



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 6

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, February 6, 2014

Pages 3475 – 3500

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, February 6, 2014****Members Present**

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

infrastructure. Going forward we will continue to make the disciplined choices to maintain fiscal

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, budget address. The honourable Minister of Finance, Minister Miltenberger.

Budget Address

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, in 54 days we will be taking responsibility for the management of our lands, waters and resources. With only 605 days left in the life of the 17th Legislative Assembly, when most governments are taking stock, we are taking on new challenges and embracing new opportunities.

Two years ago this Assembly set out to restore fiscal balance, protect programs and services, and responsibly fund infrastructure investment. We achieved this in the last two budgets by reducing spending growth to half of what it was five years ago. Entering year three of our fiscal plan, we have shown that by working together to manage the spending pressures on programs and services, we can attain our fiscal goals in the face of slow revenue growth.

Thanks to that discipline, we are in a strong fiscal situation to embrace new program responsibilities for lands, waters and resource management being transferred from Canada, invest in the priorities we set two years ago to address housing needs, poverty, addictions and early childhood development, and we have achieved our goal to increase our capital plan by \$100 million over two years to invest in strategic infrastructure to grow our economy.

The 2014-15 budget represents that continued cooperative approach in balancing fiscal discipline with the urgent priorities of this Assembly. I would like to thank the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their help in putting this budget together.

These investments represent difficult choices between funding program priorities and funding for

sustainability while still providing the quality programs our residents expect and making infrastructure investments to encourage economic growth.

Making disciplined choices about priorities is even more critical as we plan to invest in the infrastructure needed to turn around our fiscal reality through economic growth.

Last decade's dramatic economic growth has been replaced with below average growth since the recession. The Northwest Territories economy has grown in only two of the past five years and we are projecting modest growth in 2013. However, our growth prospects for 2014 are more positive as increased resource exploration activity, the preconstruction work for a new diamond mine, and construction of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway and the Mackenzie Valley fibre link, point to a strengthening in the economic base.

While resident employment and income have remained healthy, the impacts of reduced economic growth are most readily observed in our declining population. In 2013 the natural increase in our population did not keep pace with the number of people leaving for opportunities elsewhere. A stagnant or declining population over the medium term reduces economic growth and our ability to fund programs and services critical to Northerners.

If we are to stem this trend, we must do things differently.

Devolution is a very important step in the right direction. We are entering a new type of relationship with resource companies where decisions formerly made in Ottawa will now be made by the territorial government that is accountable to NWT residents. We are looking forward to the responsibility for the management of NWT lands, waters and resources and we take that responsibility very seriously. We, along with our Aboriginal partners, are creating an Intergovernmental Council to continue to move forward in our management of land and resources. We, as a government, are also committed to creating a strong cooperative partnership with the private sector built on mutual respect and trust to create an environment where the full potential of

the NWT's many resources are used sustainably to ensure lasting prosperity for NWT residents and communities.

Our economic future rests equally on our ability to develop the infrastructure necessary to support today's and tomorrow's industries and protect our environment. Energy infrastructure that lowers costs, improves system reliability and reduces environmental impacts will serve as the backbone of an economic transformation. Communications infrastructure that changes the way we transmit and use information will allow diversification into knowledge-based industries. All-weather roads make it easier for people and goods to travel between communities and reduce costs of doing business. Quality community infrastructure, including housing, is critical to attract the skilled workers we need to strengthen and diversify our economy. Infrastructure that opens new markets turns previously unprofitable ventures into growth opportunities and helps our communities prosper is key to a sustainable economy that balances economic development with respect for our environment.

Our fiscal future is closely linked to our economic prospects and healthy population growth. Our ability to seize economic opportunities as they present themselves means having our fiscal house in order.

Our fiscal strategy is built on our commitment to adhering to our Fiscal Responsibility Policy and achieving the operating surpluses necessary to fund at least half of our planned capital investment and ensuring debt service payments do not exceed 5 percent of total revenues. Within that commitment, we continue to concentrate on our objective of ensuring that the available borrowing authority at the end of the 17th Legislative Assembly is at least \$100 million. This is more important than ever as we have been reminded this year of the downside risks in tax revenues.

Both personal and corporate income tax revenue estimates for 2013-14 are lower than what was forecast in the 2013-14 budget, and beyond 2014-15 both personal and corporate income tax revenue forecasts have been reduced by a combined \$30 million.

We are also aware of the risks slow economic growth and a declining population pose for the Territorial Formula Financing Grant, which accounts for an overwhelming majority of our revenues. Over the next five years, our projections for slow NWT population growth and restraint in provincial government spending show that the grant will grow on average 2.3 percent per year, less than half of what we've enjoyed over the past five years and less than 1 percent above projected inflation.

The most effective way we can grow our revenues is to grow our economy and our population, put

more money into NWT residents' pockets, and slow the outflow of residents to other jurisdictions. Therefore, this government is embarking on an initiative to increase the NWT's population by 2,000 people over the next five years. Some of the areas of concern are the hundreds of vacant jobs in the NWT, the continued high rate of fly-in/fly-out workers, the need to improve the results of the immigrant Nominee Program and the need to get more of our post-secondary students to return home after graduation to live and work. We are already discussing this initiative with other governments and the private sector and look forward to working with all Northerners to make this initiative a success.

At the same time, we continue to deliver training programs for the people who are already here, and we will also be undertaking a review of our adult education and post-secondary programs to ensure that NWT residents have the skills to successfully compete for the jobs that exist now and into the future.

Discipline in managing our operating budget is key to generating the surpluses necessary to fund infrastructure to stimulate economic growth. We have little direct control over our revenues, but through control over expenditure growth we can ensure fiscal sustainability into the future. This strategy has given us the fiscal room to invest with the federal government to build the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway, for the GNWT to fund the Mackenzie Valley fibre link, and the major Stanton Territorial Hospital renovation, expected to cost \$350 million, in addition to the approved capital plan.

Looking forward, however, our ability to take further advantage of cost-shared projects under the new forthcoming Building Canada Plan, including for the benefit of community governments, or private partnership opportunities to advance the Mackenzie Valley Highway, is being challenged by competing pressures. Our fiscal attention is split between addressing our \$3 billion infrastructure deficit, and the continuous pressure to expand programs, services, and introduce new initiatives. Reduced revenue means that disciplined choices to continue on the fiscally sustainable path we've set for ourselves will not be enough, and we are prepared to borrow responsibly to make strategic infrastructure investments.

We have a record of sound fiscal management as shown by our Aa1 credit rating from Moody's Investors Service and debt servicing costs below 1 percent of revenues. Our fiscal discipline demonstrates that we're capable of managing our own financial affairs, and supports our argument that we have the ability to manage debt should the borrowing limit be increased. We are not looking for handouts, but the financial leeway and tools

needed to build our territory. We are in discussions with the federal government to increase the borrowing limit by an additional \$1 billion so we can seize opportunities to transform the economic potential of this territory by making critical infrastructure investments such as the proposed transmission grid expansion and the Wrigley-Norman Wells portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway for the benefit of our residents and industry.

Mr. Speaker, resource revenues have not changed our fiscal strategy because we are starting from the principle that resource revenues from devolution will not be spent on programs and services. We heard overwhelming support for this principle during the budget consultations we held last fall.

Our current fiscal plan is based on 5 percent of resource revenues flowing to the Heritage Fund so that there will be enough remaining resource revenues to make a meaningful investment to address the infrastructure deficit in the immediate term. Current and future generations can equally enjoy the use of roads, hospitals and energy infrastructure as well as the economic benefits that flow from a growing but sustainable NWT economy.

Should this Assembly choose to take a different approach, we will have to change the fiscal strategy, which will mean reducing our capital plan, modifying programs and services, and preventing our full participation in infrastructure programs to grow our economy such as Corridors for Canada III under the forthcoming Building Canada Plan. We must also remain nimble in our fiscal planning as resource revenue forecasts are very sensitive to commodity price swings and operational decisions outside our control.

Mr. Speaker, the biggest highlight of our \$1.612 billion budget is the \$59 million to administer our new land, water and resource management programs and services. This will be funded through a \$67 million increase in the gross expenditure base in the Territorial Formula Financing Grant, and will grow annually at the same rate. After adjustments, we have about \$9 million in flexibility to address unanticipated expenditures associated with implementing devolution and pressures associated with economic growth.

With our new responsibilities come new revenues. Starting 2014-15, we will collect NWT resource revenues and have included an estimate of \$120 million in gross resource revenues in this budget. However, half of the 2014-15 gross revenues will be offset against future Territorial Formula Financing Grants and we will share 25 percent of the resulting net fiscal benefit with Aboriginal governments.

For budgeting purposes we have included the \$15 million Aboriginal government share of the net fiscal benefit in this budget, but the actual amount will be

determined in late 2015 when actual 2014-15 resource revenues are collected and the net fiscal benefit for the year is determined.

Devolution stands out as the largest single reason for the \$146 million, or 10 percent increase in expenditures in this budget, but we have also chosen to make \$27 million in new investments in healthy and educated people and to expand economic opportunities. The remaining 3 percent of the growth in spending includes \$54 million to address increased salary costs and other forced growth pressures for existing programs and \$24 million in other adjustments and amortization, partially offset by \$34 million in sunsets.

These expenditures will be funded through a total of \$1.846 billion in revenues, leaving an operating surplus of \$200 million after infrastructure contributions and deferred maintenance are considered. Consistent with our Fiscal Responsibility Policy, we will use the surplus to fund the \$223 million capital investment approved by this Assembly for 2014-15. The shortfall will increase our short-term borrowing to \$236 million and bring total borrowing to \$658 million by the end of 2014-15, leaving \$142 million in borrowing room.

We remain committed to keeping a stable tax system. While we continue to index property taxes and fees to inflation where practical, this budget does not introduce any new taxes.

If we exclude the revenue increases from devolution, other revenues are forecast to increase 2.8 percent in 2014-15 from the 2013-14 Main Estimates as modest increases in transfers from the federal government are offset almost entirely by a decline in income tax revenues.

Despite declining tax revenue growth, increasing the tax burden on individuals or businesses would not be fiscally prudent. Our tax bases are too small to generate the revenues we need to deliver comparable programs and services to the provinces and we rely on federal transfers for three-quarters of our revenues. These federal transfers are partly determined by our population growth, which means the risk that tax increases may cause a population decline outweigh the potential benefit of more own-source revenues. We are in competition with other jurisdictions for investment and human capital. The most direct path to grow tax revenues is to increase the tax base by fostering sustainable economic growth, growing our population and investing in critical economic infrastructure. This is the path we will continue to follow.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to reflecting the assumption of new responsibilities for lands, waters and resources, this budget includes investments in strategies to tackle our most intractable issues of poverty, addictions, early childhood development and slow economic growth. By taking charge of managing our resources and directly addressing

issues that have a stranglehold on the potential of this territory, we move closer to achieving this Assembly's vision of strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories.

Gaining control of resource management has been a goal of this territory for decades, and this budget reflects the financial resources necessary to undertake these new responsibilities and duties.

In total, we have allocated \$59 million to undertake the new responsibilities and duties under the Devolution Agreement on April 1, 2014. We have budgeted prudently, leaving fiscal flexibility to fund any additional, and as yet unanticipated, activities necessary to deliver our new Resource Management Program responsibilities. The new funds include \$27 million for a new Lands department to support, manage and administer the sustainable use of public land in the NWT and \$32 million to fund expanded mandates and responsibilities of existing departments. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will have an additional \$14 million to manage water resources, contaminated sites and remediation, conservation planning and cumulative impact monitoring. The budget for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment will increase by \$13 million to deliver program responsibilities for petroleum and mineral resource exploration, development and rights, administration of the royalty regime, and related Aboriginal consultation and NWT regulatory system guidance. The remaining funding is allocated to central agencies to support the new responsibilities for handling assets and additional administration.

This program transfer is the last major transfer of responsibility to the GNWT. We have highly skilled and effective teams with experience devolving programs, who have been fully engaged with their federal counterparts to ensure that goal of a successful and seamless transition on April 1st is achieved. There will be no dramatic changes coming in the administration of land, rights in respect of water, and resources, other than the GNWT will be responsible, not Ottawa. We are committed to creating a transparent and stable program for land, water and resource management to enable environmentally sustainable economic development.

Mr. Speaker, this budget continues to support our most vulnerable populations: children, those living in poverty and those suffering from mental health and addictions issues. Investments targeting these vulnerable groups will help us achieve our goal of healthy people free from poverty.

Beginning with the youngest ones, who depend on the right supports in their first years to set them on a path for a healthy future, this government will be

implementing junior kindergarten for four-year-olds. Research shows that a child's level of development at the age of five can predict the child's academic future. Unfortunately, over one-third of NWT children start school already significantly behind in their overall health and development. Creating a junior kindergarten at no cost to families will put our resources where they will have the greatest impact. Beginning with a reallocation of \$1.8 million in 2014-15, junior kindergarten will be implemented in the smallest NWT communities where the greatest need has been identified. The goal is to have junior kindergarten available in all communities within three years at an ongoing cost of \$7.2 million.

In addition to this transformative step, we are devoting \$2 million in new funding to initiatives to support other aspects of the Early Childhood Development Framework. Of that, \$511,000 will increase the number of qualified early education and care professionals in licensed programs through wage and training incentives, and \$1.5 million is provided to improve outreach to expectant mothers, strengthen regional Healthy Family programs and raise awareness on the importance of early childhood.

We are also continuing our efforts to expand midwifery programs, including the hiring of two full-time midwives in Hay River. This year's \$515,000 investment is the second year of a multi-year plan to expand service options to expectant mothers, bringing our total investment to nearly \$1 million.

Taking action to respond to the Anti-Poverty Strategic Framework is a priority for this Legislative Assembly and we have added \$2.6 million in new funding for actions to support this framework. This funding includes \$1 million to provide healthy and nutritious food to children and youth through early childhood, school and after-school programs, \$500,000 to fund non-governmental organizations and Aboriginal governments for projects that support the priorities in the framework, and \$680,000 for transitional housing units in four non-market communities to support hard to house residents unable to access other housing options.

We are addressing the recommendations of the Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness with \$2.6 million in new funding above the \$4 million in direct spending already included in this budget to support mental health and address addictions issues. This includes \$900,000 to establish community-based on-the-land healing programs that are rooted in Aboriginal culture and tradition and build on best practices for treating addictions. The mental health funding also includes \$500,000 for a Children and Youth Resiliency Program that supports community programming aimed at mental and physical development for children and youth. Our prevention and early intervention programs are designed to promote

wellness and healing, and to reduce the need for treatment programs in the longer run.

Finally, \$305,000 will be invested in developing and implementing a specialized Wellness Court that would benefit clients who come into contact with the justice system and are suffering from issues related to mental health, addictions, and cognitive impairments. Offering an innovative approach to wellness and reducing contact with the justice system supports this Assembly's goal of sustainable, vibrant and safe communities. In order to support the success of such a court, this budget also invests \$895,000 to establish a collaborative case management pilot program. Breaking down barriers between departments and agencies, and integrating case management for common clients with mental health and addictions needs is essential to improving the experience of those clients when interacting with various social programs and managing common outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, in our first budget dialogue a year and a half ago, NWT residents made it clear that they wanted us to improve outcomes by doing things better and more efficiently within our normal programming. We were able to fund junior kindergarten through savings in other school programs and we are responding with investments in this budget to improve program delivery for our residents while, at the same time, making program delivery more efficient and cost effective.

This budget invests \$790,000 to continue the implementation of the new med-response service, which will provide community health care practitioners with remote emergency clinical support, and will triage and coordinate NWT air ambulance services. Another \$1.36 million will allow health authorities to tap into shared information systems expertise at the Technology Service Centre, and \$1.15 million will establish an Information Systems Service Centre to consolidate support for enterprise-wide health and social services application systems.

Nearly \$1 million will be used to complete the Financial Shared Services implementation, an initiative aimed at improving the GNWT's service orientation, providing broader career options for regional finance staff and improving organizational efficiency and timeliness. Work also continues on the establishment of a government-wide Procurement Shared Services Centre on April 1, 2014, which will standardize practices and processes and allow departments to focus on program delivery by merging the support functions specializing in the management of procurement. These investments continue the work of the last Assembly to refocus government to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations.

Mr. Speaker, this government continues to press forward on its goal to increase employment opportunities where they are most needed by decentralizing GNWT positions. We started phase 1 in 2013-14 when we decentralized 18 positions outside Yellowknife. Phase 2 starts in 2014-15, as we build our decentralization objectives into our post-devolution organization. We are placing 52 new positions created to deliver our new land, water and resource management programs in the regions and an additional 50 positions to administer other programs will be placed outside of Yellowknife. Phase 3 is also starting this year and is to develop a longer-term plan that considers existing obligations, regional capacity and vacancies, and the impact of government spending. Bringing government closer to the people it serves not only improves service delivery but also helps build a better understanding of programming needs.

The GNWT is also working to build capacity in the regions to prepare for decentralization. This includes a planning study for office space to address potential office space shortfalls as well as investments in housing stock. The lack of adequate housing options in non-market communities has long been a concern, and our efforts to move more government positions into these communities are creating an even greater demand for housing. We are spending \$7.5 million in 2014-15 as the first year of a three-year \$22.6 million investment to add 100 units for rent at market rates in smaller NWT communities and up to 69 additional units through partnerships with communities or private developers.

Service delivery in smaller communities often suffers when we can't recruit or keep the right people because of a lack of housing options, and adding new housing will improve program delivery and may save money in the long run. This investment is above the \$5 million we are already adding to the NWT Housing Corporation's 2014-15 capital budget for housing, which is part of the \$10 million we will invest over the next two years to improve the quality of our public housing stock.

We are using key initiatives like the GNWT Workforce Planning Strategy and the Regional Recruitment Program to address barriers to employment in communities and ensure that our decentralization efforts are successful. The Regional Recruitment Program helps departments, boards and agencies recruit NWT residents to fill regional job vacancies and helps placements be successful through up to one year of on-the-job training.

Mr. Speaker, economic prosperity not only reduces social program pressures by engaging people in productive employment and healthy choices but determines our ability to fund social programs and services. If we do not attend to our slow economic

growth now, we will jeopardize our ability to fund programs and services our residents rely on in the future.

This government is partnering with NWT residents and businesses to expand private sector economic opportunities. Over the past year we have undertaken several collaborative efforts to understand how we can best support sustainable mineral development, expand economic opportunities in other sectors, and leverage alternative energy to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and lower the cost of living. This budget invests in the priorities that emerged from those efforts.

We are devoting \$1.9 million in new funding in this budget to address the recommended actions in the Mineral Development Strategy. This funding includes \$655,000 to provide better and more comprehensive geoscience information and research, \$400,000 for a NWT mining incentive program aimed at attracting mineral exploration, and \$200,000 to market the NWT as an attractive place for mineral exploration and development investment. Work will also be undertaken to investigate ways to improve access to the mineral-rich Slave Geologic Province. Investments will be made in mining workforce development, including the delivery of geoscience field assistant training and linking NWT businesses with supply opportunities for the mining industry.

We continue to invest to ensure the Sahtu oil and gas exploration takes place in an environmentally sustainable manner and to the benefit of local residents and businesses. In addition to the \$1.2 million announced in last year's budget to support NWT residents in capturing benefits and managing impacts, we are adding \$742,000 in 2014-15. Our response includes a new environmental health officer, enhanced assessment, monitoring and mitigation of environmental impacts, and hiring highway maintenance supervisors and transport officers to respond to higher traffic volumes on the Mackenzie Valley winter road with additional monitoring and enforcement resources.

Our work continues to diversify our economy away from dependence on non-renewable resources through \$1.2 million in new funding to initiatives supporting the Economic Opportunities Strategy. This work will include the development of an agriculture strategy and regional economic plans. Direct support will be provided to small businesses outside regional centres to attract critical human resources through a pilot rebate program for the film industry and increased support to the tourism industry, including the establishment of a convention bureau; 2014-15 will also be the first year of a two-year \$1.7 million investment to support the commercial fishing industry in

capitalizing on domestic commercial market demand.

However, the long-term health and growth of local industries and business cannot be achieved through piecemeal approaches, but requires a fundamental change in the economic equation they are facing. In a territory of more than one million square kilometres, infrastructure is the best mechanism by which that equation can be changed. Infrastructure opens markets, lowers costs and improves productivity in all sectors.

This year, this government took the first step in advancing one of the most important infrastructure projects of our time: an all-weather highway down the Mackenzie Valley. The first section, the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway, will connect Canada from sea to sea to sea. This partnership with the federal government provides a much needed immediate economic stimulus to the region, but also the potential for longer-term economic growth.

Our fiscal strategy plans to leverage more federal partnership opportunities in infrastructure investment with the new Building Canada Plan.

We also look forward to private partnership opportunities to connect Norman Wells to Wrigley, should the Sahtu oil play prove viable. The vision of a highway that spans the entire Mackenzie Valley will not be accomplished overnight, but we are doing the regulatory legwork now to be ready to take advantage of the opportunity to advance that vision.

The right type of infrastructure investment can also spark diversification into new industries, transforming challenges, such as geography, into economic opportunities. Capitalizing on Inuvik's location by building the Mackenzie Valley fibre link will transform the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility into a world-class satellite receiving station. Reliable high-speed Internet in our communities will transform the way services are delivered and expand the breadth of opportunities available to residents, from training to small business ventures. The Mackenzie Valley fibre link is on target to begin construction in the winter of 2015, with completion expected in the summer of 2016.

The NWT Power Corporation is commissioning a new LNG facility in Inuvik, the northernmost LNG installation in North America and the first of its kind in northern Canada, saving money and benefitting the environment. We anticipate further LNG use in all off-grid communities with a permanent road connection and in areas potentially requiring significant new generation capacity like the North Slave.

This year we will also complete the business case for an integrated power transmission grid between the North Slave and South Slave hydro systems and the Canadian grid. An NWT grid will stabilize

costs and services. It will help us maximize the benefits of existing hydroelectric generation assets and reduce our reliance on imported diesel and its associated greenhouse gas emissions. This is a cornerstone of our 20-year vision for electricity supply which, in combination with the Energy Plan, supports a brighter economic and environmental future for our territory.

The sustainability of our environment is inseparable from our economic sustainability. The air, land, water and wildlife are the riches on which our economy is built.

Mr. Speaker, this budget devotes \$5.4 million to support Energy Plan initiatives that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by lowering our fossil fuel use, including \$1.4 million to finish the business plan and design for the proposed 65 km transmission line connecting Whati to the Snare hydro system. Funding will be provided for a broad range of alternative energy projects, including \$450,000 for biomass, \$625,000 for solar, \$100,000 for wind, and \$700,000 to continue the NWT Energy Corporation's pursuit of renewable energy options. Support will also be given directly to communities, businesses and residents in support of their efforts to implement energy efficiency measures and alternative energy projects such as small scale biomass heating.

We continue to invest in lowering utility costs in public assets, including \$700,000 for energy efficiency improvements in public housing units. The GNWT is already reaping the benefits of past energy conservation investments under its Capital Asset Retrofit Fund program and renewable energy projects. In 2014-15 realized savings of \$832,000 in utility costs generated from previously completed energy conservation and renewable energy measures, mainly biomass conversions, will be reinvested in the program to undertake new projects that will help manage our future energy consumption and further reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. As of 2011-12 investments in our building infrastructure have helped us re-profile nearly \$1.5 million in annual operating costs to support future investments through the Capital Asset Retrofit program.

The NWT continues to lead in the area of biomass development. We initially focused on building a market. Now we are lending support to forest management agreements with Aboriginal governments. With a committed northern business, we will see the building of the biomass industry in the NWT, using northern resources and labour, in partnership with Aboriginal governments. This industry will meet northern demand as well as the growing export market. Construction is expected to start this year.

Work is also continuing to implement the Water Stewardship Strategy to protect this fundamental

component of our cultural, spiritual, economic and social well-being. The management of waters is a shared responsibility, and transboundary agreements with upstream jurisdictions are critical in helping ensure the waters of the NWT remain clean, abundant and productive. This budget invests \$655,000 to support transboundary water negotiations in support of the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy Action Plan. Expansion of community-based water monitoring programs and development of a practical community-based cumulative effects monitoring framework will continue.

The GNWT is also enhancing efforts at ensuring the NWT boreal caribou population is self-sustaining and its critical habitat is protected. This budget includes an additional \$425,000 in ongoing funding for boreal caribou monitoring and development of range management plans. Implementation of the NWT Barren-ground Caribou Management Strategy includes the deployment of satellite collars in preparation for population surveys of all barren-ground caribou herds in 2015, support for a multi-party effort to develop a range plan for the Bathurst herd as well as the development of a long-term mechanism to manage the herd.

In looking ahead it is useful to imagine the next generation looking back at what we've done today. Will they say that we have provided them with good educations and created the conditions through infrastructure and skills training to support a robust and diversified economy while protecting our environment?

We have protected our core programs and services and at the same time enhanced those that needed more resources, especially those that help improve the lives of NWT residents. At the same time, we met the challenge of managing expenditure growth so that we have the resources to invest in infrastructure and take advantage of federal cost-shared infrastructure programs such as the forthcoming Building Canada Plan.

The scale of infrastructure needed to grow the economy cannot be funded through operating surpluses alone and we are prepared to borrow for strategic infrastructure. We are working with the federal government to enable that investment through an increase to the federally-imposed borrowing limit.

This budget made good on the promise made two years ago that if we made the disciplined choices to manage expenditure pressures, we would be able to increase our infrastructure investments in years three and four of our plan. We succeeded despite a decrease in forecasted revenues. That success gives us renewed strength to stick to our fiscal sustainability plan and continue to meet the challenge of competing spending priorities.

Our success is only guaranteed by our commitment to our fiscal strategy to generate operating surpluses to fund at least half of our infrastructure, and to our fiscal discipline as we maintain a \$100 million cushion in our borrowing room. By sticking to our fiscal plan, we keep borrowing costs down through a well-earned Aa1 credit rating. This budget demonstrates our continued commitment to fiscal discipline and fiscal sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, this budget represents the cooperative effort of this Legislative Assembly to make the disciplined choices about what program priorities to fund while still leaving enough operating surpluses to take advantage of federal cost-shared funds to start making a dent in our infrastructure deficit and grow our economy. As we take over responsibility for the management of our lands, waters and resources, we have a renewed sense of what we can achieve together to sustainably grow our economy, to provide good jobs for our residents and to protect our environment. Through this budget we are collectively embracing these new challenges and opportunities. Thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Before we continue I'd like to welcome our Commissioner. Honourable George L. Tuccaro is in the House with us today.

---Applause

Chief Superintendent of the "G" Division, welcome to the House. Wade Blake, welcome.

---Applause

Our first lady, I guess, of the Northwest Territories, of our Premier, Mrs. Melody McLeod, welcome to the House.

---Applause

All community leaders are welcome.

We're going to call a 30-minute break for a reception in the Great Hall and for us to visit a little bit.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 3, Ministers' statements. Premier McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 8-17(5): MINISTERIAL TRAVEL REPORTS

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to review with Members the history, intent and features of the ministerial travel reports.

The ministerial travel report summarizes each trip undertaken by a Minister with respect to his or her particular portfolios. The reports itemize the

destination, purpose, dates, method of travel and the total costs of any ministerial travel over \$250 charged to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

For the purposes of these reports, travel costs include the Minister's transportation costs and associated meals and accommodations. When Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly are invited to accompany a Minister, their expenses are not currently included.

The ministerial travel reports also report on any air charters specific to ministerial travel, but do not report on departmental air charters involving several passengers on duty travel which may include, but are not dependent upon, a Minister's participation.

Mr. Speaker, the ministerial travel reports are published by the Department of Executive on a quarterly basis and are posted to the government's website. There is no legislative or policy-based requirement to post these reports, but they have been posted, within six months of the end of each quarter, for the past decade. Currently, there are 38 individual travel reports posted to the website. These reports cover the period from January 1, 2004, to June 30, 2013. The report for the quarter ending September 2013 is scheduled to be posted by the 14th of this month.

The reports are intended to provide the interested public with information sufficient to make an informed request for more detailed information should any resident feel more detailed information is required. Over the last 10 years, the ministerial travel reports have led to several requests under our Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act for more specific records. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that each of those requests received positive responses which satisfied both the individual applicants and the requirement of our legislation. This is testament to the efficacy and value of the ministerial travel reports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 4, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STUDENT MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Canada's recent decline on the global stage on math performance has sent a shiver of anxiety to every parent. The first step is to try to understand the issues both nationally and here at home.

The Program for International Student Assessment, known as PISA, recently released a damaging

alarm call where it showed our Canadian 15-year-olds have slipped in global rankings in math competency; in fact, Canada's downward spiral from sixth to 13th among participating countries since 2000. This, ironically, coincides with the adoption of Discovery Learning.

Now, the NWT, Yukon and Nunavut do not participate in PISA rankings as our population is not large enough to acquire meaningful data to match provincial or international benchmarks. We do, however, use the Alberta achievement tests, or AATs, to monitor student performance in math.

Historically, our Grade 9 AAT performance in maths has been a bit of a concern. In 2012 only 34.1 percent of our NWT students achieved acceptable standards on this test. I know, Mr. Speaker, deplorable.

However, we all know the years of poor AATs have attributed directly to the recent development of the Education Renewal and Innovation Initiative that is currently being rolled out by the department.

So why am I still concerned? For starters, there is still the ongoing debate on whether Discovery Learning is really effective or that going back to traditional basics is the key.

Quebec, for example, has kept to a more traditional math teaching and has remained steadfast in international rankings and was also our nation's top scorer. Alberta, where our NWT curriculum is mostly based, has been petitioned by many parents to return to basic math skills with their government defending their position.

So what does this mean for the NWT? Many have attended some of the early presentations of the ERI Initiative, coming away with probably more questions than answers. Has the department clearly demonstrated and convinced all stakeholders the pathway of our students' success is solely depending on this ERI Initiative, or do people still feel a bit fuzzy on this program? Firstly, I think the jury is still out on this one.

So, despite the overwhelming calls from parents nationally to dial back so-called discovery math, obviously this government is paddling hard to get our students the best math education out there, but I have to honestly question the almost zero testing indicated during this ERI transition and with no vision of tying our territory to some form of national grading strategy, the department might be up a creek without a paddle if they don't clearly find this path for this math debacle. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MS. KATHLEEN GRAHAM

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to National Chief Shaun Atleo, Kathleen Graham's mother did an awesome job. As chancellor of Vancouver Island University, the chief met with Kathleen and her family following last Friday's convocation when she received her Master's degree in business administration.

Kathleen is an inspiration for all Northerners, but especially for Aboriginal youth.

[Translation] Kathleen Graham grew up in Hay River and her grandmother was Anne Buggins, who taught them how to bead and do handicraft work in Dene. She often used moosehide to do craftwork and she also was taught to do fire ceremonies. She was also taught how to live traditionally. She also said they came from Hay River and when she went to university, her way of life changed. [Translation ends]

She was always returning, out of sheer determination, to get her diploma. Indeed, perseverance is one of Kathleen's signature traits, rounding out her friendly personality and Dene values of living a balanced and spiritual life.

Another hard-won achievement was her bachelor's degree in environmental studies from the University of Manitoba. Her latest success, the MBA, allowed her to befriend fellow students from India and Africa and the Middle East. "That's exciting," she said. "Having those contacts all over the world really opens doors."

The MBA program was completed in a compressed 12-month format, so she basically lived at the library last year. "They should have charged me rent," Kathleen jokes. She is quick to credit her husband and mother who cared for her four-year-old son in the evenings, freeing her up to write and pour over books.

What do these achievements mean to other northern peers? According to Kathleen, "I know a few girls who went back to university when they found out I was doing my MBA. I really hope other kids will get connected to my story and get inspired by it."

Based in Fort Smith, Kathleen now teaches in the business program at Aurora College. Her courses include micro and macroeconomics and community economic development.

Kathleen Graham is a bright light in the North. On behalf of my constituents, I want to congratulate her for these tremendous accomplishments. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REFLECTIONS ON BUDGET ADDRESS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I started yesterday, I indicated that we were in an exciting time here, and the Minister of Finance's presentation of the budget today is no exception to that excitement. We're going to show a \$200 million surplus. He's indicated that there's a bunch of indications for Hay River's opportunity: midwifery, obviously the biomass industry is of great interest in the Hay River area and the South Slave, and also investment in the fishing industry.

Devolution brings a lot of excitement. We're seeing \$59 million for new employees, revenue of \$27 million. Everything should be bright and shiny.

Over the next few weeks, we'll be deliberating and discussing issues that we are having difficulties with. One of the biggest issues is the Heritage Fund. We're getting resource revenue sharing, the budget indicates we're putting 5 percent of that away, we're saving for the future. But I and my colleagues believe that we should be investing more; 25 percent is kind of the indicator.

We need to be putting money away for the future generations. These resources are non-renewable. They are things that once they're gone we won't have in the future. I know there's a lot of development potential, but we still need to be putting away money for the future, and 5 percent is just not enough.

What are we going to do? We're down \$30 million in revenue. How are we going to generate that revenue? How are we going to get people back in the Northwest Territories? How are we going to deal with the fly-in/fly-out situation and students that are being paid by our Education but yet decide to stay in the South?

People in the North are looking for our guidance in several different areas: education, early childhood development, health and wellness, legal aid, translations for legal, and the film industry. I support development and the growing of our economy. One billion dollars more debt, though, how are we going to carry that forward? How are we going to carry that debt?

We need to be careful of all the projects that we're removing or all we're doing with that \$1 billion...

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BOUCHARD: Our Minister of Finance has been travelling through the Northwest Territories and he's indicated to the public that with that resource revenue sharing money we're going to put some money into the Heritage Fund, we're going to pay down debt. But, really, we're not paying down

debt. We're looking at taking on another billion dollars' worth of debt.

The general public supported the concept of putting money away, and I think the way we put money away is through our Heritage Fund, and we should be putting money away at 25 percent per year, not 5 percent.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ONSITE DAYCARE FACILITIES AT
AURORA COLLEGE CAMPUSES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to address the lack of daycare facilities at our Aurora College campuses. In the NWT we have Aurora College and the government is rightly proud of providing post-secondary education to our residents so they can achieve a higher education in their home territory. NWT residents can, and do, enrol in the many Aurora College programs, and with hard work and effort they can graduate successfully. That is unless they are parents and need child care.

None of our three Aurora College campuses has daycare on site. Students who have little or no family support in their college community must rely on existing daycare services in that community, and the well-documented reality is that there is a definite lack of daycare in our three college communities. Students with children must bear an extra financial burden to complete their schooling.

Women are the majority of students in post-secondary settings, and they also make up a larger proportion of student parents. Those students who can't make arrangements with family are forced to take on jobs to pay for outside daycare, cutting into their study time and threatening their chances of graduating. Some students resort to bringing their children to class, a distraction for other students and not an optimal learning environment for the mom or the dad.

Yes, Education, Culture and Employment has a Childcare Subsidy Program for students, but from what I hear it is not easily accessible and funding levels fall far short of actual child care costs. Aurora College administration should be looking at other post-secondary institutions that run daycares on campus and use them as a model to develop its own service. They won't have to look far.

Nakwaye Ku is a non-profit child care centre for children of students, staff and the general public, located at the Yukon College Ayamdigut Campus. It serves a dual purpose as a daycare and as a practicum setting for students in the Early Childhood Development program. ECD students can observe, evaluate and teach real subjects in a real ECD setting.

Another example at Nunatta Campus in Iqaluit: 12 spaces are reserved for the Kids on the Beach Daycare for children of Nunavut Arctic College students. The Rankin Inlet campus daycare has space for 21.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: This government has a stated goal to increase our focus on early childhood development programming. We have a brand new revised early childhood framework. Daycare centres at our college campuses would fit nicely into actions coming from that framework. Is it doable? Absolutely. Will it happen? I challenge the Aurora College to make it so. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS IN THE DEH CHO REGION

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. While I support many of the initiatives in the 2014-15 budget, I remain very concerned about the funding to schools and highways in my region. I recognize the hard work involved in bringing forward a budget that meets residents' expectations within challenging constraints and competing priorities; however, I cannot overemphasize some of the real needs that continue to put pressure on program delivery in communities within the Nahendeh riding.

I was disappointed that my favorite two words, Highway 7, did not make it in the budget speech. Highway No. 7 did receive some support in the capital infrastructure budget that was passed late last year and I would like to remind the House, and especially my Cabinet colleagues, that important work on Highway No. 7 needs to take a front seat as we consider our spending priorities. When words are mentioned in the budget speech, I feel then it's a real priority.

Even in the Northwest Territories, the days are getting longer and the groundhog detects an early spring. It is never too soon to think about maintenance on Highway No. 7 and begin work as soon as we can. We must ensure safe and reliable transportation throughout the region and to prepare for the coming thaw.

Leading up to this budget, Members spent a lot of time discussing social envelope initiatives and changes to programming in education. Some of the proposed changes may be good for the youth and their families, but the community of Trout Lake still does not even have a proper school.

Expected changes with education reform cannot make up for lack of appropriate facilities that allow effective delivery of these programs, no matter how good they are. Without real schools that meet community needs, we will continue to struggle to recruit and retain teachers and compromise students' success.

Putting together this budget on the eve of devolution is also an ambitious task. In order to move ahead on additional programs and services, I insist that Nahendeh receive adequate facilities, safe and reliable transportation as well as quality buildings for our schools. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON BUDGET ADDRESS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to commend the government on this – yet another – budget address here today for the fiscal year 2014-2015.

We have many challenges in the Northwest Territories and we also have many opportunities, so it becomes the task of this government and our Finance Minister to balance all of those interests and try to do the best we can to manage our territory.

I think of a few things that are mentioned in here today. I think the initiative to try to increase the population of the Northwest Territories with a set target and a set goal within a certain time frame is a very good idea. We can talk about infrastructure deficit and all the things that we need to build, but let me tell you that if we do not have children in our schools, if we do not have people living in our communities, there is going to be little need for more infrastructure. So, it becomes a catch-22 sometimes. Does more infrastructure attract more people, or what comes first, the people or the infrastructure?

We have a difficult and challenging course ahead of us. As I said yesterday, there's a hole in the bucket; it's the people that are leaving the Northwest Territories. Like I said, I will have numerous statements throughout this sitting of the Legislature on how – I want to phrase it, I want to coin it in this way – not what is the government doing wrong, how can we do it better.

Of course, we do employ our students and our local people. You talk to some people in industry, they will tell you that every able-bodied, sober, sound-minded person in the Northwest Territories is working at this time. I disagree with that. I think there is lots of room in our public service for people who want to advance, who want to enhance their training and who want to get into private sector employment and who want to get into public sector

employment. There are lots of people out there and I think that we can do better as a government. That's going to be my motto as we look at all of these things over the next six weeks. What can we as a government do better? What do we have the resources to do and how can we affect change in areas where we can improve circumstances?

Speaking overall and generally, again I would just like to commend the government for this balanced approach to our fiscal forecast for the upcoming year and I look forward to working with them on the initiatives laid out. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to commend the government and their work towards this '14-15 budget and the budget address that was given to us earlier today. Obviously, we do have some challenges in the Northwest Territories that we have seen since the beginning of this government.

Looking at the budget address and listening very closely to what was in there and what wasn't in there, where we need to put some focus, one area that kind of caught my attention is one area where the Minister did mention that we must do things differently in our ability to fund programs and services that are critical to Northerners, but that's a statement based on the declining population that's been mentioned here that reduces our economic growth in the Northwest Territories.

In the budget address, one thing I was really looking forward to – speaking of doing things differently – was some information, some commitments to education. One statement that was in here was over one-third of our children are not healthy or developmentally ready to go into the school system. That's an issue, because in the future that means that's going to affect one of our goals, which is healthy, educated people for the Northwest Territories, a goal of the 17th Legislative Assembly. Those are, on average, the stats for the Northwest Territories. Those stats get higher as you get into the smaller communities.

One initiative that can address those is the e-learning that has been brought up in this House many times. One thing that was not brought up in the budget address that is of concern to me are any funds or commitments made to all the hard work and effort that staff, organizations, committee and the department has gone for the Education Renewal Initiative. So, where is all the funding that's going to go into this should this document be prepared for the '14-15 education school year?

We have to do things differently. The Beaufort-Delta has done a great job in getting higher education and higher learning into the small communities in the Beaufort-Delta region, yet I didn't see any commitment or funding for that program in here.

There was a really good news article in the Inuvik Drum today that talked about the Sunchild E-Learning Initiative that provided higher education and got older adults educated and graduated. I was a little disappointed not seeing that in the budget, and hopefully in the future we can see something coming down the pipes, maybe through a supplementary appropriation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON BUDGET ADDRESS

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, it is once again budget day in the NWT, or I've started to see it as it's Cabinet day once again, a day once a year where all of Cabinet's dreams are realized and Members' requests are simply daunted off for yet another year.

When the Finance Minister continues to school us about discipline choices and that we must be thinking about a fiscally sustainable path, that's become consensus talking for saying we have no money for Members' initiatives, but don't worry, your day will one day come.

When the government talks about fiscal restraint, I go to my dictionary and it reads they're telling me your initiatives are about to be cut.

This budget falls short to respond to Members' concerns and what the public wants. Members have been asked to review a budget. We looked at a 99 percent completed budget. Our advice of less than 1 percent was ignored.

The government will decry, "we are broke," they say. But you know what? The bottom line doesn't fall out, because we heard earlier today there was a large surplus. But rather, scaling back on their initiatives, what do they do? They cut ours.

This doesn't reflect the trueness of consensus government in any manner. One might assume they would give us a little give and take, the things we desire on behalf of our constituents, rather than watching them be trimmed to fall to the floor.

Today represents yet another fine example of this McLeod government schooling us and saying we know best, and they continue to act like a healthy majority government. So this government will stop at saying everything and will stop at no stop by saying we are a collaborative government. But I

look and ask anyone to say, where are Members' recommendations in this budget?

Over the coming days the government will hear continually about the shortfalls of programs that we need to invest better in, and of course, we'll hear the response from government: No, no, no. The failure of this budget isn't just on the Finance Minister, but I say it's on all seven Cabinet Ministers not fulfilling their obligations of working with Members on this side of the House.

With an operating surplus of \$232 million, there must have been the smallest amount of room for MLA concerns. We want more for cost of living. We want more in the Heritage Fund. The public would be shocked by how little is represented.

So, in closing, the Chinese will say this year is the year of the House, or horse. I'll say it again one more time.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. HAWKINS: The Chinese will tell you this is the year of the horse. Well, I tell you once again, this is the year of Cabinet, again. I will encourage all my regular colleagues to vote against this budget until we see solid initiatives represented, pushed forward, moved forward by our MLAs, by the public's wishes.

In closing, the Finance Minister says he wants to do things differently, so I encourage him to start listening to Members. That would be different.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON BUDGET ADDRESS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've listened to the Finance Minister and went through the budget address and looked at some of the highlights, I was quite pleased with some of the initiatives happening in the Northwest Territories, certainly the long-held dream of Cece McCauley in Norman Wells on the Mackenzie Valley Highway and the work towards that, and the government is responding to the oil and gas activity in the Sahtu and other areas around the Northwest Territories that the government is responding with the fiscal restraint that we're operating under. Of course, the new day for us will be devolution on April 1st in a couple of months from now.

I'm very surprised and, like Mrs. Groenewegen talked about, there was some creativity with this budget here. I was shockingly surprised to see that there were hundreds of vacant positions within the government. Every year we come to this part of our Assembly and we approve positions, and the government has said there were hundreds of

vacant positions. We approve it, but the money... I don't know where the money goes. I'm not sure what the exact number is and how many positions are vacant and how much money that relates to, but we should have some discussion because some of our requests don't quite make the table through the budget address, as one of my colleagues mentioned.

I want to raise that as an alarming concern of the positions that we, as a government, have not yet quite figured out on the efficiency and the effectiveness of government when we have hundreds of vacant positions within our government. That money is approved, it's there within the departments, but we don't see the end result of it. What happens to it? We're asking for positions in our small communities and we're always asking for these positions, can we get this position, and they keep saying no, there's no money or it doesn't quite meet the standards.

So I wanted to say to the government that we're paying attention over here and we'll be asking some hard questions the next couple of weeks.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT CAREER FAIRS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Human Resources recently held a career fair in Ottawa highlighting opportunities related to devolution. It is an exciting time to work for the Government of the Northwest Territories and I'm sure this initiative attracted attention and maybe even some prospective employees, but this news is discouraging to residents in some of our small communities.

During the career fair I heard from a Mackenzie Delta constituent who has been unemployed since June. She holds a diploma in office administration and is ready to work, but there are no jobs in her community. She makes her living there and it doesn't make sense for her to leave. The lack of work is draining our small communities.

Another problem is that many government positions that are advertised often include the condition that applicants live within a certain distance of the job's location. That requirement can easily mislead potential employees who are willing to relocate.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has invested a lot of effort into this Human Resource Strategy. Last year it was recognized as one of Canada's top 100 employers and named one of Canada's best diversity employers. It offers generous compensation and benefits packages, excellent health, wellness and professional development opportunities, but these things are

only enjoyed by those who are already in, unlike my constituent.

I ask why we focus on hiring people from the South when we fail to develop opportunities for our own people in the North. Our residents hear promises of new jobs related to devolution. They want to know what that means to them, for them. Our people are looking for work and the population of the Northwest Territories is declining. We need to make more of an effort to reach capable individuals in the communities. We should continually review our actions to strengthen the public service and recruit and retain Aboriginal people. Our career fairs need to target Northerners and showcase all that our regions have to offer. It is the only way to develop vibrant communities and people who are healthy, educated and employed.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PASSING OF JOSEPH LLOYD SANDERSON

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to pay tribute to the late Joseph Lloyd Sanderson of Fort Resolution, better known as Joe-Joe.

Joe-Joe Sanderson was born March 24, 1958, and passed away on December 7, 2013, at 55 years old. Joe-Joe died of natural causes.

Joe Sanderson was born and raised in Fort Resolution. He attended Grandin College in Fort Smith. Joe was a very athletic person growing up and at one time he was an excellent golden gloves boxing champion in the Northwest Territories and Alberta. But Joe Sanderson was more than that; he was a tremendous athlete. Joe Sanderson was better than everybody in his age category and older in the school in track and field, floor hockey, baseball and fastball. He was an unbelievable athlete.

Joe worked at the sawmill in Fort Resolution for a number of years and then moved to Pine Point where he became a truck driver and excavator operator until the mine shut down in the late 1980s. Joe also worked as a truck driver for a number of years at Diavik Diamond Mine.

Joe enjoyed being out on the land, and as a result, he became a member of the Fort Resolution Canadian Rangers Patrol in 1992 and was an active member until 2012, thereby dedicating 20 years of service to the Canadian Rangers.

Joe was predeceased by his parents, George and Judith Sanderson; siblings James Sanderson, Willie Sanderson and Cecile Sanderson; and nieces nephews Barry Sanderson, Cody Broadhead, Keith Digness, Gloria Sanderson, Karen Sanderson and baby Redvers. Joe is survived by his sisters Violet Broadhead, married to Barry; Katie Martin, married

to Lyle; Clara Redvers; Annie Digness, married to Gordon; brother Delmar Sanderson; son Jeremy Antoine; special friend Linda McKay; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

I pass my condolences on to the late Joseph Lloyd Sanderson's son, sisters, brothers and many friends that he had in Fort Resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 5, reports of standing and special committees. Item 6, returns to oral questions. Item 7, recognition of visitors in the gallery. I would like to welcome everybody in the House. Mr. Ramsay.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marked the beginning of a new air service connecting three capital cities: Yellowknife, Whitehorse and Ottawa. I was at the airport earlier today with Minister Beaulieu. I would like to recognize a former Yellowknifer now living in Whitehorse, working for Air North. I would like to congratulate Air North for taking the lead on establishing this new route. That certainly is going to strengthen ties in tourism, government and business-related areas between the two territories. Thanks to Air North and welcome, Mr. Peart. Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Kevin Lewis, who is with CanNor here in Yellowknife.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, acknowledgements. Item 9, oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 44-17(5): GNWT CAREER FAIRS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources. As I mentioned in my statement, the department had a career fair in Ottawa, so I would like to ask the Minister, what were some of the targets and early outcomes of the career fair in Ottawa? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had attended the career fair in Ottawa to raise awareness about the employment opportunities in the Northwest Territories, to attract people to the GNWT and advise people of the opportunities and advantages of living in the Northwest Territories as one of the strategies to try to increase our

population base and fill some positions that are otherwise difficult to fill. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask the Minister, when is the government holding career fairs here in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We are having open houses at the Human Resource service centres we have across the territory. We had our very first open house in late November in the HR Service Centre in Fort Simpson, and we're going to follow up with open houses in Inuvik, Norman Wells and Hay River this month. We are also going to have open houses in Yellowknife on March 12th and 13th, Fort Smith at the end of March, and on May 6, 2014, we will be having our last open house at the HR Service Centre in Behchoko. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear they're planning to have open houses in the regional centres, but what about the smaller communities in the outlying regions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, in order to try to reach out to some of the small communities, the department has announced the Regional Recruitment Program. With that program, the department has also hired a regional recruitment specialist that is based in Fort Smith and will be working with all the HR service centres, and also the HR service centres will expand out into the smaller communities. Again, sending the same message out in the communities that the GNWT is available, we have vacant positions that we wish to fill and if people in the communities have the skills and abilities to fill those positions, we are going to give them the opportunity to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to ask the Minister, how does the department reach out to our Aboriginal population? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The department has the Aboriginal Management and Development Program where we are advancing people into associate positions. We are starting at the director/superintendent level where we are advancing six individual Aboriginals into those positions. It gives them a good key position to be able to reach out and try to attract other Aboriginal employees. In the mix, we are also trying to add – we don't have the money in the budget yet – the next level down and have associate managers. So that's something that the department will be putting forward to the government. We have an Aboriginal Advisory Committee chaired by one of our Aboriginal deputy ministers that watches over some of these activities, especially these key activities in

our attempt to attract more Aboriginal people into the public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 45-17(5):
STUDENT MATHEMATICS
ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke about Canada's recent decline on the global stage of our math performance. Coupled with what we already know about our extremely poor performance on our AAT Grade 9 math scores, the debate brewing between Discovery Learning and going back to basics is clearly circling the wagon at the recent launch of the Education Renewal and Innovation Initiative. My questions today will be for the Minister responsible, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Our math curriculum for years has been based on the Alberta model. Can the Minister indicate, with the pending ERI Initiative, what changes in math teachings in the NWT and what provincial curriculum will the NWT likely follow? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The NWT and Alberta are part of the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol along with three provinces and three territorial jurisdictions. We have been involved with the math curriculum and teaching resources for the past 20 years to develop a common and use by all WNCP partners.

The NWT has been, and continues to be, extremely active in this process along with other provincial jurisdictions. As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are changes happening within Alberta education. We are closely monitoring that through their education redesign process. With any changes, we are closely monitoring what kind of changes will be happening pertaining to mathematical curriculum. We will be making changes that reflect on that for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the Minister's response. I think I really want to get rid some of the fuzziness around some of the changes that might be pending.

Would the Minister say we are maintaining our math standards towards more of the Discovery Learning or does he see us as maintaining more of a traditional charted course in math basics? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: There's been a lot of recent discussion about Discovery Learning versus traditional learning, particularly relating to

mathematics. Alberta has again... We are referring to Alberta because we use their curriculum, as well, both nationally and internationally in mathematics education for well over a decade. So we are learning from Alberta, our neighbouring province. The math curriculum that we use in the NWT has been adopted by other provincial jurisdictions in Canada. As an example in Quebec, they have done very well as they embrace a new approach to student learning. They focus on attention to careful learning and the training of the teachers who teach mathematics. This is a...(inaudible)...approach as well. This investment in teacher training is one of the highlighted areas in our initiatives, so we are closely monitoring that as well as working with other provincial jurisdictions.

MR. DOLYNNY: Again, I'm going to have to go back to Hansard and decipher that response. Again, I'm trying to get rid of the fuzziness around the changes that are pending, especially with this ERI Initiative.

Again, communication is paramount when we launch an initiative of this magnitude. Can the Minister elaborate on what kind of communication process and rollout expectation timeline will we see for this ERI Initiative and will math curriculum be affected in the near future? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: My department has been engaged with the superintendents and also assistant superintendents over the last week to explain that very concept and ask for substantive feedback from their school boards. As we said, Alberta is developing new assessment tools such as Student Learning Assessment for introduction at the Grade 3 level in September 2014. So those are some of the important key aspects that we are monitoring.

For the NWT, no matter how we decide to engage in the use of these tools, we will, on some level, compromise data for the coming years for Grade 3.

Grades 6, 9 and 12 assessment tools remain in place for the coming school year until Alberta changes their format. Then we have to adapt to those changes as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Testing is very important for parents or even students. That is the cornerstone of how we are doing well.

With almost zero testing indicators from what we can see during this ERI Initiative transition, and with little framework of a national grading strategy, can the Minister indicate by what process will the department be able to evaluate our math performance or our success of our NWT students? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Part of the process that we are going through is, again, working closely with the school boards across the Northwest Territories and working closely with the provincial jurisdictions. I mentioned the Quebec model and also the Alberta model. We are going to be making changes through the Education Renewal Initiative pertaining to Alberta making changes. It's coming. We know that substantial changes are coming. So through the mathematical curriculum, we will be making those changes as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 46-17(5):
DAYCARE FACILITIES AT
AURORA COLLEGE CAMPUSES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are also addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I want to follow up on my Member's statement about college daycares and the need for our students to have some place to put their children while they go to school.

There certainly is a lack of affordable daycare for students. As I mentioned, it keeps them in a financial hole and I think it keeps many of them in poverty. It's not where our students should be if we expect them or want them to gain learning and to gain accreditation and get good jobs.

I'd like to start off by asking the Minister, I mentioned the child care subsidy in my statement and I'd like to ask him if he could provide the House with data on the use of the Childcare Subsidy Program. Was it fully subscribed in the last fiscal year? It is my understanding that it was not. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that detailed information, but we can certainly provide the breakdown of the use of the Childcare Subsidy Program over the last year or last few years, and whether it's been maximized or the usage of that particular subsidy program. We can provide that. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I look forward to that information. I'd like to ask the Minister, in terms of daycare and the opportunities to provide daycare on campus and for our students, I'd like to know if the Minister is willing to review with the Aurora College Board and the Aurora College president the benefits of on-campus daycare. Will he commit to establishing a daycare if only at one campus in Fort Smith where we currently have our Early Childhood Education program?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are discussions that we will be having with the college. There are certain initiatives happening in the college, the review of the overall training initiatives, so there will be those discussions. Aurora College with its three main campuses, serving the 32 communities, are going through their growth and objectives long-term plans. So they will be meeting, I believe in June, and they'll be discussing this particular subject, as well, to my understanding.

Inuvik and the other two campuses, as the Member alluded to, provide child care programs. Inuvik students have access through the Children First Daycare as well. So there are some facilities that are available within the communities, but I understand where the Member is coming from. We provide a subsidy program to the students and we'll continue to do that. At the same time, I will be addressing this with the Aurora College Board of Governors. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. I look forward to hearing sooner rather than later, I hope, that the college is willing to look at developing on-campus daycares. Certainly, if there are not enough students with children on campus to fill a daycare, I'm sure that the rest of the community would fill it up.

If the Minister or if the college can't establish an on-campus daycare, as I mentioned in my statement, there are a couple of daycares in Nunavut where the spaces are reserved for college students. So I'd like to know if the Minister would consider that.

Will the college, will ECE consider reserving spaces in community daycares for college students and their children? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Those are the types of discussions that we need to have with the Board of Governors. As you know, they're arm's reach from us. We provide funding to them. It's the board that makes the decisions on where the money should be expended and we work closely with them, I work closely with the board chair of the Board of Governors. Every opportunity to meet with them at the annual event through the meetings, but these are some of the areas that Members have alluded to. It is an initiative that's been earmarked before. So I'm sure the Board of Governors will be discussing that and I will be reminding the board members as well. Mahsi.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Thanks again to the Minister. The concerns of the students were heard loud and clear when we met with Yellowknife students a number of weeks ago. The value of an on-campus daycare at a training venue is something which I want to make sure that the Minister has understood. So in Fort Smith, for

instance, if there was an on-campus daycare, I would imagine that the funding for the Childcare Funding Subsidy Program could be put into an on-campus daycare, and it probably wouldn't cost all that much more to get that established. It would also provide a venue to train our professionals.

Does the Minister realize that we can have an on-campus daycare that services two purposes? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. I'd like to thank the Member, as well, for meeting with the students, because it is very important to listen to those students, to hear their ideas, concerns and suggestions. Those areas are being brought to our attention here today, so we will be following up with those ideas particularly to Iqaluit and also Yukon College. Some of the examples brought to our attention here today I will be addressing with the college as well. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 47-17(5): VACANT GNWT POSITIONS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance. On page 3 of the fiscal strategy of the budget address, the Minister says some of the areas of concern are hundreds of vacant jobs in the Northwest Territories. Then he goes on, and part of that paragraph that I want to focus on, but the Minister also stated that in there, is that they want to embark on an initiative to increase the population of the Northwest Territories in five years.

I want to ask the Minister, in the vacant jobs – there are hundreds of vacant jobs – how many vacant jobs are there in the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In any given time there are about 800 vacancies. There are about 400 that we're actively trying to fill. Those numbers are split between Yellowknife and outside of Yellowknife.

MR. YAKELEYA: I know there's probably a little more complexity on the answers, but 800 positions that the government has right now, there are 400 they're actively trying to fill. So the other 400, what happens? There's active and inactive. Is that correct and can the Minister also put a financial figure to those positions that are vacant?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. There are unfunded positions. There's still a gap of about 7 percent on the benefits that the departments are funded with for positions that the departments are required to cover off. There is money that's used for casuals to offset the

vacancies, contracts that are used to offset the vacancies. Some folks may be away on leave. So it's a very complicated list. It's not just empty or full. There are many issues to consider.

One of the things I would point out, as well, in the budget address, is we're devoting \$22.6 million, I believe it is, over three years to put housing in small communities with a specific focus to try to deal with the housing, to alleviate one of the barriers to filling those positions, which is often adequate housing. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. We have voted for these positions in past Legislative Assemblies, past sessions, and still we're having a difficult time and I'm on board with Mrs. Groenewegen. How do we create some things to do something exciting, something that would fill these positions?

Mr. Blake talked about getting the young people back into our communities or somehow get the northern people back working again. So I want to ask the Minister, on these positions, what happens to the dollars when we vote on them and now we found out there are 800 vacant positions that are not yet filled? What happens to these dollars that we vote on to prove that these are the positions that we want in the government?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. Once again, this is a short question that would require a very complicated answer if we wanted to cover all the issues. But there are positions, the money is used in some cases to help cover off a gap in benefits, there are casual dollars, there are contract dollars, there are staff that may be on transfer assignments. So there's a range of reasons why some positions may be empty.

The issue, though, is one of concern to the government that we need to find a way to make sure... We have a couple of competing issues here. We have northern graduates that don't come home and we have positions that we are going begging in terms of permanent employment, and we have to reconcile that as we move forward. If we could fill all our positions we would go a long way to addressing some of the concern we have about trying to go from 2,000 in five years, in terms of population increase. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard on this side that we could be very creative on this initiative as to filling these 400 vacant positions, the active positions. I'm going to make the assumption that the 400 inactive, what does inactive, meaning these 400 positions to fill, and we can embark on that, and as I said, like some of our colleagues, but let's start training up people in our own communities, start upgrading them. Maybe that's the bigger picture.

I want to ask the Minister, when will the Cabinet come over to our side and say let's sit down, let's figure out how we can resolve this. Right now, as it stands, we have 800 vacant positions within the Government of the Northwest Territories and yet I'm not too sure what the financial cost is of us approving those positions in past Assemblies to have those positions in the GNWT.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. If the Member will recollect, before Christmas we had a meeting and I indicated to the Members that we were intent on coming forward to try to address this issue and that we would keep committee fully engaged and apprised. We had a first inaugural meeting with the mine presidents as well as the chamber representatives this week, just to see if there was a shared interest in trying to address this issue, and there is, so we're in the process of striking a high level senior working group to try to look at some of the things like the immigrant Nominee Program, the fly-in/fly-out issue as well as some of the broader ones. It's not only the government that has vacancies, it's the private sector as well. So we are going to look at those as well as we are definitely turning our attention to how do we do a better job recruiting our own students to come back home. We intend to get that working group going. If the committee has a specific role that they see for themselves or potentially how they would like to be engaged, if they would let us know, we would be happy to look at that.

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

QUESTION 48-17(4):

DECENTRALIZATION OF GNWT POSITIONS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to focus a little bit about decentralization and moving jobs to the communities as laid out in the Minister's budget speech. That's a key part of devolution. He's talking about phase 1 and phase 2. Perhaps I'll just ask on phase 1. What is being planned for phase 1 right now? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Phase 1 was completed last year and we laid it out in the budget last year. Phase 2 speaks to some of the things we are looking at in the more immediate term in terms of devolution and reorganization, the lands, departments being set up in the regional centres and those types of things. Then as we look at our devolution and post-devolution organizational structures and then the longer-term phase 3 is going to be a bit more in-depth as we look at some of the things that are once again impediments to moving positions outside of Yellowknife, which the two main ones

would be office space and availability of housing. Then looking at what distinct, discreet functions of government would make sense in an operational sense about where... (inaudible)... located outside of Yellowknife.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I was just wondering: has the department or does government have a rough idea about what regions may be getting jobs? I know that office space is an issue, and housing, but we've got a little bit of an infrastructure plan with housing. I'm not too sure about the office, but have they got a sense of what regions will benefit from these 50 positions?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: The housing piece, the \$22 million that is going to small communities, the actual location has yet to be determined, and of course, we're doing some of the initial planning subject to approval in this House. The office space requirements, we're looking at some communities where it seemed to be an issue, and as well, some communities may have other housing challenges, like the small communities, so that's being looked at as well. We do know through our current process that's now before this House, there are structural changes coming with the new departments. For example, we talked about, in the budget speech, a Lands department being set up in every regional centre. That's underway as well.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I guess my experience has been that often when we've got lack of housing issues, some of those government department jobs do get sent to bigger, larger centres, and they often stay there only because citing, of course, that there's no housing.

Is there a strategy in place where the new recruits, or whoever is being hired, are advised that at some future point they will be relocating to the regions and communities?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Where there are no incumbents, that is not an issue of concern. Where we are taking over responsibility with incumbents, there is a two year, I believe it is, guarantee of job certainty in the position in the community where they currently are, which in this case would be Yellowknife. After that, the opportunities for longer-term planning would kick in and potential decentralization opportunities may flow.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad for that answer, but I guess the key thing is that, well, just in the newspaper, as well, is that a lot of our regions and communities, it's government jobs that is our sector only because of lack of industry at this point in time.

Once again, when will the government be deciding on which region, what kind of breakdown will these 50 jobs be slated for?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There is some certainty in regards to the Lands department and those kind of organizational changes where there's going to be a Lands department in each regional centre. Those decisions are there. Some of the other components that may be decentralized, we're still looking at what makes the most sense and what is available in terms of capacity in communities to absorb potential positions, and that will be happening over the next few months.

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

QUESTION 49-17(5):
RECRUITMENT STRATEGY FOR
VACANT GNWT POSITIONS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to throw a few single words out there that the government might want to consider when trying to recruit people for the 800 vacant positions and how we are going to get Northerners first and foremost into those positions and, secondly, how we could attract other people to come here. Let me throw a few of those out: mentoring, sponsorship, job shadowing, transfer assignment, succession planning, partnerships with the private sector, tracking our students when they're out there, forecasting labour market trends in the Northwest Territories so we can tell students even when they're in high school what kinds of positions we're going to have a shortage of going forward, scholarship, loan forgiveness. If we lose \$25,000 for every student that doesn't come back to the Northwest Territories – at least \$25,000 and probably more once they get established and start a family and so on – what are we doing with their loans, the debt? That's what you hear down south all the time. The biggest burden for post-secondary, after people graduate from university with an education, is starting off life with these incredible education debts. We should get ahead of the ball here and try to think about doing something, knowing full well that if we don't get our population up, that grant from Canada is just going to keep going down.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance, on the 800 vacant positions, how many of those are inactive and how many of them are we actively trying to recruit people into?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this particular moment, I understand we are recruiting actively for 571 positions.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'd love to see where those advertisements are. You're actively recruiting 571 positions in the Government of the Northwest Territories. Does the Minister have a breakdown of how many of those are in headquarters and how many of those are in the regions?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I don't have that level of HR detail, and I don't have the ability to ask my colleague from Human Resources to provide the statistics, but we have those numbers available, it's just that I don't have them before me here today.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Well, if the government is actively trying to recruit for 571 vacant positions in the public service at this time, you know, please include us in that challenge. We probably could have some ideas to help you out in filling some of those positions.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, on the 800 vacant positions, what kind of monetary dollar value does 800 vacant positions represent? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If you used the ballpark figure of, on average, \$100,000 per position, the math would be \$80 million. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Is there a strategy or anything out of the ordinary in place right now to attract, recruit for those vacant positions at this time? I don't know; if there are that many advertisements and that many posts out there on government websites, I haven't seen them.

What is the effort that is being put forward at this time? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, we are doing things like regional recruitment. We are looking at the way we are structured as a college and supporting post-secondary students. We are now doing things, as indicated in this House, like job fairs. We have the initiative that's going to put market housing in the small communities, which we hope will allow us to staff long needed positions in the smaller communities. There are a lot of things being done not only by us but by industry.

The issue is, are we doing it, as the Member herself said, well enough. Clearly, when we look at our territorial population statistics, there is work to do. The fly-in/fly-out, as well, is a challenge. We also believe there is significant opportunity in the immigrant Nominee Program. The one political case that comes to mind is Premier Wall from Saskatchewan went all the way over to Ireland as part of a recruiting career fair to sign up Irish folks to move to Saskatchewan to fill jobs that are going begging. We are in a very competitive market to do those types of things in addition to trying to employ every Northerner that we possibly can. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 50-17(5):
EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENTS

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with my Member's statement today. I have questions today for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

In the budget address it mentions that one-third of our NWT children start school already significantly behind in their overall health and development. I want to ask the Minister, with the data collection, does he see those stats as per norm that we see in the small communities?

Would the Minister give us any kind of indication what those stats are in the small communities and how he plans to address those challenges, those problems that we have with children being behind in their health and their development? Does he have the stats for the small communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. We do have those stats from the small communities and also the larger centres in comparison and also southern jurisdictions, as well, because they do serve isolated communities sometimes.

We have done a lot of research in this area and we have been working with other provincial jurisdictions. We realize that a lot of our communities, especially the isolated communities, small communities, are not up to par on their educational paths. Through the Education Renewal Initiative it will certainly capture those areas, and even the Early Childhood Development Framework that we have been talking about. All those tools that we have been providing will offset and enhance the program that we're going to be delivering as we move forward. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: I agree with the Minister that we do have a lot of challenges in our smaller communities, especially ones that are isolated.

The Minister and committee have had the opportunity to work with the Beaufort-Delta Education Authority on their e-learning program that provides education tools and education to the small communities using teleconference.

Would the Minister agree that this new e-learning structure is working and is very successful in the Beaufort-Delta region, and is he willing to look at providing additional resources to this project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: First of all I would like to commend the Beaufort-Delta Education

Council for working diligently on this particular e-learning initiative that they have embarked on. It has been very, very successful to date, even though it has been a short time frame. At the same time, we have been doing our research across our great country of Canada and there is other e-learning that's happening throughout the other regions, but this particular one captures the most isolated communities.

I agree that this is an area that we need to invest in more and then how we can deliver that as a test pilot project through the Beaufort-Delta region to other isolated communities. Those are just some of the discussions we are currently having. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: I appreciate the Minister's comments on the work that's been brought forth by the Beaufort-Delta Education Council, and just quoting him he says it's "very, very successful" and that we have to start investing into this organization.

Right now the Beaufort-Delta Education Authority, through the e-learning program, provides opportunities for three communities to advance their education, higher education, meaning that there are other communities in the coastal regions that aren't getting the proper, not the proper but the same education that they can.

Would the Minister be willing to invest funding? Knowing that the Beaufort-Delta Education Authority is using their old funds to fund this program, can new dollars be invested into the Beaufort-Delta Education Authority to fund this program so the coastal communities can also reap these benefits? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thanks for the Member's statement, Mr. Moses. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for addressing this important subject. We are, as I stated, working very closely with the BDEC – Beaufort-Delta Education Council – exploring various ways on how we can expand on their initiative that has been highlighted as a success.

As the Member indicated, part of the coastal regions are not covered. This is our goal, to capture those isolated communities, reaching out to those isolated communities. We are discussing that at this point. Mahsi.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to be pretty blunt about this, I guess, would the Minister be willing to fund the e-learning program with new dollars so that Beaufort-Delta Education can use their allocated funding for other programs and projects that other regions have? Is there new

funding in the ERI Initiative coming down the pipes in the 2014-15 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: E-learning will be a key component of the Education Innovation Action Plan, so as we move forward, evolve into action plans, this will be captured to reach out to the most isolated communities. So, yes, that is part of the plan. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Bouchard, Hay River.

QUESTION 51-17(5): HERITAGE FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Finance on his new release of this year's budget.

I would like to ask the Minister, if he had done his tour of the Northwest Territories, how he can justify as the amount that we are supposed to put into the Heritage Fund when we have clearly heard other numbers such as 25 percent and 50 percent?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was an issue of choice and having to make disciplined choices to try to meet all the objectives that we have as a government and as an Assembly, in a way that allows us to be sustainable, stay within our borrowing limit and still move forward.

There was a very diverse range of opinion across the territory. For example, the community of Hay River, they were supportive of the 5 percent when we met there and when we did a wrap-up at the end of the day. In Fort Smith there was a significant debate, 25 percent at the end of the day. Inuvik said they thought it should be probably more, at least 10 percent. In Norman Wells it wasn't that clear. In Yellowknife the range went from 25 to 100 percent. So there was a range. There was no doubt and you have to make a choice. That's what we're supposed to be doing. That's what we are required to do and that's what we did in a careful, thoughtful way.

MR. BOUCHARD: I know the Minister did attend Hay River and he indicated that Hay River supported the 5 percent. At the same time, the Minister indicated that we were reducing debt and he's indicated in our budget here that we are looking at borrowing another billion dollars. So I mean, I think Hay River is supportive of 5 percent plus paying down the debt. I think the 25 percent that we're looking on this side for is a cost-savings. The community of Hay River is looking to save more towards the future.

I wonder how the Minister justifies this when he indicated that we're going to reduce debt but we're

actually taking on more debt, a billion dollars' worth of debt.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As we went around the North and travelled to the regional centres, we talked about not only the Heritage Fund but we talked about the vision of the Assembly and of the government with the grid build out to the road completion from Wrigley to Norman Wells, the need to look at things like natural gas expansion, the need to put infrastructure into our communities. The only way we can do that is if we get a bump-up to our borrowing limit, which I would point out we haven't had finalized yet and we haven't borrowed a cent yet. We painted that picture for folks for the road ahead on what we need to do as a territory with devolution. We are currently, with our \$800 million borrowing limit in the budget address, with the path that we're on, we will be within \$142 million of our borrowing limit. We've agreed that we want to keep a \$100 million cushion on anything that could happen, a horrific fire season this coming summer, God forbid, but something of that nature.

So we had a fulsome discussion with the communities. We didn't mislead communities. We didn't just go in there and talk about the Heritage Fund. The Heritage Fund is actually about \$45 million that we are looking at potentially out of a budget of \$1.6 billion. We had the board discussion too. We have to make those choices. We can do both, the question is not what degree. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I think we're looking at terminology. The Minister indicated that we are looking to borrow a billion dollars. The indication that he said that we might have been misled is the fact that we indicated that we're actually going to reduce our debt. This budget says we are going to reduce our debt and that's what they have been selling, but in this budget they are also talking about borrowing another billion dollars. So I'm just wondering where the Minister sees the difference in that. We've talked to the communities about reducing the debt, but now in this budget we are actually taking on more debt.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We talked about if we park the \$1 billion request to bump up our borrowing limit to the side which is going to be geared to major economic infrastructure, when we talked about the Heritage Fund, the resource revenue sharing, we talked about debt reduction, paying down the debt and we talked about investing in infrastructure. Those are the three areas and we are working to keep the debt reduced to within \$100 million cushion of our \$800 million borrowing limit. We've talked to people about that. We've talked to people about the things we need to do about the Stanton renovation at \$350 million. When we did the consultation, we didn't have the number, but we knew it was going to be significant. So we were clear and we do need, as we borrow money like we

plan to do on the Stanton renovation, we need to be able to pay down that debt. We want to keep it within \$100 million. To me, that's debt reduction to keep it all affordable for people. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you. Another area of interest in the budget is the discussion of the regional positions. The Minister's presentation indicated that there's going to be 52 positions in the regions. I'm just wondering: how many positions are we putting into Yellowknife with devolution?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I think there have been briefings with the Members. We've offered all the existing employees in Yellowknife that are in federal positions that are transferring. We've had, as the Premier indicated yesterday, nearly 100 percent take-up. So you're going to be at 150 positions, roughly. I mean, I don't have the exact number, but all the jobs that are currently in Yellowknife, job offers were made, all of them were accepted and they have a two-year commitment to their positions and stability here in Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 52-17(5):
MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC
HEALTH RECORDS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I understand it, Bill 4, of course, is before the House and that's the Health Information Act. What happens, as I'm learning a little more about this, actually it harkens to a question asked to me by a constituent who wanted to know more about electronic health records and how they're managed from, say, a personal medical record position or perspective.

In the Northwest Territories, if I understand it correctly, we use a program called Wolf. So my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services is: How do we monitor access to this program to know that if you have technical access to the programming, how do we know the appropriate people are only using these files, and what protocols do we have in place to monitor these particular items? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Around the EMR we actually have a significant number of firewalls and protocols in place to ensure that only people who have access or need to see that information have access to that information. I do know that there are lots of different technical requirements that an individual has to

meet in order to get in: passwords, fobs and other items so that the information remains secure and private only to those individuals who need access or have the right to access that information. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I've heard about a complaint that was only observed after the complainant brought it to the attention of Health and Social Services. So I guess what my question would be is: What protocols are in place to ensure that this is being done and monitored without someone having to figure out that their personal files were violated? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. The Member hasn't shared with me any information on an individual whose rights or information has been violated. I'd certainly like to hear that. We take these types of situations, if they occur, very, very seriously and we'd like to address them, but there are protocols in place to ensure that the information is secure with those protocols. Certainly, we can review them if there's been an incident and I'd be happy to hear about the incident if the Member would be willing to share it with me. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: My question was what automatic protocols do we have in place that will inform the system that this violation has taken, or in some cases happened. So I guess without having it to be brought forward by the person who has been... I'll say potentially their private information has been violated. So that's the question, not can I sit down with the Minister to talk about this. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. There's a significant amount of triggers and safeguards, and I'd be happy to share some of the written protocols with the Member if that's what he's looking for. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are there any automatic protocols that brings to the attention of any type of management authority process that informs people that the wrong folks are viewing personal medical files without people having to wait down the road when they realize their personal information has been violated and the only reason the system knows is because they found out about it by accident? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. I haven't currently or actually haven't personally used the system, but I will talk to the department and get that additional information provided to the Member. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 53-17(5):
GNWT POSITION VACANCIES

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really looking forward to seeing the breakdown of those 571 vacant positions, where they are located, whether that would be in the regions or in the headquarters.

The Minister of Finance indicates that they are actively seeking to recruit candidates for those 571 positions; however, on the GNWT website right now there are 126 jobs advertised. Of these, five are short-term, 10 are terms, and so that amounts to 126 versus 570-something.

I'd like to ask, where are the other 400 jobs being advertised? Are they on some other website? Are they being recruited by boards and agencies? How would a person know?

The government says that they have these vacant positions. It leads one to wonder what happens to all the money that we vote to those departments for those positions if there's nobody in them. It rather begs the questions, and now we see evidence that the government is not even trying to recruit for them, unless it's somewhere else that we just can't find. Hey, we're MLAs. If we can't find them how can the public find them?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Member wants a response to her question, I will direct it to the correct Minister to answer the question.

The easy way to reduce the 800 positions is to delete the positions that are no longer required, so that's one way to delete them, but in order to get accurate information, I will direct the question to the Minister responsible for Human Resources.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The department has developed a Workforce Planning Strategy across the territory that is designed to fill the positions. Currently, we are looking at each of the vacant positions and why the positions are vacant. Many of them are at the community level, and many times we don't have the infrastructure to fill those positions, so we are examining an example that I brought forward earlier with the regional recruitment where we might be able to fill the position with an individual that would need approximately one year's worth of trainings using 20 percent of that individual's salary to train that individual up to meet the requirements of the position.

Right now, of the 571 positions, 328 of those positions require a university degree, so just that alone can be an issue because most of the people

that live in the Northwest Territories that have university degrees, in fact 97 percent of the people in the Northwest Territories that have university degrees already have jobs, so when you're trying to fill positions that need university degrees then you have a very small pool to work with that creates one issue. In addition to that, 270 of those positions are located in the regions and the communities and not having the proper infrastructure to attract individuals, such as housing and office space is also an issue.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I find the Premier's comment extremely unusual. I was asking about how we can fill the positions. I wasn't suggesting we should delete the positions, and I don't know where that came from. If we can't fill them, well, we'll just delete them. I mean, I didn't ask anybody to delete positions, especially not since so many of them are actually located in our regions.

We're all about decentralization on this side of the House, and we think you are over there, too, so I don't know what deleting positions has to do with anything. However, if we are actively seeking to fill 571 positions in the Government of the Northwest Territories, I'd like to ask the Minister of Human Resources, as the appropriate Minister, where are we putting that information out? Are we just letting them sit there and we're not recruiting because we don't have jobs or we think there are no people out there with university educations? I'd like to know, where are we putting this information for the public?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Recently, the department has done surveys to determine what the best method was to attract people to the public service, by asking individuals that have come to work for the government how they got their information to come to the government. Only 2 percent of the individuals that came to work for the government had indicated that they had found their position advertised in the paper, so we are doing e-recruit.

A lot of our strategies now have been to do e-recruitment right across the Territories and in the communities. These positions will appear on the website and what we are doing is asking individuals to submit their resumes to the government electronically and we're putting them into the system and we're trying to match the positions, the individuals with their skills with the positions that are available.

We recognize that there is certainly a difference there. As I indicated earlier, many require a university degree. Many of the people that are looking for positions that aren't employed don't have the necessary skills, so now we're trying to indicate individuals that are close enough to be able to meet the requirements and try to give them those requirements by training them for a year, using their own salary as training money. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Human Resources, this shortfall of 500 and, well, actually 800 positions, but 571 that we are actively trying to recruit, how long has that situation existed? Is this a new trend? Is this something new or is this something that has been on the books and unfilled positions for quite some time now? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, at any one given time the Government of the Northwest Territories carries a vacancy of around 10 percent and this is fairly standard, 10 percent of the entire public service. The positions do fluctuate. The various departments have about 1,500 staffing actions per year. So between all of the departments, there is always various staffing actions, so this is a shot that has been fairly consistent throughout the government but it's like one shot. Almost immediately as this information comes forward it is out of date, but we have to at some point take a spot and say this has been relatively average, so this is the number we're using. Thank you.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I well understand the concept of people coming and going, there being job actions and positions being filled and positions being vacated. I understand that. Ten percent of the public service at any given time, the Minister used an interesting word when he said we "carry" about 10 percent vacancy in the public service. That makes it sound like that is kind of an acceptable thing to carry from one year to another, from one budget to another.

I would like to ask the Minister, is there an attempt, a serious attempt to fill this 10 percent, or is that carrying of those... Does that grant some serious financial leeway in these departments if those positions are not filled? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As the Member can appreciate, this is a very complex issue. She indicated that earlier on. As Minister of Human Resources, I am prepared to give a detailed briefing on the positions, why some of the positions are vacant, why we're carrying vacant positions while those jobs are actually being done, but could be done in casual positions.

Some of these positions are vacant because individuals are assigned to other jobs, and some of these positions are vacant because individuals are on leave and so on, so there are various reasons why there is always a 10 percent vacancy, roughly a 10 percent vacancy. The best I can offer would be that I can bring the department to give a detailed briefing to committee, if that's the wish of the House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 10, written questions. Item 11, returns to written questions. Item 12, replies to opening address. Item 13, replies to budget address. Item 14, petitions. Item 15, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 16, tabling of documents. Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 22-17(5):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
MAIN ESTIMATES 2014-2015

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015." Thank you.

TABLED DOCUMENT 23-17(5):
PENSION ADMINISTRATION REPORT –
RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT AND
SUPPLEMENTARY RETIRING ALLOWANCES
ACT, AT MARCH 31, 2013

TABLED DOCUMENT 24-17(5):
STATUTORY DECLARATION OF RESIDENCE
FOR MR. NORMAN YAKELEYA,
MEMBER FOR SAHTU

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. In accordance with Section 21(1) of the Retiring Allowances Act and Section 11.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I hereby table the Pension Administration Report - Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, at March 31, 2013.

Pursuant to Section 14 of the Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the statutory declaration of residence of Mr. Norman Yakeleya, Member for Sahtu, dated November 8, 2013.

Item 17, notices of motion. Item 18, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 19, motions. Item 20, first reading of bills. Item 21, second reading of bills. Item 22, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. There are two items on our agenda today. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

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

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report from Committee of the Whole, Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, your committee would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Item 24, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Friday, February 7, 2014, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 4-17(5), Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2013 Final Report

- Tabled Document 22-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015
- Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Medical Care Act

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the day

There will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning at the rise of the House today in Committee Room A. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, February 7th, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:29 p.m.