seems to be, about three or four different contributions for different programs or initiatives. I also note that one has expired in 2015 and two, or sorry, the three remaining are going to expire in January, February, and March of 2017. Beyond this

year's budget, does the department have plans to engage with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer for future initiatives and if so, what might those be? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we've actually been able to secure money from other jurisdictions like Alberta and the federal government and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and we've had some really good luck in doing that, and we're optimistic that we'll be able to secure money in the future. I can't say what that money would be today because a lot of these dollars come tied with specific goals or objectives in mind from the funding organization and they change. Through our Aboriginal health community wellness group we've been able to invite some fantastic proposals and take advantage of these opportunities as they've presented and we anticipate we'll continue to do so. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: That's good then. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. I note that pages 202, 203, and 204 are all related, so we could take them all as one item. Do we have any other further comments or questions on those pages? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Minister if... or how much of the non-insured health benefits of \$13 million goes to medical travel or if it's already in medical travel from this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have that detail at my fingertips but we certainly could provide a rough estimate of what those costs would actually be. The non-insured health benefits cover drugs, equipment, dental care, eyeglasses, boarding homes and a few other things, medical travel is one of those components. I don't off the top of my head know exactly of that how much is going to medical travel but we will get that detail and share it with committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the agreement expires March of next year. What is the plan or is there something already in the works for an extension of that agreement in

non-insured health benefits? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are currently analyzing the contract which does expire shortly. We have committed to engage Aboriginal governments across the Northwest Territories to be involved in the negotiation. We are formulating a plan, or we will formulate a plan with them, for full engagement as we move forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just on page 202, regarding the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, continuity of care, I see a reduction in 2015-16 to 2016-17 from \$325,000 to \$157,000. Is this program going to continue? Has it been sunsetted? What is the status of this program?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as I indicated before, we have had a really good relationship with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. We have entered into agreements with them where we are doing work on their behalf. Most of those are time sensitive. They are two, three years, and then they conclude. This is one of them. This one concludes this year. We reap the benefits of having that work done here in the Northwest Territories and being able to incorporate the learnings into our program delivery. These are their dollars that are being spent here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Especially in small communities, people are not being screened for cancer, mammograms, Pap tests, and colorectal tests. Is the onus on the patients to get screened or is there a person perhaps to move to regional centres? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, for some of the details I would like to go to the deputy minister, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, the issue of people in small communities accessing cancer screening is one of the priorities in our cancer strategies, which was finalized and tabled recently in the Assembly. We know the statistics show that the screening rates aren't as good as they should be. We actually are in the second year of a research project that we are doing in partnership with the community of Fort Good Hope and the University of Alberta, working directly with Fort Good Hope and people in Inuvik to try to figure out why that is happening and what we can do to work with communities to increase awareness to encourage people to access screening earlier this is a priority area for our cancer strategy and you will see more work on it as we roll it out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is interesting to know that there are things being moved forward and it continues. It may be a critical element to this if the officials could maybe comment on the idea of a territorial cancer screening committee, whether that has been established yet? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is an interesting idea. I would certainly like to get more thoughts from the Member on what he is actually visualizing here. I would be happy to share it with our cancer project team that is working on this.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is all the questions I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. First off, I want to suggest that the department should get a prize for this part of the budget where they actually put in the information about when different agreements end. No, seriously. It is a very helpful addition. I would encourage that that sort of approach be adopted by some of the other departments. I was directed, though, to ask questions here in this

section about non-insured health benefits. As I understand it, this is a federal program. But my understanding is that the feds, or whoever runs this program, have sort of whittled away at what services and things were actually covered under this over a period of many years. I don't think that is a good thing I am wondering, with the new federal government in Ottawa, one that seems to be taking a stronger interest in Indigenous peoples across this country, what sort of prospects the Minister sees for expanding the scope of some of the services and things that are covered under non-insured health benefits? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is one of the areas that the P-T Ministers of health have been pushing to have on the agenda. It is certainly an area that they want to address for the reasons that the Member has described. We have indicated that we want to work with our Aboriginal partners moving forward. We want them to be involved in the process. They badly want to be involved in the process. One of the issues that we know they want to raise is some of the stuff that doesn't exist within the formulary, or the list of what is covered and what is. For example, I have had a number of individuals approach us saying that they are really frustrated that they can't get progressive lenses, as opposed to bifocals. They are forced to get bifocals because progressives aren't covered. The reality is bifocals are a hardly-used technology anymore, whereas progressives are the norm. These are issues that they want brought forward. That is why we want to make sure that we are working closely with our Aboriginal partners as we move forward. I can't say whether or not the federal government is going to be interested at all in amending their formulary. But we will certainly raise our concerns with the formulary that exists today.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple of other, maybe, pieces of advice or suggestions here. I think there are some opportunities to work with our northern partners, particularly Yukon and Nunavut on this because there might be some strength in numbers in approaching the federal government on this. I understand they have similar issues on this. That is one piece of advice or suggestion.

The other would be I have heard the Minister say he is going to consult with Aboriginal governments about this. I hope he will actually consult with healthcare professionals because I know that they experience a great amount of frustration in what services and products and things are covered under NIHB. I know that there are some healthcare

professionals... Sometimes they are dealing with folks that come in from communities, people are here for a relatively short period of time, trying to get approval for things that may not be on the formulary or it may vary from it. It is just incredibly crazy and difficult. I am aware that some healthcare professionals actually just pay out of their own pocket to get things done in the interest of their clients. It is great that we have professionals that will do that, but that is just how ridiculous this system has got over the years. Anyways, some frustration on my part from a number of healthcare professionals. I really want to encourage and urge the Minister to consult with the whole gamut of healthcare professionals in the Northwest Territories in putting together our position that we are going to bring forward to the federal government on that. Can you commit to do that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have actually already done that. In the review of our existing contract, we polled staff, health professionals from across the territories, together, tried to get a fair, representative balance of professionals and had them participate in review of the contract and help us identify some of the areas we really want to push. As far as the three territories, we are planning a tri-territorial Ministers of health meeting to talk about exactly these issues as well as other shared issues that we have and for the exact reason the Member has described. United, we have a lot of voice. We are three really small jurisdictions that can easily be overlooked. When we go to our P-Ts, the three of us usually band together to make a louder voice. We are certainly going to have our own tri-territorial meeting before the next P-T. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Nothing further.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Any further comments on pages 202 to 204? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wonder if the department can comment on the electronic immunization registry. I note that back in 2014-15, we had a contribution of \$38,000, and it would be good if the department could just explain a little bit more than the description here as to what that has done for the department. What has it done as it relates to identifying those who still need immunization, and are we meeting our goals in getting the territory immunized? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am going to pass this one off to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This funding was to help us explore options for immunization registry that would help us to comply with the mandatory reporting of immunizations that is required under new regulations to the Public Health Act. We are frequently able to get funding support and technical support from the Public Health Agency of Canada. They provided some funding support so that we could look at developing a new data-capture information system for the registry. Based on that, we are now finalizing a project charter and hoping to actually go out and see what it would cost us to put this in place. We have also looked at the potential for capturing some of this data through our electronic medical records system, and we are trying to take advantage of that and then just identify what additional work we might need. We are hopeful that Public Health Agency of Canada will continue to provide financial support as we move forward. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is good to know. I am glad we are taking positive steps. I do note too that, in the federal government's budget, they have indicated that they have improving immunization coverage rates available funding to the tune of \$25 million for the country that might be something we want to look at accessing sometime in the future. Mr. Chairman, relative to the toll-free tobacco quitline, for a couple of years now, we have been allocating \$100,000. I wonder if the department can maybe elaborate on what the uptake of this has been. Does the department do any particular follow-up, or is there a means in which we can identify the success that folks are having with quitting smoking? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I will go to the deputy minister for this one, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. We do actually track uptake on the quitline. I don't have

that information with us but we can provide it, and I believe that follow-up is available as part of the services provided by the quitline, as well as referrals, but we can certainly get the details on the statistical utilization and full range of services and provide them. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and any kind of information along those lines relative to success rate for quitting tobacco use in the territory would be appreciated by Members, I expect, and if we can learn anything about the success of the Don't Be a Butthead program that the government has ran for a number of years would be appreciated as well. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we would be happy to provide a breakdown of what we are doing to encourage people not to smoke and the work we are doing with communities. Much of what we are doing now is trying to empower communities to bring in their own solutions around reducing tobacco use. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask the Minister if the home care and support services that deliver by this department under the regular budget and the home care and community care, the home and community care delivered on behalf of Health Canada is the same program?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the deputy has the details. I will go to the deputy on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair we do receive just over \$5 million from Health Canada for home and community care, which is intended to enhance home care services for Aboriginal communities, and we do integrate that service delivery with our core program for home care, which our budget, our core budget is a little more than that. I believe it's about \$6 million. I have that information earlier in the budget. We do try to integrate the service delivery so we take maximum effectiveness of this, and it's targeted specifically to

Aboriginal communities, home and continuing care services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all I have for this page. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Further comments, questions for pages 202 to 204. Seeing none, we will return to the departmental total on page 171. Do I have comments or questions on this page? Last kick at the can, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I had a request to ask a question that would dip back into page 177, which is administrative and support services. There was on page 177, French language services. There's sort of a dramatic increase from 2014-15, \$215,000 to \$856,000. I think the Minister explained that that was a result of some negotiations with the francophone community in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister tell us what that money is actually used for? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Member is right. That increase is as a result of the lawsuit that was filed against us and our requirement to meet the needs and the provision of French language services. For the detail, I will go to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

MS. DELANCEY: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. That funding goes to the various authorities, and it covers the cost of some staff positions who can provide services in the French language. It goes to cover training for staff to ensure that they can provide the active offer. It goes to translation of materials and signage and related activities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the patience of the department, and me asking a couple of questions here. When it comes to the funding that's made available to health authorities for training, is any of that training done through College nordique? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there's sort of a GNWT

coordinated approach on this. I don't have that detail in front of me. I will commit to getting that information for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I don't have any further questions, but thanks for their patience.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Are there any further comments or questions, page 171, departmental total. Seeing none, we'll call the page. Health and Social Services, departmental total, \$414,234,000. Thank you, Members. Does committee agree we have completed consideration of the Department of Health and Social Services? Thank you, Minister. Thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. We will take a short break before moving on to consider the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Consider Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017. Committee, we will begin consideration of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I will now turn to the Minister responsible for the department for opening comments. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2016-2017 main estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Overall, the department's estimates propose a decrease of \$5.8 million or 8.8 per cent over the 2015-16 main estimates. These estimates continue to support the objectives of limiting expenditure growth in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fiscal framework. The mandate of ITI is to promote economic self-sufficiency through the responsible development of the Northwest Territories mineral and petroleum resources. The development of natural resource industries including agriculture, commercial fishing, and the traditional economy, and the promotion and support of tourism, trade, and investment, business and manufacturing and secondary industries to create a prosperous, diverse, and sustainable economy for the benefit of all Northwest Territories residents.

Highlight of the proposed estimates include:

- \$1.1 million for the continuing of tourism 2020;
- supporting the tourism industry to promote diversification;
- provide skills, training, and marketing;

- \$1.4 million for the continuation of the mineral development strategy;
- the strategy to promote the Northwest Territories as a place to invest;
- aboriginal capacity building;
- contribution funding for the mining incentive program, and support for geoscience;
- \$2.2 million for the continuation of the economic opportunity strategy that includes \$1.4 million for the revitalization of the commercial fishing industry;
- transfer of the Office of the Oil and Gas Regulator to the Department of Justice;
- reductions of \$5 million.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment's main estimates continue to support the priorities of 18th Legislative Assembly. Specific activities in support of these priorities include:

- attracting foreign, direct investment, and cross promoting minerals, furs, fish, forest products and tourism to investors and markets;
- increasing exports by working with the tourism, diamonds, and traditional economy sectors to promote Northwest Territories products to international markets;
- supporting mineral exploration in the mining sector by implementing the mineral development strategy;
- capturing opportunities to build transportation infrastructure that enables resources to get to market;
- closing the skills gap in the mining sector;
- implementing the mining incentive program;
- developing and proposing a Mineral Resources Act, and supporting Aboriginal governments to build capacity in dealing with mining related activities;
- finalizing and implementing the commercial fisheries revitalization strategy to increase fish production;
- encourage and mentor new entrants to the Great Slave Lake fishery;
- negotiate an agreement with the fresh-water fish marketing corporation to access markets outside of the Northwest Territories;

- seek federal funding to build a new fish processing plant in Hay River and work with the Tlicho Cooperative to promote and market fish caught in Great Slave Lake;
- supporting the manufacturing sector by developing a Northern manufacturing strategy and continuing to promote manufacturing in the Northwest Territories;
- development of an oil and gas strategy to attract oil and gas development that also provides for the environmentally responsible and economically sustainable development of the oil and gas industry;
- finalizing and implementing an agriculture strategy that will advance food production and economic opportunities in the agriculture sector.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Thank you, Minister. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, I would, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my immediate right, I have Kelly Kaylo, acting deputy minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. To my left, I have Deb Archibald, assistant deputy minister, mineral and petroleum resources with the ministry of industry, tourism and investment; and to my far right, Julie Mujcin, director of finance and administration with Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. We'll now proceed to consider the detail for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Committee, that brings us to page 231, Industry, Tourism, and Investment. Total department, \$59,870,000. We will defer this page until after consideration of department detail. Brings us to page 232, Industry, Tourism and Investment, revenue summary, information item. Any questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, we seem to have skipped the organizational charts, 228, 229. I had some questions about particularly the one on 228. Is this the right time and place to do that, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRPERSON: (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Committee. Yes, we will go back to page 231. Any

questions on the previous pages from the work charts? With that, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, looking at the organizational chart of the department on page 228, I can sort of see that there's three different divisions or sections within ITI, one on economic development, and there's a bunch of regional superintendents, and then there's also tourism and parks there, and then there is policy and legislation, communications. It also includes some diamond, secondary industry, finance and admin stuff, and then there's minerals and petroleum resources. I am just trying to figure out how the mission of the department is economic diversification. I am trying to figure out how the department organizes itself to promote economic diversification because I don't see sections in here of the department that deal with, say, the traditional economy, agriculture, fisheries, arts and culture, promotion. How does the department organize itself and how does the structure reflect its goal of economic diversification? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As a department, we've put those responsibilities as close to the people in the communities and the regions as possible so those types of activities as the Member described are included in the regional boxes for the superintendents of each of the different regions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Presumably, there must be some headquarters, functions, policy development, program development for areas like agriculture and fisheries that don't just happen in the regions, that would have to be done for the entire Northwest Territories. Where do those things happen and take place? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. Those types of headquarters, responsibilities are included in the box for the director, investment and economic analysis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Okay, so I see that that box down there... I'm just wondering whether the Minister would be prepared to work with his staff to try to find a different way to present this information, or in fact even reorganize the department a bit so that there's more of an

emphasis on economic diversification, because it's not, I guess, what sort of jumps out at me when I see this organizational chart. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. We are always looking to improve in any area. The IEA leads the development of programs and initiatives in support of the Northwest Territories traditional economies, specific programs support for arts and crafts, agriculture, fisheries, trapping, and commercial game harvesting. Generally, we stay away from if we follow what the Member is recommending, we would have boxes for individual people, and we try to stay away from that in the interest of being as efficient as possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm certainly not suggesting that I want to see an organizational chart right down to individual employees, but certainly, I think a reasonable person that would pick up this organizational chart would not get the impression that this department actually supports agriculture, arts and culture, traditional economy, the fisheries. They're not even in the organizational chart anywhere. I am trying to make what I thought was a helpful suggestion in trying to make sure that the structure and organization of the department actually reflects the mandate of this Assembly and its stated goal of economic diversification. Once again, would the Minister be prepared to look at that? Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're certainly prepared to look at it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Does committee have any further questions related to pages 228 and 229? I see none. Committee, we will return to page 232. Information item, revenue summary. Any questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the non-renewable resource revenue, can the department maybe give us a little better understanding of the minerals, oil, and gas royalties, what the percentage would be roughly of those? What would be the percentage in minerals and what would be the percentage in oil and gas of the \$50,810,000. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd say rough estimate being 90 per cent minerals, maybe ten per cent oil and gas.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you. Appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next, we have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair those revenues from mining, oil, and gas, are those gross figures, or are they what we actually get to keep, because we've got arrangement on a devolution where we can keep 50 per cent of the revenues up to a certain point and then even within that arrangement, we flow through some of the funding to Aboriginal governments, so are these gross or net figures? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's our share after the federal government has been provided with their share, and this also includes the amount that we share with Aboriginal governments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, for some reason, I thought the figures were significantly lower from briefings that we had received earlier. I seem to recall a figure of around \$35 million, but all right. There is a figure of \$700,000 under park permits and other fees that's brand new. Can the department explain what's happened here? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Auditor General recommended that we follow different accounting practices than we were following in the past. In the past we just netted it out with our park operator. Now we have to separate out the expenditure side and the revenue side. That's what's happening here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: None. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): We will continue to page 232, revenue summary, information item? Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. That brings us to page 233, active position summary, information item. Any questions? Are we agreed? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. There were some significant changes here, going from 184 full-time position last year to 167. I think the Minister may have made some remarks in his opening words here to introduce the department, but what are we actually losing in terms of staff here? How is that going to affect the capacity of the department to deliver any programs and services? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The total effect in the reductions is that the department is reducing by 17 positions. Twelve of those 17 were filled; five were vacant. With the significant decrease in commodity markets and economic activity in those areas, we feel the impact will be minimal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The 12 positions that have been filled... Have any of those people found work elsewhere within the GNWT? Presumably, we're tracking that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding of those 12 that were filled, three offers have been made far, one has been accepted. We're still looking to place nine of the filled positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: No thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Committee, any further questions to page 233? Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. That brings us to page 234, NWT Business Development

and Investment Corporation, active positions, information item. Any questions? Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. That brings us to page 236, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, total activity \$8,422,000. Detail on the next page, corporate management, active positions, information item. Any questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to the reductions for the Dehcho, it went from three to two. Could the Minister advise whether the position was a filled or vacant position? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The decrease in the one position for the Dehcho region is a vacant position which is a regional lands and resources analyst in the Dehcho region, in Fort Simpson. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. This vacancy, how long has this position been vacant, and does the Minister know or aware of that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department has been unsuccessful in efforts to fill that position. We had three unsuccessful job action postings, and the position remains vacant. I suspect each competition was probably in the neighborhood of maybe two to three months, so I expect we spent at least probably six to nine months trying to fill the position. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: No, thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for his answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Okay. Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Any further questions to active positions on page 237? Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. That brings us back to page 236, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, total activity \$8,422,000. Are we agreed? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair I'm not sure really where to bring up these questions, but, because the corporate management includes policy, legislation, and communications, I thought this was the appropriate place to do it. I understand that the department is going to be developing a new Mineral Resources Act and is also committed to review the Petroleum Resources Act. In the development of that new act and the review of the Petroleum Resources Act, will the royalty regime be part of the scope of that work? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The royalty regime will be looked at in the scope of the upcoming legislative review of the Petroleum Resources Act, and the Oil and Gas Operations Act, and in the development of the Mineral Resources Act. Decisions will be evidence-based and will keep in mind the current fiscal policy framework as well as the reality of the high-cost operating environment for resource developers in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm glad to hear that. I think I might have heard something a little bit different at one point. As long as it's going to be part of the scope, then it does make sense to have it all together. Can the department tell us when we might expect this work to begin and when we might see a legislative proposal? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've already started the work and started to scope it out, so this is something that we're looking at moving on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: Can we expect to see legislative proposals for these two pieces of legislation in 2016-17? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's what we're aiming for. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to contract services, I notice a \$271,000 reduction. Could the Minister please explain how this came about and how that has an impact on the department? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We, recognizing the reduction in activity and low prices in the commodities market, it was reduced by \$100,000 in directorate and the rest came out of policy, legislation, and communications, and... Sorry, \$100,000 came from PLC, and the rest was directorate. It was basically contracting services to help promote development in the Northwest Territories in the mining and non-renewable sectors. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify, so that's where, the promotion, through advertisement, newspapers? Or is that actually going out recruiting businesses, staff doing that or contractors doing that for us? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: That'll be part of it. Also attending a lot of the shows and so on. There are not as many shows, especially with the downturn of the economy. There are not as many opportunities to promote because of the very low prices of our commodities and the very minimal activity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: No, not at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank the Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Sorry, I neglected to ask about one other piece of legislation that the department has indicated it's going to review as part of the mandate, and I think it's the Oil and Gas Operations Act.

So, in reviewing that act, does the department expect to deal with the issue of hydraulic fracturing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've committed to a comprehensive review of all

resource management legislation, including oil and gas legislation. Public concerns related to hydraulic fracturing can be most effectively addressed through amendments to the NWT Oil and Gas Operations Act and the Petroleum Resources Act and associated regulations, so we expect that there will be opportunities for a proactive public discussion on hydraulic fracturing through the development of the proposed amendments to the PRA and the OGOA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: No. Thanks, Mr. Chair. The Minister's got some great advisors there, giving him good briefing notes, anticipating lots of the questions. I do appreciate the answer from the Minister. Thanks very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I'll take that as a comment. Committee, any further questions to page 236, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$8,422,000. Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. That brings us to page 239, economic diversification and business support, operations expenditure summary, total activity \$21,087,000. Committee will defer this and go to page 240, economic diversification and business support; grants, contributions and transfers; information item. Any questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Business Development and Investment Corporation contribution is down about \$400,000, and the department indicates, of course, that this is to support economic objectives. That certainly is a priority of this government. I wonder if the department can kindly explain, maybe, why there is a reduction in this line item. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of the overall fiscal framework of the Government of the Northwest Territories for this budgeting process, BDIC was given a target, and this is what the BDIC decided. That was their approach that they've taken. I just would note that BDIC is an independent corporation that has its own board of directors, and legislation has been developed to make sure that they operate at arm's length from the government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the department provide an explanation under commercial fishing industry support with regard to the \$1.4 million? It would just be good to have some clarity for the record. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of our fisheries revitalization strategy, we identified \$1,410,000 to work with the fishery, NWT fishermen or fishers, to develop or build a new fish plant. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Committee, page 240 and 241 are combined, just so you know. Any further questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we explain community futures as contributions to help communities in need of solving their long-term employment problems, and that particular line item also looks to have taken a significant reduction. Can the department please provide an explanation for that reduction? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Two of the Community Futures organizations have become inactive and very low volume transactions, so the funding was removed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. Vanthuyne?

MR. VANTHUYNE: Those are my questions for now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next we have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note there's a reduction in available SEED funding from the 2014-15 actuals. Can the Minister indicate why there's a reduction in available funding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We maintained our budget from the 2015-to-2016 main estimates levels and I suspect in 2014-15 if there is resources available from other programs and if there's a demand for additional funding under the SEED funding it's not unusual for us to move money into the SEED program, and I suspect that's what happened in 2014-15. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister for that response I've heard it's a very popular program and a very flexible program at that and a number of other areas of entrepreneurs accessing funding they sometimes run into bureaucratic red tape and SEED is a very good program for bypassing that. I think it's a very good vehicle for moving dollars into the hands of entrepreneurs and people who want to diversify the economy on their own terms. I'm a big proponent of this and it's good to hear that we're willing to make those changes if there's demand. I do have a question: is SEED another area where it's an over-subscribed program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My experience is it's over-subscribed but not uniformly across the board. Obviously, the North Slave region is constantly over-subscribed if we put all the money there. In some regions it's not fully subscribed from time to time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Testart,

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Given that, does the department take a look at those numbers and make decisions on what kind of funding to put into the program based on the users or does the department more or less try to live within its means with this funding or is it looking at ways to get more money out the door? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a program we review on a continuous basis. We recognize we have limited funding and we try to make sure that we get all the money out the door before the end of the fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. Testart?

MR. TESTART: Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Okay. Thank you. Next we have Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm just on that line there, looking at the fur program. The actuals for 2014-2015 is \$225,000, and 2016-17 the main estimates is \$155,000. Can the Minister elaborate on that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was I believe a \$50,000 reduction. We've changed some responsibilities around so that most of the responsibilities for the fur production side now are all back with ENR and ITI is mainly involved in the marketing and branding of the fur. We heavily promote the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand, which promotes the Northwest Territories wild fur as the best fur in the world. We are not travelling out to as many fur shows as we have in the past, so we feel since now most of our market is in China and the China market for fur is very, very well established and they have indicated to us many, many times that if we increase our production two or threefold they'll buy whatever we produce that's part of the rationale there, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. Nakimayak?

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. On the Northern Food Development Program, there is an increase from \$418,000 to \$550,000. The Northern Food Development Program in my region Nunakput I know in one community, Sachs Harbour, they were harvesting muskox in the past and those programs have seemed to fail. I know have been due to logistics. I'm just wondering if the Minister is looking at diversifying that part of the economy in my region to help promote northern food development in the region and for the Northwest Territories. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a very, very long history with harvesting and marketing of muskox. We still really believe that it's a very good product, especially the meat and the qiviut. It's just we haven't been able to find a magic formula. Between the Inuvialuit Development Corporation and a number of government departments we probably spent millions of dollars not only on the harvesting side but also in promoting and the marketing side, and it's certainly an area that we want to continue to find a way. I think this year I'd like to see if we can work with the community to revive it. We've also negotiated with the federal government in the Growing Forward Program some funding for muskox. I think that, you know, there's still a very significant demand for qiviut products but the supply of qiviut is very, very low. We're down to buying qiviut from individual hunters which is not the best way to harvest qiviut. This is something we'd like to look at and see if we can find a better way of developing this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Mr. Nakimayak?

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, I just have one more and then I'll carry on with that. Mr. Chair, in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region we have a herd of reindeer that is owned partially by the Inuvialuit and subsidized by the GNWT. I'm just wondering if the GNWT would invest more money in working on this project which seems to be successful at the level that it is now. There may be a possibility of growing the herd as well. The grazing range is probably some of the largest in the world compared to other reindeer herders in Europe and Russia and China as well. We have a good opportunity for a good positive investment. I'm just wondering if the Minister is looking or has any plans to grow this project from where it is now looking forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've always stayed away from reindeer because it was always under federal jurisdiction. One of the little known effects of devolution is that reindeer is now under our jurisdiction, so it's in our interest to, I guess, promote and develop the reindeer market. At one time, you know, they're probably one of the healthier herds of wildlife that we have in the Northwest Territories right now, so that would be something that I think we'd be looking at. I certainly very much enjoy the reindeer products that come out of Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod, and I'll agree with that. Any further questions? Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair, just more of a comment. I know we're looking forward now where you know, everyone on this side of the floor is talking about conservation and saving money and becoming more sustainable. I think this is one of the opportunities to have sustainable development in our region and our territory and set a good example. That's all I have, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. No, the herd has done quite well. I think a large part would be in the herdsmen and so on, where you get that kind of knowledge and expertise. I agree that it's certainly another way of diversifying. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next we have Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a variety of questions starting with commercial fishing industry support. I'm wondering why the contribution for the new fish plant was not in the capital budget rather than this O and M budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's because it's not a capital item. This would be a contribution to the NWT Fishermen's Federation who would be the ones that would be responsible for building a facility when they acquire the sufficient resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question for the Minister is whether he knows the total cost of the new fish plant. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It'll be subject to whatever design and processing that the NWT fishermen decide. It will be housed in the facility that they agree on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Yes, thank you. Moving on to the film industry pilot project, I believe this is one of the success stories of diversification in the territory, and I'm wondering at what point it will stop being a pilot project and whether there's any evaluation contemplated for this project since it is described as a pilot. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I would call it an editing problem; I don't see it as a pilot project any more. As a matter of fact, we transferred resources that were not spent in the past fiscal year to this year so that we would maximize the funding for the film industry. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Moving on to Growing Forward, could the Minister please tell us whether all of the money allocated in Growing Forward was used in the last fiscal year? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is money that comes from the federal government as part of the agreement we have with the federal government. My understanding is all of the money has been spent and we'll confirm that with the Members. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Ms. Green?

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm interested to hear that because I thought I understand that this fund was also subsidizing muskox and I wasn't sure how that fit in to support for the agriculture sector. Maybe the Minister could clarify that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, there are a number of potential areas that the money can be spent on that are identified going forward including muskox. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What concerns me about this is there seems to be another program that supports muskox harvesting, whereas there aren't other programs that support agriculture I am wondering if agriculture is getting all the support it needs to continue being a rising star in diversification. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not aware of any other programs. There might be some from the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program and the hide procurement program where we pay a nominal amount for the hide of a muskox. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just trying to understand this. Growing Forward is paying for muskox hides. Is that correct? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Growing Forward is paying for agriculture. There are at least seven or eight areas which the money can be used in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not to belabour this point, but I am still not getting where the muskox fit in. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. – BDIC had a subsidiary company that was involved with muskox. Growing Forward, there is one item in there that money could be used for muskox if there was a program or project in that area. Right now, there is nothing going on with muskox in Sachs Harbour where the majority of the muskox are. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to the Minister for clarifying that. Those are all my questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Next we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have to clear up a few things about SEED. There is \$3.8 million, and it is broken down regionally. I believe it is divided equally between the five regions. If it is not fully subscribed in one region, is that money then allocated to a different region so the entire \$3.8 million can be spent? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chair. Our regions get together on a regular basis. They all discuss who has got how much money and if there are bigger needs elsewhere, they will move the money around. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: The business plan stays as a renewal process underway to improve the effectiveness of SEED. Is that completed and what are the outcomes of that if it has been? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess, if you look at what our objectives are, those regions that are not accessing it, we would like to know why. We would like to see more equitable spending. We would like to see the money used for what it is for. We are also always looking at our

delivery agents. We have a number of delivery agents, and if there are better ways to deliver the programs, we look at them as well. I guess, going forward we have regular reviews to make sure that the programs we have serve their clientele in the best way possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. BDIC, you said that it is independent, and they have a board of directors. I know Mr. Sebert just dismissed the Power Corp. board of directors at a savings of a million dollars. How much is BDIC's board costing the government? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not aware of it, but I could write to the chair and ask for that information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Yes. The commercial fisheries, I see it is \$225,000, and that is to offset production and freight costs. Is this fully subscribed every year?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I go back a long ways with the fishermen. At one time, fishermen were only paid based on their production. There was always money being lapsed, and at some point, we decided it was fisherman money, so we gave the whole allotment of money; we gave it to the fishermen. They decide how the money is spent. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that money is used to, like it says, to offset the cost of freight. I know the government is working hard to expand the fishing industry, putting a big investment into this new fish plant. I know that we need more fishermen on the lake. Is this \$225,000 going to allow the entrance of new fishermen into the industry? I don't think we need these subsidies forever, but until we get the industry ramped up here, I think we are going to need them. Are we going to need more to allow more fishermen to get into the industry in the near term? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In my mind, we will. If you go back to the heyday of the Great Slave Lake fishery, there was over 200 people were employed in the fishing business. I don't expect that we will ever get back to those heady days, but I don't see why we couldn't have a thriving Great Slave Lake fishery. The only way we will get to there is to have fishermen. We have a lot of interest internationally. As a matter of fact, I had dinner with a Chinese Consul General. He had eaten the Great Slave Lake fish here in Yellowknife, and they recognize we have the best fish in the world. They remarked that they have cargo planes now flying from Edmonton to Shanghai on a daily basis or on a regular basis. It is not a stretch, if we get enough fish, we could market it internationally. I am very optimistic and bullish on the Great Slave Lake fishery. If we do it right, if we can get some fishermen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Yes. That \$225,000, I am just worried that is not going to be enough to get... Like there are some guys in Fort Res that want to start fishing. There might not be enough money to offset their freight costs. If that is being fully subscribed right now between the fishermen we have, if we try to bring another four, five, six, seven guys in there, there is just not going to be enough. We might not be able to keep them on the lake. Is there a chance that number might go up, and can it be supplemented by the Northern Food Development Program? Would that be a use for that program as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess we are going to take it one step at a time. Right now, fisheries is a federal responsibility. We are not going to step in and start spending money in an area that is rightfully federal responsibility. The Government of the Northwest Territories has been helping with the transportation of Great Slave Lake fish to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. We have been helping the fishermen to the tune of \$225,000 a year. At one time, we were very close to the devolution of fisheries, but the deal fell apart. We have written to the Minister of Fisheries to indicate that we are interested in reviving discussions on devolution of fisheries because it is more in our interest. I think we have a much bigger interest to develop that sector. I plan to meet with the Fisheries Minister in the near future to discuss a number of fisheries issues hopefully we will be able to raise those matters with him. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, that is really good to hear. I appreciate that. The Growing Forward, there is \$300,000 for that, and that is the GNWT contribution. How much is the federal contribution of the Growing Forward fund, for the total amount? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I believe it is \$1.2 million over five years. Something like that. Sorry. \$1.2 annually. Our share is \$300,000 and their share is \$730,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Any further questions? Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: One more question, I guess. Well, two more. The \$1.4 million for the fish plant, is there additional federal money that might be attached to that, that we can expect? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: NWT fishermen have put in an application to CanNor seeking funding of approximately about \$2.4 million. We have been after CanNor. I was just at a meeting yesterday where CanNor president or chair was there. It is still under active consideration amongst other things. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am good for now. Thanks to the Minister for the answers.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. I take that as comment. Next we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank Mr. Simpson. He asked three or four of my questions. That actually helps me out. I will probably only have one for our Minister. In regards to the community transfer initiative that talks about contributing to funding for service of economic development officers, are these positions in the communities or within the government? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe it was 13th Assembly or 14th Assembly, it was a big priority of the government to transfer government positions to municipalities. The

economic development department, or now ITI, we transferred quite a number of economic development officer positions to the municipalities. A lot of them, whatever money we had was what we transferred to the communities. The EDOs were in the communities over quite a long time now. A lot of the communities had difficulties filling the positions because the funding wasn't at a high-enough level. I think we have gone back at least two or three times to get additional funding. I think these are what these positions are. Not only does the government have economic development officer positions, communities have economic development positions. Whenever we can, we bring everybody together, even though they are not all government economic development officer positions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that answer. It is good to hear that we are working together. I think that is very beneficial. I do have one other question. How many positions are out there for the communities? Do you know that or is that something that the corporation works on? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We actually have 13 positions that make up the \$1.5 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that answer. Is it allocated across the regions, or is it more heavily utilized in some of the different regions with the five different regions? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Sorry, I misspoke a little. It's actually 12 because one of them dropped off. I'll just read you the list. We have Akaitcho Business Development Corporation, City of Yellowknife, Community of Fort Good Hope, Deh Cho Business Development Centre, Deninu K'ue First Nation, Deline First Nation, Tuktoyaktuk, Tulita, Ulukhaktok, Tsiigehtchic, Sahtu Business Development Centre, and Tlicho. I guess there's quite a mix there.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: No, I'm good. Thank you. I thank the Minister for the answer. It gives me a clear understanding of what it is. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just looking at the community future's line punch, and it's somewhat opaque, the description, "Contributions to help communities in need solving their long-term employment problems." What exactly is that if the department can provide some details on how this funding works? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, we have Community Futures; I think we had six or seven. I think we're down to five. We provide core funding of about probably \$120,000 or \$150,000 to each community futures, and they make small business loans. I think they're in the neighbourhood of zero to \$100,000 or something in that neighbourhood. They'll deal mainly with small business and some of the community features are very successful. They have a number of long-term clients and a lot of them have built very large holdings. They've supported our programs quite a bit. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is the program evaluated on employment statistics? I'm just seizing on solving their long-term employment problems. I'm wondering if we're taking a look at this program and funding it according to those goals and outcomes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. As I indicated earlier, we review on a regular basis, we're approached by different delivery agent on a regular basis that would like to take on the client, and right now we have five Community Futures corporations that are very strong going concerns. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to quickly go back to the new film industry pilot project, some humour, my understanding before,

Mr. Chairman, was that in previous pots that were allocated that seemingly only southern producers that were working in the North could access the pot. I'm happy to see that there's an increase in the pot. Can the department clarify whom is eligible? I note that it does say in the description that eligible producers. Are northern producers now eligible to access this funding? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Only northern producers or filmmakers access these programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you. That's it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Next I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, previous Members touched briefly on small scale fisheries operation out of Fort Resolution. Having discussions with some of the local people, they're envisioning even the possibility of a small abattoir ice truck to haul stuff to Hay River, fish to Hay River. I'm wondering... I'd like to ask the Minister: who would the people of Fort Resolution need to have discussions with in order to access this type of federal funding?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It would be with the regional offices in the region. I believe the regional headquarters is in Fort Smith, so that would be the regional superintendent. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that's all I have for this section.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have a few questions here under commercial fisheries, and as the Minister may recall I sent an email just over a week ago here. You know, the community of Tsiigehtchic would like to start looking at opportunities as well. As the Minister may know, we have some of the best fish in the Northwest Territories. We actually get broadhead white fish in our region. In the fall we get thousands. I recall fishing with my father there, it's endless amount of fish and it's a shame that we don't have more of a

market for it, but the community is looking at possibly starting a fishery, similar to what they have both here and Yellowknife and in Hay River. I'd just like to know if there's opportunities for other communities as well to get involved in this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's important to have a distinction between a traditional fishery and a commercial fishery. The traditional fishery, the case law is very clear. Aboriginal people can harvest fish and so on and use it and trade and so on, but when it comes to the commercial side it's a bit of a different story where you need to have quotas and the only way you can get a quota is to have a test fishery. I guess not to make it too complicated. I think through our Northern Food Development Program we can work with the community. As I said, the overall federal fisheries is still responsible for fisheries and they set the quotas. But in terms of making fish available for local consumption, you know if you talk to our department or regional staff I think we have programs that can help facilitate that. You can get as big as you want I would think. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Blake, anything further?

MR. BLAKE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just under the film industry, as I mentioned, in ENR you know they do a great project there with Mr. Stanley out of Hay River. Are there other opportunities for other chapters as well to take advantage of this in the Northwest Territories? I know a number of trappers that have good practices and it would be nice to see that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, thank you. I think that'll be classified as a reality show and I think the individual was able to go out and raise funding. He had a number of sponsors including the fur harvester auction and quite a number of sponsors, local sponsors, and local producers to make the show happen. I believe, you know, if there's a whole bunch of them it probably won't be as popular, but I think it's within the realm of whoever can get out there and get some sponsors and find some producers and film crews that they can make it happen. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to report to progress. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Committee moves to report progress. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. I will now stand and report progress.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. May I have the report, Member for Hay River North.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Do I have a seconder? Member for Great Slave. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried. Masi.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Wednesday, June 15, 2016 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 the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees and the Review of Bills

14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 19-18(2), Addressing Core Housing Needs in the Northwest Territories
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. The House stands adjourned until Wednesday, June 15, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

