



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 24, 2011****Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Bromley, Hon. Paul Delorey, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Krutko, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Sandy Lee, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Michael McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Ramsay, Hon. Floyd Roland, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 115-16(5):
2011-2015 NWT BARREN-GROUND
CARIBOU MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An environment that will sustain present and future generations is one of the goals of this Legislative Assembly and how we manage caribou is a major part of achieving that goal. Actions taken by the Government of the Northwest Territories to deal with declining populations of barren-ground caribou herds have improved our environmental planning, protection monitoring and water management activities as envisioned in the Northerners Working Together plan.

The guiding document for our caribou stewardship actions was a 2006-2010 Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy. This strategy resulted in the increased investment by our government and our partners to work together on the necessary actions needed to help stabilize declining herds and intensify the collection of information required to make wise management decisions.

These management actions, successfully implemented with our co-management partners and Aboriginal governments, have helped stabilized three previously declining herds -- the Cape Bathurst, Bluenose-West and Bluenose-East herds -- and slowed the decline of the Bathurst herd.

During the past five years we have strengthened relationships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups using barren-ground caribou and enhanced the research and monitoring efforts necessary to manage these herds.

I want to recognize the individual harvesters and Aboriginal governments who have shown

leadership and taken actions to help caribou recover. This has not been without costs.

However, as barren-ground caribou herds remain at low numbers, we must remain vigilant in our efforts to ensure barren-ground caribou remain a plentiful resource.

Later today I will table the next five-year management strategy for the barren-ground caribou. This draft new strategy builds on the 2006-2010 strategy and previous management planning initiatives recommended by co-management boards, Aboriginal governments, caribou management boards and NWT communities. It does not replace herd-specific management planning. It provides a unified framework for those plans.

Strategies have been identified for the following five key components: engaging partners in the management of barren-ground herds, ensuring information is available for sound herd management, managing impacts of key factors on caribou herds, public education and compliance, and maximizing benefits.

Implementation of this new strategy will require significant new investment. Key actions include developing and completing management plans for all herds and building capacity for involvement in conservation actions. It will require resources from partners who share responsibility for managing barren-ground caribou herds. These partners include Aboriginal governments, co-management boards, caribou management boards, the governments of Canada and neighbouring jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, there has been tremendous commitment by many people to stop the decline of caribou. We need that commitment during the next five years to support the recovery of all herds to levels that benefit all residents. Advice and direction from co-management partners and Aboriginal governments are critical in defining specific actions needed for each herd.

We have made progress in conserving our barren-ground caribou herds during the past five years and continue to invest in improved environmental stewardship through the Managing This Land strategic initiative, which has funded work on the draft strategy and improved caribou monitoring.

Our success over the next five years rests with all residents. I encourage everyone to review this draft new five-year strategy and provide their comments and feedback on the actions proposed in it. By continuing to work cooperatively to manage these herds, we can ensure our caribou populations remain plentiful to benefit current and future generations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 116-16(5):
EDUCATION HALL OF FAME

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the title of our strategic plan is Northerners Working Together. This reminds us of an important point, that it requires the effort of all Northerners to help us achieve success on the goals of this Assembly. In acknowledgement of the contributions our residents make towards our goal of healthy, educated people, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is now accepting nominations for inductions into the Education Hall of Fame this year. This is a great opportunity to give recognition to Northerners dedicated to education in the Northwest Territories. This includes anyone who supports education, from teachers to coaches, custodians, volunteers and community businesses and also sponsors.

This is the second year the Education Hall of Fame has been in place and the recipient format has changed slightly. The new format sees one inductee from each region in the Territory and a Minister's Choice nomination. This year there will be a total of seven inductees, Mr. Speaker.

Accepting one inductee per region respects regional contributions and is more inclusive. It also gives local leaders and organizations the opportunity to become more involved in the education of their community, as we have heard through our Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative that they would like to be.

The department is accepting nominations up to Thursday, March 31, 2011. Electronic nomination forms are available on the department's website and at regional Education, Culture and Employment service centres and district education council offices. I hope Members will take the opportunity to nominate a deserving person from their region and encourage others to do the same as well.

Mr. Speaker, successful nominees will be announced in April and will be invited to a ceremony and luncheon scheduled for Tuesday, May 17th, at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. Inductees will receive a plaque commemorating their achievement and a gift

certificate from our sponsor First Air, who we thank for this continued participation.

I look forward to announcing this year's inductees to the Education Hall of Fame and recognizing their contributions to education in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ROUTE 51 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the support of Education, Culture and Employment and other government agencies, Route 51 Learning Institute has become a successful source for alternative education for Yellowknife students since its opening in November 2009.

The objective of Route 51 is to provide academic improvement in achievement to non-traditional learners and prepare non-academic students with skills to enter the workplace. In the beginning, due to the late start in the year, YK No. 1 was hoping to register 40 students. However, Route 51 served a total of 112 students by the end of June 2010. For the 2010-11 school year, YK No. 1 was hoping to accommodate 75 students. Currently, there are approximately 125 students registered.

The school has seen many successes. One of the anticipated outcomes of the program is for students to find success at Route 51 and be able to transition back into Ecole Sir John Franklin High School. Route 51 prides itself in offering students with alternatives to learning that can't be found anywhere else: flexible schedules, which allow students to fulfill other obligations and activities; flexible timetabling to allow Ecole Sir John High students to take courses at Route 51 which they can't fit into the schedule at high school. There is a close liaison between Ecole Sir John Franklin High School and Route 51, who offer support for student learning. A nutritious conscious environment and healthy homemade snacks made by two staff members, Joyce Whiteford and Kirstin Prescott, fits with YK No. 1's strategic goal of living healthy lifestyles.

Route 51 is exploring a number of opportunities for students in the near future. These include ways to expand electronic workspaces to meet growing demand of students, building a partnership with Breakaway Fitness to offer students opportunities to receive credit for physical education which fits in with YK No. 1's strategic goal of living healthy lifestyles, and exploring opportunities for CTS modules and trades and apprenticeship programs.

The students and staff at Route 51 along with YK No. 1, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the larger community have all contributed to creating a place of learning that is serving our young people well.

Mr. Speaker, I and some of my colleagues visited Route 51 last week. It is clear to us the pride that the staff and students take in Route 51 and the opportunities and good work it is providing. I encourage all students looking for alternative education support to visit Route 51 to find out how they can help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
MRS. FWASI OF K'ALEMI DENE SCHOOL

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Elders have a huge role to play in our education systems of today. They remind youth what wisdom is and what real education means. Their presence in schools, though too rare, brings stability and assurance to our young people that are currently wanting. Let's work to ensure that our elders are able to fulfill their key role in every one of our educational facilities.

Today I especially want to salute the woman who is the traditional heart and soul of K'alemi Dene School in Ndilo, Mary Jane Francois, who the children call Mrs. Fwasi.

---Applause

Mrs. Fwasi is the school elder. On joining the K'alemi Dene family 10 years ago, Mrs. Fwasi introduced herself and her Weledeh dialect, and the children heard "Francois" as "Fwasi." Teachers thought this was a pretty good example of how people learn language and the name stuck. Mrs. Fwasi likes it because it has such a nice rhyme with mahsi.

Mrs. Fwasi instructs the children in the Weledeh dialect and advises teachers on words and expressions as they relate to the daily lessons. Students learn the Yellowknives Dene First Nations history, its landmarks, traditions and culture at Mrs. Fwasi's knee. Mrs. Fwasi's lessons come from her stories and memories and straight from the heart. Visit K'alemi Dene and you are instantly greeted by the beauty and accomplishment of Mrs. Fwasi's presence. Her newly completed full moosehide beadwork tapestry is on proud display in the new school's foyer and was an experience of creation shared by all the students.

Mrs. Fwasi is now working on a huge baby blanket with traditional beadwork on white stroud. This masterpiece will be displayed above the school's vision and mission statements.

Mary Jane Fwasi will celebrate her 70th birthday June 1st. Teachers and students are planning a huge celebration to thank their spiritual grandmother of all these years. In the words of K'alemi Dene principal Angela James, "we love our Mrs. Fwasi and are blessed to have her sharing her language, traditions and culture with the students and staff of K'alemi Dene School."

Mr. Speaker and all colleagues, please join me in saying, Mrs. Fwasi, mahsi.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABSENTEEISM IN SCHOOLS
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to speak on a very important topic and the overall well-being of society of First Nations people in the NWT, Mr. Speaker, the rate of absenteeism in our schools in the small communities. Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious problem and the responsibility must be shared. The high rate of absenteeism is the responsibility of the local district education authority and the district education councils, the teachers, the parents and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, if our children do not attend school regularly, they are being deprived of an education that is so important for their future and the future of the NWT. We need educated people to take over the running of First Nation communities, regions and this Territory. Without this education, we will rely on others to come into the communities and tell us what to do.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that if a student misses five days a month, by the time they are in grade 8 they are two years behind and not ready for high school, let alone be successful in high school. Mr. Speaker, if our students are not ready for high school when they get to high school age, there is no way they will be ready for post-secondary education when they get to post-secondary education age.

Mr. Speaker, if the First Nations want to control their lives, they must ensure that their children are in school every day. Mr. Speaker, if the First Nations children attend school over 90 percent of the time, their marks are comparable to non-Aboriginal children in the school system.

We need a plan to address this issue. We need the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to work with the education authorities, educational councils and they will, in turn, work with the teachers, the children and the parents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
THUMBS UP CONTEST
FOR SUPPORTING EDUCATION

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This is Education Week and I hear that Education, Culture and Employment is challenging residents to take part in the Thumbs Up contest to identify ways people can support the education system. Well, I have thumbs up for two Fort Simpson men who are doing a great job encouraging our students to think about their future. I am speaking about Bob Norwegian and Wilbert Antoine who are excellent role models. These two cousins have 75 years of trades experience. They left the North and made careers and now they have returned to Fort Simpson and want to make a difference and help our Aboriginal youth. They spend their spare time in the bush and maintain traditional values. It doesn't seem like youth are hearing much about careers in oil and gas and mining industries. Who better to get students to listen to what opportunities are available than Bob Norwegian and Wilbert Antoine, who can show how the industries have affected their lives in a positive way.

They tell students about the thousands of types of jobs that are out there: employment as electricians, engineers, geologists, machinists, environmental technicians, management and many others.

A recent article in the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers publication highlighted what a good role model these men are. Bob Norwegian has been an electrician and instrumentation technician in the oil and gas industry working on gas plants, oil pipelines, jet turbines and he has designed and built microprocessors. He now operates Rabbit Skin Ventures with his wife in Fort Simpson. Wilbert Antoine has worked in coal mining and diamond mining and is presently the northern development officer for Canadian Zinc.

Both men are committed to helping kids understand how important education is and how preparing for a good job just doesn't happen overnight. Tomorrow they will meet with Aurora College students in Fort Simpson to continue their great work and I wish them well.

They have told me that our grandfathers took every effort to do things on their own. They want to show the youth today, with their stories, that this is still true. When you have a dream, you can follow it.

Thumbs up to Wilbert Antoine and Bob Norwegian for their enthusiasm in encouraging our students to think about the long term and the future they can create for themselves. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE CURRICULUM
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to speak on Education Week, and more importantly, dealing with the education curriculum that we offer to our students in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we develop a curriculum that's meaningful to our students' education and gives them an opportunity to learn the bright history, and more importantly, the knowledge that has been held here for thousands of years from their ancestors, regardless if its treaty rights, land claim rights, or even preservation of our language and culture.

Mr. Speaker, the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Board of Education along with its partners, the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in, have developed language curriculum which is now presently in place in the Beaufort-Delta. It provides an opportunity for Aboriginal students in the Beaufort/Mackenzie Delta to learn the language curriculum in the classroom developed by the communities that they come from, and more importantly, by the cultural groups in the region.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important not only to educate our students but educate ourselves as Northerners, to understand the amazing history of the Northwest Territories and understand the area of Aboriginal rights, treaty rights, old treaties, modern day treaties, but more importantly, what does it mean by way of wildlife acts, the history of the trapping industry in the Northwest Territories and looking at the overall revolution of how we've evolved over the last 150 years from simply having trading posts to now large communities to urban centres and large rural communities that exist. In some cases in the history of the North, some of these communities that exist today well exceed 150 years. That's an important part of our history that we have to not only preserve and protect, but pass on to our younger generation and develop that curriculum in our schools in the Northwest Territories so that our students can also understand the history of the North and where we come from and where we're going.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS ON
THE PASSING OF JACK ADDERLEY

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to use my Member's statement to acknowledge the passing of Jack Adderley in December. Jack was 86 and had lived in Yellowknife for 52 years. He was well known for many things, especially his humour. One of the

lasting efforts that Jack left our community was the 1972 partnership with Jack Sigvaldson, commonly known as Sig, when the two of them launched their own newspaper, a local rag called the Yellowknifer. I'm sure many of you may have heard of it before.

The first cutting-edge newspaper was designed on the desk of a kitchen table and the dark room was Sig's bathroom. The NWT government at the time didn't think that their enterprise was worth financing. Times changed and moved past, and nearly 39 years later that has evolved into the Northern News Services, which has published seven different community papers. With the characteristic candour and style that Jack had been known for, he reported government oversight and hard criticism and accountability on Yellowknifer's anniversary every year.

Before arriving in Yellowknife, Jack had served in the Royal Canadian Navy in World War II and in Korea. He was a signalman and he brought those skills here to the North by providing Morse Code, which at that time was one of the only ways to communicate out of the North.

By 1959 he moved to Yellowknife and worked at the Yellowknife Airport. Jack's voice was also heard and entertained many Yellowknifers over the years from his commentary when he announced and covered the hockey games and in the summer when he covered the ball games at Tommy Forest Park. Eventually he even had his own radio show on CBC Sports called the Jack Adderley Sports Reel. George Tuccaro, our esteemed Commissioner, has credited Jack for helping him on his way to become a successful broadcaster.

Jack Adderley had been involved with many, many community events and he certainly was a player in the activity of our city. He was active in the Royal Canadian Legion and was often the parade marshal on Remembrance Day. He and his wife also helped establish, with their work, the Abe Miller Centre. Both Jack and his wife, Mary, spent their final years at Aven Manor, where Mary died two years before him.

While Jack was a resident at Aven, I had many occasions to stop and hear many interesting stories from him. My favourite was when he would talk about the stories of how he and Sig would settle their editorial disputes and, certainly, creative arguments at the paper, which was simply flipping a match and deciding who won over that.

In closing, my condolences go to the Adderley family. Jack will certainly be missed by many people. I certainly will make note that the Aven Manor has never been the same without him. I miss his stories and his laughter.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NEED FOR STAND-ALONE CAMPUS FOR
AURORA COLLEGE IN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to lend my voice today -- what's left of it -- to celebrating Education Week. Last week Mr. Lafferty called on all NWT residents to help in promoting education this week. I'm very happy to help him do that.

The Minister also stated that learning is a lifelong journey and I couldn't agree with the Minister more. I'm proud to say that I'm a product of the local school system here in Yellowknife and I'm very grateful for the teachers and the facilities that I had along the way. Now that I have a son that's at Montessori at N.J. Macpherson, the cycle continues, only this time as a parent.

Schools are the very foundation of the community. I'm very fortunate to have two great schools located in the riding of Kam Lake: Ecole St. Joseph School and N.J. Macpherson. I want to thank all the teachers, administration and support staff at those two schools for all they do for our children and our community.

My vision for the future of educational needs and facilities in this community involves a stand-alone college campus for Aurora College. Ultimately I do believe a university can and should be established somewhere in the North. Currently Canada is the only circumpolar nation without a university located north of the 60th parallel. It's time to set the course for a stand-alone campus for our college, which is long overdue.

In the foreseeable future, capital dollars are going to be hard to come by. That is why the planning, coordinating and partnerships need to be developed today to get this campus built. We need this campus. Many of our bright, young, talented high school graduates have to go south to post-secondary school. Sadly, some of them stay in the South getting work, finding relationships and taking on their life in southern Canada. By providing an environment with a campus and expanded programs, perhaps we could keep more of our students here at home and our young people here at home.

Again, as this is Education Week, I want to thank all those involved in education around the Territory for all they do for us.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE CURRICULUM
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to add my voice to the Members and to talk about education. A couple of days ago, when I

brought my young son to Mildred Hall School, my son was talking to me and saying that at the school they were learning the Dene laws. I said, oh, what kind of laws are you learning? He said, well, we're learning about the Dene laws. I said, well, what laws do you know right now? He said, Dad, Dene law number three. I said, well, what's number three? He said, Dene Law number three is love one another as much as possible. And I was going, oh, my God. Mildred Hall, I want to thank them for all the teachers and that, that they're teaching about the Dene laws. That's a law that my son is talking to me. That's a very strong law and a very powerful law. It's a good law to remind me. That is part of our education system today in the North here that they are teaching in our schools. How do we practice that law in today's society? It's very hard, very difficult. Yet our younger kids are learning this and we have to show them.

People in the North are listening to us. The Aboriginal governments are listening to us. They're talking about us while we're in this room talking about them. Something that we need to look at in our education field is that we come a long way from off the land into the world of computers. We really have to thank our teachers, our parents, the elders and the teachers today for helping us.

I also want to thank colleagues like us here, that day in day out have to be conscious of what we're leading our people to.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2009-2010 STUDENT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have an excellent education system here in the North but it's not quite working as it should. One only has to look at the 2010 student assessment results released by the Department of Education in January to know that. For the 2009-2010 school year, the highest percentage of students working at or above grade level in English Language Arts was 81 percent. That was for grade 1. The numbers, unfortunately, go downhill as the grades go higher. Interestingly enough, the numbers for students functioning at or above grade level in Mathematics is higher than for English.

Education is one of the pillars essential for the foundation on which the success of NWT residents depends. Research shows that, along with poor housing and health, low levels of education result in socially disadvantaged people. I believe that our Department of Education is aware that our system is less than perfect, but I don't think we've yet figured out how to make it really important to our residents to ensure that our kids get to and stay in school. Many factors contribute to this situation; distrust of schools and education on the part of

parents, for instance. I believe that our northern society does not place as much emphasis on the importance of education as we should, particularly our leaders.

The Miriam-Webster definition of "lead" is "to guide someone or something along a way." We have leaders for a reason. We rely on them, we take cues from them and we follow their advice. I believe we need to convince our leaders, all leaders -- community leaders, government leaders, sport leaders -- that they hold the key to getting and keeping kids in school. If a leader sees that the kids are not attending school, then he or she should be speaking out about it, saying that it's wrong. He or she should be visiting the family, asking why the kids are at home during the school day. He or she should use their influence to change the culture of their community so that education is important and is priority number one.

People listen to their leaders, and I include MLAs in that group. We have influence and we should be using it for the educational good of our children and our Territory.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACKNOWLEDGING NUNAKPUT TEACHERS

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following on my colleagues for Education Week, I'd like to talk about some of the teachers that we have in Tuk that are leaving this year.

I was nine years old when Ms. Cameron came to town; her and her husband Brent. She really influenced me to always try and progress myself in school. She taught every one of my kids, all four of them. She won't get to teach Mikayla, but she's only eight, so hopefully next year. Ms. Cameron will be retiring back home to Cape Breton.

Mrs. Hayslip, who has always been a rock for the community and working with the kids in Tuk, pushing them, making sure they're doing the best they possibly can.

Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, all the hard work they've done for the community of Tuk.

This year we had our long-time education...Thirty-five years Jean Gruben sat as the director of the education board in Tuk. I'd really like to thank her and all the hard work she's done for all the kids.

All of the teachers in the Territory, thank you. To all the staff at Mangilaluk School and all the schools in Nunakput, keep up the good work. I thank the teachers and the parents.

On another good note, we had 108 kids over 80 percent attendance in Tuk that will be going to Inuvik for swimming day at the pool. That's 108 kids. That's awesome to see. I'd like to thank the

parents that keep pushing those kids to school even when it's 40 below. I'd like to thank all the teachers in the Territory and the Minister as well.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF 66TH ANNIVERSARY
OF ALBERT AND FEBULA BOHNET**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in this House to recognize a special day. Albert Bohnet is 94; Febula Bohnet is 84. Today they have been married 66 years.

---Applause

She will always be the younger woman in his life.

The marriage started back in 1945. Just to give us a sense of scale and time, that was the last year of World War II. It's a singular milestone.

Today they still live in their own home. They burn wood. They have a garden. Clearly a recipe for good health and a long life of love together is what they get as a result of their life together.

As we wish them well for the coming year and another year of togetherness and continued good health and happiness, I also have a wish for this Assembly that we may all be blessed with the love, health and longevity in our lives that they have shared in theirs.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to recognize Pages here this week from the community of Sambaa Ke/Trout Lake. Also thanks to the principal, Lee Fillion, for being the chaperone. It's an excellent program and I continue to support it. First here this week was Ms. Katrina Deneron. Second was Ms. Sheyenne Jumbo. I'm proud to say that Sheyenne is a young author. She had written a book in Trout Lake called *Come Learn with Me*. It sells at Amazon.com for \$12.24. There are only two left.

---Applause

Hopefully they had a great week and really enjoyed it. Once again, it's a good opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to bring children in from all our small and remote communities. Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to take this opportunity and with pleasure to recognize Darrell Bohnet, one of the children of Al and Febula Bohnet, from Fort Smith originally. A good Metis boy. Many years with the government, vice-president with Diavik, now retired in Yellowknife. I'd like to thank him for coming to the Assembly. He's lucky to have such parents as he does. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 7, acknowledgements. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

**QUESTION 523-16(5):
GREENING THE WORKPLACE INITIATIVE**

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are to the Minister responsible for Human Resources. I want to follow up on an inquiry and a bit of correspondence with the Minister regarding greening the workplace under the June 2009 Human Resources action plan, *A Brilliant North*. This objective calls for encouragement to employees to develop and implement environmental programs. Can the Minister tell us what work has been done to date? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Human Resources, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Greening the workplace is a very important initiative that this government undertook as part of its 20/20 human resource strategic planning. What we've accomplished is we've set up an interdepartmental advisory Green Team that meets on a regular basis. We have representation from the majority of the departments and they make recommendations to our deputy minister committee on a quarterly basis. The green advisory team has developed an action and terms of reference that they're working on. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the comments from the Minister. Mr. Speaker, this is good work. It shows motivation on behalf of our employees and our leadership. We know that improving practices involves changing habits and human behaviour such as getting people to wear seat belts or stop cell phone driving, not an easy task; one of the most difficult things to change. Strong leadership is often needed. The Minister, according to my correspondence, has indicated that at least seven departments are signed on. That's a good start. What more aggressive plans does the Minister have to roll this out across government beyond

Yellowknife and provide the marketing resources needed to give us a model workplace? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Right now we're focusing on our government. As well as having an advisory team we also have internal departmental teams, and I'm pleased to say that we have five interdepartmental teams that have undertaken a host of initiatives so that we'll have a greener workplace and with the active participation of all of our employees. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, good work. I understand that some of the work has included voluntarily setting printers to duplex, using recycled paper, having recycling stations in offices, in-house waste audits. ENR has a Green Event Catering Contract Policy for its departmental use. I'm wondering if this could be spread to all departments. I also note, Mr. Speaker, many people complain to me about GNWT catering that includes bottled water. They just shake their head when we're surrounded by the best water in the world. Does this catering policy include the dropping out of bottled water? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In addition to some of the activities that Mr. Bromley outlined, we have developed some other activities that I would like to note such as in-office composting, purchasing recycled bond paper, we've purchased bicycles for interoffice travel, also hybrid pilots. We also organize healthy lifestyle activities, we conduct in-house waste audits, have established recycling stations in every department, and we organize staff awareness contests. All of these activities play a role in improving our workplace and, certainly, with utilizing the deputy minister committee, we use that to make sure that it occurs in every department. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Your final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to note that these things and a lot of other common-place green behaviours sound to me like the least we should be doing in our departments and not really voluntary. The Human Resources department and Public Works and Services are best positioned to make these standard practices. Why are we leaving it up to employees to separately devise and implement the most basic practices of green office management? Can we get this in place as a standard that must be achieved?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: It is our intention to implement a Green Procurement Policy within the department; as well, the GNWT event catering which will exclude bottled water. There are a number of locations in the city that are bottled water-free zones. As well, we are reviewing the department utility monitoring status and we hope to be able to report on that. I will have to check on the

status on whether the Legislative Assembly is a bottled water-free zone. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

QUESTION 524-16(5):
YELLOWKNIFE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION
AND RENOVATIONS

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment. It is Education Week and clearly there are a lot of things affecting education in the Northwest Territories. One of them, in my opinion, is infrastructure. We've done a lot of great work with infrastructure but here in Yellowknife we've got a couple of the schools that need a little bit of work. They were on our capital plan once upon a time but they've both kind of disappeared. I'm wondering if the Minister can give me a bit of assurance that we're going to see in the transition documents that the department is working on some attention put on Sissons School, which needs some significant renovation, as well as the back side of Mildred Hall, which needs some upgrading.

These renovations will save us money over the long term, money that we can roll into the actual education of our children. If I can get some comments from the Minister, that would be great.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. At one time these were part of the capital process, but due to other pressing issues we had to deal with... But as we move forward for next year's capital planning process this could be part of the initiative that we need to bring forward along with other capital project initiatives. We've talked about the Sissons Schools and also Mildred Hall, completion of the Mildred Hall and different aspects.

Mr. Speaker, during the transition period we'll be talking about what needs to be before the 17th Assembly, but it will be up to the 17th Assembly to decide as we go forward, but this summer we'll be discussing that capital planning process. Mahsi.

MR. ABERNETHY: I appreciate the Minister's response. I know that we've had a lot of conversation about Sissons and Mildred Hall and I'm happy to hear that it's going to be in the transition documents. At least I think that's what I heard. Can I get a little bit of confirmation that indeed this department will be putting a specific reference to Sissons' renovations and the back side of Mildred Hall, the windows and whatnot, in the transition document? I know it will be the

responsibility of the 17th government, but I know this department has done some work, has done some costing and had a conversation with the board. I want to make sure that that is built into the transition document so it's highlighted as a priority coming into the 17th Assembly. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I did state that this will be part of the discussion that we need to have as we discuss all the capital projects for the Northwest Territories and we need to prioritize what needs to go in place for next year. Definitely, the Sissons School and Mildred Hall will be part of that discussion and we'll keep the Members posted as we move forward. They will be part of the process as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

QUESTION 525-16(5):
ABSENTEEISM IN SCHOOLS
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In following up on my Member's statement on absenteeism in the school, I have questions for the Minister of Education. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if the department keeps stats on absenteeism and then uses those stats and if there is a correlation between achievement and/or the lack thereof in absenteeism? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We work through, and also are in consultation with, the school district education authority and also the council. We collect that data that are important for our educational system. We need to work closely with the school boards. They provide information on the absenteeism that the Member is referring to. The stats overall for the last few years, we do have them on file. Based on that, where we need to focus in certain areas. There have been some great achievements over the years and also there have been some lack of achievement over time. Those are the pros and cons we need to look at.

Mr. Speaker, yes, we do have that information and work closely with the education council in that respect. Mahsi.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell me if there has been a reduction in absenteeism in the schools in small communities from year to year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I don't have the detailed information before me now. I can get that information for the Member. I understand that there has been some improvement in absenteeism, because the school board has

developed initiatives to deal with absenteeism because it is a big issue in the small, isolated communities. We are currently discussing that with the various school boards across the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, was absenteeism contemplated when the department developed the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the absenteeism is a cross-function of the priorities that have been established through the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, whether it be the student support, the early childhood development, the literacy, the home support. So it does fall within those four categories. Every region that we visited, absenteeism was an issue and is a challenge. We are putting a strategic plan in action that is coming from the general public telling us, the educators, the parents, how we can deal with those issues and those matters at hand. They are giving us solutions from that. We are moving forward with this early this year. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me roughly if he has some general objectives in the plan? Can he tell me what the plan is to address the absenteeism issue? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the solutions are still coming at us from the regional forums that we have initiated. We visited four regions already, including Yellowknife, and also two more upcoming, Beaufort-Delta and also South Slave where Mr. Beaulieu will be part of that process, as well, along with other MLAs. It is at the preliminary stages right now, but in due time, in May session we are hoping to table the document and that information will be available to the general public. There are a lot of solutions in that package that will come out of that. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 526-16(5):
NEED FOR NEW SCHOOL IN TROUT LAKE

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During this Education Week I just want to raise one of the things that I have been consistent about for the community of Sambaa Ke, which is Trout Lake. They have always impressed upon me about the need to have a brand new school for the community. I raise it once again with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. How much planning has been done? Has he heard the community in working towards building a new school for Trout Lake? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We did hear from the community. I also work closely with the chair of the DEC as well. They have raised those issues in the past. We need to look at the overall schools in the Northwest Territories. Trout Lake is part of that process that we need to discuss. The situation it is in, the age of the building and the space of the building, this are information that we have been gathering. We will discuss it further as we move forward to the next year's capital planning process. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, over the course of seven years we spent hundreds of millions of dollars in our larger communities building new schools. I think it is time to start concentrating on our small and remote communities, in Trout Lake. I think the capital planning process and the priorities of this government should start concentrating on the small, remote communities. Will the Minister work with his Cabinet colleagues and start investing in the small, remote communities and public infrastructure? Mahsi cho.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I totally agree that we need to focus on all schools in the Northwest Territories. We will continue to push where the priorities lie. I agree that we need to focus on the communities that we represent. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I think another thing that the community of Trout Lake needs, in order to get on the capital plan, is a full assessment and needs of that community. Is the Minister willing to at least work towards that in this fiscal year in the operating and maintenance funding? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, in the 2010-11 capital plan there has been funding that has been included to provide technical upgrades. We are just reporting program issues. It is a start for our department working with the community to address those space issues that Trout Lake is facing. We will be discussing further with the Member and also with the community DEA. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have always advised the Minister that the school in Trout Lake has never been replaced. They are currently existing in the community hall and the community has been promised by this government that they will replace the school. I look forward to the Minister to work with his Cabinet colleagues to make that a priority and make that dream come true for the community of Trout Lake. Mahsi cho.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I too will continue to push for my colleagues on the

pressing matters that are before us with the capital plan projects. Trout Lake, I am looking forward to the community visits. I definitely will be visiting the school and see the outcome of our discussion at that point and stage. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 527-16(5):
ABORIGINAL CURRICULUM IN
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SCHOOLS

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education in regards to my Member's statement in regards to the importance of developing curriculum for the students in the Northwest Territories. It is something that is meaningful to the students. Like I mentioned, the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Board of Education along with the Gwich'in and Inuvialuit have developed language curriculum to deliver in the schools in the Beaufort-Delta. That is one way I believe we can develop curriculum that is useful to the students, and more importantly, preserve their language and culture. Mr. Speaker, I think we also have to go a step further in regards to looking at the northern history, the history of the Aboriginal people in northern Canada, and more importantly, looking at the rights of indigenous people in northern Canada and understand those rights. What is the Minister's department doing to revamp the curriculum we have in our schools so it is meaningful for the students and relates to the Northwest Territories and its history and the people that live here? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I can't agree more with the Member that we need to integrate our northern perspective into our curriculum development. We need to work closely with Alberta. It's through their jurisdiction that we continue to work on the curriculum development, because a part of the education program is under their jurisdiction as well, the curriculum development. But with the Northern Studies and Social Studies we have made some changes. We've produced some textbooks that reflect the Northwest Territories, the geographic areas of the whole Northwest Territories and the routes and some plans as well, so identifying those key areas. So we have started the initial stages, but we want to produce more of those textbooks, do more program development and also curriculum development that reflects the northern perspective. Mahsi.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. I'd like to add to the Minister's comments and I think it's a question of

timing, and more importantly, it's putting the resources into it. I noted, looking at our budget, that we're putting a lot of money into French immersion, and more importantly, developing French programs and services in the Northwest Territories. But I think by making those investments, we're losing sight of the most important component of that in the history of the Northwest Territories and indigenous people that live here and their history. I think one thing that I find, being in this House for almost 16 years, is that the uneducated public, which really doesn't understand Aboriginal rights in the Northwest Territories or treaty rights and land claims rights that have been settled, regardless if it's the old treaties or modern day treaties. That's the stuff that we have to develop that's useful and that people could be educated in and learn and really understand the issues in the Northwest Territories. So which arm of your department is doing the work to get this curriculum off the ground to get it into our classrooms?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. It is our department that is responsible to deliver these programs into the schools. Again, I have to reiterate that we need to work with Alberta and also the DEAs and DEC's. Having those initiatives, not only that, but the Aboriginal student achievement that's underway, they've discussed that as well, having a residential school era in our school system, land claims, self-government. We're introducing to our social program development area within the curriculum. So we are listening to the people and those will be written out after this fiscal year. It will take some time, but we will make those initiatives key priorities for this government. Mahsi.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you. It's good to develop curriculum and whatnot and put it into the schools, but we have to make it mandatory that people will actually take the course, learn the course and get credits for those courses. What I'd like to know is will those courses, regardless if it's Northern Studies, Aboriginal studies, that it be mandatory in all high schools in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That will be the discussion we need to have. In the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, that's been highlighted as well, that it be mandatory for the students to take those specific courses whether they be Aboriginal students or non-Aboriginal students. So those are discussions that we're having, ongoing discussions. We still have two forums to attend and then the final package will reflect on that as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister to keep us abreast in regard to where this is going and give us updates whenever

possible. So I'd like to ask the Minister for ongoing updates on where the progress of this is going. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. I definitely will commit in this House to keep the Members up to speed on what's happening with the ASA. We will be going to the Beaufort-Delta in May. So those are the discussions we'll continue to have and conclude that discussion at that time. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 528-16(5):
SAHTU TRADE CENTRE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Being Education Week I want to ask the Minister of Education a few questions regarding the Sahtu. Mr. Speaker, education, either you're on the land, and my people always wanted to be successful even on the land. Now today in the new world of making a living we want to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, on the land we had an open university. In the Sahtu now we have Aurora College centres. I noted that many of our students are now leaving the Sahtu region for other centres for their educational careers. I want to ask the Minister. When he is talking with his colleagues about capital planning, if they would look at the possibility of some serious discussions around looking at the need for a Sahtu trades centre in the region. Would the Minister commit to that?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Let me first commend those students that are pursuing their higher education. We support those students 100 percent to fulfill their dream and come back successfully into our Sahtu region or other regions in the Northwest Territories. With this Sahtu trades centre, the Member had approached us a while ago and we are working on the key aspects of gathering information and we need to work with Aurora College in that respect as well. We're talking about the community learning centres, as well, and combining those and how it would look. But we are working on that, gathering the information and seeing where it takes us from there. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. The Minister indicated that they are working on gathering information; and being quite familiar with the process of moving it through the stages to a vote for capital needs, that's quite a distance away. So I want to ask the Minister when you are gathering information within the time frame of this government, would this continue to the next government in terms of having a clear picture on whether the Sahtu will receive some good news to

say that a Sahtu trades centre is coming down the tube and putting it in the books for some discussion in the House?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. That is the information that we are gathering, the needs assessment of the community, a trades centre versus a community learning centre that we have currently. So it could be a part of the discussion on the upcoming capital planning, but it all depends on the information that we do receive and we'll try to expedite the process along with other major capital projects that we may be faced with. So we'll do what we can as a department to push this towards the capital planning process. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Has the department looked at other avenues to support this initiative, or partnerships in the region or in the North to look at where some cost savings can be looked at? Because there are other needs also. I hear from Members that want to have institutions in the North also.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Any assistance the Member can provide, we'd really appreciate it and discussing a partnership approach has always been our push as the Government of the Northwest Territories, we're always seeking out potential partners. So we will be seeking out what kind of capacities are out there with regards to partnerships. So those are discussions that are open for us as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is certainly showing me a little love here in terms of putting this Sahtu trades centre. Would the Minister bring forward this discussion to the next Aurora College Board for serious discussion to look at a trades centre in the Sahtu in order to move it to the next step of putting it in the books?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I do believe there is a Board of Governors meeting coming up and the Sahtu has a representative on there. I'm sure that individual will bring that discussion forward. This will likely be the topic of discussion at that level.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

QUESTION 529-16(5):
NEW AURORA COLLEGE CAMPUS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some questions today for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment going back to my Member's statement when I talked about a stand-alone campus for Aurora College located here in Yellowknife.

Yesterday I was asking some questions of the Minister of Health and Social Services about

planning dollars and found out that there's \$900,000 in planning for Stanton. I'm wondering if Education has any planning money in the works for a new stand-alone campus for Aurora College here in Yellowknife.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Krutko. The honourable Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. What I can tell the Member is that this is an area that we've been discussing for a number of years now. The lease is coming up as well. We need to plan for that this fall. The stand-alone campus we've been discussing with other jurisdictions as well, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, and other jurisdictions about how we can move forward as a university of the North. We talk about the campus here and we talk about a university of the North building on the existing campuses.

This is an area that's important for our department and we'll continue to push forward. I will keep the Members up to speed on what's been happening with our discussion. A recent discussion that I had just the other day I will provide that information to the Members as well.

MR. RAMSAY: The current space that the college utilizes at Northern United Place obviously isn't conducive to a college campus. There's no parking, there's not enough room there. They obviously need a new building. I'd like to ask the Minister if there will be any planning dollars in the capital plan come this fall. I know there's going to be an election in October, but I'd like to ask if there will be any planning dollars for this campus come the capital plan this fall.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That's a discussion we need to have. I can't stand here and say, yes, we're going to commit dollars. We need to discuss further with the capital planning projects that will be before us. If we need to commit a certain amount of dollars towards the planning studies for the college campus, then we will do that. We need to discuss that further. At that point in time we need to highlight what the priorities are. This is one of the priorities we've been working towards, so we will be discussing it further if we need to allocate the funding at that time.

MR. RAMSAY: Obviously I think the planning dollars are going to be important to getting the government's commitment to building a stand-alone college campus here in Yellowknife. Yesterday we found out there's \$900,000 in planning for Stanton. I'm thinking that's coming from the capital plan that's being developed by the government. If one Minister can say there is money, why can't the other Minister say that there's going to be some money? Where is the commitment in the capital plan that's coming this fall to get planning dollars for

the Aurora College stand-alone campus here in Yellowknife? We need a commitment.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I'm fully committed to working towards the planning stages. We are at that point where we're working towards the capital planning projects. I did indicate in this House that I'm committed to working towards that and identifying dollars. The planning stages are in play and the capital planning process will be before us this summer. We'll move forward in this regard as a discussion and then see what comes out of that. If we need to allocate funding, then definitely we'll talk about that at that time.

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

QUESTION 530-16(5):
WORKPLACE HARASSMENT LEGISLATION

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Justice. I'll give him a little bit of a break from the education venue. Workplace harassment and workplace bullying are something which I think we are becoming more and more aware of. I think it's existed for a very long time and is all too common. I think we are becoming more aware that employers do not necessarily treat their employees fairly.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice what legislation or regulations currently exist in the NWT to deal with workplace harassment or workplace bullying.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Within our Justice department we do have a Human Resource Policy that deals with the specifics of if there's harassment in the work environment or if there's verbal abuse and so forth. We do have those policies in place and work closely with the Human Resources department as well. Those policies do go through some changes, as well, that reflect up-to-date information we receive from the general public. We'll continue to make those changes as necessary.

MS. BISARO: The Minister referenced a policy within the Department of Justice. My concern, I guess, is for employees outside of the GNWT. If someone in a private firm feels they are being harassed or bullied, what recourse do they have to try and make their workplace situation more tolerable?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are the areas that we continue to get complaints from various parties and we deal with them either through the employers or through our Justice department. The avenue they may have with respect to certain types of complaints that may be brought forward, it all depends on the case-by-case

basis. We need to work with those individuals as the need arises. Again it can be an interdepartmental initiative as well. Our Justice department is available to the general public if there are any issues pertaining to that and also with Human Resources.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that information that the general public does have the opportunity to go to the Department of Justice for assistance. Several other provinces in Canada and the Canadian government itself have implemented, over the last five to six years, legislation which deals with workplace harassment and bullying. I'd like to ask the Minister whether that is something that this government might consider to either change an existing act or to bring in a new act that would deal with harassment and bullying in the workplace.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This particular area is not just our jurisdiction; it's a national issue. Workplace and bullying harassment that's happening within our work environment or outside our work environment. So there is a strategy in place at the national stages and we're part of the discussion through the Justice department, whether it be the public safety, Education department as well. I will keep the Members posted on if there are going to be any changes or acts that are coming into play. We are looking at various options from other jurisdictions as well.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I guess I'm just not quite clear. I'd like to ask again, he mentions a national initiative. Is the Minister saying that nationally across the board all provinces and territories are working on something and that we are part of that? Because there are Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec who currently have their own legislation.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Each jurisdiction provides their own issues or challenges before two federal Ministers along with provincial and territorial Ministers. Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions have their own. We want to take advantage of that so we don't reinvent the wheel and see if they can fit into our judicial system as well, our justice system. Those are areas we are exploring. That's what I was referring to, was that we bring our acts and legislation into play at the national stage and bring that information back so we can establish that type of system here in the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 531-16(5):

NEED FOR LOCALLY TRAINED DOCTORS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Members will have heard of the fantastic progress that Nunavut is making this week towards meeting the need for new locally trained doctors. The federal government Memorial University program will see eight new interns trained in Nunavut; \$5 million injected into Iqaluit's Qikiqitani Hospital upgrading to accommodate the training, and return practice provisions of two years for each doctor. That's 16 years of committed physician service. Fantastic. Can the Minister tell me what our Health department is doing to bring such bounty here?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have received the information in that and I am in communication with the federal Minister to see how we could take advantage of such a program.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that comment from the Minister. I've been in touch with the Minister recently on the case of a trained physician in our community, a doctor who only needs this government's help to give us a physician for the future. Briefly, she is asking only for this government to arrange an internship here for her. She says she'll intern in any specialty so that she can qualify and live here with her family, all of whom are committed to the NWT. Today I learned that she has contacted Memorial University with regard to this program and they were very enthusiastic to move her to the front-line of the next round of the inductions to the Nunavut program, which closes April 7th. We have a hard deadline. I know the Minister's staff is working hard on this. Will the Minister commit to urgent action so this opportunity isn't stolen out from under our very noses?

HON. SANDY LEE: I am not able to speak about personal individual situations here, but as the Member knows, we have met on this and I have instructed my staff to follow up. They have been meeting and getting information to evaluate the situation. I am aware of the urgency.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to stress that this is an opportunity that requires an enthusiastic response. Somehow I'm not getting those vibes. I'm looking for those vibes. My constituent has said that the department is concerned with the costs. My constituent is willing to chip in from her own pocket. When I look at the cost of recruiting staffing and moving a new physician, this prospect seems to save us a bundle right off the start. Will the Minister commit to taking

these costs into account and applying our savings to this golden opportunity?

HON. SANDY LEE: We are reviewing all aspects of this file. We are giving it due consideration. I expect to have an answer for him shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been urging the Minister to get going on this, because I know that it's an ephemeral opportunity that's going to walk out the door on us. I appreciate the Minister going after this. I have to ask why this is so hard. Why are we dilly-dallying about when the long-term cost benefits are so clear here? Why aren't we working these opportunities aggressively when they show up on our doorstep?

HON. SANDY LEE: The situation is not as simple and clear cut as the Member suggests. It's complex to evaluate a medical professional and we are consulting with individuals and bodies to help us evaluate the situation. As the Member knows, my staff have made it a priority to meet with the person in question and we are putting in all energy to evaluate the situation. I am going to get back to the Member shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Krutko.

QUESTION 532-16(5):

NEED FOR K TO 12 IN ALL COMMUNITIES

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Education since it is Education Week and our theme day on education has just been rolled out here. I think it's important that there was a government policy made back in the 12th Assembly to implement K to 12 in all communities in the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, some 16 years later we still haven't fully implemented the policy, in which there's communities that still don't have high schools such as the community I represent in Tsiigehtchic. I know that the Beaufort communities are in the same boat.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that we have the policy, that we're able to implement it fully. The whole intention of the policy back then was to get away from having to send our children away from our home communities to regional centres in regard to having to attend school and high school, and also because of the residential school fallout from that. I think, Mr. Speaker, again, some 16 years later the policy's been put in force and we're still not having full implementation of K to 12 in all communities. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education what his department is doing to ensure that we can have high schools in communities such as the ones I represent such as Tsiigehtchic.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Since the establishment of the policy that's being referred to, the direction, it's always been the mandate of this government, and also specifically the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, to have K to 12 into the school system in the communities that we represent. We have initiated some into the communities. It is at the discretion of the school boards and also the communities. If they want a high school to kick-start in their region, grade 10, grade 11, grade 12, then by all means we're definitely open to discussion with the school boards, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have initiated that and we will continue to do that with other regions such as the Beaufort-Delta, the Member's riding, that may not have grade 12, but we're open to discussing that with the district education council. Mahsi.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, in regard to the policy, there are challenges implementing the policy, especially when we're putting roadblocks in the way of the communities by way of student-teacher ratio. The system we have now is 16 to 1. The community of Tsiigehtchic basically has maybe 38 students. Because of the ratio, the most teachers they're going to get are two. For me, that is the problem with the policy and being able to implement the K to 12 strategy of getting high schools in all our communities.

As the Minister, I believe that you have to take into consideration the unique situations and you have to revamp the policy in regard to student-teacher ratio so the ratio is realistic and achievable in communities where you have low populations of students. I'd like to ask the Minister, would you consider looking at that as an area that we can work on to solve this problem of getting high schools in our communities?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, this is an area that we can explore. We have explored other areas as well, and the policy development or establishment, and made some changes and amendments to certain policies. When it comes to student-teacher ratio, we've made some changes in the past that reflect on whether it be the inclusive schooling or other programming area. I'm committed that we can look at this area and if we need to make changes, I'll definitely notify the standing committee, my colleagues, to say if we need to do this, we need to start planning together with the district education council and also with the district education authority as well. Mr. Speaker, I will look into this and see what can come out of this. Mahsi.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Speaker, another area I think the Minister should seriously look at is the whole

area of boarding of the students that have to leave their home communities and go to the regional centres. In Inuvik they had a hostel that was designed for the students from the Beaufort-Delta to go to Inuvik and take high school, which was costing over \$400,000 a year. Since that, they've revamped the program where they're basically allowing now for home board, or basically boarding the students with families in Inuvik, which is costing in excess of \$200,000. So there's a surplus of \$200,000 somewhere in the system that could be used to enhance the programs in those communities that need additional teachers. Would you also consider looking into that as an area that we can find revenues to implement that idea?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, in respect to the boarding, it is at the board level, the education board level. We provide funding for the students, the enrolment, and they provide funding to the various organizations to establish such as a boarding home. So if there's a surplus, it goes back to the school board and it is at their discretion to allocate the funding to various programming or other areas as well.

As the Minister, I need to work with that with the school board and I can't give them the direction to say you should spend that money in that area. I have to respect their decision, as well, but I will commit to this House that I will be working with the school board. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Your final, short supplementary, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister to use some ministerial discretion here, because I believe that we're failing our students in the small communities who are dropping out, who are going back home because they are not fully accommodated for their education like other students in their home communities. I'd like to ask the Minister to take some direction on this and look at the resources that you're giving to the education boards and give it directly to the communities that need that resource. I believe that is where the bottleneck is and I believe the Minister has to take some action on this one, and the Minister should use some of his prerogative and make sure that those dollars are being spent in the communities where we're seeing those students failing because they're not achieving their high school abilities because of having to fall out of school because basically they're not back in their home communities because the supports aren't there.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, this is an area that I'm fully committed. The Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, I'm looking forward to the Members' discussion at that level when we're in the Beaufort-Delta in May, along with other discussions, the solutions that will be brought to the

table and this will definitely be a part of it. We've heard from other Sahtu and other regions as well about the boarding and also the Deh Cho. I'm glad the Member is raising that issue and I'm looking forward to that discussion in May. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 533-16(5):
SALE OF COMMISSIONER'S HOUSE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Public Works. Mr. Speaker, it's regarding the Commissioner's house of the Northwest Territories. Our present Commissioner won't be taking up residency in the Commissioner's house that we've allocated them for their privilege, of course, if that's one that they want to exercise. It will be sitting empty for four years. Mr. Speaker, in the past, Bob Engle, a well-known aviation Northerner, has offered to give his house to the Northwest Territories for an appropriate tax credit. It's more of a regal style of house to accept important foreign dignitaries, guests and whatnot. As anyone knows, a tax credit really doesn't fall on the backs of the taxpayer. It really comes to it would work in both interests.

Mr. Speaker, has the Minister of Public Works ever entertained that type of discussion about accepting the Engle house as a potential formal Commissioner's house, and maybe even looked at considering selling the present Commissioner's house, which will sit empty for four to five years doing nothing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there were about three questions there. The answer to all three is no, we haven't looked at it. It's not a responsibility that falls under the Department of Public Works so we haven't had any requests come to us about some of the suggestions he's made and we have not reviewed any correspondence to that effect. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Well, Mr. Speaker, I did inquire with that office regarding the cost of how much it would be to heat and power that empty Commissioner's house that will be sitting empty between four and five years. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Public Works have the figures that it would cost the government to have that house sit empty for those four to five years? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Once again, the Member's asking me questions that I know full well he has the answer in front of him. Mr. Speaker, it's not something I have any information on at this point. I'm sure we have compiled that information. I

did have staff talk to me about some of the costs, I just don't have it at this point. I'd have to, if the Member wanted to, provide it to him again. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, it is not so much about the cost; it is about the waste of money. The fact is the house will be sitting between four and five years completely empty and there is no guarantee the next Commissioner of the Northwest Territories will be taking up residency in there, regardless if they are from Yellowknife or any other jurisdiction in NWT. Mr. Speaker, my question is simple. Would the Minister be able to work with the cross-Cabinet officials, depending on whether it is the Minister of Finance or even the Premier's office, about looking and evaluating the offer made by Bob Engle a couple of years ago to this very government about accepting his house for a tax credit and perhaps maybe using the money and the proceeds of the present Commissioner's house in sales to fix up that house for a proper regal house deserving of the people of the Northwest Territories that are represented? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, once again, the request hasn't come to my office. I believe the request did come to our government, but in the life of the 15th Assembly, so it is not something I am currently reviewing. The request I believe at the time went to the Finance Minister's office.

Mr. Speaker, if there is a suggestion that the Member is making, we can certainly consider them and bring it to the appropriate department. There are a number of rules that have to be followed that we have agreed to as a government with the Commissioner's position and tax laws and federal requirements that we have to abide by. I would certainly welcome any suggestions that the Member has, if he wants us to consider putting the building up for sale. We would have to see what the circumstances around that would be and what the requirements that we would have to follow are. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister for that offer. I just want to put it officially on the record. Would the Minister be willing to entertain a meeting, if I can put one together, to discuss this very matter about looking at addressing possibly the Engle house as the new Commissioner's house and, of course, further discussions about selling the present Commissioner's house even though it is sitting vacant for four to five years? If he would be willing to agree to a meeting, that would be great. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, if the Member would care to put it in writing, I would certainly consider it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

Replies to Opening Address

MR. JACOBSON'S REPLY

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address the Assembly on the subject of devolution resource revenue sharing and why it is so important to the riding I represent in the Inuvialuit.

In my riding, we have some serious social and economic problems. For example, Canada in 1991 had a graduation rate of 61.8 percent. The Northwest Territories had 59.9 percent. In the Inuvialuit settlement region, including all students, was 53.8 percent, a difference of 6.1 in the Northwest Territories and 8 percent in Canada. By 2009, it increased to 17.8 percent to 79.6. The Northwest Territories increased 9.4 to 69.3 percent and the Inuvialuit settlement region went only 5.5 percent to 57.7. Statistics on Inuvialuit graduates have been only collected since 2004 and to 2009, graduation rates 38.6 percent, a difference of 34 percent within Canada; 30.7 percent of the Northwest Territories, almost twice the difference, Mr. Speaker.

There is also a dependency on the government for income support, low income levels in the region with average medium family income in 2006 in small Inuvialuit communities of Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok and Sachs Harbour of \$37,395 compared to Canada's \$63,600, 1.7 times greater in the Northwest Territories of \$88,800, 2.4 times greater than those in the communities. This is also coupled by a high cost of living for these four small communities that have an average of twice the cost of living compared to here in Yellowknife. In reviewing education income levels, disturbing trend, Mr. Speaker, but curing the gap between Inuvialuit and territorial, national levels are widening. This means the efforts of this government do not focus on reducing the cost of living or improving the ability and skills so the next generation is able to achieve higher standards of living.

Communities still continue to pursue subsistence harvesting to close the income gap to feed their families. However, there is a concern and dependency on social housing, and income support reduces the motivation of individuals to improve their education, employment skills and seek meaningful employment. This is likely further

coupled by the lack of economic activity in the region. With the Inuvialuit beneficiaries, the unemployment rate is 2.5 times higher than the Northwest Territories rates and three times higher than Canada's unemployment rates. The Inuvialuit culture remains strong, mainly through the dedication of our elders and growing interest of Inuvialuit youth. However, the youth of Inuvialuktun continues to decline, with 37 percent of Inuvialuit fluent in the language in 1984 to 23 percent in 2009.

There are also severe health and social problems in the communities, in particular addiction to alcohol and drugs. In our home community, last year's survey conducted by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation of close to 90 percent of people surveyed responded they experienced problems of addictions. This is something wrong, Mr. Speaker. The Inuvialuit are seeking to improve the standard of living. I would say the primary goal as set out in the Inuvialuit Final Agreement that we will continue to work towards the achievement of the goal without support of this government or other Aboriginal governments.

Devolution will provide additional resources that can be used to provide better education to address all social problems, but more importantly, to use as a tool to control major economic decisions. Implemented properly, we can control the resources that will generate wealth for all the people of the Northwest Territories including additional revenues for the Northwest Territories governments, both public and Aboriginal.

As you are aware, negotiation of the devolution of powers from the federal government to the North has always been difficult, particularly the relationship of land resources in which are a great concern to Aboriginal people. The Inuvialuit have consistently participated in these negotiations since the signing of the Northern Accord 20 years ago. Throughout this period, the Inuvialuit represented their interests and at times the negotiation process was stopped because there were differences between the parties. Last time the negotiations were halted, in 2007, the Government of the Northwest Territories refused the final offer from the Government of Canada. The Inuvialuit supported the Government of the Northwest Territories efforts to obtain a better deal and also agreed to a revenue sharing agreement-in-principle. The Government of the Northwest Territories did not achieve that all positions that there were some improvements, of course, and some realities we must all face.

The sharing of wealth, since 2007 the world economy has crashed; an economic downturn we've never seen and never known. Governments are continuing to address the problem by stimulating the economy. Canada is in no position today to increase the share of revenues but did

achieve an equalization formula that is provided for a new sharing arrangement for the resource revenues. It is extremely unlikely at the time that the Northwest Territories will be able to get a special deal or change the formula until the economy can support and improve transfer payments for resource sharing.

In regards to sharing the revenues, the Aboriginal people's current revenue sharing arrangement, the Inuvialuit are part of 25 percent net fiscal benefit. The revenue sharing AIP also allows the sharing arrangement to be revisited through the context of self-government and transfer payments to the Aboriginal governments. These revenues will help the Aboriginal governments to address many social and education disparities and continue to strengthen their cultures and languages. Is it enough? No, Mr. Speaker, but it's a start.

With an improved economy and control of the economy, other revenues negotiated with the Government of the Northwest Territories we should engage Aboriginal governments to fully achieve arrangements to share the government revenues and relationships and responsibilities. Again, there is no provision in the current AIP that allows for a revenue sharing arrangement to be negotiated before the final agreement between the Aboriginal governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories. These bilateral negotiations should begin as soon as possible to achieve mutually and beneficial arrangements for all.

The sharing of powers, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement was the first land claim agreement in the Northwest Territories and the fourth comprehensive land claim agreement in Canada. Since 1984 the Inuvialuit have worked hard to ensure the goals of the IFA be implemented with the spirit and intent of that agreement. That has not been an easy task, Mr. Speaker. Since 2007 we have encouraged our Government of the Northwest Territories to begin negotiations of the bilateral agreement of sharing of responsibilities related to the land, resources and water. The Government of the Northwest Territories refused to enter these negotiations until the AIP was signed and this created some discomfort with the Inuvialuit and other Aboriginal groups, because at the same time the Government of Canada proposed to reform regulatory systems that may impact the provisions of the land claim.

We have promoted the devolution and the instrument to take control over our land and resources, but we're not working together to meet this goal. Negotiations between the Aboriginal governments, the power sharing arrangements should begin now to provide the necessary to all stakeholders, including industry and the authorities under the stakeholders the devolution agreement will be exercised in a responsible manner and

improve implementation of the treaty and land claim arrangements.

Again, a whole chapter of the devolution agreement and the principle of obligations that the Government of the Northwest Territories be negotiating bilateral agreements to clear evidence that these negotiations are going to be difficult should motivate the Government of the Northwest Territories to engage Aboriginal governments immediately. Aboriginal peoples and representative governments, the complementary of the world land claim of the agreements of opportunity to continue to work with the federal and territorial governments to clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities. The Inuvialuit will continue to protect the provisions of their land claim agreement and believe that they ought to be the primary beneficiaries of wealth generated by the resource development and devolution agreement is one step to achieving this objective.

This does not preclude others from making money, but impacts the Inuvialuit as a people of their region that face the social and cultural impacts of employment, business opportunities and programs, services that will help raise the living standards and manage potential impacts.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make it clear to this Assembly that I do support the devolution agreement-in-principle and I'd strongly encourage the Premier to initiate discussions with further bilateral agreements between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Aboriginal peoples necessary in order to conclude the final agreement. Mr. Speaker, we must work together for the betterment of all the people in the Northwest Territories and make sure that everybody comes away from the table wanting to work together in an open-handed approach and not taking things personally. At the end of the day we're here for our people, our people are suffering and this is a good way to help the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 147-16(5):
CARIBOU FOREVER – OUR HERITAGE,
OUR RESPONSIBILITY,
A BARREN-GROUND CARIBOU MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY FOR THE NWT 2011-2015, DRAFT

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled Caribou Forever - Our Heritage, Our Responsibility,

A Barren-Ground Caribou Management Strategy for the Northwest Territories 2011-2015, Draft, February 2011. Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 148-16(5):
TESTIMONIALS FROM KAW TAY WHEE
STUDENTS REGARDING THE
HEALTHY FOOD FOR LEARNING PROGRAM

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table today testimonials and drawings from 16 of the young students at Dettah's Kaw Tay Whee School describing the enormous benefits they've received from the recently cancelled Healthy Food for Learning school nutrition program.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 15, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 39-16(5):
EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, February 28, 2011, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that the GNWT develop a reliable, trustworthy and confidential measuring tool to verify the percentage of persons with a disability within the GNWT workforce;

And further, that the Government of the Northwest Territories reassess and, if necessary, revise the staffing priorities assigned to the affirmative action groups identified in Section 101 of the GNWT Human Resources Manual to ensure the priority assigned to persons with disabilities relative to the other groups is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Affirmative Action Policy and is adequate to support the goal of a representative public service;

And furthermore, that the GNWT develop a plan to ensure that the percentage of persons with a disability employed by this government be maintained at, or increased to, no less than 5 percent of the total workforce within five years of the date of this motion;

And furthermore, that the government report back to this Assembly within 120 days as to the government's plan to achieve the goals of this motion, and each five years thereafter.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

Motions

MOTION 37-16(5):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE
TO FEBRUARY 28, 2011,
CARRIED

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Deh Cho, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, February 24, 2011, it shall be adjourned until Monday, February 28, 2011;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to February 28, 2011, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is being called.

---Carried

The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MOTION 38-16(5):
SENIORS HOME REPAIR PROGRAM,
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS seniors are valued and respected members of our communities who have contributed throughout their lives and deserve our support to live independently as long as they are able;

AND WHEREAS the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is currently undertaking a review of its programs and services;

AND WHEREAS most communities in the Northwest Territories do not have independent housing units specially designed for seniors;

AND WHEREAS many seniors are on fixed incomes and, therefore, especially vulnerable to increases in the cost of living;

AND WHEREAS seniors are especially at risk when their homes fall into disrepair and many of them are not able to perform repairs themselves;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Sahtu, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends the NWT Housing Corporation reintroduce a home maintenance and repair program for seniors.

Mahsi cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Motion is on the floor. Motion is in order. To the motion. The honourable Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the course of the last three or four years when the NWT Housing Corporation amalgamated its programs and services into four distinct packages, they had some real nice acronyms: HELP, CARE, et cetera. What it didn't address was the need for seniors in those programming packages. Previously we had a strong seniors package within the NWT Housing Corporation. There was the Elders on the Land Program, some repairs programs, some maintenance programs. They were all distinct to help seniors in our communities and regions.

The last couple of years I have found that as I deal with seniors' issues, I support them as they apply for Housing Corporation programs and services and I keep getting the response that there's no specific seniors program that covers them at all. I go to ask further and they say, in reality, there are no seniors program, it was all deleted. Their applications are based on the general population.

I don't think it's fair. I think that we had distinct seniors and elders programming for the very reason to take care of our elders and seniors. I really think it was an oversight, a mistake by the Housing Corporation to lump them together with the general population. I don't think they really thought this through.

There are many issues that myself as MLA and other Regular Members, and even the Ministers as MLAs themselves address many of the same concerns I'm sure in their specific ridings. I believe that we should move back to some distinct senior repairs and maintenance programming at the NWT Housing Corporation.

A lot of the issues that are out there are that they must address arrears. I spoke about having an independent appeals system to address arrears but our seniors' arrears that are showing up are 20 years old. It counts against them when they apply for programming. I'm not too sure how this works, but somewhere in our laws and legislation, it might be federal, we have a statute of limitations that's only seven years. I don't know how they can apply something that happened 20 or 30 years ago against our seniors. That's a real inequity there and it's not really fair. I believe that must be addressed.

I don't want to go too much further other than there's a need that's missing. It worked before. I believe we should introduce it. I look to the support of my colleagues and this House in urging our government to reintroduce this program and make it work for our seniors and elders in our communities.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Member for Nahendeh for developing and asking me to consider seconding this. I'm very pleased to second the motion.

I've also looked at the seniors home repair initiatives that this Housing Corporation has put into our communities. It makes it quite difficult, even though the programs are there, for the seniors to apply to them and receive help. Sometimes they're lucky, they can get the support. Sometimes they miss out because they don't understand the applications or the process itself. It's quite foreign to them. Some of them don't understand the policies. There are some elders that are quite frustrated because of other issues that they're unaware of or just the nature of living in small communities that prevent them from taking a step further in their application being accepted or looked at.

There were a lot of calls from my communities, especially Fort Good Hope where a lot of elders needed help. For example, the land issue of tenure becomes a real problem for the elders. When I go into the communities of the Sahtu and I go into Fort Good Hope, for example, they say we need our house fixed and Housing isn't there. I explain to them that they need to put an application together and need to get that land tenure into MACA so that Housing can look at the application and go ahead. They give me quite a lecture on land and housing and when housing was first introduced into the communities.

If we could look at something that's comprehensive, that seniors can go there and have one dedicated personnel from Housing Corporation just to work with the seniors, because right now we have the resources that work right across the board and sometimes we have personnel from the Housing Corporation that go into Deline. Sometimes the person doesn't have a translator or interpreter with them. They go into the house and try to explain a program, as complex as we have them or as simple as we have them, to an elder that doesn't quite understand English. So the elder nods his head or doesn't quite know what's going on. I have run into a few occasions in Deline where the Housing Corporation has gone into some of the homes there and the comments I hear back from the elders I say, well, did Housing come? They say, eh-heh. Did they talk to you? They say, eh-heh. What did you understand? They say, don't know, they just went out. So there's a real communication issue there with housing programs.

We need to take our time with these elders. The Sahtu has the highest core need in the region. I think that a seniors housing program can work. It takes a little more time with them and I think we

need to put it in a separate area where they can just look after seniors and work with seniors and help them out.

Some of the programs are only so much dollars in each community and it's first-come first-serve sometimes. Sometimes some of the houses are well beyond the dollars that are dedicated for a program, so the department has to look at how much money can be spent there.

Just in closing, the one incident that it brings to mind right now is an elder in Fort Good Hope -- and the Minister is well aware of this -- is an elder that lived on the land, he was well in his 70s or 80s, he left for his family on the land and his house froze up. The Housing Corporation did go there, and there was nobody there. The elder came back to a frozen line, sewer. This was late December. He went to see the Housing Corporation and apparently the person that's responsible for Fort Good Hope and that area went on holidays for a couple of weeks, so the elder had to live in his house without any running water or the use of a flush toilet. Things like that are nobody's fault, it's just how things have worked out.

I really think this government needs to put some emphasis on our seniors, on our elders, into the house and put a program like this. I support this motion 110 percent.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I too will support this motion. I have a few reasons for wanting to see a program like this go. The main one is that I think we should focus on getting elders' homes fixed, because of some of the things that Mr. Menicoche talked about. Mainly because in the small communities they do have fixed incomes and they can't afford to fix their house. Even individuals that are working and would be considered working poor, actually have more income than most of the seniors who are living off of old age security.

The other thing is if we don't address the issue of the seniors, and we're not addressing it quickly enough with the CARE program, which they are eligible for but not frequent enough or there's not as many CARE programs given out to the elders. I'm of the belief that all elders who have homes that they have to maintain their homes should be kept up to date and programs should be put in place to do that to ensure that their houses don't fall beyond economical repair.

Just the whole idea of houses falling behind economic repair and the ramifications of that is quite something, actually. If a unit falls beyond economical repair, meaning that it's costing more than 75 percent of the full value of the replacement of that unit, the government won't put money into it.

It just doesn't make sense to because it's beyond economic repair. But the senior will not move. So we have the option of having the senior either at one point saying the house is so poor that we're going to have to build you a new house, which is going to be expensive; or we're going to put you in residential care, which is going to be more expensive; or let the senior live in a dilapidated house. Those are the options as I see it.

If we put this program in place I think we will save these homes. We'll save the government a lot of money in the future. And we will also make the first little move towards trying to develop markets in small communities, because markets in small communities would make it possible for the seniors to actually put money into their own home, their own money, because when there's a market then that is considered equity as opposed to a non-market community where you can't really accumulate equity.

I think elders owning their own home, that in general is something that is very good for this government. It's economical for us as well. A lot of times the elders, as they get older, instead of moving into residential care they have somebody move in with them. So it's always good to have a good unit for that to happen.

I'll support the motion. I'm very pleased that the MLA for Nahendeh brought this motion forward. I look forward to the vote.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. To the motion. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am totally in support of this motion. I think for me there are two main reasons why I believe that this motion ought to be passed and taken action on. The first one is, I think, respect for our elders and our seniors. I think the fact that we at the moment lump them all together for home maintenance and repair is not a sign of disrespect, but we are not respecting them as we should.

The second issue for me is that I believe, and I believe I've heard the government say, that we want to keep our seniors in their homes as much as possible. We want to keep everybody in their homes as long as possible. I think if we have targeted funding for seniors' home repair and maintenance, as Mr. Beaulieu has stated, their homes will remain habitable a lot longer.

We don't want to take seniors out of their homes and put them into institutions. We, first of all, don't have the spaces or institutions where we can put them. Secondly, I don't think anybody wants to go to an institution until they absolutely have to.

I believe a targeted fund for seniors' home repair and maintenance is something which will assist us in many ways. It will be more cost efficient than if

we don't do it. I think it would be relatively easy for the Housing Corporation to determine how many seniors we do currently look after to a certain extent. Take that percentage of the users of the Housing Corporation's programs, target that percentage of funding to seniors' home repair and maintenance. It should be a fairly simple thing to do.

The last time that we had seniors programs was in 2005, 2006, and the last numbers that we've got indicate that seniors did take up on seniors programs quite a bit. Preventative maintenance in the Sahtu, 60; South Slave, 87; North Slave, 104; Nahendeh, 27; and Beaufort-Delta, 89. Those are large numbers, Mr. Speaker, and I think it indicates that we have seniors who do want to stay in their own home, they do want their home to be comfortable, and they're willing to look after it but they need some assistance. In my view, targeting funding for seniors particularly will accomplish that goal. I am in support of the motion. I urge my colleagues to be in support also. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be voting for this excellent motion here today. I want to thank Mr. Menicoche for bringing it forward. Mr. Menicoche, I think, truly hits upon a nerve that should be a value that we wear on our chest every single day here. I mean, this Assembly quite often talks about its respect for elders and our seniors, and this motion replies to that call for action. It says that we should be helping people age in place. Aging in place is a philosophy out there to ensure that aging people are allowed to stay as independent as possible with the support of those around you, and at time that actually means government coming to the assistance to ensure that we help people age in place. In some particular cases that means home repairs, sometimes it means changing the old style bathtub into more of an accessible style or just updating hand railing and changing doors.

Mr. Speaker, it's great value when we can allow a senior or an elder to be able to stay in their own home and not take away that independence. Mr. Speaker, it's kind of like caging their spirit when you send them off to an institution or seniors home. I've heard the complaint from many seniors that there's no way that they're leaving their house, at least on their own two feet. It's like taking their heart from their chest. To allow them to live in poor, unhealthy conditions, is society allowing to stand by and saying, but that's okay. I believe that's wrong. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to see the spirit ripped out of seniors who can live on their own, and sometimes it's in these unhealthy conditions that have been

mentioned here that I think we could be doing a lot for.

Mr. Speaker, when a senior loses their house because it's become either unaffordable or, of course, its maintenance has fallen into such disrepair, I've heard many people have referred to it as it's like losing a loved one; the pain of being shipped off into a new place. Now, there are seniors' homes and they're designed for certain reasons, but I think, by and large, we can allow ourselves to find ways to continue to support our elders in a loving way that shows them the respect and dignity they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, this motion is more than just home repair, it's speaks to the spirit and the independence of our seniors and our elders and that can't be lost. Mr. Speaker, again, I'll be supporting the motion. I look forward to the rest of my colleagues in this as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've outlined on several occasions in the past that under some of the new programs, seniors are eligible for more funding. Under the old Senior Citizens Home Repair they were eligible for up to \$20,000 in funding. The funding we have nowadays is based on income, so a lot of seniors that qualify have very low incomes, so they qualify for higher amounts of assistance. Then under the Preventative Maintenance Program the seniors are eligible for up to \$2,000 each year.

Under the priority allocation and selection system, seniors and disabled persons receive extra points, so obviously they're given priority ranking. Under the old program, forgiveness was fixed at 10 years and under the CARE program it's between one and 10 years, depending on the amount of money received. So under the old program you had to wait 10 years before you were eligible to apply again. Under the new program, depending on how long, up to three years you could possibly apply for programs, so that would allow more work to be done on your unit.

In 2010, Mr. Speaker, there was 191 CARE applicants that were approved across the Northwest Territories; 136, or 71 percent of those, were seniors. Under the Preventative Maintenance Program 94 applicants were approved. Of those 94, 86, or 90 percent of those, were seniors. So that obviously shows that we recognize the importance of seniors and we respect our seniors and we treat them the way they should be treated.

Mr. Speaker, we also deliver some programs that are funded by CMHC that seniors can take advantage of. There's the Emergency Repair Program. It provides up to \$11,000 in assistance to

low-income homeowners to undertake emergency repairs. We have the Home Adaptation for Seniors Independence Program that we deliver on behalf of CMHC, and it allows homeowners and landlords to pay for minor home adaptations to enable low-income seniors to live independently in their homes. There's also the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for homeowners. It provides financial assistance to low-income homeowners who own and occupy their house, in order to enable them to make some repairs to their house to meet a minimal level of health and safety.

However, Mr. Speaker, having said all that, we recognize that it may be beneficial if there are programs targeted specifically at seniors, and in recognition of this I have directed the officials at the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to take some steps in advance of our next intake period, which is coming up next September, and we plan on introducing a targeted intake process for seniors that apply for all Housing Choices programs, including opportunities for seniors in each community to meet with district staff and be made aware of all the housing situations that are available to them. We want to implement a targeted communications strategy for seniors so they're aware of all the programs that are available to seniors. We can allocate a portion of funding under CARE to seniors home repair as well as the Preventative Maintenance Program, and I think that's one of the things that this motion speaks to. I think in taking these steps, we can increase the awareness of seniors of some of the programs that are made available to them and the enhanced benefits they can receive under our new program.

As well, as all Members know, Housing Choices is undergoing a full evaluation of all the programs that we offer. We see this as a way of providing an improved understanding of how the NWT Housing Corporation can better serve all residents, seniors included, and make some possible adjustments as need be.

Because, Mr. Speaker, this is a recommendation to Cabinet, we will be abstaining from the vote. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I'll allow the mover of the motion closing comments. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleagues for their support. As well, I'd like to appreciate the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation for being proactive on this issue, but certainly there's a gap in our programming. There's a need here or else a motion like this would never have been discussed in our committee system and with other colleagues.

For instance, I've got a senior that exhausted all the programs the Minister spoke about, so how do we

address his concerns? We're going to have to come up with some kind of new program or a targeted program and try to work our way around it. There are many other issues that the seniors face, Mr. Speaker. They've got arrears issues that must be addressed. Like I said, they're often many, many years old, and what are they doing there? You know, they've got to be exhausted.

In the end, Mr. Speaker, it is our job as a government to make life a little bit easier and to improve life in the communities. That's what this motion does. It's urging government to look; we've got to refine this. There's apparently a gap, let's work towards closing it. Let's help those that are in need directly and not just make it a bureaucratic nightmare and say, sorry, you've exhausted all the programming, you're not eligible, we cannot replace your furnace or your hot water tank at all.

With that, Mr. Speaker, and in closing, I'd like to ask for a recorded vote on this motion. Mahsi cho.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Member is asking for a recorded vote. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Bromley, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. SPEAKER: All those opposed to the motion, please stand. All those abstaining from the motion, please stand.

CLERK OF OPERATIONS (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Lafferty; Ms. Lee; Mr. Miltenberger; Mr. Roland; Mr. McLeod, Deh Cho; Mr. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes; Mr. McLeod, Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: The results of the recorded vote: in favour, nine; opposed, zero; abstained, seven. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills.

Colleagues, I want to take a moment to thank all of the Pages that have worked for us over this past week. They are doing a great job. In particular, I would like to recognize two Pages from Hay River South from my colleague's riding, Taylor Price and Morgan Giroux. I would also like to thank chaperone Linda Theriault for being here all week chaperoning for the Pages.

---Applause

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project; Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of

Members' Compensation and Benefits; Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits – What We Heard; Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy; Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future"; Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts Over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010; Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates 2011-2012; Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act; Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act; Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act; Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act; Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights; Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights; Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement, with Mr. Abernethy in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you. I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. In front of us today are tabled documents 4, 30, 38, 62, 75, 103, 133, 135; Bills 4, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20; and Ministers' statements 65 and 88. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates, 2011-2012, and do the departments of Public Works, Executive and, time permitting, hear some remarks from Finance.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. With that, we will take a short break and return with Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates, 2011-2012.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): I call the Committee of the Whole back to order. Prior to going on break, we had agreed to Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates, 2011-2012. We were going to go with Public Works, and then we were going to go with the Executive and, time permitting, Finance.

We will go to Public Works. Minister of Public Works, do you have some general or opening comments you would like to make?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

I am pleased to present the Department of Public Works and Services' main estimates for the fiscal year 2011-12.

The main estimates propose a departmental operations and maintenance budget for 2011-12 of \$93 million which represents an increase of \$224,000, or 2 percent, in O and M funding over 2010-11. In addition, the department has an approved infrastructure investment plan of \$14.3 million for 2011-12.

Public Works and Services is an essential partner in the achievement of government-wide goals, while achieving the best value for government, communities, businesses and residents. The department achieves this through support and leadership in the areas of:

- asset management,
- information and communication technology,
- procurement,
- records management,
- community fuel provision, and
- electrical and mechanical safety.

The department also manages an additional \$196 million for projects and services on behalf of its clients through revolving funds, chargebacks and capital transfers. These funds are used to provide:

- computer and data communications for government offices;
- fuel services for residents, businesses and the NWT Power Corporation in 20 communities; and
- deliver capital infrastructure for our clients.

In response to priorities set by the 16th Legislative Assembly, and specifically the stated priority of achieving effective and efficient government, Public Works and Services has led a change in the way the GNWT approaches how we plan for and acquire public infrastructure. The department has implemented changes to the capital planning process with all major projects subject to a more rigorous and detailed review before being considered for approval in the GNWT's infrastructure acquisition plan. As a result of these changes, we are seeing new projects moving more consistently through design and construction on time and on budget.

In support of the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative and the government's direction to establish financial shared services centres, Public Works and

Services' main estimates include \$300,000 in funding in 2011-12 to assist the Department of Finance in the implementation of this initiative. The funding will be used to provide accommodations for financial shared services. Additionally, to support and complement the overall shared services initiative, Public Works and Services is taking a lead role in developing a model for shared procurement services.

Public Works and Services completed the consolidation of maintenance for GNWT building assets in 2010-11. The department now has direct responsibility for the operation and maintenance of 795 buildings in 33 communities on behalf of client departments, boards and agencies.

Looking forward, the consolidation of maintenance provides Public Works and Services with the opportunity to focus on developing and further improving the delivery of our maintenance services, in particular in the small remote communities.

In 2010-11, PWS established indeterminate settlement maintainer positions in the communities of Ulukhaktok, Sachs Harbour, Wrigley, Fort Resolution, Behchoko and Tulita as well as one new electrician position in the community of Inuvik. I am pleased to report five of the six settlement maintainer positions are now full and recruitment for the remaining position remains a priority. These positions, together with the 11 apprentice positions established by the department over the past four years, will enable the department to better manage the maintenance activities and availability of resources at the community level, while having more control over the cost and quality of the services provided. It will also allow PWS to be more proactive in completing its mandate of building maintenance and better support the department in complying with code mandated checks and repairs and completing deferred maintenance requirements.

In 2011-12, facility risk management safety and the Deferred Maintenance Program will remain a key area of focus in the department. Through this initiative, PWS is addressing the maintenance requirements to improve the useful life of our existing government buildings.

In the GNWT's main estimates, Public Works and Services has identified \$3 million for deferred maintenance for 2011-12. Including the \$5 million in capital approved for this program, this brings our total investment in addressing deferred maintenance to \$34 million over the past four years.

As a result of this investment in our infrastructure, the GNWT will have reduced its \$470 million deficit in deferred maintenance to \$325 million by the end of this fiscal year. This represents a reduction of \$145 million since this program was initiated in 2008-09. PWS has accomplished this through coordination of deferred maintenance projects with

major and minor capital projects, regular operations and maintenance funding and projects managed under the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund.

In 2010-11, responsibility and funding for utility payment and tracking for GNWT owned buildings transferred from program departments and was consolidated in Public Works and Services. This will allow for active tracking of utility expenses government-wide and feed into current energy conservation projects.

The department has invested in several energy conservation initiatives to reduce the GNWT's energy consumption and dependence on fossil fuels. Through the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund, Public Works will invest \$3.4 million in energy conservation and efficiency projects on GNWT infrastructure throughout the NWT in 2011-12. Examples of the projects completed to date under this initiative include the electric boiler conversions in Fort Smith, installation of central biomass heating plants for schools in Hay River and numerous energy-efficient lighting and building retrofits throughout the NWT. These projects are in full operation and generating ongoing savings for the GNWT as well as reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. For 2011-2012, PWS plans to invest in energy initiatives through projects such as the addition of a biomass heating capacity to the central steam plant in Fort Simpson.

I am pleased to report that the department has already seen the benefits of energy conservation initiatives. PWS is projecting a savings of \$775,000 in energy costs in the 2010-2011 fiscal year. With the proven savings resulting from sound energy investments with solid payback potential, Public Works and Services anticipates that in 2011-12 the GNWT will be in a position to establish a capital asset retrofit program as partially self-funded through realized savings on an annual basis. The department will continue to monitor the performance of completed energy conservation and biomass projects and explore opportunities for further investment under the program.

In keeping with our ongoing efforts to improve the information technology support and services provided by the Technology Service Centre, the department is in the final stages of completing the DCN contract renewal process. With a resulting network implementation, the GNWT will be in a position to benefit from improved services and cost savings. Some of the key benefits anticipated with the new contract include:

- lower costs per unit for bandwidth access;
- service delivery improvements in satellite served communities;
- new technology will provide increased bandwidth to meet client demands to support delivery of programs and services;

- improved performance in terms of network speed and capacity for all communities served by the network.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to mention the provision of essential fuel services through the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund. Public Works and Services funds a provision of heating fuel and gasoline in communities where self-sufficient commercial operations do not exist. In doing so, the department is helping to develop independent small businesses to distribute fuel within our communities. In the response to the challenge of rising fuel prices, the petroleum products division is pursuing operational efficiencies along with supply and transportation alternatives to stabilize the cost of fuel products in the communities served by the program.

To that end, the petroleum products division has contracted the summer 2011 supply and transportation of petroleum products to a northern marine carrier and has established three-year contracts with local northern companies for the resupply of petroleum products by road. Public Works and Services continues to be responsive to its many clients and strives to provide high-quality services to departments and the people of the Northwest Territories. The budget that we will be reviewing today will contribute to achieving this objective.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks and I would be happy to answer any questions the Members may have. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes I would, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Does committee agree that we allow the Minister to bring his witnesses into the Chamber?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, if I could please get you to escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Thank you. Mr. McLeod, if I could please get you to introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left I have Paul Guy, deputy minister of Public Works and Services, and on my right I have Ms. Laurie Gault, director of the Technical Services Centre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you. As with other departments, we'll go through the Members and have them do opening comments and then we'll go to the Minister at the end for his responses. Are there any general comments? Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to start off with thanking the Minister in regard to getting the maintainers positions in Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok and I hope that it's five out of the six, I hope it's not the sixth person in one of my communities I represent that has been hired and they're still looking for who will provide the support to the settlement maintainers.

Getting back to the PWS with the digital communications network contract, it expires in September 2011. The highlight of the importance and how we need the high speed Internet in the communities for the schools, for the nursing stations, for the community itself and all communities, I just hope they can reach that prior to it expiring and having the old blackout days in regard to Internet. The health centres really do need that and we utilize the program with telehealth.

The remote water quality monitoring treatment plants for Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk, I thank the Minister and we look forward to completing the infrastructure. The review for Sachs Harbour water supply system I hope we can get that sorted out if it's not been sorted out already. Reviewing aviation fuel facilities and policies for the airports for Sachs and Ulukhaktok and Paulatuk is a good start and then replacement of the maintenance shop up in my hometown of Tuktoyaktuk, that's probably been since the 1960s and it's good to see that we have our money in the capital plan to replace that building, because the worker there... That building is so old it's almost in the ocean.

Getting back into establishing of the gasoline that you're selling to the Northern Stores, is that going to be directly from the government, PWS to the Northern Stores and is it going to affect the people directly as per litre, per gallon of fuel or heating fuel or gasoline in all communities? Because gasoline in the community of Tuk is \$1.56 a litre and that's unacceptable for the pricing. I'm hoping the Minister can help us that way if it's directly to the Northern Stores or Co-ops or whoever's selling the gas that we could, it impacts the people directly.

Thank you for letting me speak to the opening comments. I look forward to the page by page.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Next on my list is Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a couple of comments. I'll start with the Minister's statement that we've changed how we plan and acquire public infrastructure and made changes to the capital planning process. I think I said last year, and possibly the year before, that I'm really pleased that we've made these changes. I look forward to hearing from the Minister in this second year of the new capital planning process whether or not he thinks that it was a beneficial move. I know that was his opinion last year, but we had a hugely busy

construction season in 2010-2011 so I'd be interested to know whether or not he's as positive about these new changes as he was last year.

I was really pleased to hear about the settlement maintainer positions. I think this is absolutely the way we need to go and I would hope that this would be a path that we're going to continue on and that we're going to try to get settlement maintainer positions in more than just the six that we've already targeted. In looking after buildings, whether they be government buildings or otherwise, it certainly is a huge advantage to have a maintainer in the community and not have to bring somebody in.

I was really pleased to see the numbers about the reduction in our deferred maintenance costs. We've gone down a great deal and I've told the Minister before, and I will say it again, but I think attacking our deferred maintenance deficit is absolutely the way that we need to go. I think from this I see that it's paying off.

We were advised last year, and I guess that it has been accomplished in the 2010-2011 budget year, that we're going to consolidate payment and tracking for utilities. I guess I would like to know from the Minister whether or not it seems to be working. I know it's really on, but I imagine there's a bit of a sense of whether or not it's going to be a beneficial change.

I'm pleased to see that we are continuing to invest in energy conservation and efficiency projects. Again, I think that's the way we should be going. I was particularly pleased to see that it looks as though, because of the energy efficiencies that we're putting in place, the Capital Asset Retrofit Program is going to be partially self-funded, if not this next budget year then the one afterwards. That to me is just another indication that we're on the right path.

I am concerned about the bandwidth and the IT requirements that we have within the government. Two departments particularly are increasing their requirements probably daily. Education and Health and Social Services are two huge users of IT and are adding more all the time. I'm interested in hearing, when we get to the page, how the department is handling the increased demand on our IT services and particularly on our bandwidth.

As usual, I think PWS does a good job and I'm pleased with what I heard from the Minister and look forward to the detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next on my list is Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a few comments with regard to Public Works and Services, especially the settlement maintainer position. When I did my last tour of Wrigley in January, that position

had still not been staffed. I see that almost 90 percent have been staffed, so if the Minister could let me know if the one in Wrigley was successful in being staffed. It's something important to the community of Wrigley -- it always has been -- and I'm glad the department has returned that position to Wrigley. The importance of it, as the Members have already explained, is we had a freeze-up of I think it was the water truck two or three weeks ago and that's something that could have been prevented had the settlement maintainer been there. A role like that is not just for the settlement; it's fire trucks and anything else that requires at least some level of expertise to look at. The hope is that this person will find in getting something running or maintaining it is just for the betterment of the community. I think one of the words that the Minister used in his opening remarks was being proactive. I certainly look for that position to be staffed and it will certainly be a positive move for the community of Wrigley.

I only want to bring up one other thing. I wrote the Minister on a couple of occasions about the Public Works and Services office in Fort Simpson. They do get their vehicles maintained by the Department of Transportation. I'm thoroughly against that. I oppose that. I do believe we have a policy in utilizing local businesses. There is an automotive business in Fort Simpson that can maintain light vehicles. I would urge the Minister to review that and look at it and say, yeah, okay, Public Works and Services is going to have to use and support local businesses. It's a proud policy that we have and I'm not too sure why they're not implementing that in Fort Simpson. If the Minister has some legitimate reasoning for it he can also explain to me how it works in other regions, because I'm certain that's not the case in other regions. We have to be consistent in delivering our policy. I believe that this department's got to do the same as well.

Public Works and Services has been instrumental in maintaining a lot of infrastructure in the communities. I just want to say kudos to the staff, as well, because when I do my travelling to the communities, I see the staff travelling to the communities, providing the maintenance work to the schools and health centres and keeping our small communities up and running. That's just my brief opening remarks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Next on my list is Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start off by saying that I appreciate this department's achievement in keeping their budget on track. Having said that, I disagree with the Minister's Department of Transportation going up 6 percent when the government's only going up 3 percent, especially given the proven track record of Public Works and Services achieving reductions in

costs and actually saving this government money. That is where we want to be investing, and aggressively. We know full well what's happening to the cost of fuel and it looks like we're on an accelerated rise again here. The window of opportunity we know is almost certainly brief and we can't afford to miss it. This department had an opportunity here to act more aggressively, given the considerable expertise and accomplishments they've developed in this area.

I want to say that I appreciate the consolidation of maintenance for GNWT buildings and the developing and further improvement of the delivery of maintenance services. I am curious about how in particular will the benefits of this consolidation be realized.

I am very supportive of the settlement manager positions. An electrician seems like a great score for Inuvik. I'm very curious about the 11 apprenticeship positions established by the department over the last four years. I'm wondering how long an apprenticeship is. If we've had these for four years, does this mean that some of them have completed their apprenticeship? Where have they settled? I'm interested in what their areas of skill are. I'm interested in what this translates to in numbers of apprentices we're able to train. I think that's a great program. I've said the same thing about the Housing Corporation. I'd like to know what skills are represented in our apprenticeships and what the turnover is on them and whether they're actually staying in our communities.

The investment and infrastructure that's reduced our deferred maintenance I think is an accomplishment that needs to be recognized and applauded. The consolidation of utility payments within this department is probably a good piece of work, but again this will allow for accurate tracking and feed into current energy conservation projects. I'm curious how, again, you expect to achieve this. What are the possibilities there?

It's no surprise that I think it's great that we got the electric boiler conversion done in Fort Smith, in the schools in Hay River and so on. These, of course, are old technology that we're finally getting onto, but this department has shown the initiative to actually get out and do it. All kudos for that.

The numerous other projects are small, but not only are they gaining us but they're developing the trades and skills to do these sorts of things and spreading that knowledge to our communities. I think the same thing in our Housing Corporation when they take this on, biomass heating capacity in Fort Simpson and so on. I'm wondering if it's possible for this department to share their expertise and approach that they've developed with, for example, the NWT Power Corporation, recognizing that we're talking heating and not electricity, but it's the can-do, let's-get-it-done attitude that pays

dividends here. That's what we need from our Power Corporation. Again, old technology that's being used in many areas in Europe.

I think it's great that we start capturing those. The Minister of Finance has promised that we would start a revolving fund capturing the savings and perhaps it's actually going to happen here finally, in the last gasping breaths of our Assembly. I'm happy to see that.

Finally the Minister mentions that he's going to explore opportunities for further investment under this program. That certainly should not be a difficult task.

We certainly have a big need for enhanced and improved bandwidth services, so I hope the department really does get after that. I'm not at all knowledgeable in this area but I recognize the need. I ask the department to indeed do what needs to be done.

The petroleum products division operational efficiencies, we've been hearing about that now for a while and I'm glad to see that's become operations. If the Minister's really looking to help our residents and service our communities, and I thought he had actually committed to doing this, I don't see it in his remarks, perhaps it's happening. I ask again: what about the expansion of the petroleum products division to the PPPD, the petroleum and pellet products division, and start supplying pellets to our communities?

The Green Procurement Policy remains a hollow document and I know this department knows what needs to be done there. I'm hoping that they're getting after it. I'm hoping the Minister will tell me that good work has been done there and they're about to come out with a real Green Procurement Policy and explain how it will be spread throughout the Government of the Northwest Territories.

I'll leave it at that. There's lots of potential in this department. I'll be exploring some of these things in detail, but I'll be looking forward to the Minister's remarks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too am very pleased with some of the reintroduction of some of the settlement maintainers into the communities. One of those positions happens to be in Fort Resolution. I'd like the department to look at the whole issue of apprenticeships. There are 11 apprentices that the Minister indicated in his opening remarks. I think there's room for more. I think every tradesperson should have an apprentice and that the department could work with the Housing Corporation and MACA to maintain houses, buildings, other infrastructure in the community and use tradesmen to do that and apprentices to work with them. I think it's got a lot of

long-term benefits, as far as employment goes for educating people, especially at the community levels. I'm thinking of sort like creating a critical mass by putting the Public Works buildings, the Housing Corporation units, and I know that the Housing Corporation do have their own maintainers and so on, but they can't really afford apprentices, and I'm not sure that this government can really afford apprentices, but I think that we have to bite the bullet at some point and get the apprentices in any event because of the long-term benefits of such actions.

That's one area that I think maybe it's not going to be laid out in this budget, but I think that this department could start working towards trying to achieve that. I think there would be enough kids coming out of school and getting ready for trades that, if we're able to, as some of these apprentices finish their program, putting them into the workforce and, really, this government working as a little bit of a larger unit, I guess, to create a critical mass of work that's needed in the communities so that these apprentices could complete their programs at the community and regional levels or whatever, ultimately to find employment out there, whether it's with departments or with private industry.

I'm happy with the way the deferred maintenance, the whole section of deferred maintenance has gone. I'm assuming at this rate we'll be completed the deferred maintenance that's currently in the books in about 10 years, which obviously would mean there would be more deferred maintenance issues coming up somewhere between now and then, but I would be curious to know if the government has a plan to address deferred maintenance issues as they come. Like some sort of plan so that there's no accumulation of deferred maintenance in the future. I think deferred maintenance is an item that cannot be avoided. At some point you do have to replace a furnace and so on and so forth. It's something that can't be avoided but it's something that this department has done a good job of dealing with, a good job of approaching the whole issue of deferred maintenance with their buildings and addressing the issue. It looks like we see a light at the end of the tunnel here and I'm seeing lots of activity in the communities in this area, so that's very positive.

I think we're moving in the right direction in the cost of fuel as well. I have a community that has the fuel barged in and two years ago the cost was very, very high. Last year some of the cost came down and the department was able to respond by reducing the cost of the fuel to the communities, and I know the communities appreciated the reduction in fuel costs and trying to level out the costs was very positive. I'm pleased with that.

That's all I have, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on my list, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I want to add my few comments to the department. I do want to say the maintainer's position was advertised and filled by a local person in Tulita. I'm very pleased with this program and the other communities that do have it. It's something that we should continue to look at to expand in other communities. It's a valuable program. I do want to thank the department for going ahead with this and filling these positions as quickly as possible.

As my colleague Mr. Beaulieu indicated, that the Apprenticeship Program is something that's very valuable in our small communities and that there is certainly room for more. So I look forward to the department's plans to see where we're going to continue to expand and support our young people to get into the trades. As we know, there is a lack of qualified skilled tradespeople in the North and it's needed so much in our communities, so I continue to support the Apprenticeship Program under the leadership of this department here and certainly look forward to expanding it more.

I do want to talk about the Deferred Maintenance Program. One of the goals is that our department building remain safe and reliable and that the amount of dollars that are going into the Deferred Maintenance Program and also through the energy management initiatives under the Capital Assets Retrofit Fund here. I do want to say that our infrastructure is aging and some of our buildings in and around the Sahtu fall into that category. I make note, for example, in Tulita we have a building that is being used right now by DPW. It's called the trades shop. It's quite old and needs to be demolished and a new one needs to be put up. I noted that the Minister has made some notes on this one here and I look forward to seeing where that trade shop would be replaced as quickly as possible, Mr. Chair.

I do want to say the community of Deline is quite pleased with the new aviation fuel tank at the airport. I think there's quite a bit of interest and that employed a few people at the site similar to the tanks that we received in Fort Good Hope.

Mr. Chair, I wanted to ask if the Minister would make a few comments somewhere in the detailed budget on the Tulita petroleum division office there. The old building there in Tulita needs to be replaced as quickly as possible and I hope that the Minister would show where in the books that this is going to happen. Under the same department of petroleum products, the community resupply, the Bear Lake ice crossing basically increased its weight capacity to 55,000 kilograms. This was a concern for people in Deline, that their fuel might be getting over there late because of the warm weather and the weight of the ice crossing.

Hopefully, there are longer discussions, I guess, long-term views as to how we could rectify this type of concern.

I wanted to add my support to the bandwidth services in our small communities. Education is asking for them. Health is asking for them. Especially with the high cost of health electronic operations now make it more efficient, I could say, in terms of getting the information to the doctors in the larger centres of Yellowknife or Inuvik and we can use the video monitoring and the electronic health records and all that good stuff that goes on with today's technology. Because, you know, the cost of flying people out for medevacs, certainly that's still needed, but sometimes it's good to have someone just go to the health centres and be hooked up to that type of operation so they can get checked out through that avenue. I'll continue to advocate for the health centres, especially in our smaller communities where doctors and nurses are not visiting them as much as we want them to visit those centres.

I want to ask the Minister some detail later on in terms of the health centre in Norman Wells and the long-term care facility, the plan that we have given our support to have a long-term care facility in the Sahtu and the planning that would go to make that a reality. I appreciate the support from this House and from Cabinet to bring this to fruition. At the same time, I understand that the community health centre is also in the plans. It is desperately needed. It has been one of the priorities of the health board as one health centre that is sort of busting at the seams. I have been in that health centre. It is really cramming and replaces that we have some eye care services or the dental health. It is not adequate. However, I guess today it will do to have our services. We have to put up with some of the overcrowding in that facility. I understand that is in the planning stages. Mr. Chairman, I have wanted to say that to continue to work with the department to see how some of these essential services are being looked after in our small communities. I think the department is being pretty good in working with our small communities. Mahsi cho.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Committee, we are on general comments for Public Works and Services. Seeing no further, I will give the Minister an opportunity to respond. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the committee members for the comments that were raised and concerns and issues that they have brought to our attention.

First of all, I will just say briefly that the program that we initiated for settlement maintainers is something that seems to be working quite well. We have been able to fill most of the positions. There is still one position in the community of Wrigley where

there is an outstanding vacancy. We are going back to re-advertise and see if we can find somebody that will fill that void and help us with the maintenance.

The issue that has been brought forward by all Members is around the DCN. There has been, over the years, some concern over the growth. We are seeing growth really move forward progressively. I think it is around 30 percent every year. Our staff is working quite hard. Most of the growth is driven by the schools' curriculum traffic and some of the health diagnostics data. While it has really placed demand on the bandwidth, there is also a benefit on it, as Mr. Yakeleya has pointed out, that in that work is now transporting critical information which is really in line with health and social services' priorities. We have looked at options of how to improve the service. We have a new contract that is being looked at. We are looking at ways and we have some options of addressing the demand placed on the system and we are looking at offloading some of the schools, but not all the schools, onto a different, less expensive, local Internet facility. That seems to be working well. For health right now, we have to, because of security reasons, maintain their services on our program. We certainly would like to provide a more detailed briefing to committee at any given time that there is opportunity to do so. This whole area is quite complex and there are a lot of things happening, a lot of positive initiatives that we would like to share with Members.

Mr. Jacobson had raised the issue of the shop in Ulukhaktok. That is something we are looking to address. We are not sure right now on the comment made regarding gas and Northern Stores. That is not something we do at this point. Our program for PPD only operates in communities where there is no local fuel provider and no independent business doing so. We have not had any discussions with Northern Store to provide them with fuel.

The question was raised by MLA Bisaro on infrastructure process change. Our results, after a couple of years now working the system, indicate that is working well. We have seen improvements on cost. We have had more consultation and also we are experiencing a lot better contracts that are made in the schedule that are set out for the contractors. We are not planning to expand our maintenance program to all of the communities as was requested by MLA Bisaro. Right now we are looking at the communities where the volume of work warrants a maintainer and where the challenges are of getting private contractors. In most cases we are using a mix of both maintainers and contractors. It seems to be working well. We are also attracting now, through our consolidation of our utilities, the expenditures. We have better baseline information. We are able to compile that

information. At the current time we are using that information to identify facilities that are using large volumes of fuel or other utilities and allow us to decide where we would invest in either a replacement or an upgrade or an energy-efficient alternate energy heating or things of that nature.

The MLA for Nahendeh had asked about the Wrigley position. Again, I will just state that we had an individual that was interested. It didn't work out, so we are going to be advertising that position again. He had also asked about the maintenance of our vehicles along with DOT being done with the Department of Transportation. We are using this system in the community of Fort Simpson because we have a mechanic there and it is cost efficient for us to utilize this individual. If we don't maximize his time, it would be hard to justify his position. We do go outside of the government to private sources once we have overloaded our capacity with our mechanic. We did go out to a standing offer agreement and had no response. At this point, we would like to keep the system in place. We feel we are meeting all of our obligations.

We are also working in our attempt to consolidate maintenance and maximize our efficiencies. We wanted to set up expertise and identify expertise within our own ranks too, work in the area of energy efficiency and that is something that we are working towards. I think we are doing quite well. We have also been asked by MLA Bromley to consider sharing information on some of the findings that we have on some of our best practices. Although we are more than willing to do so, we also have to keep in mind that we have limited resources and it may be something that we can work close... I mean, we do work close with other departments and agencies, but for us to make that as a... For us to act as a resource to everyone is going to be very difficult. We were also asked about expanding the PPD to include pellets. We had initiated a study, we are just about there. We are about 90 percent complete. We should have the results sometime in April for Members for review.

Mr. Chairman, MLA Beaulieu asked about setting a target to have apprentices with all the tradespeople throughout the departments. I guess that is something, I guess, the government should look at seriously. In our department we have a number of positions now, things are working quite well and to expand the program would, of course, be very dependent on available funding and we'll continue to seek that appropriate investment.

We were also asked about a couple of capital projects in Mr. Yakeleya's riding regarding a shop and we have done a study that looked at all of our maintenance shops and right now are considering what we can reasonably bring forward in terms of replacements or building new for consideration for the next capital plan, so that is something that we

will be doing over the summer months. He also asked about the Tulita tank farm. Mr. Chairman, that was approved in our capital budget this past fall. It is also the same with the Norman Wells Health Centre. That still falls under the responsibility of the Department of Health, so maybe we can ask the Member to direct his questions to the Department of Health on that front. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you Mr. McLeod. Does committee agree that we have concluded general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Alright. Does committee agree that we will move along to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Okay. The department's consideration begins on page 7-7 but we will defer this page until after consideration of detail, so we will get everybody to turn to page 7-8. Page 7-8, Public Works and Services, information item, infrastructure investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Page 7-9, Public Works and Services, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Thank you, committee. We will move along to 7-10, Public Works and Services, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before we go to 7-10, on 7-9 I am just wondering are the savings that are gathered through the energy-efficient technologies we are using, do they turn into revenues at all? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister McLeod. Thank you Minister McLeod. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the investments and the Capital Assets Retrofit Program, the energy-efficiency investments, we track and monitor the savings and then report them back on an ongoing basis to the Department of Finance, FMB. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Mr. Guy. So is the intent to eventually... Those disappear into the general revenues then. I assume and I wonder if the intent is to eventually see them reflected here as revenue. Thank you.

MR. GUY: The current plan for those savings is to set up a process where they are reinvested into the...(inaudible)...fund, so they would show up in the budget under that line item, under the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are on page 7-9, Public Works and Services, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Moving along to 7-10, Public Works and Services, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. The next page for consideration is page 7-12, 7-13, Public Works and Services, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question here with regards to document management, records management. If I read it rightly from the business plan information, there was a Government of the Northwest Territories-wide initiative which was put into place in 2010-2011 and I believe is carrying over into the 2011-2012 business year. I just wondered if I could get a bit of a statement from the Minister as to whether or not this initiative is working the way they had hoped it would work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, the Member is correct. There was an initiative, it was funded through a strategic initiative for a government-wide document management system. That initiative was scaled back to a pilot program for a document management system. When that was done, Public Works and Services was identified as the department to begin the implementation and proceed with that pilot project and we are working on that right now. We expect to have the system in place and running this June. We have selected the system we are using and are in the process of procuring the equipment and undertaking the training for staff. Once that system is in place, it will become the base system that will be deployed government-wide through all departments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Guy. I guess I would like to know if there is going to be any sort of an evaluation of the pilot project prior to sort of expanding throughout the rest of the Government of the Northwest Territories systems. Thank you.

MR. GUY: Yes, that is part of the process. Part of the intent of piloting Public Works and Services is because we have some expertise in the area of records management already and we had begun to deploy records management system on our own, so the intent will be to take lessons learned through this pilot project and integrate them into the training and the overall plan when we deploy government-wide. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are on page 7-13, Public Works and Services, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$7.612 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 7-14, Public Works and Services, information item, directorate, active positions. Agreed? Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, Mr. Chairman, in the area of active positions, maybe the department could give me a breakdown on the area of affirmative action candidates and also the number of female and disabled individuals who are in the department and what level they are at. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have a document that lists all our employees. We could provide it verbally or we could provide it to the Member in written format.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Krutko would you prefer paper or verbal?

MR. KRUTKO: Paper sounds good. Chop down a few more trees.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): There you go. Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod, he accepts paper.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will gladly do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 7-14, Public Works and Services, information item, directorate, active positions. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 7-17, which is asset management. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of questions here about demolitions. In this current budget year, the school in Tulita and the Deh Cho Hall in Fort Simpson were supposed to be demolished. I just wondered if there were any difficulties with those demolitions. Are they done and complete? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Both projects went well. We were very happy with the work that was done with communities and they are basically all complete.

MS. BISARO: Right on. That is good to hear. With regards to the projects scheduled for this year, Fort Good Hope and Inuvik schools, are they still in the plans to be demolished in 2011-2012? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: We are considering Fort Good Hope school at the time and the Inuvik school will be down the road, once the new school facility is completed. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are on page 7-17, Public Works and Services, activity summary, asset management. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one quick question. Is deferred maintenance for 2011-12 a total of \$8 million?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we are just looking to confirm that number at this point. Mr. Chairman, with the current budget and what was approved in our capital budget, we believe \$8 million is the total amount.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, I didn't hear the response. That's my only question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): The Minister confirmed that the amount is \$8 million. Minister McLeod, did you want to confirm that again?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, yes, we'll confirm that \$8 million is the amount that's in the budget for deferred maintenance. We have \$3 million in O and M and \$5 million in capital.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to the general office space for the government, I know that we require more space, but do we have a forecast going forward on what the operational costs of those facilities are in regard to operating these office buildings in light of not having to pay lease costs versus operational costs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we have forecasted what it would cost to operate a building. Yes, we do cost-benefit analysis also. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: If it's anything like the Laing Building that we own, as a government, I think the more experience of the amount of money that's been put into the renovations and mid-term retrofits and everything else, you're talking in the millions of dollars in regard to the cost of a facility that we operate. So as part of this general office space that we are requiring to own outright, do we have an idea of what the lifecycle costs of those facilities are in operational costs and mid-term retrofits?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The short answer is yes. We've taken those costs into consideration when we did the evaluation between the lease and

our own ownership, government-owned buildings. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Is it possible to get copies of those reports? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I think we had provided this information prior to today, but we can dig them up and provide them to the Member again. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: I'd just like to ask the Minister how do you get an operational cost of a facility that hasn't been operating? So we've got office buildings in Inuvik, you're talking about building one in Yellowknife. So technically you can't have the operational costs unless you functionally operate the facility to know what your actual costs are. So do you know what the actual costs to operate those facilities are, based on occupancy and usage of heat and power?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The Member knows full well that we can't provide actual costs until we're operating a facility. Our costs are all forecasted, as we do with any kind of planning and for budgeting purposes. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: So does that mean we have about a 20 percent either way in operational costs since it's projected costs, not the operational costs? Unless you actually operate, you won't know what the costs really are, but do you estimate one way or the other, 20 percent higher or 20 percent lower or is it higher than that?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we utilize existing facilities to give our best estimates for operational costs, usually buildings comparable in size or design. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Next on my list, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The demolition of the Chief Wilbert Wright School, now that everything is supposed to be where it's supposed to be, the materials sent out, the area that they use for disposing of the extra is okay. Has that land now been transferred back to the hamlet through the municipal department? I know the hamlet of Tulita was hoping that this land now would be reverted back to them for the use of a recreational ball field.

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

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, yes, everything is where everything is supposed to be on this project and the land has now been reverted back to Municipal and Community Affairs and I believe they're having discussions with the municipality. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I raised the point and I noticed that the demolition went very well for the department. They had some good discussions.

Actually, a lot of people showed up, surprisingly to the contractor, just maybe because he thought there was going to be maybe a dozen people showing up to work. Actually it was just over 50 people that showed up and wanted to work. So it went very well. So I'd like to congratulate the department for being flexible and open to a good possibility. I believe that the same type of discussions now are happening in Fort Good Hope with the old Chief T'Selehye School and I hope things go well with them there. Is it possible for the department to provide me with a brief report as to these two demolition projects in my region, in case I get calls from constituents as to the work projects? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Both demolition projects that we had on the schedule for last year went very well. It was well received by the communities, it generated a lot of employment and it also allowed for recycling to happen with a number of the products that came from the school. In terms of what the status of the Fort Good Hope School is, we are right now at the stage where we're doing an assessment of the facility. We're doing some environmental testing to see what types of hazardous materials are in the facility and we plan to move forward with the same goals in mind of doing the demolition on this facility and then trying to maximize employment and recycling. Hopefully things will go as well as they did in the other two communities. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Would the Minister comment as to the request of the reports? I'm not too sure what details of the reports he can provide. If that's something that he could comment on.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: It is our practice to share the information once the reports have been compiled in terms of what hazardous material may be in the building, any outstanding issues that the facility may need to address while doing demolition. So we'd be happy to share that information. We usually do with the contractor that has the contract.

MR. YAKELEYA: I look forward to at least the Tulita report, Mr. Chair, and hopefully later on the Fort Good Hope report. I wanted to ask the Minister, I know there was an issue with the school in Colville Lake with the washroom facilities and the running water there. I know there was material there, material being ordered to get there and I think it's already there and waiting to use it. Right now I believe that Colville Lake's School is still using the honey bucket system and there are other issues that prevent them from hooking up the water lines and the washroom facilities. Can the Minister comment as to what's going to happen next?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'd be happy to share the summary report on the demolition of the Tulita school with the

Member. We'd also be happy to supply information on our findings with the Good Hope school. As to the Colville Lake school, there is a contract that will be going out in this coming fiscal year to install a water tank in the school that would allow us to have running water, and that is being discussed with a local contractor to provide that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We're on page 7-17, Public Works and Services, which is an activity summary for asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$81.881 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Next page, 7-18, Public Works and Services. It's an information item, asset management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 7-20 and 7-21, Public Works and Services. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask a couple of questions here. First of all, with regard to the new data centre that's just been completed, could I get an update on where things are at in terms of occupation of the building? I believe the building itself is finished, but have we moved totally into there or is there still some moving to come? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; the building was just recently completed. It went through a fairly long commissioning process because there were a large number of specialized heating and mechanical systems in that building. The building was just finally turned over to us in early February by the contractor, so we achieved substantial completion. We're now in the process of starting to move server equipment in, put cabling in and migrating the data centre functions over there. We expect to have that part of the project complete late May or early June and then the facility will be fully operational at that time. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks very much for that update. Good to hear. I wanted to also go back to the issue of bandwidth and the demands that are being placed on our system, particularly because of education and health. I'd like to ask the Minister or the DM what the plans are for the department to accommodate our ever-expanding needs for IT. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Ms. Gault.

MS. GAULT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's been a number of initiatives that we've been working on, particularly the most recent is with regards to addressing the education requirement for greater

access to Internet bandwidth. We have redirected Internet traffic off of our main government network and this has provided additional bandwidth access for the schools and at the same time has relieved the congestion on the DCN for the government, other departments, and in particular for the growing health use of the network particularly for digital X-rays. With the new contract that we are looking at or the new network, we'll be improving performance right across the network, new technology, particularly in the satellite communities where in order to have education curriculum needs for distance learning, for health tele-speech initiatives, this will provide greater bandwidth for us. We are looking at an overall reduced cost per unit for our bandwidth. We know we have to manage it as a government overall growth, but we anticipate these initiatives will improve both the performance and the quality for the government. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks very much for that update. Good to hear. I'm just wondering, in terms of distance education, my understanding is now that it's well nigh impossible in some places, certainly the smaller communities, for the students to try to do distance, it takes literally up to hours to download the materials that they need for distance learning. With this new system, is that going to be improved? I suspect it probably won't go away, but will it make it that much easier for particularly high school students to do distance education? Thank you.

MS. GAULT: There are definitely certainly aspects of the education curriculum that will be improved. There are certain types of distance learning or video conferencing that simply cannot be accommodated due to the latency in the satellite technology. This is why we're working closely with the schools to understand specifically what kind of applications and education components they are looking for so that together we can determine what we can do from a technology standpoint. We do anticipate there are many of those, but we do know that there are some that we cannot accommodate because of the technical limitation of satellite. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Gault. We're on page 7-21, Public Works and Services, activity summary, Technology Service Centre, operations expenditure summary, \$1.361 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to pages 7-22 and 7-23, Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, \$2.134 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to page 7-24, which is Public Works and Services. It's

an information item, lease commitments - infrastructure.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Moving along to 7-26, Public Works and Services, information item, Technology Service Centre (chargeback).

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Next page is 7-27, Public Works and Services. It's an information item. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: I seek unanimous consent to go back to 7-22, petroleum products.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Let's move back to 7-22. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was just asked by my colleague to ask a few questions in regard to the area of petroleum products but more in regard to as we realize the area of supply of wood pellets. It's getting big in the Northwest Territories and I think that also because petroleum products does provide fuel products to our communities, have they considered by looking at other products that they can bring into the communities such as wood pellets to supply communities with not only diesel fuel and gas but maybe consider wood pellets as an alternative heat source for the communities so people can convert over to wood pellet stoves in their communities and cut down on the cost of fossil fuels? Is this something that the department can consider under petroleum products as another type of material that can be brought into the communities as part of your resupply for fuel products? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we are considering other products, more specifically wood pellets, and we are doing the assessment now. It's 90 percent complete and we will be having the results in April.

MR. KRUTKO: I'd like to thank the Minister for that. As government we are putting a lot of money into government retrofits and conversions in regard to public buildings regardless if we're talking about schools or government facilities in our communities. I think if we're talking about expanding outwards into the communities, this again is another area that I feel the department of petroleum products can expand in, and more importantly, look at alternative types of fuels and materials. I'd just like to ask the Minister in regard to doing this type of initiative, is it going to be done in-house or are we looking at contracting out to provide the pellets?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chair, we have hired outside help. We have a consultant hired to do the analysis and we're also working with the Arctic Energy Alliance and we are looking at the business case to see if it's viable. The Member is very adamant about actual numbers and we want to ensure that we have this calculated properly and bring this forward if everything goes right. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chair, can the Minister tell me exactly when you intend to conclude the study and maybe look at the possibility of either recommendations or consideration of implementing it or bringing it forward to either committee or Members of the Legislative Assembly so that we can see, again, where we are going to consider alternative fuel sources for communities? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the study is ongoing right now. We have expectations to be finalized in April. Then we will do an analysis of what the findings are and decide on the next steps from there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you. Page 7-23, Public Works and Services, activity summary, petroleum products, operations expenditure summary, \$2.134 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Prior to going back, we had just concluded 7-26, so we are now on 7-27, Public Works and Services, information item, Technology Service Centre (chargeback), active positions. Mr. Krutko

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, in regards to chargebacks, again, with the advancement in telehealth and telemedicine and the possibility of improving health care services in our communities, I think it is important that we have either technicians on the ground or technicians working within the different departments to ensure that we are able to enhance that program and deliver on it, because from what we have seen in communities I have been in in the health centres, in Fort Liard and elsewhere, and talking to the nursing staff that had new equipment brought in, it really improves the delivery of health care. Again, I think it is important that we develop the bandwidth, but more importantly, making sure that we have someone with the technical services such as the Department of Public Works to ensure that we have the people there, like the technicians and whatnot, to provide that. I would just like to know where we are working with the Department of Health and Social Services in regards to expanding our systems by way of telehealth in our communities in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we certainly agree with the Member's comments about the TSC and the services and especially in the area of health, improving services to our smaller communities. We do provide support across the board. Usually the health authorities are in a position to have their own staff on board to help them with the technical side of the repairs or upgrades and things of that nature, but we also provide broad support to all of the communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. We are on 7-27, Public Works and Services, information item, Technology Service Centre (chargeback), active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Page 7-28, it is also an information item, Public Works and Services, Public Stores Revolving Fund.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We are moving along to page 7-30, Public Works and Services, information item, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to question here the surplus deficit. After looking at income and expenditures for this fund is a deficit of \$232,000 and yet the description at the top indicates that it is supposed to be a breakeven operation. Could I get an explanation as to why this is a deficit and is it a certain point in time only? That is it. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Mr. Chairman, the reason we are showing a forecasted deficit for 2011-12 is because over time the closing balance of the revolving fund, the surplus deficit has been creeping up. The higher end of the surplus side of the scale was limited to a surplus of \$1 million. We try to target half a million dollars, so that is a planned deficit to bring it back in line with our target of half a million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chairman, you are planning for a deficit of half a million dollars, so this is actually a good thing. I guess, then, maybe we should revise the description at the top of the page. Half a million deficit isn't breakeven to me. Thank you.

MR. GUY: I will just clarify, Mr. Chairman. If you look at the closing balance, it is showing \$514,000. That would be our target of half a million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Again, Mr. Chairman, we find ourselves under the economic threat of what is going on in the world, especially coming to fuel

prices as we have just heard in the news since just yesterday that the fuel prices have exceeded \$100 a barrel in which they are talking of the possibility of what is happening in Lebanon and other places in the world in regards to the Middle East that affects southern Arabia and other countries. It could be in excess of \$200 a barrel. Are we prepared for that? Do we have enough fuel products that we purchased and at what time did we purchase and are we vulnerable to the changing prices in regards to our ability to basically fund that, realizing that we don't have a surplus? What will the costs... I know we have had an arrangement where we are providing fuel products what you call over the top, that we are able to bring in fuel from around B.C. and through Alaska and over the top in which we are looking at savings there. I would like to know from the department in regards to the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, how vulnerable are we in light of what has happened here in the last couple of weeks.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Minister McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, the revolving fund is something we can control as to what the inputs and outputs are for this program. We have purchased all of our fuel for the summer resupply. We have purchased the majority of our fuel for winter's resupply. We look, as the Member raised, to the future. We expect we are going to see rising costs, but that should not affect our revolving fund. Thank you.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, do we have any long-term locked in contracts in regards to our suppliers in regards to the commitments we have with the Power Corporation and communities in regards to fuel resupply? Do we have long-term contract commitments or is it simply on a year-to-year basis?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, we have contracts signed for three years with our suppliers. Most of our fuel purchases are based on rack price.

MR. KRUTKO: Mr. Chairman, again, if it is rack price, we are definitely going to see a difference of what it was last week versus what it is this week. I think that is the vulnerability that we are under. If it is basically based on rack price, we are vulnerable. I think that, for me, having a locked in price and a long-term contract, again, if it is based on the rack price, that is my concern. I would just like to know, just using the scenario of what the prices were last week versus what the prices are this week, do we have any idea what that... I have to pull out the calculator here, but again, my point is that we are vulnerable by locking ourselves into a rack price.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Mr. Chairman, as I indicated, all of our summer purchases are done and have been delivered. Most of our winter supply

is in the communities. We are not very concerned at this point with the prices up to now. We have a fairly good reserve in the tanks in Inuvik. That will help us offset some of the future costs. Right now it is difficult to predict what our summer purchases will come in at. I would expect, as the Member has indicated, that it will come in a lot higher. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister McLeod. We are on page 7-31, Public Works and Services, information item, Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Page 7-32, Public Works and Services, information item, work performed on behalf of others.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Page 7-33, Public Works and Services, information item, work performed on behalf of others, continued.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): That concludes our consideration of detail. I will get everybody to turn back to page 7-7, Public Works and Services, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$92.988 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Does committee agree that we have concluded the consideration of Public Works and Services?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Thank you, committee. Minister, if I can please get you to thank your witness, and thanks to the witness for being here. Sergeant-at-Arms, could I please get you to escort them out?

Is committee agreed that we proceed with the Department of Executive?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. We will just give the witnesses an opportunity to exit the Chamber.

Premier Roland, you have some opening remarks that you would like to make from the Department of Executive.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The 2011-2012 main estimates for the Department of Executive. The goals for the Department of Executive are centred on our role in ensuring effective coordination of government activities, supporting informed decision-making related to policies and programming, and coordinating implementation of strategic initiatives that advance priorities of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

The overall proposed budget for the department is \$15.07 million for 2011-2012, which is an increase of \$764,000, or 5.3 percent, from the 2010-2011 main estimates. The overall increase since the last main estimates is due to \$445,000 for strategic initiatives and \$570,000 in forced growth, including \$337,000 in collective bargaining increases, offset by sunsets of \$251,000.

The 2011-2012 main estimates reflect the key activities where the department plays a critical role in leading or coordinating the development and implementation of strategic actions that advance the Assembly's priorities.

The Executive operations branch includes the strategic planning unit, Program Review Office, Bureau of Statistics, office of devolution and the regional operations offices for the Department of Executive. In addition to the core business activities, there are a number of priority areas that have been advanced during 2011-2012.

As was noted in the budget address, the Northwest Territories has experienced virtually no population growth over the past five years. As part of the Maximizing Opportunities Strategic Initiative, these main estimates include \$145,000 to support implementation of an overall growth strategy. The growth strategy is currently under development and will build on the existing activities like the national marketing campaign that support overall growth in the Northwest Territories.

An investment of \$150,000 is also reflected in the main estimates related to the community price surveys that are being undertaken as part of the efforts to monitor impacts of the changes in electrical rates on consumer prices. This investment is supporting collection by the Bureau of Statistics in all communities that is being undertaken in six month intervals over 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

The regional offices within the Executive operations branch are coordinating implementation of the pilot project for single-window service centres in rural and remote communities. That was advanced as part of the Refocusing Government Strategic Initiative. These offices, located in Ulukhaktok, Aklavik, Fort Good Hope, Colville Lake, Nahanni Butte, Fort Providence, Whati and Lutselk'e, were opened in the fall of 2010 and are staffed by a government service officer, or GSO. We have been fortunate in recruiting Aboriginal people for all of these positions who, in most cases, are able to deliver services and work in their own Aboriginal language. These GSOs are a great asset to our government. They provide assistance to residents of these smaller communities to access Government of the Northwest Territories programs and services. We are getting very positive feedback on the establishment of these offices. GSOs are using proactive approaches to help residents, like

elders. One day a week the GSOs are out of their offices and visiting with elders in the communities to listen to concerns and provide practical assistance to help elders access programs and services as required.

These main estimates do not reflect funding required for the next stage of devolution negotiations and implementation planning. As Members know, the AIP was signed last month, well after this budget was developed. The department will need to return to the Legislative Assembly for funding to support negotiations for a final agreement, including GNWT support for participation of regional Aboriginal governments. Members will be aware that the AIP includes funding for the GNWT and Aboriginal governments to complete a number of activities before a final agreement is reached, including developing an organizational design, completing work on waste sites, developing training plans, assessing IT requirements, and developing territorial legislation. The negotiations are separate from these activities, and the GNWT will need to ensure that participating northern governments have adequate resources to complete this next critical stage.

Also included in these main estimates is the Cabinet support branch of the Department of Executive, which is responsible for ensuring systems are in place to support informed decision-making and successful implementation of Cabinet direction. The branch includes the Cabinet secretariat, legislation and house planning, corporate communications and protocol, the women's advisory office, and supports the Commissioner's office.

Other key activities for the department that are reflected in these main estimates include the Ministers' offices, which include the Premier's office and support to Ministers as well as the Department of Executive's portion of the federal Engagement Strategy activities. This activity is being coordinated by the Premier's office and will support additional capacity to engage the federal government on our key priorities.

Also reflected in the main estimates is the office of the secretary to Cabinet, which is responsible for providing overall leadership for the public service, supporting Executive Council decision-making, and coordinating the development and implementation of overall government-wide direction. Finally, the department also provides operational support to the Public Utilities Board, which is the independent regulatory agency responsible for energy regulation within the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my introductory remarks and I am prepared to answer any questions that committee members may have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Is committee agreed that we allow the Premier to bring his witnesses into the Chamber?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Sergeant-at-Arms, if I could get you to please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Thank you. Premier Roland, if I can please get you to introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Penny Ballantyne, Cabinet secretary, and to my right is Dave Stewart with the Department of Executive.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Premier Roland. As with previous departments, we will allow Members general comments on the opening remarks and once all the Members have spoken, we will go to the Premier for his response to those general comments. General comments, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of comments here I have to follow up since Mr. Bromley is not here, and express, as he would, his dismay that this budget has increased by 5.3 percent instead of the 3 percent cap that we had presumably agreed on. That said, I am really pleased to hear about the single-window service centres and that they are working, that the GSO, government service officers seem to be a successful move and I look forward to hearing further updates as we get a little further into this project.

I am disappointed, however, there is nothing in the Premier's remarks, I will certainly have questions when we get to that part of the budget, but in terms of volunteers and in terms of NGOs there is nothing in the remarks here. The Premier knows, or the Minister knows it is an area that is of great concern to me and several other Members, so I will have some questions when we get to that part. Other than that, I have nothing else. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. General comments. Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regards to the Premier's statement I just can't help myself wondering which groups the Premier is talking about negotiating with regional Aboriginal governments. Are we only talking about the two that signed the agreement-in-principle?

There was a question asked in the House by Mr. Menicoche about trying to fund Aboriginal organizations that have concerns with the devolution agreement and it was pretty clear from

his comments that he will not be funding those organizations. So by asking for money from the House to support negotiations towards a final agreement, who are you going to negotiate the final agreement with, and more importantly, why are we leaving the Aboriginal groups that have not decided to sign and offer them an opportunity to come forward with their issues, negotiate them on a table that we can all sit around and get away from this idea of exclusion by simply not agreeing with the government? That seems to happen in most dictatorships around the world, but it seems like we're starting one here in the Northwest Territories simply because you do not agree with the position of Cabinet or the government and you are being excluded or chastised for not taking or not participating in government-to-government talks, regardless of whether it's required or not required. We do have an obligation to consult, we have land claims obligations, we have obligations under the UN Declaration of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear, from what I see here, that this government will proceed full speed ahead. Sorry, we've signed with two groups, we haven't signed one agreement with any Dene organization or treaty group in the Northwest Territories who have treaties, regardless if its 1921 or treaties signed in 1998 in regard to Treaty 8. Those are the groups that have treaty rights, land rights. They're the only group that has a land claim that talks about Northern Accord, it talks about royalty sharing in the Mackenzie Valley. Yet, Mr. Speaker, from what I can read here, it looks like it's business as normal, nothing's happened, we're going full speed ahead and we'll leave those people on the sidelines.

It is totally pathetic that this government, in this day and age, will continue to operate basically removing from those groups that question government's position, or question government agreements knowing that they're not perfect. They do not meet the objective of the land claim agreements and they do not meet the objective of the groups that have made it clear through written concerns, areas of concerns and not allowing for those agreements to even be discussed or considered, which took place over some seven months after a letter was sent to the Premier where the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council clearly stated at a northern leaders' meeting back last spring, where the Premier was asked, are you going to respond to my letter. I was there and I heard perfectly clearly, oh, I'll get back to you right away. That was last spring. It took him seven months to respond to a letter.

Yet we are here approving a budget for a department that wants to go full speed ahead realizing that you have signed an agreement with a minority of Aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories and yet you call it government-to-government relationships. So I would just like to ask the Premier, from the statement that you made in

regard to your opening remarks, which groups are you talking about negotiating with and do they have to sign the agreement, or can they agree to disagree and bring their issues forward and try to find resolution either between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada to find resolution to this issue? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. General comments. There are no more general comments. I'll go to Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The overall increase of the Department of Executive incorporates a number of the strategic initiatives that we've discussed through the life of this Assembly and also includes the compensation portion, the compensation benefits portion of the budget and that is why it goes over the target amount.

The areas of the NGOs and volunteers, we are doing work in those areas and we will be prepared to speak to them as we go through the detail of the budget.

On the agreement-in-principle, devolution, the comments I made in my opening remarks about funding and having to go forward and get our budget prepared, as this budget right now does not have funding that would be required to work with all of the groups, those that wanted to work with us to do the work, we would have to come forward early in the new year to request of this Assembly dollars to work with the groups that are there and want to move forward on negotiations, and the negotiations will take part in a number of ways. There are areas where bilateral discussions will happen strictly with Aboriginal groups, and that is Section 12 when it talks about resource revenue sharing.

There are other areas where we will deal specifically with the federal government; for example, transfer of employees to the Government of the Northwest Territories from the federal government, and other areas where it'll be more inclusive of all groups when it comes to, for example, chapter 6, where we talk about jurisdiction and sharing of authorities in that area and implementation of the final agreement. So there are a number of different levels of negotiation that would be required. We'll have to do a lot of work in the upcoming months to prepare for that, a work plan, schedule and prepare for mandates as we would venture down the road of negotiations with the federal government and with Aboriginal governments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Premier Roland. Is committee agreed that we've concluded general comments?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. We'll move along to detail. Detail for the Department of

Executive starts on page 2-7, but we'll defer 2-7 until after consideration of detail. So let's turn to page 2-8. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Alright, Executive, information item, infrastructure investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed. Next page, Executive, 2-9, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): We're agreed. Next item, page 2-10, Mr. Krutko.

MR. KRUTKO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can I get a breakdown in regard to the number of affirmative action candidates in those 61 positions, what level they're at, and more importantly, how many disabled and women do we have in that department and what level? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Krutko. Premier Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Out of all of our employees, total of affirmative action is 41. So 62 percent of Executive, 43 percent is government overall. So we're doing better in that area. Now, affirmative action includes Aboriginal, and P1, P2 is a traditional title that's been given. Aboriginal people is 26 percent and indigenous non-Aboriginal, 36 percent. For total female in senior management we have 12 positions. We have three female, nine male. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Premier Roland. Mr. Krutko. We're on page 2-10. Executive, information item, active position summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Agreed on 2-10. Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Chair, I move that we report progress.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): There is a motion on the floor to report progress.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. Premier Roland, if I can get you to please thank your witnesses for us and, Sergeant-at-Arms, if I can please get you to escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. I will rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 133-16(5),

Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Legislative Assembly Board of Management at the adjournment of the House today.

Orders of the day for Monday, February 28, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 39-16(5), Employment for Persons with Disabilities
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project
 - Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits

- Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits - What We Heard
- Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy
- Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future"
- Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010
- Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012
- Tabled Document 135-16(5), GNWT Response to CR 3-16(5): Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act
- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act
- Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Fire Prevention Act
- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
- Bill 18, An Act to Repeal the Settlements Act
- Bill 19, Municipal Statutes Amendment Act
- Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act
- Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights
- Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Monday, February 28, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

