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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 26, 2014****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 41-17(5):
POST-DEVOLUTION RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT REGULATION**

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that our future prosperity is heavily dependent on the responsible development of our abundant natural resources. On April 1, 2014, our government will be assuming new responsibilities for the administration of public lands, resources and rights in respect of waters. This means changes for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, which will now administer mineral exploration and development activities and regulate onshore petroleum activities in the Northwest Territories, except in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

Having the authority to make decisions related to mineral and petroleum resource exploration and development on public lands will ensure the Government of the Northwest Territories can manage these non-renewable resources effectively and efficiently to the benefit of all residents of our territory. These new responsibilities will allow us to decide just how our future will play out, on our terms.

Our government is committed to the responsible management and development of Northwest Territories mineral and petroleum resources to create sustainable benefits for our people and fuel economic diversification and foster more robust growth over the long term. Our decisions will be guided by a legislative and policy framework that includes the federal legislation and regulations we have agreed to mirror in the Devolution Agreement

and existing Government of the Northwest Territories policies and strategies.

Responsibilities for mineral development will include planning and policy development as well as issuing the licences and permits required for prospecting and mining and recording mineral claims. The administrative authority that will allow us to further develop our onshore oil and gas resources also includes the regulatory responsibilities of ensuring public health and safety, conserving petroleum resources and protecting the environment.

As Premier McLeod announced earlier this week, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment has been designated by Executive Council as the regulator of oil and gas activities for Northwest Territories onshore areas, outside of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, effective on the devolution implementation date of April 1, 2014. I will be guided in this role by an integrated resource management approach to ensure fair and equitable decision-making. It should be noted that many decisions of the regulator will not be taken directly by the Minister. Where it makes sense, responsibility for decision-making will be delegated to independent, expert staff in the Department of ITI. This is consistent with the conventions supporting ministerial governance applicable in the Northwest Territories, in Canada generally, and in the family of nations descended from the British parliamentary tradition.

Oil and gas regulation in the Northwest Territories was previously carried out by the National Energy Board, an independent federal agency. The National Energy Board will remain the regulator in the NWT's offshore areas, which remains Canada's jurisdiction, and in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, but under territorial legislation. This will ensure the consistent regulation of resources that straddle the onshore/offshore.

In all other regions of the Mackenzie Valley, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment will serve as the regulator. Initially the regulator will apply the policies and practices inherited from the National Energy Board, but it will be open to the Northwest Territories to make prudent adjustments to those policies and practices as we move forward, consistent with the "devolve and then evolve strategy" we have adopted.

Oil and gas regulation are serious responsibilities. Cabinet carefully reviewed and considered a number of possible options. This approach to regulation is similar to that of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which have successfully regulated oil and gas activity for years, and in Yukon, which received its own devolution of oil and gas regulatory authority in 1998.

Our government considers this model to be the most economical, efficient and accountable way to ensure that regulatory practices reflect NWT priorities, ensure public health and safety, protect the environment and also meet the needs of industry. Our government is committed to ensuring the northern environment will sustain present and future generations, and to diversifying our economy to increase employment opportunities where they are most needed.

To provide support, a new office of the regulator of oil and gas operations is being integrated into the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. This office will include the roles of chief conservation officer and chief safety officer, as established under the proposed mirror Oil and Gas Operation Act, which applies to the exploration and drilling for, and the production, conservation, processing and transportation of oil and gas within the NWT. Funding for this office will be drawn from the reserve fund established for unanticipated devolution-related costs. The decision to establish this office was not made in time to include it in the 2014-15 Main Estimates, but any future year funding will be requested through the regular business planning process.

The chief conservation officer will be responsible for environmental and conservation monitoring compliance and the chief safety officer is empowered to order a stop of operations for safety reasons.

Post-devolution organizational design was guided by the idea that regulatory functions should reside with the department with the legislative responsibility. This is the model currently employed in other departments. For example, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is responsible for both the approval of licences and permits and inspecting for compliance with the conditions applicable to those same licences or permits.

Decisions related to oil and gas regulation, such as approvals to drill a well or operations' authorizations, require in-depth technical analysis. To assist during the transition period, and to ensure that decisions related to health, safety and conservation requirements are informed ones, our government is establishing two-year service agreements with experienced regulators for other jurisdictions – the National Energy Board and the

Alberta Energy Regulator – to provide advisory and technical services.

The agreement with the National Energy Board establishes a framework for collaboration as neighbouring regulators that will ensure business continuity following the transfer. The Alberta Energy Regulator, which will provide technical advisory services, is a 75-year-old organization with extensive experience in onshore drilling.

These technical services will assist with the decision-making process, but ultimately, the decision will be made by the NWT regulator, consistent with NWT legislation and regulations and guided by an Integrated Resource Management Framework built on existing policies, strategies and frameworks such as the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, Water Stewardship Strategy and Sustainable Development Policy.

As is currently the NEB's practice, many regulatory functions will be delegated to the chief conservation officer and chief safety officer, who will be responsible for ensuring that regulatory activities and decisions reflect and advance NWT priorities.

These agreements with established regulators will also help us achieve our long-term goal, which is to recruit and develop expertise in the territory. Collaboration with established regulators will help the Government of the Northwest Territories to build capacity in this area as we begin to exercise our new authorities following transfer.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to the sustainable development of the territory's resources. Responsible development will provide important job and business opportunities and generate significant revenues that can improve quality of life for our residents. We are equally committed to upholding the highest standards of public health and safety and will uphold our commitment to protect the environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 42-17(5):
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS' ROLE IN THE NEW
REGULATORY REGIME POST-DEVOLUTION

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on the Department of Lands' role in the new regulatory regime in the Northwest Territories post-devolution. The NWT Devolution of Lands and Resources Agreement will bring significant changes to the Northwest Territories. The Department of Lands has a key role in ensuring that the sustainable use of public land reflects the priorities and values of Northerners.

The Department of Lands will support, manage, protect and administer the sustainable use of public land in the Northwest Territories. It will assume land management responsibilities being transferred from

the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Legislation called for in the Devolution Agreement, which the department will administer, has already been introduced in the Assembly and is a major step in the final preparations to assume new responsibilities for public land on April 1st.

The proposed Northwest Territories Lands Act is a mirror of the federal Territorial Lands Act, which will no longer apply to Territorial lands on April 1, 2014. The Northwest Territories Lands Act is intended to provide the GNWT with the authority to manage all surface lands dispositions, such as sales and leasing, on Territorial lands.

The Department of Lands will also be responsible for inspections, enforcement and policy development for these lands.

The Department of Lands will also be responsible for administering the Government of the Northwest Territories' new authorities under the proposed Surface Rights Board Act. This act will establish a Surface Rights Board that will resolve disputes related to land access and related compensation when a negotiated agreement cannot be reached.

The Northwest Territories Lands Act and the Surface Rights Board Act will form part of an integrated regulatory system in the Northwest Territories along with the delegations in the federal Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. Delegated authorities under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act will include designation of inspectors, and managing, administering and holding securities related to land use permits in the Mackenzie Valley as well as powers, duties, functions and coordination of project assessment.

The Department of Lands will be responsible for coordinating and conducting project assessments on public lands in the Northwest Territories, functioning as a "single window" for development applications.

As the Government of the Northwest Territories assumes its land management responsibilities after devolution, we will be guided by a critical policy foundation: the GNWT Land Use and Sustainability Framework. Mr. Speaker, as Members heard when the Land Use and Sustainability Framework was tabled on Monday, February 24th, the principles set out in the framework will guide this government in making responsible and responsive decisions about land use and land management. Our decisions will be balanced and sustainable, considering ecological, social, cultural and economic values.

The framework recognizes that the GNWT is only one partner in an integrated land management system and provides for decision-making that is respectful of Aboriginal and treaty rights as well as third-party land interests and legal rights.

The Land Use and Sustainability Framework is one part of a broader legislative and policy framework to ensure that we are ready to manage our new authorities and responsibilities.

We are undergoing final preparations to assume new responsibilities for public lands on April 1st. This is an exciting time, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to working together to manage the lands in the Northwest Territories for the benefit of current and future generations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 43-17(5):
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
POST-DEVOLUTION

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, as of April 1st we are finally going to have legislative authority over water, excluding the offshore, in our territory.

This is major step forward for the people of the Northwest Territories as water binds us together. We share with all NWT residents the desire to safeguard our water resources for current and future generations.

New responsibilities assumed by Environment and Natural Resources under the new NWT Waters Act will enable us to do this.

ENR will approve water licences prepared by the land and water boards and will be responsible for inspections and enforcement of those licences as well as regulating deposit of wastes from activities and developments on, or which impact, public land and waters.

The department will also conduct the analysis to enable boards to set securities for water licences and will then hold those securities.

The Minister of ENR will continue to be the Minister responsible under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and will exercise this authority along with other responsible Ministers from the new Department of Lands and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

A one-window approach will be implemented to ensure that decision-making and regulation of activities involving public land, water and non-renewable resources is coordinated across government.

ENR will continue to provide technical input and advice on water, forests, wildlife and the environment through the environmental impact and assessment process.

The department will also provide technical and expert advice on guidelines and regulation changes

needed for the management of development activities in the NWT.

This includes working cooperatively with other departments and regulatory bodies to further develop a made-in-the-NWT policy framework to help manage and protect the environmental interests of residents while providing economic opportunities, jobs and training for Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, in May 2010, ENR and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada released a Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy for the NWT.

This strategy will continue to guide our actions in conserving this valuable resource.

Progress continues to be made in many areas. This includes maintaining the network of water quality and quantity monitoring sites established by AANDC, increasing and supporting community-based monitoring programs in the Mackenzie River Basin and developing source water protection plans for our communities.

We continue to pursue transboundary water management agreements with Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and the Yukon.

Mr. Speaker, we will be relying on the continued support and involvement of Aboriginal governments and our partners as we move forward in building capacity and undertaking northern-focused research with a greater emphasis on the biological aspect of water monitoring.

Devolution will expand the role of ENR in cumulative impacts assessment, monitoring and management. The Cumulative Impacts Monitoring Program along with ENR's work on a Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Response Framework will improve the way cumulative impacts are assessed, monitored, managed and considered in land and water management decisions.

Mr. Speaker, we also recognize a network of protected and conservation areas has yet to be completed in the NWT.

We are committed to completing this network through the Land Use and Sustainability Framework and the development of an Ecological Representative Network Plan.

Land use and ecological representation planning combined with the use and development of northern tools are key to finishing a protected and conservation areas network.

Mr. Speaker, our unique context and values are rooted in working together with Aboriginal governments for the betterment of our communities and our shared vision of a healthy and prosperous territory.

We will continue to work cooperatively and collaboratively with Aboriginal governments, communities and our partners on the stewardship and management of our forests, wildlife, water and environment.

This will allow us to examine issues from all perspectives – scientific, traditional and local knowledge – in our decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, this approach will help us meet the challenges and opportunities of devolution and set the agenda for our development in the next decade. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 44-17(5):
NORTHERN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SERVICES
PENSION PLAN LEGISLATION**

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, retirement planning is key to all of our residents' personal financial health. Our government is committed to helping them make the choices that are right for them to build their own strong, sustainable future.

About 1,000 Northwest Territories residents are members of the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan. This is a defined-benefit pension plan, similar to the one Government of the Northwest Territories employees have, but for public sector and non-profit employees working throughout the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. There are 38 NWT employers now active in the plan, supporting their staff to make retirement plans that will meet their needs.

These NWT residents deserve to have a modern, viable and financially stable pension plan capable of meeting their retirement needs.

Later today I will introduce legislation to establish this pension plan in NWT law, giving it certainty and permanence. The board of directors and pension committee will have a sound regulatory framework that will guide the administration of the pension plan for many years to come.

This legislation is the result of a unique collaboration between officials from this government, the Government of Nunavut and the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan. It represents the latest developments in pension plan design and administration and it sets the standard for other jurisdictions to follow. The Nunavut government intends to pass mirror legislation that will provide the same degree of certainty in that jurisdiction.

At this time I wanted to acknowledge and thank my Nunavut counterpart, the Honourable Tom Sammurtok, Minister of Community and Government Services, for the excellent contribution

that his staff made to this project. I also wish to recognize that the development of this legislation could not have been accomplished without timely input and sound practical advice received from the plan's officials.

The pension plan, supported by this new legislation, will continue to provide many of our constituents with increased comfort and financial security for their retirement planning. As legislators, we will be proud to say that the 17th Legislative Assembly was able to make a contribution towards those important goals by supporting and enacting this pension legislation. At the appropriate time today, I will introduce Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PINK SHIRT DAY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. February 26th is Pink Shirt Day. It's a day when we take a stand against bullying by wearing a pink shirt or a pink scarf or a pink flower.

This annual day has unlikely beginnings. It started with a simple protest in 2007 following a bullying incident at a rural Nova Scotia high school. A ninth grade male student had been bullied for wearing a pink shirt, and in a gesture of solidarity, two senior high school boys purchased and distributed 50 pink shirts. To the organizers' surprise, the protest made national headlines. Shortly after, several provincial Premiers designated Pink Shirt Day an official day against bullying.

What's the symbolism behind a pink shirt? Well, pink is usually associated with femininity and boys who wear it could be in danger of being perceived as weak. On the occasion I just described, two older, stronger boys deliberately broke with convention by wearing pink themselves and getting other boys to do it too. It was an ingenious way of taking a stand with their younger schoolmate and simultaneously shaming the bullies.

Bullying goes beyond this type of gender-based intimidation. It includes any act of aggression, whether it's swearing, shouting, spreading rumours, engaging in nasty practical jokes, or invading someone's privacy. The effects of bullying are devastating and can last a lifetime and, in extreme cases, can lead to incidents of suicide.

Through the 2010 Minister's Forum on Aboriginal Student Achievement and the National Health Survey on School Age Children, we know that NWT students have been severely affected by bullying as

well. There is an urgent need for action. Thankfully, bullying has climbed to a higher place of prominence on the government's agenda. New territorial legislation was passed in 2013 and a campaign is underway to combat bullying and develop resources for victims, teachers, parents and bystanders.

Bullying can't be wiped out by a single government, agency or a community group. A collective effort is required. I challenge Members of the Legislative Assembly and residents of the Northwest Territories to wear pink on February 26th and commit to a compassionate way of life and kind way of interacting with others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Mrs. Groenewegen has mentioned, there's a bit of a pink glow in the Chamber today and that's because it is Pink Shirt Day. It's Pink Shirt Day here and across Canada. For the third year in a row, NWT MLAs are acknowledging the importance of this initiative to combat bullying, and for the third year in a row we are not alone.

In the last two years, the Anti-Bullying Campaign has gathered momentum across North America and across the NWT. NWT students, educators and education authorities have developed and implemented strategies, awareness and resources to deal with the issue of bullying in our schools. It has become a front of mind issue for both the students and educators.

It's tempting to put all the responsibility for addressing bullying onto the school and educators, but we must accept that bullying takes place in all kinds of environments and situations, not just schools. Bullying has to be considered in the larger context, the bigger picture. We cannot ignore the importance of addressing bullying in our society as a whole.

As I did last year, I wish to again highlight bullying in the workplace. Four out of 10 employees are affected by workplace bullying. According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, "Many places of work, consciously or unconsciously, endorse, perhaps even encourage, bullying behaviour. In fact, workplace bullies frequently get promoted or they are often not dealt with directly as the workplace culture does not know how to address such behaviour."

We've managed to bring bullying to the fore in the education system. We now have to do the same for the workplace and there are three key actions we can take: recognize bullying behaviour; speak out

at the time that you encounter bullying; and stand by those who are being bullied and support them.

The GNWT needs to take the lead, work with industry partners and develop some strategies to highlight, educate and profile bullying in the workplace. I was really pleased to see the GNWT messenger service on Monday highlight Pink Shirt Day and the GNWT Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy. The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission has a lovely, very pink ad in today's Yellowknifer. Both of these actions show a start towards highlighting bullying in the workplace. If we continue with these actions, the GNWT can lead by example and in doing so we will improve not only our own GNWT workplace but all workplaces in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANTI-BULLYING ADVOCATES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a perfect world there would be no bullying. Unfortunately, we see it all too often in our schools, in our communities and even in the workplace. However, there is some good news. The good news is that we have a lot of anti-bullying advocates here in the North. For example, today we just had a group of youth in the Great Hall to draw attention to this serious issue with the support of their educators, but it's not only the youth who are our strongest advocates, we have groups and organizations across this great territory. We have strong advocates in the schools, the youth centres, friendship centres and in all of our communities, even here at the NWT Legislative Assembly.

Today Members are showing their support by wearing pink, as well as these boutonnieres. We've even gone as far as making an amendment to the Education Act to address the anti-bullying issue, and also taking the necessary steps towards legislation of the Safe Disclosure Act to protect our employees.

Today I'd like to recognize, acknowledge, continue to support and say thank you to all those across the NWT in our communities how have intervened at one time or another or have spoken up. Your help makes the North a better place to live and your actions not only stop bullying but help empower others, increase others' self-esteem and show respect and demonstrate the openness about bullying that our society now accepts.

Although bullying continues across some of our communities in the Northwest Territories and it is continuing to be an issue, I would like to say thank you to all those who are advocates for anti-bullying, whether it's in the schools, in the workplace and in

the Legislature here I recognize all Members for standing up today and showing their support by wearing pink. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PINK SHIRT DAY IN THE MACKENZIE DELTA

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to join my colleagues on Anti-Bullying Day today, the theme day. A lot of great practices by our territory today on anti-bullying. A lot of the schools are getting involved. For example, Fort McPherson yesterday celebrated this Anti-Bullying Day by showing their support for children who are being bullied. The reason they celebrated yesterday was because there is no school in the Mackenzie Delta for the next three days. So they were doing their part yesterday in their fight against bullying. I'd like to share my support with them and that is why I also wore pink yesterday. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MS. SHARON ALLEN, ADVOCATE FOR MADD CANADA

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Anti-bullying is incredibly important to us today, just as important as the initiative against drunk driving, which is my Member's statement today.

Today I want to praise the immense contributions of a Fort Simpson resident, Ms. Sharon Allen, who is a dedicated campaigner for Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the national organization best known as MADD Canada.

Sharon has been personally affected by impaired driving. In 2008 Sharon and her husband, Kevin, lost their daughter, Keisha Trudel. Keisha was only 16 at the time. Keisha's memory has been kept alive by Sharon's effort to spread awareness about drinking and driving. In the House today I'd like to describe some of her efforts.

Last fall Sharon and other MADD volunteers arranged for 40 RTL Westcan tanker trailers to display a large decal with Keisha's photo. The idea was to remind drivers and observers that Keisha's death was completely preventable. During the 2013 Christmas season, the Fort Simpson chapter of MADD Canada initiated the project Red Ribbon Campaign. The RCMP, village bylaw officers of Fort Simpson and local volunteers banded together to generate awareness about drinking and driving. Later this year the same contingent will head up a campaign encouraging citizens to report suspected impaired drivers to the police.

Sharon has also been instrumental in developing a program called Shattered, a multimedia assembly program geared to NWT students in Grade 7 and up.

Since the early days of the anti-drinking and driving movement, people just like Sharon have been educating the public about the human tragedies caused by impaired drivers. The exact number of lives saved as a result of the work done by MADD Canada can't be known with certainty, but estimates suggest that the number is upwards of 40,000. That's equivalent to the entire population of the Northwest Territories.

Impaired driving is the leading criminal cause of death in this country. On a per capita basis, the NWT has the highest rate anywhere. Fort Simpson alone had 135 impaired charges last year. For these reasons, Sharon's tireless efforts deserve to be recognized.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BULLYING FROM A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today's Member's statement will be about bullying, and the speech I will be reading today has been penned from the eyes of a 12 year old, who is my son, McKinley, who is in the gallery here today. He has a way of not mixing words, and he has a particular way of being direct, so as such, I will read the speech he gave to his class a few days ago.

One in four teachers see nothing wrong with bullying. This is bad because teachers, the adults, are supposed to give students a proper education and prevent bullying, not sit around and not doing nothing about it.

My name is McKinley Hawkins, and I am here to tell all schools the negative effects of bullying and how it affects many students. Hopefully, this speech can change bullies and schools, because bullying is not right, it is wrong, so now I will talk about the facts on bullying.

One in seven students are bullied or a victim of bullying. I am here to drop that number, and I am here to speak up for all victims because all students deserve a good education. About 160,000 teens skip school every day because of bullying. That is a lot of teens that miss out on learning. Over two-thirds of students think that teachers and schools respond poorly to bullying, with a high percentage thinking that adult help is ineffective. This is hard to believe, but schools do not care about bullying. This is the reason why many students drop out from schools.

Bullying can be a problem, but if it continues or gets really bad and violent, it can lead to

possibly suicide, which was what happened to Amanda Todd. Suicide is something that a victim of bullying may think solves their problems, but it does not, it makes it worse for other people. Nearly 4,000 Canadians commit suicide, with an average of 10 suicides per day. That is bad, because a high percent of causes are bullying.

Bullying victims are two to nine times more highly to consider suicide than normal victims, and with girls aged 10 to 14, they are even at a higher risk of suicide. Bullying-related suicides could be connected to any other type of bullying, like cyberbullying, physical bullying, verbal bullying, emotional bullying and texting bullying.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. HAWKINS: These are the warning signs of suicide sometimes: showing deep depression, ongoing sadness, showing interest in dying, engaging in dangerous activities and saying things like they can't handle things anymore. If you know anyone with these signs, get them help, because suicide never makes things better. Schools can prevent bullying, like encouraging students to stand up for them when bullied. Other ways that students can prevent bullying is having school-wide events to prevent bullying.

Now is the time to prevent bullying because it is now clearly becoming an illegal offence. So I encourage schools to stop bullying and take action now because if everyone works together, everyone will have a good education and a good life."

In closing, he says, "I hope this speech will help many, and many schools stop bullying, because bullying is bad and can affect many, many lives. If you were bullied, I want you to look at the outcome of other victims and how he or she feels because if it gets bad it can lead to suicide. This can happen to anyone, so please help stop bullying.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for hearing me. These were his own words he gave to his class the other day. I tried to read them exactly how he wrote them, and they were his. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Good job, McKinley, and keep doing what you're doing, young man. Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRADITIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wanted to talk about the people who bring the

inspiration of art into our world, from the people in Yellowknife, to Ulukhaktok, to Sahtu, to Deh Cho, Lutselk'e, right down the Mackenzie Valley and in all the Northwest Territories. I want to thank them for putting in the work that they do to make buckskin vests or jackets or painting or carving or something. It takes a real talent and patience and it takes a lot of love.

This jacket here was made by my mother and my aunties, when my mother was alive. In order to get this jacket, for example, and what my mom taught me was that you had to get your own moose before she would make a moosehide jacket. She said that's what I want you to do. So I was lucky and got a moose and brought the hide back to her and she did the tanning and she sewed the beads, along with my aunties, and put the jacket together. It took her a long time. When she gave it to me, my mother said, here's your moosehide jacket and this is the only one I'm going to make for you. I asked why the beads are sewn in the design. They put their own unique talent in their arts and crafts, our artists in the Northwest Territories, and that's what's so unique and special. Really, we cannot sometimes put a dollar to this type of work; it's priceless.

When I asked my mother why this type of beadwork and that, basically she said it's because the aunties and myself put our love into the work. That's what it demonstrates.

I know people who do the artwork, painting, carving, fish scale and birchbark making, really love it. Sometimes we take that love and we wear it, and sometimes it makes us feel good and sometimes it makes us feel somewhat homesick.

So I want to say to the artists that sometimes recognition is given to you enough. Keep up the good work. Keep up the tradition. Keep what you've been taught by your parents and pass on this tradition.

Hopefully, if we continue this, we will stop the bullying in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN CLASSES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our children are our future. The way we care for them in their earliest years will have impacts that will last for the rest of their lives.

Education, Culture and Employment is proposing implementation of junior kindergarten, taught by elementary school teachers who will be encouraged to take course work in early childhood education. But the literature on early childhood education emphatically demonstrates that the success of junior kindergarten depends upon high quality

programs delivered by fully trained early childhood education workers.

Kerry McCuaig, Fellow at the Atkinson Institute, and the junior kindergarten implementation consultant for the Minister of ECE, has written that the requirement for high quality programs is "non-negotiable." She summarizes evidence that show the higher the quality of the program, the better the outcomes for children, and the quality of the program depends on the quality of the workforce. Research also shows that low quality programming could have a detrimental effect and actually delay the healthy development of our children.

Early childhood programs need to be provided by early childhood educators who have a solid understanding of the developmental considerations and needs of children under five and who are trained to work with these young children and their families. Education, Culture and Employment must ensure that there is at least one fully trained early childhood education worker for every community junior kindergarten group or class.

Early childhood education is a profession. If we are putting our precious young children – our future – into their care, we must give these educators the full recognition, wages and professional development that we give to teachers in our schools.

Aurora College should immediately implement a training program that graduates fully qualified early childhood education workers that meets federal standards. Our children, families and communities need them.

If quality of junior kindergarten programs is an essential condition for success and fully trained early childhood education workers are a requirement to meet that condition, then no junior kindergarten group or class should go ahead without at least one qualified early childhood education worker. Mahsi.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize some folks that are tied in with the NEBS legislation that are putting a lot of time in this particular bill: Shawn Maley, Nicole Pintkowsky, Bev Walker, Cassandra Cassaway, Rebecca Masongsong, and Ken Burns from Lawson Lundell. Thank you for being here today.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. R.C. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mr. Damon Crossman who works for our sport and recreation division and a man that can find you anything when you go to the Arctic Winter Games. I'd also like to recognize and wish good luck to Jamie Koe, who is going off to the Brier, I believe it's this weekend, and if you need someone to pack your brooms, I'm available. Thank you.

---Laughter

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to take a second to recognize a few folks in the gallery today. Superintendent of YCS Ms. Claudia Parker and also assistant superintendent, Mr. John Bowden, a former teacher of mine at St. Patrick's, welcome to the House today. I also wanted to recognize and wish good luck to Jamie Koe, Team NWT at the Brier that's coming up at Kamloops. Good luck to Team NWT. I also wanted to wish good luck to Damon Crossman. I know he does a lot of great work at MACA with sport and rec. I know the team is on the way to Fairbanks in a few weeks. Good luck to Team NWT in Fairbanks, as well, and good luck, Mr. Crossman.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to recognize Anti-Bullying Day today. In the gallery I would like to recognize two people who wrote the lyrics and produced the song "Think Pink," the anti-bullying theme song that was performed at the Pink Shirt Day today in the Great Hall. They are here with us today, Teaya Crossman, a Grade 3 student from Weledeh Catholic School, and also David Dowe, a classroom assistant from Weledeh. Also joining them is Damon Crossman, Teaya's father. Of course, I'd like to recognize the superintendent, as well, Claudia Parker, and Assistant Superintendent Johnny Bowden.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I want to recognize my son McKinley Hawkins, who wrote the speech I had the pleasure of reading today and I want to thank him for allowing me to read his words on his perspective of bullying. That said, I'd like to thank all of my colleagues for sharing the time and allowing me to do as such. I must finish by saying, now I have to get him back to Weledeh. So, thank you very much.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, a number of

residents here from Range Lake. Of course you heard already Mr. Damon Crossman who is here, who is a resident of Range Lake, and his daughter Teaya with her song. I guess it was played this morning on CBC, so now you've got a hit soundtrack out there, so I'll get your autograph later for that. Also in the crowd, as we heard earlier, Team NWT representing the Northwest Territories, Mr. Koe, who is also from Range lake. Good luck, my friend. Of course, we were all inspired by the young Mr. McKinley Hawkins, who writes just as good as his dad, I think, in the House. Better. We'll leave that up to the jury.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. I'd like to welcome everybody here in the gallery today. Mr. Shawn Maley, a good old friend from up in Inuvik back in the early days. Welcome here, everybody. Also to Mr. Koe, I see you're going to be playing your brother first game, so good luck. We're all behind you.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 185-17(5): ANTI-BULLYING MEASURES AND DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Evidence suggests that suspending a bully is not effective because it basically rewards the bully with a vacation from school.

I'd like to ask the Minister, what progress has the department made towards a tiered approach to discipline in the schools with suspensions as a last resort?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The bullying has been the highlight of the day today and throughout all schools across the Northwest Territories it's a special day for us. We talk about the suspension for those bullies that are bullying the students, and we've been dealing with the school boards on how we can develop a plan of action. There is a draft Safe Schools Plan by this department in early June of 2014, working in collaboration with all the school boards to deal with those matters that Member Groenewegen is alluding to, where if there's going to be a suspension it's considered as a vacation. We heard that from the students. We want to take those seriously into consideration, so those are the discussions we're going to have, and we're going to

develop a plan of action in 2014 that's coming this summer.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'd like to thank the Minister for that. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment describe his department's efforts to address bullying through collaboration with any other departments such as Municipal and Community Affairs or the Department of Health and Social Services? Could the Minister describe if there are any of those kinds of collaborations taking place?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I'm glad the Member is asking that specific question. Yes, indeed, it is a collaborative effort. It's not just the Education department. As Member Bisaro also alluded to, we're in a workforce environment, so it does cover all spectrum of activity that is happening in the schools, outside the schools, so working in collaboration with MACA, Health and Social Services, the Justice department and other departments are getting involved. It is one of our priorities, as well, to prevent bullying from happening in the school environment, in the work environment and in other places within the Northwest Territories. It is a collaborative effort.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Colleagues, before we go on today, I'd like to recognize today in the House that it's Mr. Blake's birthday today. I'd also like to wish Mr. Bromley's mother a happy birthday. It's her 88th birthday.

---Applause

Happy birthday, and hopefully you'll have cake today, son.

The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

QUESTION 186-17(5):
ASSISTING INCOME SUPPORT
CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment and it is dealing with income assistance.

I'd just like to ask the Minister, what does the department do for people who are stricken to their homes or place of residence and have challenges such as disabilities, reading, writing challenges, anything that might hinder them from being able to go to the income support office to get the assistance in filling out an application? What does the department do with people that need this type of assistance and are stricken to their home? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I did raise cutting some red tape in this

House. That is one of the areas we've initiated with income support, the reporting mechanism on a monthly basis like we have on a quarterly basis or every six months type of deal. So those with disabilities, we highly recognize them. We want them to have an easier life than all these different reporting mechanisms. Some can't walk to the office and we recognize that as well. We've made some changes in that respect.

We have client service officers working diligently with those clientele that have the disability. Most times the CSO would go to their household, as well, to assist them as much as we possibly can. We want to make it easier for those people with disabilities. It's my department's goals and objectives to reach out to them. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: The Minister alluded to my second question. That was how do we reach these individuals who are in their homes. Do we have a community outreach worker or a mobile client service officer for the communities? I know in some of the smaller communities, we have these government service officers that might be able to help, but in some of our regional centres where the GSOs aren't readily available -- we have a higher population -- our home care can address these as well. They usually help in that case.

Can the Minister confirm that in the regional centres that we do have mobile client service officers that go into the homes to help fill out applications that are needed? I'm also really concerned about the safety of these client service officers that might be going into these houses and if they are being accompanied by any type of RCMP officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Indeed, safety becomes a factor when it comes to client service officers dealing with clientele. It goes both ways. We do have client service officers in most of the communities; and those communities that may not have it, we have regional representatives. I just met with the client service officers from across the Northwest Territories just last week and I had a really good discussion with them. I wanted to share their perspective because they are grassroots people dealing with clientele on a day-to-day basis. I was very appreciative, listening to what they are faced with, their challenges. We talked about going to households and how they can assist people with disabilities or elderly couples. We are doing what we can to reach out to those individuals who are most vulnerable. We have to respect their situation as well. It's our understanding, within the department, to reach out to those individuals and support them in any way we possibly can. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: The Minister mentioned that it works both ways and I agree. Our client service officers

do a lot of work and work with a lot of individuals who sometimes get a little irritated with the process. Mainly I'm just worried about their safety if we do have a mobile client service officer going into the households of some of our clients.

The next question I have for the Minister is whether or not we have proper training across the whole department from region to region to ensure that the assessment that our client service officers do and the directors who approve these assessments have the proper training to do so. In one area people are getting a better assessment than others. So I wonder if that training is the same right across the Northwest Territories and whether or not there's training available on a yearly basis to bring these individuals in. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are some of the areas I wanted to share about from the front-line workers and I did hear about them last week. I'm going to be meeting with my senior staff in the department on income support and start implementing some of the key areas such as professional development and what kind of training is required to deal with critical situations.

So, what the Member is addressing here is very important to our client service officers and clientele. We are going to make sure that the training programs are in place. There are some training programs we are currently conducting. I want us to enhance these even further to deal with our clientele who are most vulnerable. It is in the works and we are going to improve those programs as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Short, final supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to ask the Minister what authority he has to make any recommendations for particular or special cases when he's dealing with his directors in his offices. What authority does he have as Minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When it comes to making decisions based on the clientele's needs, we have to follow the policies, regulations and also the legislation that has been passed in this House. At the end of the day, the decision lies within my department. I'm the overall person in charge of authority of income support. The client service officers work in the communities with the clientele and work with the directors. It goes under my shop as well. We have to keep in mind that there are regulations, legislation that we have to follow, to meet the needs of individuals in the communities. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 187-17(5):
NWT OIL AND GAS REGULATOR

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of ITI. I would like to follow up on his statement from earlier today. We have just recently learned that ITI will be taking over as oil and gas regulator as of April 1st. The previous regulator was the National Energy Board, a public board – a public board – with a mandate to ensure that all oil and gas development was in the national interest. As this is just a few weeks away, I wonder if the Minister can tell me what the mandate of the oil and gas regulator will be. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in the House yesterday, our hope is to get in front of standing committee with our plans moving forward on regulating oil and gas activity here in the Northwest Territories. Our plan is to have as seamless a transition as possible. We've got service agreements set up. We want to ensure that we are protecting the environment and, at the same time, growing the economy here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I didn't hear a mandate there. I hope we get it figured out in the next 32 days. Mr. Speaker, ITI obviously doesn't have the internal capacity to suddenly become the oil and gas regulator, so we have to contract out services, as the Minister mentioned, for example, from the NEB or another province. We could have stuck with the NEB who already knows the NWT very well or gone with the British Columbia commission, as the Yukon has chosen to do, but we chose to use the services of the Alberta Oil and Gas Regulator.

Given their record of treating the NWT as a convenient dumping ground for everything they are allowing to dump into the Athabasca River, why would we choose Alberta to provide these services? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Our goal and objective is to grow the capacity to regulate the oil and gas industry here in the Northwest Territories by residents of the Northwest Territories. We do not have the capacity. That's why we're reaching out to both the National Energy Board and the Alberta Energy Regulator and we're also looking at the possibility of some work with the BC Oil and Gas Commission as well. We need to bring that expertise to bear come April 1st and we are setting the wheels in motion to allow us to do that.

I take some issue with the Member's concerns about the regulator in Alberta. They do have 75 years of experience regulating the industry in Alberta. We have confidence that they have the technical and professional expertise available to us

to allow us to continue to regulate the oil and gas industry here in the Northwest Territories.

For the activity that is currently underway, we have a transitional agreement with the National Energy Board to allow us, again, to see a seamless transition as possible into the new regime, which will see the oil and gas regulatory system be taken care of by the Government of the Northwest Territories on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I'd like to respond to that. Tar sands ponds that leak six million litres of contaminated tailings per day into the Athabasca River, steamed crude oil bubbling up through northern Alberta wetlands in multiple sites, coal mine tailings ponds collapsing. That is the record of the Alberta Energy Regulator in just the last six months.

Do we really grow responsible capacity, as the Minister says, by bringing so-called experts with such a poor record and pro-industry bias into our regulatory system? Why did we not simply continue with the National Energy Board? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. It's important that the Government of the Northwest Territories has the ability to direct where we want to go with the industry here in the Northwest Territories. On the policy side of things, it's going to be our government that directs the policy direction. It's going to be in the best interests of the Northwest Territories when our government is in control of the regulation on oil and gas activity here in the Northwest Territories.

The last time I checked, we do not have oil sands located in the Northwest Territories. I'm not sure what the Member is trying to get at, but let me be clear, Alberta has the most experience and I listen to Members talk about hydraulic fracturing and the fact that we're going to have hydraulic fracturing here in the Northwest Territories. We've got a couple of wells being drilled today in the Sahtu. Alberta has the most experience, the most technical experience and professional staff available to allow us to look at hydraulic fracturing here in the Northwest Territories. That's where we're going to get the expertise and help. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. The experience has no correlation with doing it right; of course, we know that.

The National Energy Board recently announced that it would require worst case financial security deposits on all oil and gas exploration. Some junior exploration companies were complaining that they could not afford to explore on the same scale as big companies if they had to pay clean-up costs in advance and I heard the Minister complain about

this progressive attempt towards responsible management, presumably from lobbying by these companies. Is this shift away from the NEB a signal that our NWT oil and gas regulator does not agree with the NEB's responsible approach proposed? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We are going to have a made-in-the-North solution to this as we move forward. Again, it's important that we put our best effort into getting a situation here where it's going to see us have as seamless a transition as possible. We are continuing to work with the National Energy Board. Come April 1st we're going to inherit the regulations and policies of the National Energy Board. We're going to inherit the federal acts that regulate the industry here in the Northwest Territories. After April 1st, if it's deemed necessary, we can amend some of that legislation, we can enact policies. The world certainly will be our oyster after April 1st. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 188-17(5):
SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL
ARTS AND CRAFTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about the artists and the stories behind their artwork and where we live and what my mother has told me in the stories. I can fondly remember her telling me about putting my jacket together and there are many stores out there in the Northwest Territories.

I want to ask the Minister of ITI in his document on supporting the local artists in the Northwest Territories, there is an accounting collection project that's happening within this department that's about going to the communities to collect stories. I see there are some communities. Is there going to be an annual report or is he going to each community? You know it would be certainly nice to hear people talk about the moose hair tufting or the birchbark basket making or just know what do they do and how they put this work to life that supports their own culture and their way of doing things. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department continues to support the advancement of arts and crafts across the Northwest Territories. We have a new program called the High Procurement Program where we can get out and get tanned hides and ensure that they get in the hands of artists and craft makers around the Northwest Territories. This is something that we feel is going to be very successful for artists and artisans across the territory to enable them to get to work with hides and fur products from across

the Northwest Territories and incorporate those into their artwork. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: That's a good initiative. I want to ask the Minister, in one of the projects do you sit down with an artist that tells you and documents why they do this type of work we call art? For them it's love of their skill and they develop it. Why do women and men sit and why do they make moose skin boats that go to Deline? Why do they bead? What's the document? Why do we sit down and make birchbark baskets, or go up to Ulukhaktok and why do they make these prints? What's the story behind the art? What's the real meaning?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. I think what the Member is getting at could be incorporated, and will be incorporated, in our Aboriginal Tourism Strategy. I mentioned this yesterday in the House. It is something that a lot of other jurisdictions across the country are watching as it unfolds.

We want to increase awareness and support for Aboriginal tourism amongst Aboriginal communities. We want to improve skills for Aboriginal businesses involved in the Aboriginal tourism industry. What the Member is talking about fits perfectly into this type of strategy because when people come here to visit the Northwest Territories they want to hear a story. They want to hear why that person sits there and builds a moose skin boat in the community and the community gets together to build a moose skin boat. That's why the movie played at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre for years on the moose skin boat project and it's very important that that type of story is incorporated in an Aboriginal Tourism Strategy for the Northwest Territories. Again, that's why we're working with communities across the territory to ensure that happens. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Ramsay gets my point and that's, for example, building a moose skin boat. When I saw that the other day with some of the Members here, I certainly had a sense of sadness and pride in a skill that was once and was our means of survival and our love of the land.

I want to ask the Minister, in the collection and the documenting of our artists and their stories, to date there has been a collection from Yellowknife, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson, and over 100 registered artists from these communities had the opportunity to share. Are we going to see some of this documentation such as for the Sahtu or the Deh Cho or Tu Nedhe or any other regions, Tlicho, that have this documentation and we can sit down and say that's why people in that region do it this way because that's the meaning behind the art? It's the meaning behind the art. It's like finding the meaning behind Michelangelo's paintings.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: When we first brought the Aboriginal Tourism Champions together, one of the

first meetings was called Sharing Our Culture. What the Member is talking about is very important. It's a discussion that I will commit to having with the Minister of ECE. I believe the museum is doing some work in that regard and we'll certainly report back to the Member on what I find out from ECE. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This can be also an educational process. If you look, for example, in the Sahtu, if you look at the fish scale artwork done in Fort Good Hope or the fish nets made out of willows in Colville Lake or the beading in Deline or the moose skin boat in Tulita, they all have meaning behind it. It would be nice to have a CD at the end of the project so kids can take it and then they can understand. Visitors can listen to it and say this is the meaning behind the art for this region; this is why they do this art.

I'd like to ask the Minister if that's something that he can bring to the Arts Strategy to look at and say bring up these CDs so we can learn about the artist and the work behind the art.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Again, it's very important that we keep the stories alive and we keep the culture alive, and that's only going to be done if we preserve that and get it done one way or another. I know there are maybe opportunities through the school curriculum, maybe, to have that story told over and over again and become, eventually, part of a school curriculum.

Again, I made a commitment to speak to the Minister of ECE. I will do that and get back to the Member.

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

QUESTION 189-17(5):
PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS
IN THE MACKENZIE DELTA

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the years I have brought up the concern from the communities that there's a lack of housing that's needed. As we just passed the budget for this upcoming year, I'd like to ask the Minister of Housing, how many units are planned for the communities in the Mackenzie Delta?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. The Minister of Housing, Mr. R.C. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The capital budget we just passed, I think there were two units that were allocated for one of the Member's communities, and there was an additional nine with the replacement of the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik, so that's 11 that we have for this year. As well, through the

Modernization and Improvement Program, which is a major retrofit, we've got 19 units scheduled for the Member's riding.

MR. BLAKE: That's really good news, by the way. I'd also like to ask the Minister, I know when we do get new units, a lot of times they're just replacements, so in the future, when are we going to get more units as add-ons?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: With the decline in the CMHC funding, it's getting awfully difficult for the Housing Corporation to put in other units, so we have to replace the ones that are already there. We have a lot of units that are old and that need replacing. The two units that I spoke to before, we're doing our initial allocation for the market housing and the money that we had received through FMB and the Legislative Assembly to try and provide housing for professional staff in the community. We're doing our initial allocation. I think there are a few that are earmarked for the Member's riding. As well, next year there's going to be another significant investment in the Member's riding with the seniors complex in Fort McPherson, and that's in addition to the \$31.8 million we've spent in the Member's riding since 2006.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! Order! The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 190-17(5):

SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT POLICY

MR. HAWKINS: I want to ask the Housing Minister questions too. Unfortunately, I don't have any for him today. Seeing how, of course, the Housing Minister is giving out millions of dollars here...

My questions will be directed to the Minister of Human Resources. I've received a call, like most MLAs do every year this time of year, which are from both summer students and certainly parents alike, and often they see that other students are getting jobs and they're hearing about placements already being made.

My question is to the Minister of Human Resources regarding the policy, as such, for early hires. Do we have any particular policy that allows summer students to be hired in advance of the April 1st new budget year starting? It does cause a lot of stress and concern for the students that e-mail, phone, the parents that e-mail and phone, and they want to know why certain kids seem to get all hired early February, or even sooner, and it's quite frustrating when their kids are competing for jobs and seem to never get a shot.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is no policy for early hiring of students such as in March or February. The target group for the hire of summer students are the students that are

finishing the courses down south. Usually these courses end, I think, at the end of April, and so the target for the summer students would be for May, June, July and August, so kind of a four-month program that runs during those four months, and that is the target group, and I think the majority of the students come in there. I'm not aware of students starting earlier than that.

MR. HAWKINS: It's difficult to tell both a parent and a student about the competitive process that they don't see, don't know about, and when you tell the parent, well, don't worry, the system is there for you, I assure you, to be honest, I don't actually believe that at times, because you hear from parents who see the concern that their kids aren't being hired, and you hear this regularly.

My question now for the Minister of Human Resources is: What type of public scrutiny process is there to ensure that these potential job openings in departments for summer student positions are not only fair, but honest and transparent so people can see them in a competitive way? Because right now both these parents and students think of them more as they're about who you know and not necessarily what you know.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The departments use various methods to attract students. They're on the website, they're advertised by posters and so on. I indicated yesterday that that type of campaign for this coming summer was started in December 2013. The plan is to try to match the students as much as possible to their studies, so more of what the plan is, is to try to take the students and match them into the departments that they're eventually hoping to study, and based only on that, not based on people hiring people that they know and so on.

MR. HAWKINS: Well, all I know, and I think a lot of Members know, is there's a little button on some web pages that says apply here, click, send your resume in and good luck. That's all that exists. There is no transparent process to know you're competing for anything. There's no transparent process to say or show or demonstrate your resume actually has gone anywhere besides the inbox of who knows who, who knows where, and who knows when. There is absolutely nothing for any student to know that their resume has been sent out and fairly, competitively been considered. That's all I'm asking.

Now I'm asking the Minister of Human Resources, what does he have in his authority as a policymaker, as Minister of this department, to show parents and students alike that jobs are being fairly competed for, rather than, as I said earlier, it's not about what you know, it just seems to be who you know.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The campaign last year and all the years past to try to attract students usually attracts around 700 students, and the target

is to try to hire about 300 students. Again, because the summer students are hired based on the vacancy rate that is in the various departments, the departments determine how many students they can hire with that type of budget. We think it's fairly broad. Like I indicated, we recognize that about 700 students usually register for employment, 700-plus every year, actually, and then around 300 are hired.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have to school a single parent by saying we don't have a job for every student. They know that. They understand that. They respect that. They know we don't have the money for that. They're not fooled. But what they are fooled about and certainly upset about is the myth that their child's resume is being competitive, and that is making them mad, because they feel they have a fair shot and they're not getting a fair shot.

All I'm asking this Minister to do, and I'm going to ask him this again, is what type of transparent process can he bring forward to ensure that there is some type of competitive process going on there? Because, quite frankly, parents are seeing their kids not being hired or even considered for interviews and this isn't happening one year out of three years, this is happening year after year and year and I've witnessed it myself. Many darn good A students are being ignored, and the parents' frustration with me is I guess I'm not a connected parent, I just don't know the right people, what am I do to. I don't have an answer. Maybe the Minister of Human Resources has an answer so I can start looking these parents in the face and telling them something. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: [Microphone turned off] ...have very good numbers. When we're hiring students, we're hiring students that come back to the North to work. Over 95 percent of the students that do come to work for the GNWT are either priority 1 candidates or priority 2 candidates.

I can talk to the Department of Human Resources to track the students that are coming in. Like I indicated, we're getting about 700 applicants and if 400 of those students are not hired, then we can track those to determine why they were not a match, why they were not picked by the various departments that they did apply for. Students actually show their interests in the jobs they wish to apply for, so it would not be difficult for us to track those students that were not hired and then provide some feedback to committee on the results of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 191-17(5):

IMPAIRED DRIVING CHARGES IN THE NWT

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to ask some questions on behalf of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving contingent in Fort Simpson. These questions are for the Minister of Transportation.

What is the department doing to tackle the high rates of impaired driving in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister of Transportation, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Transportation is developing a High Risk Drivers Program, focusing on drivers that continue to engage in dangerous behaviours despite various interventions. We are now working with a couple of programs that are intended to put on more severity on individuals that are caught; for example, for repeat offenders of impaired driving and so on. We are looking at demerits, monetary penalties and suspensions and so on, and trying to address the issue. But just developing the High Risk Drivers Program is where we're trying to focus in on this type of issue. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: With our government's efforts to reduce drunk driving, parental groups like MADD and even SADD, Students Against Drunk Driving, have we seen a decrease in the amount of drunk driving convictions and charges in the last five years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I don't have that data with me. We are assuming that we're still going to go and put in programs like the driver's licence merit point program, the Alcohol Ignition Interlock Program and things like that, that are designed to address individuals that do drive impaired. But not having the information here, I'm not able to provide that to the Member to indicate whether or not some of this works... In the past, some of the work the department has done has had a positive effect on the impaired driving rates. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I look forward to the information from the Minister. Does our government fund activities or have any resources that can assist with MADD Canada or its student counterpart, SADD Canada, or any of our groups here in the Northwest Territories?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Again, I don't believe that the department does provide monetary support to the Students Against Drunk Driving or Mothers Against Drunk Driving. These organizations are funded by the general population through donations, but I could look into the situation and see what type of other supports the department can and does provide to both Mothers Against Drunk

Driving and Students Against Drunk Driving. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly look forward to that research that the Minister wants to do and see what other resources are there that can assist these organizations.

I'd just like to know if the convictions for drinking and driving have increased. I think it was during the last review, I'd like to ask the Minister, has it increased? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, certainly as time goes, the severity of punishment for impaired driving has continued to increase. Impaired driving is certainly something that's not viewed like it used to be in years past. It's considered to be a very serious offence and is treated as such. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 192-17(5):
BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Human Resources. I want to follow up my statement and talk a bit about bullying in the workplace.

Certainly over the last year to two years there's been some excellent work done on behalf of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and they've been targeting young people. But bullying, as I said, transcends age and gender and it applies to society as a whole, but it also particularly applies in workplaces.

So in terms of the GNWT workplace, I'd like to ask the Minister of Human Resources whether or not there is anything that is being done within the GNWT to raise the profile of workplace bullying. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT across the board does have policies in the workplace against bullying, but I don't have the information on the specific programs that are run, but there are programs that the GNWT looks at to prevent bullying in the workplace. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I've done some looking into what exists within the GNWT. I certainly didn't find very much. I did find, as I mentioned, the Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy, I think is the title, and I think there's an MOU, perhaps, with one or the other of our unions. As far as I know, there is nothing in any of our legislation and nothing in any of our policies

which specifically says bullying. Harassment, yes, but not bullying.

So, I'd like to know if harassment is referenced, what is there within either the Department of Human Resources or within the government that assists workers if they have been bullied or they see bullying and they wish to report it, what system exists for them to do that? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, the GNWT strives to have a respectful workplace. The labour relations is a course that is a requirement for all managers in the GNWT and there are some more courses and programs that are going to be a requirement for managers in the GNWT that will address this particular issue. The individuals that feel that they're being bullied have options to go to their managers if they think that their managers are the ones providing or distributing the bullying or they have the option to go to the next level. They have the option to go to union if they happen to be unionized. They can go to their Employee and Family Assistance Program as a place to start if they feel that harassment and bullying is something they are enduring in the workplace. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I hear what the Minister is saying, but I don't hear that we have addressed the word "bullying" in anything that we do. That's where I'm trying to go. Harassment is not the same as bullying. Yes, it is similar, but I couldn't find anything in any literature on the GNWT website which talks specifically to bullying and I think we need to go there.

The Minister mentioned earlier that there are some programs that people can access. He mentioned that people can go to their supervisor and work themselves on up the line, but I'd like to know from the Minister if he could tell me, please, what those programs are that he referenced and if he could tell me where I can find the chain of command that he referenced. Where can I find a policy that tells me, if I have been bullied, where I can go? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: As the Member indicated, the Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy would be a good place to start. Also, I referred to some of the labour relations training that would be a requirement for managers. Once those requirements are set down for various managers in the GNWT, that will educate the managers in this area. That is another place where we can see some results for perhaps bullying and harassment together. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure I really understood what the Minister was saying. I believe we need to address bullying in our workplace and we need to use that word. I don't think I heard any commitment from the Minister to

try to go there. I also didn't hear from the Minister that we have concrete plans in place.

I would like to know from the Minister if he would commit to reviewing what policies we do have, the Harassment Free Policy, if he would commit to finding out what MOUs exist and if he would look at our legislation. I think the only legislation that applies is the Occupational Health Act or Occupational Safety Act. I can't remember the name of it. Would he commit to looking at those and specifically address them and make changes addressing the word "bullying"? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, it's occupational health and safety training that's performed by GNWT, labour relations. Of course, I do recognize that there is some bullying that occurs in the GNWT workplace as well. I don't think it's frequent, but it is there. I will be prepared to talk to the department and look at specifically trying to incorporate bullying into some of our work that we're doing to try to make the GNWT a more respectful workplace. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 193-17(5):
ROLE OF NWT OIL AND GAS REGULATOR

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to see devolution to start being implemented here and especially happy because my colleagues and I are able to ask questions and attempt to hold our government accountable for these decisions.

Following up on my earlier questions to ITI on taking over as the oil and gas regulator, I'd like to ask the Premier why is ITI the regulator when we know ITI interprets this role to be one of promoting and subsidizing industry. This is clearly a conflict of interest. Surely, the promoters should not be the regulators. Mahsi.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Member should elevate his thinking to where we are presently. We are taking over devolution and we will be taking a Government of the Northwest Territories approach. The Department of Lands will be the lead department in dealing with environmental assessments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: I would like to publicly commit to elevating my thinking. Boards are different from departments. Boards make decisions based on evidence that is presented to them. Departments make decisions based on politics. How can we be sure that decisions made by the new regulator will be based on evidence and not based on politics when they are made behind closed doors of the Executive? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There will be three departments that will be involved with the regulatory process. I will emphasize again, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the boards there will continue to be in existence and they will be making recommendations to the different Ministers responsible. We will have three different departments involved with three responsible Ministers. In our view, having people of the Northwest Territories make the decisions that were formally done in Ottawa, it's much better and it's in all of our interests of people of the Northwest Territories to be responsible for decisions that will affect them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, we are not like Manitoba or Saskatchewan. We have a duty to consult with our Aboriginal partners on every project proposed in the NWT. I would say, in fact, we have a duty to consult with all members of NWT society. An NWT energy board would make that process of consultation clear and transparent.

Why has this government chosen to switch from a public board model to a model that has no possibility for public participation in the decision-making process? Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Our territory probably takes most seriously its duty to consult. We consult and we consult and we consult. We will continue to do so. The Member is making assumptions. We will be coordinated and we will consult and listen to the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: As I mentioned before, this is starting to create a pattern. I'm all in favour of dilution...

---Laughter

...devolution, we all are. We want devolution for the people of the NWT, not just to the GNWT Executive. How does the Premier propose to reverse these power grabs and put oil and gas decision-making back in the realm of independent and fair public boards? If he'd like to add how we're going to do all this public consultation instead of just saying that and creating structures that don't have any public consultation, I'd be happy to hear that too. Mahsi.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: It sounds like the Member would prefer to have the NEB continue to go back to Cabinet of Canada to make the decisions. That's what he seems to be proposing. What we're saying is decisions will be made by duly elected government and the Ministers that are involved. We are contracting with NEB. The National Energy Board will continue to be involved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 194-17(5):

SUMMER STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to continue with the Minister of Human Resources on the Summer Student Employment Program. It's funny; I got a tweet a minute ago saying: "Didn't you hire somebody from down South"? I think it's a good question and fair question to ask. I put three job offers out, but they were all waiting for GNWT jobs because they assume they pay much better, it would be more lucrative. That's part of the issue here, is the fact that a lot of kids are waiting for jobs and they don't want to take them. They're hurting the public sector as well. They just want a shot at a job, a little experience and to put some money in their pocket.

I would ask the Minister of Human Resources what type of information they track on re-hires, early hires by the department. If they don't do this, can they do this for me, and other Members obviously would find this interesting, and capture the last three years, as I said, on re-hires, early hires and by department? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Summer Student Program is one of the programs used to provide experience to students so often they are rehired, the same summer student will be rehired in the department. So if there was a biology student that was hired by Environment and Natural Resources, there's a good possibility that that individual would be hired after the first year, second year, third year, and we do have those stats. All of the databases in the GNWT, we track all of the students that apply and enter that into a database and all the individuals that were hired by the GNWT are also in the database. So it would be very easy for us to track students that come back year after year. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I hope at the end of it he meant he was going to supply me that particular information, but I'll let him make that decision. I thought that was an excellent example, if we hire a student we may consider rehiring them again and maybe they do, but of course if you're the next bio student that means you need not apply, you have no shots and the fact is there's no competitive process. So what he's just done is reaffirmed that any bio student has no shot at any opportunity.

My next question, of course, for the Minister of Human Resources is what type of feedback is done through the Department of Human Resources to

reach out to these students that weren't hired? I think it would be good to get feedback from them and, at the same time, feedback to them. What I mean by that is there may be reasons their resumes didn't make the top of the list and we could work with them to help them, they probably get no feedback, and at the same time, I'd like to know, and I think the Department of Human Resources would like to know, their feelings and experience of this whole process. If the Minister does this, can he enlighten us and if he doesn't do this, would he tell us they would be able to do this? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. I just used an example, that wasn't exclusive to the fact that we would only have one such position that nobody else would be eligible. There could be more than one position of any type. The students, if the Member is asking about feedback from when the students were hired and then as they go back to school we provide them follow-up feedback, we don't do that. But we do, like I said in December, start to get the word out that we are going to be hiring summer students like we do every year. There's a Student Financial Assistance e-mail blast that goes out and it goes into the GNWT Bear Facts, on Facebook and so on. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Not every single year, but I've been an MLA close to 11 years now and I've tried to hire a summer student some summers, I've hired not only two but I've had three and let me tell you, it's quite a treadmill, if I may say, trying to find work for three students, but I know they need the cash. So that now leads me into my next question, which is, is the Department of Human Resources willing to consider maybe a job sharing policy that splits some of the jobs? I mean, it's not for me to say how we should split them, but by way of example, as the Minister just said earlier, they had 700 applications and they hired about 300-and-some students. My goodness, if we had job shared some of these we could have hired all the students, and at the same time, we would have given them enough money to be able to reach out in the private sector and sort of help them as well. In other words, we'd be helping the students get experience, we wouldn't be stealing them all from the private sector and we'd be giving more students more opportunities. Would the Minister tell me about a policy or if he'd be interested in coming up with some type of policy like that?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. I think that this type of policy is something that could be looked at and discussed. We do hire the summer students that come back. Summer students that are looking for full-time employment during the short time that they are out, and need to make enough money to be able to get through the next year in many cases. So when we hire students, it's often in an attempt to give them a full-time job or seven-and-a-half or

eight-hour-a-day job for the full duration of the time that they're out of school, so the idea of splitting jobs may be something that can be discussed with some of the students, and there may be some students that want to come out and only work half-time and other students that don't have jobs may want to do a job sharing type of scenario. Maybe that is something that we can look at. We're not adverse to try to do the best we can for the students. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, really I'm after just a couple of simple things: a bit of transparency, a bit of competitiveness and for us to spread every single opportunity out as reasonably as possible. As I said, I've hired two, sometimes three students. I try to hire a couple every summer. I try to pay them what I can and more sometimes knowing that they need the money, and the opportunities not only just in Yellowknife but in the small communities are very few and we've got to find a way.

So I'm looking, just as my last question, I hate to say I've given him a softball, but the fact is I really want to hear what this Minister can do to change our strategy so we can hire and maximize as many summer student opportunities as possible and I'd really like to hear how he's going to change and do business differently, because it's important. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The Department of HR can start to communicate with the departments and discuss that with the departments, if we're attempting to try to hire as many students as possible within the money that we have in our vacancies, so we can do that. HR, through the deputies, can contact all of the deputies to see if they're able to maximize the amount of students that are coming in, not only in Yellowknife but in the small communities and the regional centres, because I recognize that that's been an issue in the small communities as well. So, yes, I'd be more than willing to talk to the deputy and have her work with other deputies to make this a possibility. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Mr. Dolyunny.

Replies to Opening Address

MR. DOLYUNNY'S REPLY

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday, February 17, 2014, during oral questions of the House, the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Member for Range Lake entered

into a debate on why the GNWT has not given serious consideration for the quiet addiction we all know as prescription drug abuse. I for one have been a champion both in my prior legislative life and today on this being the sleeping giant of our generation.

Many Health Ministers have come and gone. In fact, we have two previous Health Ministers in this Chamber today who were given equal opportunity to do something, yet did nothing on this quiet addiction.

The overarching question is how can you fix something if you don't count it or track it? In fact, if one was to use the recent arguments for species management of the Wildlife Act, we'd be witnessing the extinction of many caribou herds at risk, if not legislated to keep a watchful eye.

So the question is why would our people deserve any less right from this government on giving them the same courtesy? In other words, when is the life of a caribou more important than that of a human? Which brings me to today's issue before the House. We have been given many signs that this quiet addiction is no longer. Case in point: the recent coroner's report of an Aklavik woman echoes the same issues that have been reminded in 17 previous drug overdose cases from 2009 to 2012 by the same office. How many more of our residents have to die in order to give this government the wake-up call that they're dealing with a ticking time bomb?

Further to this argument is my overall frustration that this Minister of Health and Social Services is not being fully informed on important files dealing with health and addictions. In fact, seeing not only this Minister pulling out one or two-page briefing notes from the prepared answer binders, when dealing with Member's questions, is a bit of a disappointment to say the least. These assumed, carefully prepared briefing notes provided to the Ministers are the summary work of many hardworking department people behind the scene. This is fine to a point; however, I would expect that Ministers should know their files and challenge themselves to question the very Coles notes they are given. Regurgitating the work of others does not constitute fact. It does, however, reveal a definite lack of understanding of the truth.

Going back to this Monday, February 17, 2014, exchange, the Minister of Health and Social Services made the following comments on page 14 of Hansard, "Under the Pharmacy Act there is an ability to set up a prescription monitoring program, but due to privacy issues that we're all aware of, we currently cannot require health care providers to enter information into the program. Because we cannot require health care providers to enter this information, we have not yet set up a program to monitor prescriptions."

Upon review of the relevant legislation and with this being further reviewed and fact checked by legislative legal counsel, we looked at the Pharmacy Act of the Northwest Territories, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act of the Northwest Territories, and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act of Canada in response to the accuracy of the Minister's comments.

I will be quoting and summarizing the relevant portions of each of these acts pursuant to clearly articulate to the Minister of Health, his deputy minister and his department, the conclusions of these findings.

I will start with the Pharmacy Act. Section 46(o) of the Pharmacy Act specifically gives the Minister of Health the ability to make regulations establishing and respecting a program to monitor prescriptions including, but not limited to:

- (i) establishing a committee or body to administer the program,
- (ii) respecting the appointment of members to the committee or other body established to administer the program,
- (iii) respecting the purposes for which the program is established.
- (iv) respecting the nature of the personal information that may be collected, used and disclosed for the purposes of the program,
- (v) authorizing pharmacists to collect personal information required for the purposes of the program and authorizing their employers to permit the collection of such information by pharmacists,
- (vi) authorizing pharmacists and their employers to disclose the information collected under subparagraph (v) to the Minister or the body established to administer the program,
- (vii) requiring pharmacists to collect information, including personal information, for the purposes of the program, requiring their employers to permit and facilitate the collection of such information, and requiring pharmacists and their employers to disclose such information to the Minister or the body established to administer the program,
- (viii) respecting the method by which personal information must be disclosed to the Minister or the body established to administer the program,
- (ix) respecting the establishment of a system, including an electronic system, for recording, storing and accessing program information, including personal information,

- (x) respecting security measures relating to the recording, storing and accessing of personal information,
- (xi) establishing requirements, restrictions or conditions relating to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by
 - a) the body established to administer the program,
 - b) any support staff or other persons providing services to the body established to administer the program, and
 - c) any person or class of persons to whom personal information may be disclosed,
- (xii) respecting persons or classes of persons to whom personal information may be disclosed, and
- (xiii) establishing requirements, restrictions or conditions relating to access to personal information by persons or classes of persons to whom such information may be disclosed.

I'm sorry, I know this was a bit long winded, but it is perfectly clear that our Minister of Health may, by regulation, create a program to track the use of prescription drugs. The Minister even mentions this in his response on February 17, 2014, but then alludes to the question whether the existing privacy legislation is applicable in this jurisdiction to prohibit the disclosure or use of information within such a program. Let's see what the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act has to say about this.

For the record, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, ATIPP for short, applies to public bodies such as our government and addresses how personal information may be collected.

Within ATIPP "personal information" is defined as information about an identifiable individual including, and I will not go through the entire list, but it does speak to name, address, age, marital status and much more.

In dealing with the relevant portions of ATIPP on personal information, it mentions the following:

Section 40: No personal information may be collected by or for a public body unless:

- (a) the collection of the information is expressly authorized by an enactment;
- (b) the information is collected for the purposes of law enforcement; or
- (c) the information relates directly to and is necessary for:
 - (i) an existing program or activity of the public body, or and the important one,
 - (ii) a proposed program or activity where collection of information has been authorized

by the head with the approval of the Executive Council.

Again, the important one is Section 42: The head of a public body shall protect personal information by making reasonable security arrangements against such risks as unauthorized access, collection, use, disclosure or disposal.

Finally, Section 43: A public body may use personal information only:

(a) for the purpose for which the information was collected or compiled, or for a use consistent with that purpose.

Again, it is abundantly clear that the Minister can obtain personal information through another entity, such as a pharmacist, if it is authorized by an enactment. However, to be fair, what may be not entirely clear, and to the Minister's defence, I must add, he did suggest, is whether a private organization may collect, use or disclose the personal information to the Department of Health.

In the jurisdiction of the NWT we do not have the privacy legislation that applies to commercial or private organizations, so for this answer we have to go to the federal legislation that this applies, and this is found in the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act of Canada, we call PIPEDA for short.

The main principles concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by an organization is set out in Section 4.3 of Schedule 1 of PIPEDA, which states: "the knowledge and consent of the individual are required for the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information, except where inappropriate."

Further, Section 5(3) provides that: "an organization may collect, use or disclose personal information only for purposes that a reasonable person would consider are appropriate in the circumstances."

Although consent or knowledge of an individual is usually acquired to use or distribute his or her personal information, PIPEDA does allow an organization to use and disclose personal information without knowledge or consent in certain circumstances.

With respect to use of this personal information, I wish to draw your attention to Section 7(2)(c) of PIPEDA, which states: "it is used for statistical, or scholarly study or research purposes that cannot be achieved without using the information, the information is used in a manner that will ensure its confidentiality, it is impracticable to obtain consent and the organization informs the Commissioner of the use before the information is used."

With respect to disclosure of personal information, I wish to draw your attention to Section 7(3), which states: "for the purpose of clause 4.3 of Schedule 1, and despite the note that accompanies that clause,

an organization may disclose personal information without the knowledge or consent of an individual only if the disclosure is:

(c.1), made to a government institution or part of a government institution that has made a request for the information, identified as lawful authority to obtain the information and indicated that – and it's a bit further down in number (iii) the disclosure is requested for the purpose of administering any law of Canada or a province.

Finally, a bit further down you see the repeat phrase (f) for statistical, or scholarly study or research, purposes that cannot be achieved without disclosing the information, it is impracticable to obtain consent and the organization informs the Commissioner of disclosure before the information is disclosed.

Again, sorry for being lengthy, but you cannot just summarize law. To be accurate, in defence you have to quote the appropriate passages when referring to it.

I'll be wrapping up shortly here.

It should now be without question this detailed review of all these legislations do lend argument that for many years any Minister of Health could have legally directed – the current Minister prefers to use the word force – particularly our NWT pharmacists the ability to use and disclose personal information to this government for statistical purposes, as long as this information did not relate to an identifiable person.

The key message today: We could have been monitoring prescription drug abuse in the NWT for many years if there was the will to do so and a full understanding of the law, especially the laws we create. Again, as we await the long intended Health Information Act that is currently under committee review, this will further assist in the statistical ability of prescription drug abuse issues in our territory, and I, like many, look forward to that day.

I only ask that Ministers do their homework and not only rely on the one or two-page briefing notes that are provided to them for the sake of debate in this House.

Let me end with page 14 of Monday, February 17, 2014, in Hansard: "We can require individuals to put information into a prescription monitoring program or we can, rather, ask them to do, but we cannot force them to do it at this particular point in time." He later references: "The Member actually is, in fact, wrong."

Regular Members are doing our homework with very limited resources. We ask that the Ministers do theirs. For the record, Mr. Speaker, this Member was not wrong. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special

committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 12: NORTHERN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SERVICES PENSION PLAN

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan, has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. By the authority given to me as Speaker, by Motion 10-17(5), I authorize you to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider business before the House and to report as the committee deems appropriate. I would like to ask Mr. Dolynny to take the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We have a number of items to consider today. We have Bill 5, Bill 10, Bill 11, Tabled Document 4-17(4), Tabled Document 22-17(5). What is the wish of committee today? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We wish to continue with Tabled Document 22-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2014-2015. We will continue with the Department of Finance and if we finish that, Education, Culture and Employment and if we have time and get through Education, Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. We will resume after a short break.

----SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, committee. I'll call committee back to order. Minister of Finance, do you have witnesses to bring into the Chamber? Minister of Finance.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Minister Miltenberger, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me Mike Aumond and Jamie Koe, who were also in the gallery earlier on and I neglected to recognize. I'd like to recognize in this forum that they were there today with the NEB folks. As well, I have Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar from Finance as well. If Mr. Koe looks twitchy, it's because he's going to be heading out to the Brier literally in the next few hours, so he's keen.

---Laughter

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): No pun intended, hopefully. Welcome, gentlemen. Good luck, Jamie. Yesterday we left off on page 5-9, information item, revenue summary. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-10, information item, active position summary. Any questions? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Without going through a long description as to what I want, I think the Minister knows. If he could provide me with a summary of what is funded, unfunded and empty positions and the value attributed to that. If he could send it to my office, I would be happy with that. Basically the same questions I asked Minister Ramsay in the Justice department. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will provide that information.

MR. HAWKINS: Good.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-10, information item, active position summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-13, activity summary, deputy minister's office, operations expenditure summary, \$89.632 million. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it belongs here. I wanted to ask the question about legislation. I wanted to say at the outset that I am extremely pleased that we've had first reading of the NEBS Act. It's been a long time coming and I'm really glad that we managed to get that done.

I did want to ask, though, about whether or not there are any plans in the works on the part of the department to make any changes to the Petroleum Tax Act? It's been mentioned a number of times by a number of Members and I can't remember all the specific details, but I know that we don't treat, we don't tax all of our petroleum products the same. So I'd like to know if there's any consideration on the part of the department to make amendments to the Petroleum Tax Act. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We expect a legislative proposal to be ready in May.

MS. BISARO: Thanks. That's great, glad to hear. Is the Minister at liberty to tell us what kinds of changes are likely to be proposed? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: At this point they're mainly administrative in nature. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. My other question has to do with the Financial Administration Act, which I know has, I think, for quite some time, been on their radar for the department to do some work. Can I get a sense from the Minister of when it will come forward to the House for first reading? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. The intention is to have it ready for first reading for October session.

MS. BISARO: Thanks. That's great. That's all I have.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, page 5-13, activity summary, deputy minister's office, operations expenditure summary, \$89.632 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering what's happening with the Financial Administration Act, unless that's been asked already. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The intention is to have it brought into the House for first reading in October. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, page 5-13, activity summary, deputy minister's office, operations expenditure summary, \$89.632 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Page 5-14, activity summary, deputy minister's office, grants and contributions, \$86.532 million. Agreed? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I realize the amount being contributed to Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has taken a big leap this year, from \$67 million to \$83 million. My understanding is that this is going towards bumping up housing in small communities outside of Yellowknife in particular. Am I correct in that understanding? Thank you.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple of big items that are causing the increase to the contribution to the Housing Corporation for '14-15 are there's a \$5 million increase to their capital planning target for themselves and expand portfolio and market rental units in non-market communities by \$6.75 million. Then there are some increased supports for homelessness or hard to house in non-market communities and also some money, \$700,000, for energy initiatives. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I know the \$700,000 was in there last year, as well, so I assume that's not part of the bump-up this year. So about \$7 million for providing market housing in our small communities. We are transferring a large number of positions or locating a large number of positions through our decentralization work related to devolution and additional decentralization work. Is the housing that we're providing for these people, will that be covered through the devolution implementation funding?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that response. It's obviously because of devolution that this is happening. I know the Minister is claiming that we're being very efficient with these dollars, but here we are not using the money that was intended for this sort of expense.

How can the Minister justify not using the surplus devolution implementation dollars to supply market housing in our communities that is clearly the result of decentralization of devolved positions from the government?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. It's a bigger issue than just the devolution positions we have as we've discussed at some length in this Assembly, a significant number of vacancies, about half in Yellowknife, half outside of Yellowknife and in the smaller communities, one of the biggest impediments to staffing hard to staff positions has been the lack of adequate housing. So we, as a government, have come up with a plan and the Assembly is going to be voting on this to put \$22 million, roughly, over three years into housing in the small communities to address that need. In the

other larger communities, the regional centres, housing issues are not going to be covered by devolution and we, as a government, are not going to get back into housing and the Housing Corporation's focus is going to be on the smaller communities. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. How many devolution positions are we decentralizing?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I believe it's 52. In phase three we're going to be looking at further decentralization as well. That work is underway and other opportunities for decentralization are being identified. So that's to date, but I'll ask Mr. Aumond if he wants to add anything further to that issue. Thank you.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The only point I would add is in addition to the 52 positions being decentralized for devolution, '14-15 we're also establishing an additional 50 positions outside of those devolution-related activities in communities outside of Yellowknife. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: So it sounds to me like at least 50 percent of this housing cost should be derived from the devolution implementation dollars, obviously, especially given that these devolved positions generally have bodies with them, whereas our vacant positions don't.

Just on the Northwest Territories Power Corporation general rate application business, I see our subsidies; exceptional subsidies are dropping while the cost of living associated with electricity is soaring through the roof, as people know. I believe close to 30 percent in the last few years increase in our electricity rates, our subsidies are dropping from \$15 million to \$9 million last year and now at about \$3 million this year. What's happened to the dollars that we were putting into those subsidies?

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Member has noted, this is the last year of the three-year top-up that we gave the NTPC to help them transition their power rates by 7 percent over the last three years. So after the '14-15 year, the \$2.8 million will sunset and that should rate the NTPC's operating revenue requirements.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you for that information. Just to be accurate here, it's been 7 percent per year for the last three years and another 5 percent on top this year. The question was what are we now doing with the dollars that we've been spending. Committee has made suggestions that those dollars should be going into reducing costs of

living especially through energy costs in the NWT in the past. What are we doing with the difference between the \$15 million and \$3 million this year, and the \$9 million, \$9.5 million last year and the \$3 million this year?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That money is sunsetted and the fiscal framework is adjusted, and the money has been absorbed or will be used. We have other costs, as we laid out in the budget, that have to be dealt with, but that money is sunsetted. I'll ask Mr. Kalgutkar if he wants to add anything further.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, the Minister is right. The funding was only approved for the three-year period, and once the revenue requirement caught up to the rates then the money was just scheduled to expire.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, just to be fully accurate here, what Mr. Kalgutkar meant, I think, was that this will catch us up to the point where we will continue to subsidize at \$11 million to enable the Power Corporation to do their business. I guess I'll leave it at that. The will of committee and interest of committee and having those dollars moved from subsidies into more efficient ways of addressing the cost of living for our residents has once again been ignored. I just want to make that clear with this.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'll take that as a statement. Committee, page 5-14, activity summary, deputy minister's office, grants and contributions. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a brief comment here. I had the same question with regard to the NWT Power Corporation general rate application funding. I am, I guess, pleased to see that this is the last year that we're spending this money, but I want to reiterate that, like Mr. Bromley, I think we ought to be putting a larger focus on trying to decrease our cost of living, and I will have a question when we get to the page where we talk about the subsidy that we give to our residents in terms of electricity. But it seems to me that we have gone from \$15 million to \$9.5 million and now to slightly less than \$3 million, and that money, that subsidy that we were providing for residents has just kind of melted into our general revenues and kind of disappeared and I don't get a sense that we are putting enough effort into trying to reduce cost of living. No question there, but I wanted to make the comment.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Committee, we're looking at page 5-14, activity summary, deputy minister's office, grants and contributions, \$86.532 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-15, information item, deputy minister's office. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-17, activity summary, fiscal policy, operations expenditure summary, \$40.129 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under this fiscal policy we know that the NWT tax policies and monitoring come under this policy. Can we get a bit of an elaboration on what exact tax policies are monitored within fiscal policy.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Fiscal policy division will monitor not only our own tax revenues but also some of the policies with respect to how they get administered and what's happening across the country with respect to different types of taxes. In terms of compliance and other things, that's another part of the department that does that, but fiscal policy will, from time to time, look at our taxes, look at our revenues and look at what's going on with the cost of either living or doing business in the Northwest Territories and come up with an appropriate balance that allows the economy its best opportunity to grow at a sustainable rate.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the deputy minister's response to that. Would taxes such as tobacco, fuel, payroll, does that come under the same fiscal policy?

MR. AUMOND: In terms of the collection and compliance of those taxes, they're done under our treasury division.

MR. DOLYNNY: Was that a no?

MR. AUMOND: I'll try to clarify. For example, looking for inspections, compliance and collections of tax revenue are done by our treasury division. Fiscal policy will come up with tax policy that would help us administer that. Also in this section you will find the cost of living tax credit, which is used as an offset to payroll tax that all of us pay.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the deputy minister clarifying that. I'll use that in conjunction when we do this next year. I think, the net fiscal benefit monitoring falls under this policy, and I believe my question has to do with the amount of benefit that is being transferred to the Aboriginal parties from resource revenues, and I believe, according to the budget address and according to the activity, I believe it's \$15 million being set aside in this

budget. Can we get an idea, the \$15 million that is in here, what percentage of that is of our resource revenues for the time period?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's the estimate that we have booked for Aboriginal government's share of the net fiscal benefit that's flowing to us through the agreement to collect all resource royalties; 50 percent goes to the federal government, the remaining 50 percent, when we look at that, of that, 25 percent of what's left as agreed to go to the Aboriginal governments, and that's what we anticipate based on past estimates that will accrue over the course of this coming year starting April 1st.

MR. DOLYNNY: I'm just trying to figure out what \$15 million represents here. According to the information we have here and talked about in the House and we're hearing the term 25 percent, is 25 percent of the resource revenues \$15 million? I just want to make sure I'm dealing percentage and numbers.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: If we start with the global figure of we are going to collect roughly in total \$120 million, 50 percent of that goes to the federal government. The remaining \$60 million, we've agreed 25 percent would go to the Aboriginal governments, which gets you to the \$15 million, leaving about \$45 million coming to us free and clear, of which we're putting 25 percent of that \$45 million into the Heritage Fund. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Great, thank you. Again, clarity is always the important key here. Just for the sake of understanding, under the grants and contribution transfers definitely a large part of that is this transfer to the Aboriginal signatories. I know this is maybe a book adjustment, but when is the actual physical money being given to the signatories physically? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, as with the Heritage Fund, it will flow once it's accrued and we know exactly what amount of money we have available to in fact divvy up. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Is it safe to say that the grants and contribution transfers – we heard the number \$15 million – is just a book entry until such time as the money starts flowing in a year from now or two years from now? Is this a book entry? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question is correct in many respects, is that under accrual accounting we have a liability since we

signed the Devolution Agreement and we've agreed to share 25 percent of our net fiscal benefit with Aboriginal governments. We have to book that and since we are estimating \$120 million, their 25 percent share works out to \$15 million. We have to account for that in the year that's earned, which will be '14-15. We won't actually have the cash until the '15-16 fiscal year when we will be able to finalize and determine what the net fiscal benefit is. Then that's when, as the Minister said, payments would be made to both the Aboriginal governments and the NWT Heritage Fund. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: So just to be clear, is it a 25 percent model or is it a \$15 million dollar model that is being accrued? I ask this with a caveat. Let's say we have \$130 million of resource revenues, what is the deciding factor? Is it the percentage or is it actually a fixed dollar that is being accrued?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's the percentage.

MR. DOLYNNY: No further questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Next on my list, Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering: with respect to the cost of living tax credit, is that related to the payroll tax and, if so, how and do they work together? Thank you.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; it is related to the NWT payroll tax, but I didn't quite hear the end of his question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Mr. Bromley, could you finish the question? Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, thanks. Sorry. The question was: How are they related and how do they work together? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: As the Member may know, on his own paycheque he pays payroll tax of 2 percent, then when you do your taxes at the end of the year you apply the cost of living tax credit against that up to a certain threshold level, then you receive that money as a credit. You get it back on your taxes in the year that you file it. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: How would that vary? Just on that, has the department... We obviously need revenue. This government needs revenue; I don't think anybody questions that. Payroll tax, based on information provided by the Minister, is providing significant funds, some of which we lose through this cost of living tax credit, but it still leaves significant dollars. I believe it was increased from 1 percent originally to 2 percent. Given our situation

where we have so many migrant workers who live somewhere else and work here and take their dollars away so that there are very few benefits, this is the only opportunity we have that I know of. What's the consideration for raising this from 2 percent to 4 percent or 5 percent?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the purpose of this budget, we have come forward with a budget that it stays at the 2 percent. Is there a debate that could be had next budget go around to talk about the efficacy of raising it, how does that work, what kind of additional revenue would it generate? That's a discussion that we could have, but for this budget we've left it at 2 percent. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Many Members have recommended that this be raised. Why was it not raised in this budget?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, upon review and reflection, the decision was to not raise taxes except for the modest increase we put on to loose tobacco at this point. Looking after our expenditures, managing to live within our revenues and budget for the additional revenue that we look to get through the Resource Revenue Sharing Agreement. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I hope I would have your support to get an answer here. I know what the decision was, obviously. It's represented in the budget here. I'm asking why. What was the thinking? What was the assessment of increases in the payroll tax? What were the barriers? Why didn't we go there?

This is not the first year that this has been raised. This has been raised repeatedly during my short career as a politician, so I'm looking to find out why we are not taking advantage of this apparent real opportunity to increase our revenue when we so very clearly need revenue, as the Minister has said. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll go to Deputy Minister Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The NWT payroll tax applies to everybody who works in the Northwest Territories where you are a resident or not. While we may get some more revenue from the fly-in/fly-out workforce, we would also be taxing the people who work in the NWT. To that effect, we would be increasing our own cost of living and it would also cost the government more because our cost of living tax credit would have to go up commensurate with that. But after you reach a certain threshold, you would just be taxing more people who are resident than who are working here.

We can't just tax those fly-in/fly-out workers because there's a Charter challenge associated with that mobility right. I guess the intent of the payroll tax originally was to try to dissuade people from flying in/flying out. That hasn't necessarily worked to the way that we thought it would, so the thinking now is to try to find other ways and means to get people to work and live in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. I think that's the reason why we went to a payroll tax is because we can't just tax people that live somewhere else and fly in and out. That's why we went to the payroll tax and that's why we have this cost of living tax credit as you've just explained.

Why couldn't we simply increase the tax and increase the cost of living tax credit to protect residents?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way this payroll tax is structured, from my understanding, once you make a certain amount of money you don't get any of that back. So we're, in fact, going to be raising the taxes on intended consequence, the way our tax structure is. It may hit some of the fly-in/fly-out folks, but it will hit even to a greater degree a percentage of our own population, not to mention the fact, of course, that the amount of money we have to pay back will go up, as well, as we collect those taxes. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I hope the Minister isn't trying to be obtuse here. Obviously, the net gain would be significant and that's what we're aiming for is increased revenues. So what would be the actual total or what would be the income you would have to have before you would lose access to the cost of living tax credit?

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The cost of living tax credit is a refundable credit based on annual net income and it maxes out at \$942 a year. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: What would be the income before you would reach the maximum there?

MR. KALGUTKAR: I believe this maxes out at \$942 a year. I don't recall what that income level is, so I would have to get that for the Member. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: What I'm hearing is once you get up into the very high income bracket, you get a protection of about \$1,000 and you may be paying several thousand dollars. For the rest, everybody can be protected under that very high income bracket and there would be no effect assuming we

adjusted the cost of living tax credit, which would also likely benefit those people again in the high income bracket. Again, I don't see this holding much water except to protect those in the very high income brackets that obviously don't need the same degree of protection that we could and very obviously are serving, as we know, in other ways with our government policies. I would urge the Minister to get down to brass tacks and put together a coherent and comprehensive discussion paper on raising our payroll tax in a way that minimizes the impact on our residents, but does maximize our opportunity for revenue. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will update and refresh the information we have on taxation, including the payroll tax, and have that ready as we start the next budget cycle next month. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the Minister for reminding us that the budget cycle is never ending. That's not for Members; that's for staff, and I appreciate what they do.

When I asked questions yesterday of ITI, I was asking about the recorded \$120 million in resource royalty revenues and the revenue is recorded in ITI. I asked where the corresponding expense was recorded because we don't keep that \$120 million; we get \$60 million, give or take. So of the \$60 million, I see a line item here for \$15 million, which is the net fiscal benefit going to Aboriginal parties, but the other \$45 million, I have no idea where that's recorded. I would like the Minister to tell me, apart from the Heritage Fund money, which I understand is going to come later and be recorded in the next budget, but of the money that's left, where is that recorded in our budget? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The remaining \$45 million is part of our general revenues and it's being used to finance our 2014-15 Capital Plan. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: So it's going to show up in the infrastructure budget? Mr. Kalgutkar said the 2014-15 Capital Plan, if I heard him correctly. My understanding was that it wasn't going to show until 2015-16. So I'm getting confused here. We have \$45 million to expend. In 2015-16, I understand the Heritage Fund money will show up but the other money being used for infrastructure, where can I find that? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Deputy Minister Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; we won't actually have the cash in hand until 2015-16, as we discussed earlier, but we have to accrue the revenue in the year that we earn it, as I discussed earlier. So Mr. Kalgutkar is correct; some of that \$45 million will show up probably in the 2016-17 Capital Plan, but it will just go into our Consolidated Revenue Fund. If Members will recall the discussion we had last night, our tax revenues are also going down by \$30 million. So they kind of offset one another to a certain degree. Given the reduction in revenues, we are also reducing our proposed capital plan by \$25 million starting in 2016-17. The funding will find its way into general revenues and will be used to fund programs and services, but primarily that incremental resource revenue will be used to fund our capital plan starting likely in 2015-16, 2016-17. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the deputy minister. Just to confirm, Mr. Kalgutkar said the infrastructure in 2014-15, but it's infrastructure in 2015-16. Is that right? Thank you.

MR. AUMOND: That's correct, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Committee, we're on page 5-17, activity summary, fiscal policy, operations expenditure summary, \$40.129 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-18, activity summary, fiscal policy, grants and contributions, and transfers, \$38.6 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-19, information item, fiscal policy, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-21, activity summary, budget, treasury and debt management, operations expenditure summary, \$27.8 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to do our annual check on the Deh Cho Bridge here. The interest is \$8.166 million. I don't see that changing over years. Is that just something we pay in perpetuity here? Thank you.

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Unfortunately, we will be paying over the next 30 years. As I've stated before, the Deh Cho Bridge debt, our bond is based on real return bonds, so the amounts do change every fiscal year depending upon the rate of inflation. What's in the budget in 2014-15 and in 2013-14, we're not anticipating that

significant of a change, so I just left the budget as is for 2014-15.

MR. BROMLEY: Again, just for my simplistic understanding here, we don't anticipate the general amount to change over the course of those 35 years or whatever. Is that correct?

MR. KALGUTKAR: The payment on the Deh Cho Bridge debt is not anticipated to change over the next three or four years. As we start paying off the principal balance and as the rate of inflation increases, then the payment will likely start increasing as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to Mr. Kalgutkar. I'm not even going to go there. Thank goodness my payments on the house go down when I pay them off. The Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link, I see we spent \$7 million. Have we laid an inch of line yet? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, we're still looking at a completion date of the second quarter of 2016. We're just in the process of going through the candidates that applied and made the cut through the request for proposals. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. So we've spent \$7 million thinking about it. Do we have an estimate yet on the total costs for this project?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. We've been actively pursuing this project since late in the 16th Assembly when we got the initial papers together, we made our initial contact with P3 Canada and we started building the case to, in fact, commit ourselves to this project. So in regards to the detail, I'll just ask Mr. Kalgutkar to speak to that since this is his file and he's leading the charge. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As Members are aware, we're trying to procure this project under a P3 type procurement. So what the \$7 million represents is to finance some of the pre-development costs that are usually associated with a P3 project in '13-14, then once the project becomes operational in 2016 the \$7 million will be used to finance the debt and other operating costs that has been incurred by the P3 partner. It's what typically is called an availability payment to the P3 entity. At the same time, when the fibre is operational, that fiscal year we'll have to book the capital costs of the fibre onto the GNWT books as well. So that should happen in the 2016-17 fiscal year. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that information. I assume that means we don't know what the cost of the project is, the total cost of the project. The Minister mentioned we've been working on this since the 16th. I don't see any expenses listed in previous years, but perhaps we've already spent \$10 million thinking about this project. So I'll look forward to discussing the financial side of things on this project in committee I guess.

I see an interest expense listed of \$4.8 million down from \$5 million last year and it doesn't say what that's for. Probably I'm supposed to know, but I don't. Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you. Just to close the loop on the Mackenzie Valley fibre link, as the Minister referred to, we are in the procurement process right now and we should be at a stage to get indicative pricing on the project sometime within the next few weeks, and at that time we will check in with the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning again just to give them an update of where we are with the project. Right now the apex of the project is estimated to be between \$65 and \$70 million, but we'll have a better sense of what that is sometime in mid to late March and in accordance with our policy we'll be back in front of committee to assess whether we continue or not.

In terms of the interest expense, that is related to our short-term interest expense. If Members recall, a couple of years ago we had a top-up to our short-term borrowing limit from \$175 million to \$275 million and that increases us to be consistent with that increase in that limit. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the additional information on the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link. This is a project that I think everybody supports and we'd love to see it get done as expeditiously and efficiently as possible. Are we expecting to spend more this fiscal year once we do have all of this information in? I assume that would be through a supp. Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: The \$7 million that are representing the main estimates, is this the budget? We are obviously not spending to that level yet. Again, once we get a better sense of the indicative pricing on a project sometime in March and we are back in committee, we will have a much clearer picture of how much this project is going to cost us. At that time, we will make a decision whether to continue or not. Just to confirm, there will be no additional money requested this year. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had a question with regards to interest expense as well. I thank Mr. Bromley for asking the initial one, but I guess I would like to know, considering that we are expecting a drop in our revenues, we keep talking

about that, some \$38 million, is that going to have an impact on our short-term borrowing? Is this figure for interest expense, the estimated amount; is it liable to be less than what we now anticipate the interest costs to be for 2014-15? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Mr. Chair, the amount of our interest expense largely depends on when we enter into a cash deficit position. Currently, we are perpetually in a cash deficit position starting September. If that line crosses earlier, then we will obviously incur more interest costs, but the current forecasts are that we will likely be slightly under the \$4.8 million. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, thanks to Mr. Kalgutkar for that. My other question has to do with the program review office. This is being or has been transferred, will be transferred into the Department of Finance from the Executive where it now sits. I read the description of the program review office on page 5-20. It doesn't really read the way that I thought the program review office was described to us in the 16th Assembly. It seems to be less a section or a division to find efficiencies in government and more one which is going to sort of assist departments with evaluation and accountability and so on. I would like to know from the Minister, has there been a shift in the function of the program review office? Is it now more supportive of other departments in making sure that they have evaluations that go along with any new program and that they have evaluations that evaluate programs that are currently in place? Or does it still have the function and is it a large... I will leave it at that. I will ask the second question later. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, it has to do, and will continue to do, both its taking on more responsibility as it comes over to under the direct supervision in the Department of Finance. The program effectiveness, efficiencies are going to be critical pieces. We're hard at work. One of the projects under refocusing government, for example, is also we are continuing to work away at red tape. We are getting requests from other departments to have programs reviewed, agencies reviewed for the effectiveness, organizational design, efficiencies. That work will continue. We are asked to review and are assisting reviewing parts of operations of government like Health and the issues related to pharmaceuticals. We have a whole range of interests and that program review office is involved, and will continue to be involved, and will be tied more closely with all the other working parts of Finance that are also involved to some degree or

other in program effectiveness and efficiencies. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, thanks to the Minister for the explanation. I do have to say that I know that committee recommended that the program review office stay within the Executive. We didn't feel that it should be transferred to the Department of Finance. I think there is a risk that it will lose its function of properly evaluating programs and services and that it will be used more as a tool from simply a financial standpoint. I think that's a fairly large risk.

My second question has to do with the output, I guess, of this office. Certainly in the 16th Assembly, there were a number of programs that were reviewed and a number of reports that came from this particular office. We, as Members, were able to see them and read them and make some comment on them. Since I have been here in the 17th Assembly, I don't believe we have had any reports for the program review office. We certainly heard that they've been working on this, that and the other thing. I don't get a sense that there's been any report or any review that has ever been finished.

I would like to know from the Minister if he can give us a bit of an idea as to what work the program review office has finished and what reports are available for us, as Members, to have a look at. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Mr. Chair, the Member is right; there has been some work currently going on in the program review office. We did some work for the Sport North Rec under MACA. We've assisted the Department of ITI with facilitating the review of the Business Development Corporation. There is work that we are currently doing, including some major work like the government's model of the Yellowknife Airport. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. BISARO: So there is nothing which Members can see that that has been finalized to date, or is there? If there is, can we get it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will just confirm the commitment made from the Minister of ITI that ITI is currently finalizing their work on the report that was done on the BDIC. I recollect the Minister made a commitment to that. In due course, it will be shared with the committee and the recommendations and such reviewed and discussed for feedback. That is one of the ones that are most closely ready, I believe, to have that type of sharing. The other thing is we've provided the three-year proposed work plan looking for feedback and the Premier, as well, made a commitment in this House to sit down with committee to talk about how the next steps for

the program review office looking at their feedback and how do we incorporate that into the operations of the program review office. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. My last question has to go with something which I think is being reviewed by the program review office, but I don't think I heard it mentioned. If I did, I apologize for not listening properly. Is the program review office currently undertaking or doing a review on Aurora College student housing? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is correct.

MS. BISARO: When might that be done? When could we expect to see the results of that review? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: The initial draft of the report is scheduled to be completed early in the spring of 2014, so we will probably anticipate it in May of 2014. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, thanks to the Minister and his officials. I am done.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Next I have on the list Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Go ahead, Mr. Dolyunny.

COMMITTEE MOTION 16-17(5):
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE
PROGRAM REVIEW OFFICE,
DEFEATED

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee strongly recommends that the government undertake a comprehensive review of the form, function and operation of the program review office; and further, as part of the review process, that the government consult with Regular Members to allow an opportunity for a broader perspective on the effectiveness and efficiency of the office; and furthermore, that the government provide the results of the review of the Standing Committee on Government Operations prior to the review of the 2015-2016 Business Plan.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the ability to bring this motion forward. It should be no surprise to the Cabinet or the Premier that I'm doing that. I brought this issue up, and so have many other Members over the years, and I actually brought it up last week in the House.

The program review office has been considered important just as of late, and I'll get to that in a second. In fact, I just want to backtrack a little bit here. In the Finance Minister's opening budget address, I went back and looked through every line and not one line in there mentions the words program review office. It's one of those things that is just embedded in the, I guess, moral fabric of what happens behind government closed doors and somehow Members are supposed to somehow understand that things are going on and at some point in time, I guess Members of this committee will be notified.

Ironically, in the last couple days and even mentioned in the Finance Minister's opening address to the Department of Finance, the program review office is not mentioned one time, two times, but five times, so now all of a sudden it's an important element of the overall functioning of Finance. All the while, I think it's because I think the department is aware that the committee has raised some serious concerns and questions in the last couple days.

This office was established in 2008-2009, and it was specifically done for the government of the day to target program review. It had a very clear mandate. It was to determine effectiveness, make recommendations, eliminate, reduce and improve. These are values I stand by and I don't think anyone in this room would differ on that. If you look further in the business plan of 2009-2010, it said – and it was put on-line and it's available for everyone to go see it if they want to Google it here – that the monitoring and reporting was to be promised to be made available on-line. Well, that's never happened. To this date, there is nothing that has ever been produced, published that the public actually has seen. This has been, in my mind, and I think I used the term in one of my Member's statements, this is a private army of ombudsmen working and dedicated to our Cabinet, and now it's being moved to the budget, treasury and debt management area.

We've heard the Minister of Finance indicate that there was a reaching out from the Premier to the Members of this committee. Well, may I remind Members of the House that reaching out occurred about a year ago, and it was asked for our input. Committee provided input. We had a list of priorities that we asked this program review office to undertake. We have not received one correspondence as of that request. This is not a current issue. This is something that is not being readily available to Members and least of all not being readily available to the public as it was stated publicly in earlier program review offerings.

The taxpayer has spent, since its inception, my rough calculation is about \$4.5 million, and in my humble opinion, \$4.5 million, I think, goes a long

way in communities. I think you can do a lot with \$4.5 million in communities. You know what? I believe that the savings that this program review office could undertake, in my humble opinion, to be found within the respected departments themselves and financed accordingly.

Why do we need a separate office that works, really, undercover? I'll use the cover of almost secrecy, because we don't know what's going on. I've learned more about the program review office in the last 24 hours than I did in the last 12 months. That should say something about this office, and it should be a concern to everyone in this House, and it should be a wakeup call for Cabinet and it should be a wakeup call for the Department of Finance. This is a consensus government. This is not party politics, and if there is an office that is supposed to work for the people, then why aren't we sharing this information?

Transparency, accountability and protection of the public purse, those are just words, but they actually have meaning, and they have meaning to many of us on this side of the House. I believe this program review office really, I guess, touches on some of those areas in a way to which I think it deserves a motion because of the fact that we're not seeing transparency, not seeing accountability, and I do question our public purse if it's value added and money well spent.

To be perfectly honest, I would have a better inclination to actually delete this completely out of the budget. If I had the opportunity to, I would, but I know I probably didn't have the strength of the committee on that. But I just want to let Cabinet know that this is something that I wish I could be doing right now, is deleting this right out of the budget, and no disrespect to the people working there. I even know people that work in that office, and that it takes a lot of work to bring to the House those types of comments, especially when it involves people, but I'm talking about protecting of the public purse. Sometimes you have to rise to the occasion as a legislator, and I think this motion does speak to this.

I might have other Members weighing in on this, but clearly this is a very strongly worded motion. Hopefully that gets the attention that it does deserve and, hopefully, we see some efficiencies in design, and I'm expecting that we see resolve.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I share much of the concerns raised by Member Dolynny and thank him for the opportunity to bring the motion forward to talk about it.

I was part of the group in 2007 that was enthusiastically behind this initiative of the program review office and was genuinely optimistic that it

would find savings, and it would be designed in a manner to look at savings in sort of a microscopic type of way, forensic, let's go through these things, what does this mean, what does it affect, how does it have an impact on other things. Once that type of issue and question was qualified, and certainly quantified, it would be brought to the political machinery to just now say, look, here are your choices: red pill or blue pill. This one leads you in one direction and this one sends you right back to where you are. Quite frankly, I was kind of hoping that we'd get those types of things, but we never really did. I never felt that from its inception that it did that.

I think in a lot of ways what it did was it found pet projects to work on, and I agree that they're great philosophical, political questions to look at, but I think at the end of the day it didn't really look at trying to chew the costs of government on, ask the question why if we had this policy in place for 20 years and by golly, we just keep renewing it because, and because was sometimes the worst answer, but that seems to be why we're doing stuff. I mean, I've had good, robust discussions with Minister Miltenberger about how do we trim things in government and all we do is we add, we add, we add, and he teases Members back about wanting more, and you know, that's true too. But, like, when do we look at reducing programs and when do we talk about them and how do we talk about them? We never have that type of discussion, and that, in my view, is what the program review office was all about. It was about to ask those questions by saying, is this the policy our government wants to continue to follow? Is this the road that we need to be on?

I think that this program review office, we need to be asking ourselves, is it doing what we originally wanted it to do? I'm not sure it is. I think that it's sort of down-periscope-approach on solving problems, I mean, they need to come to the surface once in a while, come to committee, and I'd say come to committee and get committee's direction. I understand committee is a challenging sort of beast in itself, 11 opinions, different ways, and oddly enough, even though it's 11 members, you probably leave with 12 different directions.

It is a challenge; I fully recognize that. But frankly, I never felt that we're getting the value of this office in the direction we wanted, and I can tell you, we're doing PTR, and some will say, well, geez, that came out of the program review office. Well, I can tell you, many Members never felt good about that from the start.

I can tell you that there was a robust thrust against the idea about the building downtown. It became a challenge. It just seems like in the end they just do what they want at the direction of Cabinet, and I'm not convinced a lot of this stuff that they're looking

at are really about the core intent, so I think it really needs a real review as to why it's there, as to have that heart to heart and ask ourselves, are these people in this program better served somewhere else, and only a review will be able to do that.

I'd like to leave my colleagues guessing which way I'm going to vote, so we'll wait for the final count on a recorded vote, obviously. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Next I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to thank Mr. Dolynny for bringing this motion forward. Had it been a motion to delete the program review office I would have supported it. I will support this one, though, which is an interim measure, I guess, to look at what the program review office actually does.

I also was part of the Regular Members' committee who sat down at the beginning of the 16th Assembly and thought there must be some areas where we could improve on the efficiency, eliminate redundancy and duplication. We thought there were places to find money in the system. That was the intent behind the program review office. We thought of all kinds of ideas. We had a big, long list of them. But the legacy of the program review office is a \$40 million office building in downtown Yellowknife, at a time when this government espouses and says they're going to look at decentralization. There are private buildings that have been built as well. I think of another one downtown that as soon as it was built it was filled up. It's like build it and they will come.

Anyway, I'm not just unhappy about that. I'm just unhappy with... I don't see the program review office actually looking in the government departments.

When somebody said they've set up frameworks within the departments to measure outcomes, hey, that's bureaucratic stuff. I don't know about that. I don't know about that kind of stuff. I mean, that's not where I live. Where I live is things like we suggested like how many Northwestel phone lines and fax lines are in the walls of government offices and cubicles that have been rearranged and we're still paying a monthly fee. Well, that was one small thing, but I was predicting it would result in tens of thousands of savings. I don't know what the actual outcome of that was. But I thought they would be proactive. I thought the program review office would follow the instructions of the political will of the day and actually look proactively for areas that we could...

We don't have that opportunity as Regular Members. We're kind of on the outside looking in. We approve a budget, but some of it is in very, very large amounts, very large line items, very large categories of money that we're voting. We don't

actually get to see what's going on a lot of time at the levels of the bureaucracy. I thought that was what the program review office was about. I supported it and I haven't seen a lot of that.

I think that the PTR recommendations could have been done in house by Education. I think that there's lots of capacity in departments themselves, that if we were to get that specific and say, okay, look at this or look at that, I think departments could handle that themselves, so one wonders why there is a separate shop for a program review office at this time.

Now, do I think there are positions in the government that if we knew about every single one of them we might wonder about, that we might question that we're spending money on? Yes, probably, but this is actually a visible group. This is actually a visible shop that we can see this is how much it costs; this is how many employees are working in this area.

I'm sure there are other places that there could be money saved, as well, but this is obviously not the shop that's going to be telling us about that. They're not going to be coming forward and telling us, so I don't know what our actual window into some of these areas where there may be savings, I don't know what it is for us on this side of the House. Maybe some of the passive restraint direction that's going to be given by the Finance Minister to departments, maybe that is some area where they will find ways to save money in the departments; I don't know. But I think as an interim, at the very least, if we're not going to delete the program review office, I'm saying let's give it a chance, let's review it, let's hear the case for having it, for its existence for the investment that we make in it and then I will be all ears, listening to what that case is.

So, I think this is what this motion is about here today, it's kind of a softened we're open to hear, maybe there needs to be some more direction provided. I don't know if the program review office is out there on their own without maybe the kind of specific direction that they had initially that they may still need. I will be listening. I will genuinely be listening to hear what it is they do, but I do support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Next on my list is Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Although I don't have the whole history of this program review office, I think that you've heard today from Members of the 16th Assembly that the initial attempts at putting this program review office in and the reasons behind it were not fully met. However, the history that I do have, just after we got elected to this House, was in February of 2012 we had a presentation from the Executive and there was a lot of cost savings, in the amount of, I believe, \$17 million. The moment that committee made a

recommendation to government to do anything to this cost savings or even reallocate some of those cost savings into another program, which we start seeing these budgets now and that's early childhood development, government didn't want to make those changes and they fought against it. We got it done and now we're seeing some of these things moving forward.

The history that I have with it, we try to make the recommendations. We've even heard that what good is having a program review office if we're not going to follow up on the recommendations. Well, when we try to do them, government puts a halt to that. We're not seeing any reports coming out of this program review office. You can see the frustrations that Members of the 16th Assembly have on this side of the House.

What we see when we go through the main estimates, we see other programs and services that need more support. We have small communities that need a little more support, or we have programs and services right now that do need to be enhanced, while we have a service department out there that isn't holding up their end of the bargain. Even if we had that report, that kind of information or even yearly updates, that might have a change in here.

In terms of deleting it, I was a little cautious on going that far. I was hoping to give the office another chance. I think we're at a point now where we're hearing all this information about fiscal responsibility and we're hearing things about passive restraint. In fact, I think the departments might be doing a good job in that themselves, looking at ways they can save dollars. In that sense alone, I don't know why we need the program review office.

We also have the Auditor General. When we give recommendations to the Auditor General from the Government Operations committee, they look at that and move forward with it.

As one of my colleagues said earlier, we did give recommendations from this committee for the program review office to get some areas of interest and I don't believe we had any correspondence back.

From my little history, I think dollars here could be spent in other areas, especially all the work that we've been doing, all the briefings that we've getting from Education, Culture and Employment, from Health and Social Services, from all departments. I think that moving forward this is a very strong recommendation toward government and I will be supporting the motion. It's about making decisions in this House and sometimes they are tough decisions and we have to do what we think is best for the public purse and the people that put us in here and expect us to spend the dollars in the best way possible.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Next on my list I have Mr. Blake, followed by Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Going through all the information that we've gotten for this department, there's a lot of savings that have been made through this department. Just an example is the readiness for school. One of the positive things you can see out of that is this junior kindergarten, in my opinion. They're addressing a lot of the needs in the small communities. You know how many times you hear, whether it's Regular Members or Cabinet saying, we need to do things differently. We all know that a lot of the programs and services we provide in this territory aren't really provided properly and maybe we need to make changes where we can. That's what I think this department is doing.

On another one of the positive things I've seen come through this department is government service officers. That position is huge in the small communities. It might be simple for some people. For example, the elders, every year they need to fill out their fuel subsidy forms, a whole number of forms just to get certain funding whether it's for fuel or other issues. That's what that office does. It really helps the elderly people in the community.

I see the need for this department. I can't support the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Blake. I have Mr. Yakeleya, followed by Mr. Menicoche.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was involved with earlier discussion on the program review office concept. Some of the Members in Cabinet were also in this discussion. We thought it was a good thing because we were going to look the whole operation of the government and see where some of the programs make sense in our operations. Coming from a small community and jurisdiction, I thought this was good. A lot of the programs that are operating in the communities, the left hand needs to know what the right hand is doing and have efficiencies in our communities.

One of the programs I thought was going to be looked at on the lower list of programs to look at was ENR and ITI. ENR has trapping programs for trappers and harvesters, but ITI controls the money. That's been told to me over the 10 years I've been an MLA, it makes it difficult for the trappers at times. They go to ENR and work with the furs and traps, but you have to go to ITI for the money. I thought that would be a good fit to put it together. So the trappers in their limited use of the English language to understand how the program works should go to one office. They are being bounced

from ITI to ENR. It would make it easier for the trappers and harvesters to be together. I thought something like that would be accomplished in our small communities. It makes sense.

Mr. Blake has noted some of the things that came out of the program review office that are helping. So this motion strongly recommends the government undertake a comprehensive review of the form and function and the operations. Is it still doing what it's supposed to do in the spirit and intent of our putting this forward in the 16th Assembly? Do we have a larger say into this? Are we meeting regularly? Are we looking at some of the issues? I believe we have done some of that work. What are the issues we are looking at?

I was quite taken aback when we had the \$40 million building that Mrs. Groenewegen talked about. I didn't know it was something that this government was looking at the whole operation here in Yellowknife. They spend millions and millions in Yellowknife. We need offices and infrastructure in our small communities.

So I guess I got a little bit turned off by seeing some of the things that just happened. I believe that we need to come back to the table, take the opportunity to roll up our sleeves and say, is this what it was intended to be? From a broader perspective, are the needs of the communities being met for the efficiency of programs and services in our communities? When this was first brought up, I was also inclined to say let's delete this and this. People in government can do some of this work. So we've got somewhat softened. I'm still going to support the motion. This is another opportunity for Cabinet to look at this and come back to us. I look forward to that. I think we can do some good things. We just have to meet each other halfway.

In this sense, I don't know if it makes sense that we're a co-pilot in this office. If we're not, we will have to have some more discussion. I know the government has sent us some information in the past through the meetings we've had. I don't know if we've been heard strongly enough. I know some things were presented to us, but anyway, I take this motion as an opportunity to come back and look at this, let's set some timelines and schedules to see what we can do. It's not all bad. We just need to come back again. I will be supporting the motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next I have Mr. Menicoche followed by Ms. Bisaro.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Sometimes we create creatures in our government that takes on a life of its own. I share the concerns of my colleagues and feel that the program review office has created a life of its own. I really want to sit down with the Minister and do what the motion calls for. Let's review this. Let's

review the intention of this program review office and get back to the original intention, which was to try to find efficiencies and better ways of doing things in government. That's all the motion calls for, so I will be supporting it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to just briefly comment on the motion. I talked earlier about the program review office and my concerns with that office. That motion – I want to point out to my colleagues – does not call for the removal of the program review office, as much as Mr. Dolynny would like us to go there. His motion does not ask for the program review office to be deleted. It asks for a review of the program review office by the government and I think that certainly a review of any program, intermittently, is a good thing. This is a new program, it's a new service, it's a new office and I don't believe it has been reviewed since it was first established. I think it is timely. There certainly is what I would consider to be a difference of opinion on the understanding of what the office either is doing or should do or has done. I think whether it's a lack of information on the part of Members on this side or whether it's just that the review office isn't doing what they should be doing, there needs to be some kind of evaluation of this program review office.

The motion asks for a review. The motion asks for Regular Members to be consulted so we can have some input into what we think the office should be doing or should not be doing. Again, I want to reiterate it does not ask for this office to be removed. It asks for it to be looked at and made better. Any program, through an evaluation, I think could be made better. Maybe it's a little bit better, maybe it's a lot better, but there's an opportunity for us to make this particular program review office to work to the best of all Members of the House. I certainly am in support of the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): To the motion. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to indicate to the Members we have provided all the reports to the committees over the period of time. We have also briefed and been asked for feedback as to the three-year work plan that the PRO has been working on. There were questions on the status of priorities. Aurora College student housing program review is currently underway. The residential care for children program review is delayed because of the Auditor General's current review of the program. Energy use program review has been deferred due to overlap with other works. There is also a number of projects that have been initiated this year, the Sport and Recreational Council review, potential cost savings from updated

pharmaceutical policies and procedures, Yellowknife Airport governance model, the BDIC review, Single Window Service Centre update, Family Law Remediation Program, Territorial Midwifery Program evaluation. In addition, the PRO continues to develop capacity building within the Government of the Northwest Territories.

As a process of reporting, it has also resulted in considerable savings in the neighbourhood of about \$100 million. Some of the programs and recommendations and major initiatives for the K to 12 school programs and PTR studies, health programs and services evaluation, general office space evaluation, adult education, rationalizing phones, faxes and printers, Harvesters Support Program review and, as mentioned, Single Window Service Centre Pilot Project. A large number of work is ongoing. I think that the PRO has resulted in considerable savings. There is a lot of work going on. We have offered a briefing to tie it in with the new Finance department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Premier. To the motion. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am gratified to hear that the majority of Members see value to this type of operation. We are a corporation of \$1.6 billion. We have over 5,000 employees. We have literally thousands of programs running all over the Northwest Territories, big communities, small communities in every conceivable service area, health, education, roads, housing, intergovernmental relations, you name it. No body this size, this complex can really consider itself to be functional because it doesn't have the ability to have some type of evaluative function and efficiency function and review function. It's really important even to those who want to cut it because they may not be happy with what they see. We need this type of investment that is critical that we do keep this going and that we don't set up a process trying to find enough support to actually cut this program. We need objective assessment. We've put these folks to work looking at a whole host of areas. We heard it discussed around this table. The most recent one is junior kindergarten, government service officers. They are at work on red tape. Mr. Yakeleya has outlined some other areas where they could play a role. They do have a support function. Their job is to act on the direction from departments from their managers, their superiors. Their job is not to be out front, in public, high profile. They have done significant amounts of work. I well remember the work on education and health, the PTR, inclusive schooling, how the re-profiling that resulted and the money that has been moved into junior kindergarten.

This function, this office, is very critical to government, to a corporation the size of ours. We will continue to engage with committee. We have to

look to the future. We have to look at the work plan. Devolution is upon us. There are new responsibilities. We do have that work to do. That work is going to take place as a matter of course as opposed to what I think this motion will do, which is going to trigger an enormous amount of time, energy and focus instead of doing the work. It needs to get done to advance all the priorities of the government. We are going to end up spending an enormous amount of time and energy taking a look and potentially, I would suggest, paralyzing the program review office as it goes under the magnifying glass of scrutiny.

The other reason we need this third party operation is because I don't think anybody would agree that we would expect Health or Education or any department to be able to critically look at themselves the way the program review office is asked to look at operations of government. With all of those concerns in mind, keeping in mind that we are going to move forward with the Premier's offer to a briefing and mapping out the future, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be supporting the motion too. My hope would be that as we spend the money that it is going to cost to do this and it is obviously well worth it and if it is not working in the consensus government context, I would urge the Cabinet to be sure to include Regular Members in the steering committee that guides the review or the two people that guide the review.

I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Question has been called. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Thank you, committee. We are on page 5-21, activity summary, budget, treasury and debt management, operations expenditure summary, \$27.8 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Page 5-23, information item, budget, treasury and debt management, active positions. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you. Page 5-25, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, operations expenditure summary, \$49.567 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, I see that this office seems to have a role in collections. I am wondering if the comptroller general's office does have a function in the administration or collection of the payroll tax. Thank you.

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

MR. AUMOND: Mr. Chair, in the office of the comptroller general, the accounting services activity, there is a collections function. Collection of the payroll tax is done in the treasury division. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, the other function I see this office has is providing financial analysis, advice and interpretation, internal auditing and so on. The issue has been raised a number of times that there are compliance issues. It may be at play in collecting the payroll tax. I wonder if the Minister could tell me what those compliance issues are that the Minister has considered asking the program review office to look at. Thank you.

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: As Mr. Aumond was referring to before, a lot of the compliance issues are generally around the payroll tax and that is performed under the budget and treasury division. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. This is obviously related to the internal auditing and so on as well. I'm just wondering if we know what those issues are that have caused the Minister to suggest that this should be reviewed by the program review office.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Can I please ask the Member to maybe clarify what he is referring to in terms of in compliance?

MR. BROMLEY: The Minister has said that there may be compliance issues at play in the collection of the payroll tax and that he was considering having the program review office take a look at it with that in mind. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to ask the Member to tell me when I said that, because if he's talking about today, it's something that I have no recollection of saying in this House. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley, is that something you heard today?

MR. BROMLEY: No, it isn't, Mr. Chair, but I'll see if I can dig it out. It wasn't said today; I'm referring to before today. But within the last year, I think, the intent was to put the program review office to

looking at compliance issues on the collection of the payroll tax, but I'll try and dig that out.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We, as well, will take a look at our discussions and if that was brought up possibly during a committee briefing at some point. We did make reference at some point to bringing on a new payroll compliance officer. I'm not sure if that's maybe what the Member is referring to.

Anyway, we'll commit to also check to see if that issue has come up. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I'd appreciate that. Would the Minister have the information handy why we're considering another compliance control officer for this tax collection? Thank you.

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, treasury has two staff members looking at over 2,000 payroll tax files and there is currently, I'm estimating, about a three-year backlog in reviewing those files. It's very important that we have a standardized process in terms of ensuring that we do a review of our payroll tax files on a regular basis.

We came through the forced-growth process to have an officer added just to start alleviating some of that backlog and it's an important revenue stream that we need to look at. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar. Thank you, committee. For the record, the vote on Mr. Dolynny's motion was a tie. As the Chair is responsible to break the tie to maintain the status quo and allow the House to discuss the matter further, I voted against the motion. This is why the motion was defeated. I apologize for that.

Next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question with regard to the huge increase in compensation and benefits. I presume that it's for the transfer of employees into Finance from elsewhere. Can I get an explanation, please? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Deputy Minister Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we do have a couple divisions from the Human Resources department with respect to employee services coming into the department as well as folks coming in from various departments as we finalize our implementation of the financial shared services. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: That's good. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Committee, I'll take this opportunity to recognize the mayor of Hay River in the gallery. Welcome, Andrew.

Next on my list I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. I just wanted to get right into the financial shared services and amalgamating people into the financial shared services. I've been trying to find some documentation on this from the last time the committee had an update on it. I think it was just before our election in 2011, so I don't know if P and P have had an update on where financial shared services is going.

The original intent, of course, was the logical thing to do was when we split the Department of ITI and ENR and there were some similar functions so we just kept shared services. I've spoken earlier in the House about how a seemingly innocuous group of government employees started gaining momentum and now we've got almost like this fairly significant group of people in our government. I don't know if they're going on their own mandate or they're prepared to give committee an update on where financial shared services are going.

Talking with some people, this is how we used to do things about three governments ago, 12 years ago or even more, then we've done other things and now we're amalgamating back to the old Department of Finance way of doing things. People are saying we're going backwards by creating this again, so I want to get the Minister's thoughts on that.

As well, the reason that came to my attention is because employees were telling me that when they were considering this two years ago – because it's been in the works since we got re-elected in 2011 – is they went out to all the departments and said, look, we're amalgamating our services – if that's the word they're using – no employees will be impacted, yet in Fort Simpson I've got two employees potentially losing their jobs.

As well, when they created these new positions in shared services, once again they're doing the same thing to employees that they're doing to our public, is over-qualifying those positions and giving no regard to years of service. So we might potentially lose two long-term service employees in Fort Simpson, not to mention the other areas because I understand there are other impacted employees and frustrated employees. They're Aboriginal and they're long-term Northerners and they're frustrated internally as well. My fight was always trying to get people in there, but when they're in there, these are opportunities for growth, these positions, they got sold to the employees as opportunities for growth, yet one of my constituents has been asked to go backwards. The person had 10 years of services in the same type of job, offered the same position in shared services at a retraining level, which means

after six months they're not even sure they have that job, and it's kind of like a blow. Somebody who's growing in government, trying hard, there every day, knows the system, yet when there's an opportunity for growth – and this person is Aboriginal – they make them go backwards. I don't think we should be doing that to our own employees, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would be more than happy to meet with committee for a full and comprehensive update and review of this financial shared services amalgamation which has been fast-tracked and is more pressing than ever to have it done, given we've on the eve of devolution.

In regards to the specific issues with the Member's constituents, I would suggest that an appropriate venue for that would be an opportunity for the Member and myself and some staff to sit down and we could review the particular circumstances so that we all have the same information and we can make sure that we deal with it in a way that respects that confidentiality factor. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I thank the Minister. I think it might be the Standing Committee on Government Operations that takes the lead over finances. Perhaps at that time we can invite as many Members as we can to that briefing. I'm glad for that commitment because this is almost becoming a department that we almost need a deputy minister here for. It has taken on a life of its own. I have checked with my colleagues to try to find out more, so here's a good opportunity while we're doing the budget. I'm glad for the commitment and I'll be interested to see where government wants to go with this department. It continues to grow. It has objectives and it's impacting internal employees and causing grief as well.

With that, I look forward to a briefing, hopefully before we leave this session. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We'll wait for any direction from committee, Government Ops, if that's the appropriate committee. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Sometimes in this role we become quite critical in design. Unfortunately, that's part of our role as legislators and part of our role in going through budget as we are doing before the House.

It's also an opportunity, and I've said this many times, when I see something that's going well, I pay credence to that as well. This is one of those areas. I believe there has been significant improvement, and we've echoed that in the tabling of the public

accounts. I really want to echo the fact that this was a lot of work to change a mindset of trying to get numbers, analysis of numbers, financial numbers, the reporting aspects in time to work with the Auditor General of Canada. We've seen a remarkable improvement in the last two years since we rekindled the public accounts program.

I wanted to make sure I went on record because sometimes that gets missed. For the record, there are no questions here, Mr. Chair. This is a classic example of when a department works with committee, we can get great things done. That's what I want to leave you with. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny, for that good news. Mr. Miltenberger, would you like to respond to that?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: On behalf of the Department of Finance and the office of the comptroller general, I would like to thank the Member for his accolades and kind words in this House and on the record. As he's indicated, good work was done, an enormous amount of work by all parties. I just thank the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we are on page 5-25, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, operations expenditure summary, \$49.567 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to follow up. I did find the document I was referencing. It wasn't the Minister's words, it was the program review office had looked at the payroll tax compliance and in a couple of reports they made reference to that. The first one, October 30, 2012, they said: "Growth in taxes" meaning payroll taxes here, "has not kept pace with growth in non-resident income. Suggestions: we may not be achieving desired results, may not be operating optimally, may require increased resources." Perhaps that's partly the compliance officer that Mr. Kalgutkar referred to.

In the second reference, February 27, 2013, about a year ago, they gave this issue a high score, meaning it really should be given some priority. It was categorized for consideration in the 2014-15 work plan which is under discussion today through the budget. I don't have an official citation here, but is there any intent to look at the compliance issues that we seem to be hearing about with collection of payroll tax? Thank you.

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't actually recall those reports the Member is referring to, so I'll have to go back and dig up that information for him. Currently, the office is compiling information to develop its 2014-15 work

plan which it will share with committee early in the new fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: That's fine. Thanks very much. Perhaps the Minister's discussion paper on that developed in consultation with the Regular Members could be part of that. That's all I had. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Committee, we are on page 12-25, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, operations expenditure summary, \$49.567 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-26, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, grants and contributions, \$11.085 million. Ms. Bisaro.

Ms. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I need to ask a question here with regard to the Power Subsidy Program and the subsidy that we are paying out. I'll start by saying I notice a doubling of the amount between our actuals in 2012-13 to what we estimated in this current budget year and the budget year we are now discussing. So why is there such a large increase from actuals to estimates? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Member would recall when we went to the rate zones, demand on the program has dropped significantly. The utilization of the program has not been as high as we anticipated because of that change.

MS. BISARO: So that begs the question if our actuals are down that much, why are we estimating \$11 million instead of \$6 million? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: I believe this is the budget that was in place prior to the rate zone change. We might have to go back and look at the magnitude of the budget that's in place now. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: You mean we might have a slush fund to play with. That's a humorous comment, Mr. Chair.

My question has to do with the increase in our power rates and with consumers not being subsidized anymore, because we've been subsidizing, I think, 7 percent, 7 percent, 7 percent, 5 percent. Is there a relationship between the loss of that subsidy on our power rates or the increase on our power rates and will there be a corresponding increase on this Power Subsidy Program because our residents are going to be paying the full rate now? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: It's hard to predict that right now, but we wouldn't anticipate to have that much of an impact on this budget. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar. Committee, we're on page 5-26, activity summary, office of the comptroller general, grants and contributions, \$11.058 million. I'll read that number again, \$11.085 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-27, information item, office of the comptroller general, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-29, activity summary, office of the chief information officer, operations expenditure summary, \$2.260 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Sorry, committee, \$2.460 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-30, office of the chief information officer, grants and contributions, \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-31, information item, office of the chief information officer, active positions. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-33, activity summary, Bureau of Statistics, operations expenditure summary, \$1.042 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this, but I do want to say that I highly value the Bureau of Statistics. I find that the information they produce is very good. I don't find it is a consumable maybe the general public grabs upon. It's usually for those folks like academics and whatnot and those researchers and boring MLAs that are trying to find a crowbar to complain about government. With that said, I'm very grateful.

I just want to put on the stats that that is a shop burrowed into the hollows of government. It does some good work. I just want to thank them for the information they produce. This area never gets any recognition at all. It's probably for a good reason they don't tend to get a lot of criticism either. I said for a good reason because they do a good job.

That said, I do appreciate the work they do. I just want to make a point on the record. I'm really glad they keep the information up to date, especially when I remind the McLeod government about the detail. I just wanted to put that out there.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger, do you accept that compliment?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I do, on behalf of the employees that labour long and hard. We

can't manage or we can't count, as we say, in many areas and this is one of those, so thank you on their behalf.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, we are on page 5-33, activity summary, Bureau of Statistics, operations expenditure summary, \$1.042 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-34, information item, Bureau of Statistics, active positions. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 5-36, information item, Liquor Revolving Fund. Are there any questions? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This section isn't necessarily going to get a compliment. It may be a little more of a link. It is not necessarily criticism either, but what I'm finding here is there are some real concerns about the modernization of our present Liquor Act. Recently I brought some concerns to the Minister of Finance about some problems that we've been having in interpretation and certainly in the modernization. Does the Minister see any sort of public dialogue on potentially modernizing some of our liquor laws? As such, we have to sort of balance out what is real and modern and what is realistic.

What we are seeing in the rise, for example in the city of Yellowknife, I know that many bars are asking for Sunday openings and extending the sales period. Recently there was an experience where I saw a bit of an anomaly in one of the liquor laws. I brought it to the attention of the Finance Minister to what that detail is. It doesn't really matter as much, but what we are noticing are quirks as to what I would like to say is sort of a modernization.

I know that I was here during the Liquor Act rewrite a few years ago. I think the work there at the time is certainly good, but that said, does the Finance Minister see any future or I should say near future discussion about some of the rules around these types of things? I know that the general administration has been bequeathed down to the city so they can make some rules, but I'm talking about some broader opportunities. I have heard that there might be some things on the horizon. If there are, maybe the Minister can speak to that type of policy development under this area. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, we are always interested and prepared to have discussions with committee. If it is on an area such as this, yes, we are prepared to have a discussion

about concerns, next steps, options, but I would ask Mr. Koe if he wanted to speak to some of the things on the drawing board in terms of addressing some concerns that we are dealing with, and we do get a considerable and fairly steady stream of issues being raised.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Mr. Koe.

MR. KOE: Mr. Chair, as due course of business, we do get regular requests from MLAs to take a look at parts of the Liquor Act. We do follow those up to see if those would be regulatory changes or act changes. Some items we have on the table right now are looking at manufacturing retail outlets, you brews, and the proposal of the motion on enforcement of the Liquor Act by municipal enforcement officers. We are doing the research on that through regulations and act and see how best we can look to compromise some proposals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, I appreciate Mr. Koe's answer on that. I will frame this question on two points. What type of public dialogue do you draw out there? I don't see any ads in this particular area saying, are liquor laws meeting our needs? Really, I think they are individual ones. Recently we changed concerns in the Sahtu to reflect what is needed and demanded there. Rightly or wrongly, it seemed like the right thing to do and certainly the right thing to support, as far as I was concerned, because we were responding to community area needs, certainly people's needs.

What type of outreach does this area, division, do in sort of staying in contact with what vendors as well as the public find are important and certainly relevant to the localized area? The simple example I would provide to make sure it is clear and relevant is maybe Sunday openings make sense in Yellowknife. It might not make sense somewhere else. That type of dialogue. I am talking about allowing it in general as opposed to providing the opportunity for a permit. Right now, you have to permit. You are only allowed so many. I guess that is the type of relationship I am trying to find out how much we do and how we do it. Do we get any dialogue or feedback or relationship built on that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We will go to Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chair, we deal with issues and concerns as they are brought to our attention by MLAs, by clients, by vendors. If there is a broad cross-section of impact, we will talk to folks. In terms of what I understand the Member could be suggesting reaching out to have a much broader discussion, restate the readiness to accept invitation to meet with committee. If there is a concern by the committee about issues that require

a broader outreach, then we would be happy to have that discussion with the Member or with the committee. In the meantime, we work at this level out of Hay River, as well, to deal with those issues that are raised on an individual specific basis. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, so the answer is no, but you take inquiries so that is fine. I see an opportunity to continue this dialogue. The example I provided was an example, one that is sort of in the public realm, one that is easily understood that makes sense to people. Whether they agree or disagree is not the issue as opposed to the example to illustrate is important. Fair enough. That is the only question I have at this particular time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I will take that as a final comment. Moving on with questions on 5-36, I have Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, this is in regards to some numbered questions here. Projected in the main estimates are liquor sales of \$48.5 million, cost of goods sold, \$16.9 million and last year we had \$47.5 million in sales and cost of goods sold as \$17 million, so what the numbers here are saying is that we are buying cheaper products or something there. We like to drink \$1 million worth, so somehow we must be buying bulk sales but we are consuming the same product for almost \$1 million less. Can I get an explanation on that?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. For that, we will go to Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Mr. Chair, in terms of the increase in liquor sales, one of the prime drivers of that is the change in the liquor model in Yellowknife, going from the private store model to the consignment store model. We are hoping that change will drive sales up a little bit. In terms of why the cost of goods sold has gone down, we have realized some freight savings. Our costs are starting to go down. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, that is a good explanation for that. Liquor Commission agency expenses are up by \$1 million over the last couple of years, maybe could we get an explanation for that?

MR. KALGUTKAR: Again, it is primarily due to the fact that we are changing our model in Yellowknife, going to a private store model, sorry, going to a consignment store model from a private store model, so when we go to a consignment store model we pay the store operators a commission on the sales. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chairman, that's fine. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Committee, we are on 5-36. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So we know the fact that we are making not bad money off our sales of buying liquor and the costs, and maybe stabilizing the costs here in the North. I guess my question is to the Minister. The main estimates are for the \$25.372 million profit. I heard it before that the money goes into general revenues and they give it up. I know we passed a motion one time at least, to put a symbolic gesture to put at least a percentage to direct program services into alcohol prevention promotion programs in our communities. I am not too sure; the response wasn't favourable from the Minister. Just a symbolic gesture because I know we put the \$25 million we make off of selling booze to the people of the Northwest Territories, then as a direct symbolic gesture saying that it is important to us to save lives and we want to do this, even 1 percent of this money. I was looking at 10 percent, and so I still think that is the way to go in saying yes, this money can go directly into alcohol and drug prevention programs in our communities.

Also, I would like to get a breakdown of what the sales are like in Norman Wells liquor store. We make a profit. On a business deal, this is a good deal. I don't know what the bootleggers make, but this is a good deal here for us as a legitimate government business. Making profits and the money goes into general revenue, and I understand, Mr. Miltenberger, last time you told me about all that goes into programs, but this is now directly hitting the pocketbooks. Bring it back into our communities on a percentage. That is what I would like to look at in this Liquor Revolving Fund.

We heard a lot of comments from the Sahtu communities on Bill 24. A lot of good, strong recommendations from the Members, which we know the \$48 million that caused a lot of headaches in the North and what the sales are going to the Sahtu, but it has caused a lot of headaches and we would certainly like to combat that as much as we can. The operations of our liquor store have been questioned too. Some of our Members here, and for me, I just want to say this stuff is taken by some people which they can handle pretty good. A lot of our people you see in the reports, the crime reports, RCMP reports, are pretty high. They are unable yet to handle it and it causes a lot of headaches for us as a government.

So, I guess my last question before I leave this page, has there ever been a study about what alcohol costs our business and our community? We do that with tobacco, we do that with cancer, we do that with diabetes, but has there been any type of study within this government to say this is what it costs the community or a business, missing work, getting sick, everything, showing that. I know they did that in the Alberta government, and it cost the government, if you look at some of the factors in the trillions of dollars. Have we ever done anything like that in the Northwest Territories, to really see the

devastating impact on the socio-economic and health level of understanding the real cost of all of this?

You know, we need to take a break, so I'm not interested in opening the bars and liquor stores on Sunday. Enough is enough. Modernize or not, we have to put our foot down to say this stuff is costing us dearly in our communities, so I hope the Minister doesn't come and have the discussion with us in committee on looking at bars on Sunday. Let's have a day of rest, okay? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the Department of Health and Social Services can put out some broad numbers that show and point to the societal impacts of alcohol abuse right from babies being born with FASD right up to all the costs of work and jail, shelters being full and that type of thing. The issue of the money, this \$25 million goes into general revenue, so we have general revenue of over \$1.6 billion, \$1.8 billion. Out of that, including this, we take now with the supplementary appropriations that are being considered, Health will get over \$400 million of that, so it all gets mixed together, but in my mind, it's clear that every cent of this goes into general revenue but we take \$400 million, so we put in \$25 million and we take out \$400 million to go to Health and Social Services. Out of that \$400 million, there are considerable millions that are spent on alcohol and drug related issues, in fact there is more money in the budget this year, as well, to improve those. We make the case. To me it is clear, we make \$25 million and we spend 10 times that, actually we spend 20 times that roughly. So, I think we are talking about optics here because there is this money and as a government we choose to spend \$400 million.

I will ask Mr. Koe to talk, you asked about the Norman Wells consumption. Sorry, Mr. Kalgutkar can do that.

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

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe the Member asked what the operating results of the Norman Wells liquor store were, so for the fiscal year 2012-13, the total sales generated in Norman Wells was about \$2.6 million and had a net income of about \$1.4 million. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The whistle is getting dry there. That is a lot of booze in our communities and regions. Again, I understand the Minister, and I believe we are talking optics on the profits, I understand what he is saying. He is

saying it for symbolic. For us in the Sahtu, we can put aside a percentage, even 1 percent or even a half percent, symbolically that this money from the Sahtu sales go directly to our small communities – Colville Lake, Good Hope, Tulita, Norman Wells and Deline – and we are going to do something directly to work with alcohol abuse and prevention promotion. It is not much, and I understand that we appreciate the money that is going to help, but not all of it is going into prevention. There are doctors and everything else that needs to be looked after. That's what I am talking about. If we can do that then we know, that's what the chiefs are saying, this is the chiefs, not me, who brought this up in the Sahtu. We've got to show something. Right now, the optics don't look too good. That's what I'm saying.

I'll leave it at that. Those are all my questions for this page.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's concern. We could say in this budget that the \$900,000 that is going to on-the-land programs have come out of this money. It's all in general revenue. I appreciate the Member's concern. I have no further comment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, we're on page 5-36, information item, Liquor Revolving Fund. Any questions? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I do hear the Minister about the \$900,000 going into on-the-land programs for communities. There is something symbolic in taking a percentage out of the sale and directing that into communities for school programs, wellness programs, literacy programs or some kind of program in the community. That's what I'm saying. He's right, he's saying the \$900,000 going into the on-the-land programs. That's no different from us changing from Nats'ejee K'eh. It's still going to Nats'ejee K'eh. We've just shifted the will of the House here. I'm still not getting what I want.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, we could have the discussion about committing to dedicating this money, these profits will go into Health and Social Services budget. Out of that 25, X amount of it will go to whatever programs you can cover off. We can say we will coffer this money and it will go directly into those budgets in its entirety. Not a fraction, but we will put it into that area as a sign that we want this specifically streamed that way.

It's something for the Member to consider. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: I think we're moving somewhere. I would have to think about this. I can't think very well on an empty stomach. I will think about this and we can come back for a discussion. I appreciate what the Minister is saying. We're moving somewhere. I'm glad the government is thinking this way. I'm happy we can go this way for our discussion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. We'll take that as a final comment. We're on page 5-26, information item, Liquor Revolving Fund. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 5-37, information item, Liquor Revolving Fund, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 5-38, information item, work performed on behalf of others. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Committee, if I could get you to return to 5-7, Finance, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$210.630 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Finance is completed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Before we dismiss our witnesses, I think you heard it from the Speaker, but on behalf of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Koe, good luck at the Brier representing Northwest Territories.

---Applause

I would like to thank our witnesses, Mr. Aumond, Mr. Koe, Mr. Kalgutkar, and thank you to the Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out. At this time, committee, we'll take a short recess.

----SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Welcome back, committee. We're going to commence with the Department of Education. With that, we'll turn it over to the Minister for opening comments. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to present the 2014-2015 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

The department's fiscal summary proposes an overall ECE budget of \$305.6 million, an increase of \$6 million, or 2 percent, over the 2013-2014 Main

Estimates. There is \$154.9 million of the budget allocated to schools and school contributions for all programs, which represents close to 51 percent of our budget, and \$33.5 million is allocated to Aurora College, which represents almost 11 percent of our budget.

The department has a key role to play in furthering this Assembly's theme of "Believing in people and building on the strength of Northerners."

This budget represents over a year of hard work reflecting what we've heard from NWT residents. It means real change that will make a real difference in the lives of the people. We are moving forward with our part of the Early Childhood Action Plan to improve the lives of children. We will implement actions within the Anti-Poverty Strategy that will make a measurable difference in the lives of the most vulnerable of our society. The actions flowing from the Education Renewal Initiative will improve not only students' success but their ability to take advantage of the economic opportunities the North has to offer.

It is evident that many NWT students are challenged to succeed in the current K to 12 education system. I am confident the inclusive nature of the Education Renewal and Innovation Initiative will make positive improvements to the system, enabling our students to thrive. In October we tabled Directions for Change, the Educational Renewal Innovation Framework. Since then, we have begun developing an action plan which, like the framework document, will be completed with full input from our partners. In total, the department plans to spend \$8.2 million on early childhood development in 2014-2015.

The department will implement voluntary, free, full-day junior kindergarten offering access to quality, play-based programs through a three-year phased approach starting with small communities in 2014-2015. It will be introduced in the 29 smaller NWT communities first because they have the greatest need for early childhood development programming. Included in the main estimates is the re-profiling of \$1.8 million in school contributions to fund these plans in 2014-2015.

Also, under the Early Childhood Development Framework, the department proposes to spend \$511,000 for wage top-up and training to increase the wages of Early Childhood Program staff in licenced child care centres. This will provide a concrete incentive for staff to improve their early childhood qualifications.

The department plans to spend over \$179 million in school and library programs; \$154.9 million of this will go directly to education authorities for the delivery of K to 12 education.

Through the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the department proposes to spend \$650,000 to enhance existing

school food programs. This will help ensure all children have access to healthy nutritious food to fuel their learning.

In 2014-2015 the department plans to spend close to \$7.2 million on culture and heritage programs and services. This includes maintaining territorial-wide museum operations, NWT archives, the Cultural Places Program and funding for community arts, culture and heritage programs.

In 2014-15 the department plans to spend over \$6.7 million to support Aboriginal language programs and services. Approximately \$5.2 million will be paid in contributions to support Aboriginal language and cultural programs in schools, at Aurora College and in communities across the NWT.

During stakeholder engagement we heard from our language partners that Aboriginal governments are best placed to revitalize their own languages in the context of their culture. In recognition of this, we will adopt a new approach to help regional Aboriginal governments implement their five-year regional language plans. Included in the 2014-15 Main Estimates is the re-profiling of \$627,000 to increase contributions to Aboriginal governments. This will enable them to strengthen and revitalize their languages and hire language coordinators in the regions.

In 2014-15 the department plans to spend \$2.6 million for the coordination of services and communications in French across the GNWT.

Working with all GNWT departments and agencies, the department continues to lead the implementation of the GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services in collaboration with the Federation Franco-Tenoise.

Included in the main estimates is new funding to support the GNWT's efforts to increase student participation and increase awareness of career opportunities in mineral exploration and training. Also included is the funding to reinstate money and continue implementation of the Small Community Employment Support Program. Over the past fiscal year, 151 individuals in 20 NWT communities have accessed this particular program.

In total, the department plans to spend \$10.7 million in 2014-15 to build essential work skills in small and remote communities, offer wage subsidies for on-the-job training, and support apprentices. This funding also supports community initiatives projects and provides continuing funding to partners such as Skills Canada and the Mine Training Society. All of these initiatives support the development of an educated, skilled and trained northern work force.

In 2014-15 the department plans to spend close to \$42.1 million on income security programs to support the most vulnerable in our society.

Based on the office of the Auditor General's review, our audit and oversight capacity has been increased and the culture of client-centred program delivery has been strengthened. The department will add a program auditor position in income security division to build capacity and meet the audit recommendations agreed to in the department's response to the 2013 Auditor General's report on income security.

Beyond insuring appropriate program delivery, the department has changed how eligibility for the Senior Home Heating Subsidy is determined. This change removes the barrier for adult children living in a senior's home. We have also improved supports to post-secondary students by increasing their living allowance and increased the grant available for disabled post-secondary students.

The last year has been a year of real change and renewal for the department. Much has been driven by our responses to the recommendations made by the office of the Auditor General in the reports on education and income security programs. The department has improved our internal operations and how we interact with clients. The department is building a departmental culture that puts accountability and evidence-based decision-making at the forefront of how we do business.

The office of the Auditor General found that improvements in corporate governance were required in order to provide better programming to our clients and ensure greater system-wide accountability. As a result, we have established the policy, legislation and communications division, the finance and capital planning division and the planning, research and evaluation division. This new structure will improve strategic, lateral and long-term planning, department-wide coordination and evidence-based decision-making.

With these plans in place over the coming year, the department is well positioned to move ahead with important departmental and interdepartmental projects that will contribute to achieving the vision and priorities of the 17th Assembly.

Mr. Chair, I will be pleased to answer any questions the Members may ask at this time. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Do you have witnesses to bring into the House?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, can you please escort the witnesses into the House.

Minister Lafferty, would you like to introduce your witnesses to the House?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, to my left is deputy minister of ECE, Gabriela Eggenhofer. To my immediate right is Dana Heide. He is the associate deputy minister, and also Marissa Martin is the director of finance and capital planning to my far right. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. I would like to welcome everyone to the House this evening. Committee, do you agree that we will proceed to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 10-7 we will defer until we complete activities. Page 10-8, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Are there any questions? Seeing none, 10-9, information item, revenue summary. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. 10-10, information item, active positions. Are there any questions? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have been asking several departments about their positions. I believe this covers pretty much everyone in the Department of Education. I have been asking them for a list of the positions that are funded, unfunded, filled, unfilled and a fair bit of detailed question beyond that, but I think the department and certainly the Minister has been following along my general question asked. I will save a lot of time by asking if the department can provide me that detail. If so, we can move on, as far as I'm concerned. I will just wait until it's in my office, if feasible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I will go to Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We do have the detailed information. We can certainly provide that to Members. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Page 10-10, information item, active position summary. Are there any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 10-13, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$11.544 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, I don't have any questions on this page, but I am going to say that I appreciate the reorganization. It seems to have been done here. Frankly, I can't think of what it was like before, but I have to say that these sections in this division seem quite logical for me and a good response to the Auditor General's general report and the folks of many of these comments. It

certainly is in line with that which I do understand, so I appreciate that being done here. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I will approach that as a comment. Moving on with questions on this page, I have Mr. Menicoche, followed by Ms. Bisaro.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Chair, under corporate management, of course they have the responsibility of finance and capital planning. I know that this is our operation and maintenance budget, but schools in our small communities ought to be a priority. I'm pleased that we finished building the big schools in the big communities. I really feel that it's time to turn our attention while we can before there's another issue in a larger community. Let's try to get some of these older schools in the smaller communities built and those that don't have any, like I've been making a case for Trout Lake. It is more of a comment at this point. I may raise it again in the next section under Education and Culture. This is just in terms of finance and capital planning. Perhaps I can just ask the Minister what his thoughts are on strategy for small schools as we move forward here. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, the Member has raised this issue on numerous occasions. It is one of the priorities of this department because we are going through some changes. Education renewal innovation was one of the pillars that are focusing on small community schools. Just as a reminder, Members have reiterated and focused on small communities. That is one of the drives within our pillars. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Just in terms of capital planning, I know that we review that in the fall time, so what is the time frame of continuing to press forward with the capital planning for small schools like Trout Lake? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, obviously there is a process we have to go through with the capital planning process later this year and going through some various stages, at the approval stages. We, as a department, will push for those schools in the Northwest Territories, those that are really urgently needed for a retrofit or renovation or replacement. Based on the criteria that have been highlighted through the process, we have to follow the guidelines. Obviously, the Member's riding of small communities, they have reiterated that, so we will be doing our part as a department to push that forward in the small communities initiative. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. On this page activity, we have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Sorry I didn't hear you, Mr. Chairman. It's tough to hear over here. I want to

echo Mr. Bromley's comments about the reorganization. I think that has been a good thing. I presume that the Education Renewal Initiative work is being done under corporate management, and I just would like to know what section of corporate management the ERI comes under. I am presuming it's planning, research and evaluation, but if I could get a bit of an explanation on that. How has that been funded, the whole work that has been done on the ERI? Has that been funded from within, or is there money in this budget earmarked specifically for ERI in the '14-15 year? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The whole education renewal innovation is a big project that we are undertaking at this point. We are developing action plans towards that by later this summer. It is an internal reallocation to push this forward and obviously we are going to have to come back to the Legislative Assembly, depending on cost factor, once the action plans develop. I will get the deputy to maybe elaborate more on detail. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Ms. Eggenhofer.

MS. EGGENHOFER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, once the action plan for the Education Renewal Initiative is completed, which we anticipate to be in May, there will be a budget that will be developed alongside the action plan and that will be, hopefully, considered as the department is developing its business plan in the summer months. In terms of the organization of the reform and innovation division, that division works out of the directorate. The director of reform and innovation is reporting to myself, and it has been funded entirely from within existing resources. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the action plan should be out in May. I thought I heard that there would not be any money in the '14-15 budget for the ERI Action Plan. Is that correct? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. Part of the process is, obviously, to develop the action plan and put it towards the next main estimates for the upcoming year. There are a couple of areas that we should be able to move forward on, but the overall theme of the action plan, once it has developed the cost factor, then we need to put it into the mains and I guess we will request our approval from there from the Legislative Assembly. That's the process that we're going through. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: So if there are some things that are going to be able to be moved forward on, they are going to be funded from within. Is that correct? I'm asking if there is new money in this budget for the ERI. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For that response, we will go to Deputy Minister Eggenhofer.

MS. EGGENHOFER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can advise that a number of the actions that we have identified already in the preliminary development of the action plan can be funded from within existing resources and others will require new funds. The ones that we have been able to fund from within existing resources are \$623,000 in this fiscal year to be provided to the Do Edaezhe program. The money will go to the Yellowknife Catholic School Board and the funding will be to assist for the program to actually be extended outside of the community of Yellowknife into the community of Hay River.

The other funding that we have managed to secure is half a million dollars for e-learning which will go to the Beaufort-Delta Education Council and, again, it is in an effort for the Beaufort-Delta Education Council to look at their e-learning initiative and expand it into other small communities. So those two initiatives are ERI initiatives, funded from within this current fiscal years' budget. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chairman, so I just thought I heard the deputy minister say this current budget year for these two projects. Could I get clarification on that? I was asking about '14-15. Is this \$1.1 million coming out of '13-14 or '14-15? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, those two particular programs are from the 2013-14 budget.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, I want to ask again, in the 2014-15 budget, is there money specifically earmarked for ERI initiatives? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, as indicated earlier, we do have to develop an action plan. Based on that, it will give us a figure of how much it is going to cost us over the long run without the action plan going to be developed. It will be carried forward with next year's business planning process. For ERI, it's not in this 2014-15 budget. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Moving on with questions on 10-13, I have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to follow up on a few questions about some of that funding. I'm not sure exactly where to ask my questions, so I thought I would ask in corporate

management. It is about the pupil-teacher ratio and the fact that the department continues to say, because the pupil-teacher ratio, we are funding with a bunch of these activities, whether it is education renewal or junior kindergarten, from within.

How much are we over-funding them currently with pupil-teacher ratio? To use the 16 to one, how much have we actually been over-funding for the last how many years? How much money do they actually expect that's in the budget? Obviously, if we're finding the expenses for these projects within, that means that we have been over-funding this department by that much for how many years? How much do they think we have been over-funded by?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. We will go to Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. Our contribution is towards the school boards. We give the school board funding based on the 13 to one even though we are legislated for 16 to one. It's an approximate figure of \$11 million over a year period to subsidize them to meet that 13 to one standard. That's where it's at today at this point. Maybe if I can get Ms. Martin to elaborate more and provide a bit more detail. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTIN: Mr. Chair, based on the information that we have received from the education authority and also based on the school year in the audited financial statements, the information that we have here is all the funding that they have received from ECE and also from other contributions from the other departments or other sources. Based on that information, we are showing that the education authority has a surplus.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Martin. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Chair, I guess my point of this that I'm trying to get to is the fact that the department has been allowing the authorities to have these funds and to operate with these funds. I mean, you say you're subsidizing them, you're providing them additional funds, but they're actually using that money to do other things.

When we add these programs, whether it's education renewal or it's junior kindergarten that we're looking at, it's actually trying to find money from within from what they're actually doing now. I'm not sure how the department feels or thinks that the education system can actually find this money, the large sums that they're talking about, in the system.

Can the Minister maybe justify they feel the authorities can find this money from within? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. For that answer, we'll go to Deputy Minister Eggenhofer.

MS. EGGENHOFER: Perhaps I can provide a bit of context. The Education Act provides for the government to provide funding to education school authorities at a PTR level of 13 to 1. As well, the Education Act provides that we fund inclusive schooling at no less than 15 percent of the overall school contribution.

The program review office, if you recall several years ago, had done an investigation into the funding that is provided to education authorities with respect to the legislative funding levels, which is the PTR as well as the inclusive schooling. Their finding was that over the years, the PTR funding actually crept up to 16 to 1, so over the years the government has provided funding over and above the legislated level. It's done so in terms of the PTR as well as in terms of the inclusive schooling.

In the inclusive schooling area, the specifics are that we're funding them at 17.5 percent, on average, as opposed to the 15 percent that we're obligated to fund them. I guess the conclusion that PRO drew was despite the fact that the government has provided significantly more funding to education authorities beyond what it is obligated to do under the legislation, your student outcomes haven't markedly improved, so they have essentially put the Department of Education to task to say, despite the increased funding, why are student outcomes not increasing. The money, really, changes; it depends on the projected enrolments.

So I think that the takeaway from that research project that PRO undertook was that we really need to look deeper at the K to 12 system and see what is required to improve student outcomes and not just look at funding. That's what really started the Education Renewal Initiative, because there was simply not enough evidence to suggest that low student outcomes are a result because there isn't sufficient funding for the education system. I hope that helps in terms of context. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I appreciate those numbers. I guess the difficulty that I have is we're forcing these authorities that have been accustomed to the 16 to 1 or the 17.5 percent and making them adjust over a short period of time. I'm just wondering what time period the department is expecting. Is this all being enforced into one year, or are we slowly implementing them to get down to the 13 to 1 and the 15 percent that's required by legislation?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, we're talking about the junior kindergarten that's going to be rolled out this particular school year in the fall. It

will be a three-year phased-in approach. There will be 29 communities this fall and the following year will be four in regional centres and then the following year, '16-17 I believe, will be into Yellowknife centres, so seven schools in Yellowknife. It will be a phased-in approach over three years and we're going to be hovering around the 16 to 1 ratio that we've been using for the level of PTR. Once the junior kindergarten is rolled out, anything above and beyond that, my department is going to be subsidizing those school boards anything beyond that 16 to 1 PTR level.

MR. BOUCHARD: Maybe if I can just get clarification. Once you roll out junior kindergarten and implement it into all three areas, after those three years what is your PTR? What's the percentage going to be? Are you meeting the 16? Are you going down to 13 to 1 and 15 percent?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, what I stated earlier is, as the Minister responsible for education, I'm guaranteeing them that they will be under 16 to 1. Anything above and beyond that, my department will be subsidizing them. Territorial-wide at this point we are, obviously, under. After a three-year period, we're saying we want to be under. That's the guarantee that we want to have. Anything above and beyond that, we're going to subsidize. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Mr. Bouchard, if you have any more questions, let me know and I'll put you back on. Committee, we're on 10-13, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$11.544 million. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. Page 10-14, information item, corporate management, active positions. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 10-17, activity summary, education and culture, operations expenditure summary, \$241.213 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a huge page, \$241 million. There are probably a number of questions here, but I'll start with a few. With the adult post-secondary education, ALBE, review that was done by the program review office and I think some of the work of the Auditor General and comments from Members, how has the ALBE work been tuned up and made more effective through those reviews and the valuation work that was implemented as a result of that? Thank you.

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

MR. HEIDE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The ALB provided us with a number of recommendations

that we've shared with committee over time. I don't have the exact status of each one of the recommendations in front of me now. We've provided progress reports going forward on the ALB review and we are progressing on schedule with the recommendations and we can provide that detail at a later time.

MR. BROMLEY: I'll look forward to that. I'm not on Social Programs, although it's a keen interest, obviously, so I would appreciate that information.

I have a few comments on the early childhood development and learning and I believe that includes junior kindergarten, some I would almost say diabolically so. What proportion of the \$8.2 million is going to the Junior Kindergarten Program this year? Thank you.

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

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you please repeat the question?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): We can. Mr. Bromley, please.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of the early childhood development and learning, the \$8.243 million, the top line, I'm wondering what amount is going to the implementation of junior kindergarten.

MS. MARTIN: The \$8.2 million for early childhood development learning in these main estimates does not include the junior kindergarten. The junior kindergarten is right now under the school contributions in this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, I appreciate that information. That is the larger one there, \$131 million. Could I just find out what amount we are putting into junior kindergarten this year? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We will just give the department a second to figure that one out. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. We have been talking about rolling out the program, phase one, two and three approach. We are at around \$7 million over a three-year period. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, I guess maybe I will go somewhere else here for a minute and maybe come back to that.

What I'm hearing from people in the field, so to speak, that are delivering programs related to this sort of thing, I'm looking at early childhood development and so on, there's a great concern as I think we have already heard that attention will be...because there's not extra funding being provided for this, attention will be taken away from those with special needs and other categories of students that require a particular amount of

attention. They tell me that really it's not so big a deal in the small communities because there is a small number of students there, so it won't be a big impact and there is a very high per capita investment in small communities, both of those compared to the larger centres and in particular Yellowknife where there is a very large number of students. We know that the net funding will be negative, for example, for YK1, and at the same time, it will be accepting 120 new students.

An example I have heard that the Four Plus program at Weledeh school for example, a very important program. I'm sure the Minister would agree. For young children that are referred by public health or are coming from a socially disadvantaged situation, and again a great concern that that program will suffer because of the junior kindergarten, so the net benefits, again, will be low. Could the Minister explain to me again how that is going to be looked after without any investment whatsoever in the larger centres like Yellowknife? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, the Member talked about those individual children with special needs. Obviously, we are currently reviewing inclusive schooling. That's a particular program to focus on those individuals with special needs. We'll do what we can through the review process to capture those individuals even more, strengthening the programming itself. That is currently under review.

Also, the Member talked about the community delivering age four programming and other programming. We are currently introducing junior kindergarten for four-year-olds. This is an area that we feel that it could be utilized in the school system because there is low enrolment throughout the Northwest Territories, more specifically in Yellowknife as well. Those are some of the areas that we have targeted that we can work with the schools and work with the school boards.

Through the engagement, the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, early childhood development engagement on that, educational renewal, we have heard over and over that we need to start from a very young age. This is an area that research has told us to focus on the junior kindergarten area. This is the best way to go. Through the research that we have conducted, we feel that we need to move forward.

We have heard from Members, also, that there are some students who are entering kindergarten. Some can't spell or read or verbally they can't communicate due to the fact that we need to start even younger. That is an area that we are working very closely with the Department of Health and Social Services. Part of the focus, of course, early childhood is a very healthy programming is zero to three. We are working closely with them on that.

We want to capture all realms. This is a four-year-old that we are going to capture. Mahsi.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, I'm just about out of time; I have to get back on the list here. I'm hearing from professionals that there are concerns that there are programs already in place for four-year-olds' special needs type situations. Given the lack of investment in these added responsibilities in large centres like Yellowknife will, in fact, cause the resources to be attracted away from these important special needs four-year-old programs such as the Four Plus program at Weledeh school. I'm just telling the Minister. At this point, I'm hoping that he will be very alert to that. I hope he is recognizing the strident calls from all quarters to invest in this, rather than take away resources and use them. There may be some degree of that that is warranted.

I agree with the Minister that there are some potential gains to be had here that the evidence suggests, not as much as the zero to three but the Minister has decided to shoot his target at four-year-olds. So be it, but there are some overwhelming studies and evidence that says only if it is a high quality program delivered by fully trained ECE workers. Can the Minister tell me that every small community will have at least one fully trained, fully qualified up to federal standards, not our lower standards, ECE workers before the community program goes in?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chair, obviously that is our overall goal and objective, to have qualified people to look after our most vulnerable children under their care. Currently, we work with the college. Obviously, Members have stated that we should be delivering a high-class early childhood development certification diploma or degree program. That is an area we are currently focusing on as a long-term plan. Currently, we have some stats on number of individuals that are working within the early childhood programming that have either certification, diploma, degrees, even teacher degrees. Mind you, some of them do not have those credentials. We are going to focus on those individuals, if we can have professionals working with them. Those are some of the areas that we have highlighted. We are fully aware of it. We want highly trained professionals to deal with our vulnerable children in our school system. We are, as the Member indicated, fully alert of these different professions that should be looking after our kids. We are working at that. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Bromley, I put you back on the list, as you indicated. Just to give Members an idea, we have Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Yakeleya and Mr. Moses in the order. We will go to Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chair, as Mr. Bromley stated, this is a huge section. I appreciate that you are

allowing us to come back and ask different sets of questions, because there is every one of these three sections we could spend a good five minutes on.

It's kind of hard for me to know where to start, but I think I'll start with some questions about the junior kindergarten, and I'll follow up where Mr. Bromley left off, to a certain extent.

I read the activity descriptions and I look at the early childhood development and learning division, and it states program and curriculum development for children from early childhood through to Grade 3, and then under education operations and development division it talks about delivery of education for K to 12. There's a bit of an overlap there and I'm a little confused about that overlap to begin with, but the other thing that I am not sure about is whether the department considers junior kindergarten to be an early childhood development initiative or whether they consider it to be an education school development. I've heard it placed in both places. It's being funded out of school contributions, we've been told tonight, and yet I really am not sure where the department thinks it sits, so I'll start with that, the contradiction in grades and just where does the department place junior kindergarten from a pedagogical perspective.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chair. As you're aware, we were going through the Early Childhood Development Framework. The action plan has been developed, and part of the action plan, obviously, will capture the junior kindergarten. I understand where the Member is coming from. Where would it be situated, because we are currently using the PTR as part of the school contribution, so there's ECD Action Plan, part of the recommendations brought to our attention, so junior kindergarten would capture that. At the same time, we are having this school contribution as part of PTR to offset the costs of introducing junior kindergarten. After a three-year period, the funding flow to the school boards will be based on the actual enrolment of those individuals that are in the junior kindergarten. Once that is taken into effect, I guess, at that time it will be part of the school contribution organization. That's where it's at right now. We're at the preliminary stages at this point but we are moving forward in those two spectrums of ECD and school contributions, because the money has to come from PTR, but after a three-year period it will be part of the school contribution.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I have to say that I'm really concerned that we are not placing junior kindergarten where I believe it rightly belongs, in early childhood development. Placing it within the schools, albeit junior kindergarten is play-based and kindergarten will become more play-

based, and again, from a pedagogical perspective, it's probably going to be taught differently, but putting it into schools and treating it like schools is, in my mind, quite dangerous, and I think there's an opportunity for schools to treat junior kindergarten not like early childhood education but to treat it like school education, and that's not where we want to go.

In terms of the funding, and this is just a minor thing, but I don't understand why you can't internally take the money from K to 12 PTR but place it in early childhood development. Just to say that it's coming out of school contributions and after the three years to say that it's absolutely going to be part of school contributions, again, just in my mind, contributes to the mindset that junior kindergarten is school, it's not early childhood development, and again, I'm really concerned about that.

The other thing that I have to say about junior kindergarten, and Mr. Bromley kind of alluded to it, but I am very concerned that we don't have... I know it's early yet. It's the end of February, and we're talking about September, but still, I'm very concerned that we will not have qualified early childhood educators in our JK classrooms. Teachers are not early childhood educators. Not all of them. Some of them are if they're specialized in that specialization. Music teachers are specialists. Early childhood educators are specialists. I think we are not quite prepared to properly teach junior kindergarten because we don't have the early childhood educators that we need for these classrooms. I know that teachers are flexible and you can take a teacher and move them from one grade to another. You could probably take a kindergarten teacher and put them into a JK classroom and they would be fine, but you can't take a Grade 3 teacher and do the same and expect them to fully understand early childhood education. There's a difference between teaching elementary, teaching primary and early childhood.

I share Mr. Bromley's concern, and he has asked the Minister if we're going to have fully qualified to federal standards early childhood educators in our classrooms, and I didn't hear from the Minister that we will. I heard that that's where we want to go, what we want to have, but I didn't hear from the Minister that that's what we will have in September, and I again have to express some concerns about the quality of junior kindergarten that we're going to be presenting to our small communities. We constantly say the small communities don't get the same quality of education as the larger centres, and if we start off with that kind of, you know, well, it's okay, we'll make do with what we have, then we're never going to get them up to the level where we think they should be. That's a major concern for me.

I'd like to ask the Minister, I think I have heard in our conversations and debates that we've had to date, but I think I have heard that we've got spaces in our schools in our small communities now so we can just put junior kindergarten into the schools. That may be, and I'd like to know if the intent is to have a stand-alone junior kindergarten classroom in the schools where JK is going to be starting.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We are serious about qualifications, as well, for those professions that will be looking after our children, and junior kindergarten teachers obviously will be required to have the same basic qualifications as K to 12 NWT teachers. Most NWT teachers have a minimum of a Bachelor of Education degree, so that's what we're striving for, also the undergraduate degree in a specialized area, and a master's degree. All junior kindergarten teachers will be required to be registered under the department's ECE NWT teacher certification. The Member alluded to if there is going to be such training. All junior kindergarten teachers as well as kindergarten teachers of five-year-olds will receive training, resources, materials needed to deliver new NWT four to five-year-old kindergarten curriculum as early as this spring. In May and June 2014, those teachers will be identified by their educational authorities to receive such training. Another one will be offered, once we roll out the program in September, for those teachers that may be new to the NWT or have missed the spring session.

Those are just some of the areas that we will be conducting. We are looking at some of the schools as we realize the 29 schools do not have licenced child care programming, and we want to have those junior kindergarten with the kindergarten class, as well, because it's play-based, and we're going to have those qualified individuals working with them as teachers and then providing additional training that is required for those individuals so they can look after our children. We're doing what we can to have those professionals in the field, and if we don't have them then we're going to provide that training.

Again, we are working with the college. This is over a three-year period and then on a long-term basis. We will be working closely with the college and with Health and Social Services and other agencies such as licenced child care operators and so forth. We will be providing those qualified teachers to look after our kids.

MS. BISARO: Unfortunately, Minister, that doesn't give me any comfort at all. What I heard you say is that we're going to require the same certification as other teachers, and what I am trying to say is that early childhood educators do not require the same certification as teachers. They may require a degree, but they require a degree in early childhood education, they don't require a degree in teaching elementary or high school. They are different and I

really am concerned that here we are at the end of February, and I think the department is expecting that in September we are going to have people that are going to be qualified and trained to take on junior kindergarten and kindergarten, and I just don't think that is on.

The other thing I heard you say is that we are going to train the people who are currently teaching in the authorities, so that tells me we are not going to be adding staff for junior kindergarten, that tells me we are going to be moving junior kindergarten students in with kindergarten students that are already there. In terms of numbers, it's probably doable. Maybe there are 10 kids in kindergarten and you can add three or four JKs. Sure, from a numbers perspective that's good, but from a teaching perspective and from an education perspective and a childhood development perspective, it's not good. We need to have people who are able to differentiate between grade teaching and early childhood development. I am not sensing that the department is really willing to go there.

The other thing that really concerns me is that it's difficult. I guess my question to the Minister is: How are you going to staff junior kindergarten? Are they going to be a stand-alone class or are they going to be combined with kindergarten students? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Chairman, that particular question will have to depend on us working closely with the school boards. The infrastructure, the space availability within a school, so we would have to work out those logistics and as the Member indicated, we are in February, and September, so we do have some time to work with them as well. We have done our research and we have done analysis of the spaces that are available to us, and we have that information before us. Some of the information that Members... I totally agree with the Member that we need qualified professionals to deal with our children in the Northwest Territories and I can just highlight some of the areas where we have early childhood workers taking courses currently. Thirty-three of them. We have early childhood workers that have certification, 27 of them. We have early childhood diploma workers, 15 of them. Those early childhood workers with degrees, there are three of them. Obviously, we want to increase those degrees and diplomas and certification. We have some of those individuals that do not have post-secondary programming; that is around 31 in the small communities. So, Bachelor of Education is another seven individuals that are working within the system of licenced child care programming, so those are just some of the areas that we currently have. Again, we want to increase those numbers and that is what we will be doing as we move forward on the junior kindergarten and so forth.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Before we continue on with questions, committee, I just want to caution both the Members as well as the witnesses here, we are only getting about two or three questions in a 10-minute block. I will give lots of latitude to make sure that we cover this activity efficiently and effectively, but I would ask that we try to get a little bit more of the preamble down and more of the questions to the activities themselves. I am asking for your cooperation. In order I have Mr. Yakeleya and Mr. Moses.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are interesting exchanges between the Minister and my colleagues. I wanted to ask the Minister, in regards to junior kindergarten, when we are looking at staffing these positions for this specific group of children, junior kindergarten, is the Minister also open to the flexibility of the small communities that we are going to be putting these programs in, to look at the strong Aboriginal culture component? We have teachers; they may just not be qualified in the eyes of the Department of Education and Culture. That could be into these schools, some of these teachers are well specialized in child development in their culture world point of view. Balance that with what we are trying to do. These are four-year-olds, you know, they are just developing and developing into life. I am trying to think of my little guy when he was four years old. His grandmother was around quite a bit to teach him, so I would want to ask the Minister, there are some strong components to some of these smaller communities. If they are unable to get the qualified teachers that we want, there are people in the communities that could come in as a teacher under the project here to work with the junior kindergartens in an Aboriginal context of child development. Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. The junior kindergarten, again, as I stated, is play-based programming and I'm glad the Member is referring to a culture base being part of the component. As the Member knows, we just introduced elders in schools, so we want to fully utilize those elders in schools, elders as part of the programming. One part of the learning themes is belonging, also becoming – those children are four-year-olds – to be independent, and learning areas such as living in a world, thinking, and also working, so those are just some of the patterns that will be taught as part of the four-year-old programming. The culture component, again, we want to utilize those elders in the school to work with those teachers. They are there as a resource and we want to fully take advantage of that. Obviously, I want to see more elders into our schools, to take advantage of these particular four-year-olds. They

can take them out on the land. I know they are a young age, but you have to start them somewhere. So, that is an area of focus for my department. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister, in light of the exchange that I heard between the Minister and some of the colleagues in terms of the teachers' qualifications, that is something I want to raise here with the Minister. When we implement the Junior Kindergarten Program, which is something I support fully, you have my support. We have people in the communities that could be also equivalent to a teacher but just don't have the degree or diploma. These are four-year-old children, not Grade 10 or 12, just young ones. This is a voluntary program, not mandatory, voluntary. In our schools like Colville Lake, that was to implement this in Colville Lake. In Colville Lake there is one, two areas of schooling, they are both multi-grades in one building. How are you going to put two or three little junior kindergartens in there? Tough as it is in Colville Lake, after operating to the school year, we are finding that we are getting the support for some of our schools, so we may not find a qualified outside teacher to come to Colville Lake to say, yes, I am specialized, I am looking into the community if possible. This is a new program, I will help out here to say yes, and I am pretty impressed with some of the numbers you have stated as to where the people are getting educated to work in the education field.

Again, as much as I appreciate the elders being in our schools, it's a long overdue battle with the department. Finally we get something. I don't even know if our Sahtu communities have elders in the schools. Maybe the Minister could help me on that, too, to get some of our own people to help out with this program here.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I agree with the Member, we're possibly utilizing community members. We know that some of the community members have worked in the education field or early childhood for 20-plus years. They may not have a degree or diploma, but they have all this experience under their belt. How can we best utilize them in a classroom setting? If we can have some sort of mentorship program working with the teachers, professional teachers. I've stated that there's going to be some training and those individuals that have been identified in the Member's riding, through the school boards we'll be able to identify those individuals that we can work with that can be part of the team to provide the junior kindergarten implementation.

The training, as I've highlighted, will be this spring and later this summer and will be part of the process. So those individuals that the Member is referring to that have experience of possibly 20-plus

years but they don't have the paper to show that they have a degree, how can we best put them in the classroom setting with the qualification that we can provide them? That is in the works and we're going to move forward on that through the college and different agencies that we work with. Mahsi.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm going to wait patiently and see how this program rolls out. I certainly support you, you have my support for junior kindergarten in the communities. I don't have a question, I'm just asking for some clarification.

I also want to ask the Minister what type of support is this budget here under these items, \$241 million, is given to preschool programming for child care and daycare centres. There are child care centres without licences in 10 communities in the Northwest Territories. Why types of resources are being looked at to support these 10 communities without child care daycare centres?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Out of the \$241 million towards operations education in Education, Culture and Employment does capture what the Member is referring to, those 10 communities without licenced early childhood programming. There is a subsidy program that we have within our Education department that captures that. I'll get Ms. Martin to maybe elaborate in a bit more detail of what she has before her. Mahsi.

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

MS. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under the early childhood budget, one of the payments that we pay to early childhood providers is the early childhood contributions. We have \$2.1 million that's provided for that as a budget. We also have the Healthy Children Initiative and we also have... The Healthy Children Initiative is \$2.1 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Martin. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thanks for the information. The communities in the Northwest Territories currently without licenced child care are Colville Lake, Enterprise, Jean Marie, Lutselk'e, Kakisa, Nahanni Butte, Norman Wells, Trout Lake, Tsiigehtchic and Wrigley. They are all in the same category: communities without RCMP and communities without permanent nurses in their centres. I want to list them for the Minister to reiterate that we need their support in the small communities, which brings me to something that I'm compelled to do and I'd like to do. I have a motion I want to read in the House on the daycare facilities that are not in the small communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Go ahead, Mr. Yakeleya.

COMMITTEE MOTION 17-17(5):
DAYCARE FACILITIES,
DEFEATED

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I move that this committee recommends that the government allocate from its existing resources additional funding to support existing daycare facilities and assist in creating new daycare facilities in small communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Just give us a second and we'll circulate the motion.

Committee, the motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, colleagues. This motion is giving recommendations to the government to allocate from the resources that are already stated, additional funding to support some of our existing daycare facilities in the Northwest Territories and also assist in creating new daycare facilities in the smaller communities.

As I stated earlier, we have 10 communities without licenced child care services. In these small communities, the employment rate is not very high. Families are struggling with the high cost of living and child care. Young mothers and young fathers are trying to find work, and if they do, they certainly have to deal with the challenge of finding reliable babysitters. Sometimes they have to be left with family relatives to look after the little ones and sometimes those situations don't always work out well. In these small communities there is certainly a high percentage of young people now having children, which inspires them, motivates them to work and do something with their lives. A lot of the young people want to work and do something with their life. Given the chance and given the support if it's there, they will certainly make a go of it.

I've also experienced, in listening to young people who want to go to the Aurora College learning centres, yet they have problems with babysitters in the morning. Especially in these small communities, work is not on a continuous basis. There's seasonal work and when there's work these young people want to work because it's only three or four months and they want to do something, develop their skills, put their ability to work in good terms so that in the future they'll be hired again.

These young people need all the support we can give them. If it could be that the department could look within the existing resources to help the ones that now who already have child care services in their communities and also to look at the ones at the communities without licenced child care services in the North here. This is something that we identified in our discussions as communities without some of the services that the other regions

have. It is a high priority. Small communities such as these ones have unique challenges, unique needs. These licenced child care centres do a lot. Even in Norman Wells they just started one up. It was going well. When it shut down, a lot of families were scrambling to find babysitters. Norman Wells has a high rate of people working with a low unemployment rate. The other nine communities are also in the same boat. I just want to raise that. The motion talks about a recommendation to allocate some of the existing funding in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, after some great consideration and thought, and after his passionate comments provided by my colleague Mr. Yakeleya, I will be supporting the motion. Of course, I will be asking for a recorded vote. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Chair, I think this does bring merit to the issue of daycare facilities in small communities. I know the staff understands, mainly because of the initial results from the EDI instrument that we were trying to address. Kids are going into school as high as 69 percent not developed. I think this motion speaks to that. It's also an opportunity where we can support mothers, parents, which ultimately leads to parenting skills but it's also an opportunity where we are able to monitor a child and allow this child, also, before they go into the junior kindergarten, to develop through play-based initiatives and interaction. It would be kind of a one stop shop, I guess you would say, for speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physio, audio, where we get all the children in one area where we can do the assessments on them and do the necessary programs and, I guess, treatment that they may need in the long run or kind of plans to develop. It also provides an opportunity to provide healthy food to the child growing up. It would be an opportunity for coordination of other early childhood programs and we talk about wraparound services in this Early Childhood Development Action Plan and this will be a great opportunity to address those as well. There are a lot of reasons that support this alone.

I know we are trying to take the junior kindergarten route, but before that, you heard colleagues speak about the prenatal to three and I think by providing this, just list off some of the stuff that I listed or really get base of support that this is something that the department really needs to take serious consideration of, not solely but working with the Department of Health and Social Services, which this action plan here clearly states that they have to work together.

We brought the motion forward in this department because I know there was a focus on junior kindergarten, but we also have to make sure that that is not the only focus in the small communities. We also care about the child's development. You go right down to United Nations' rights of the child 1991 proclamation. We go as far back as that. We have to start practicing those, as well, and start with this government. If you didn't know already, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, am in support of this motion. It's been mentioned by a number of people. I think it's also been mentioned by the Minister, but there is a big need in the territory for daycares, for new daycares. The Minister talked about junior kindergarten and in the same breath mentioned daycare. I know he recognizes that there is a need. We have some daycares, particularly in Yellowknife. We have existing daycares. I have spoken before about the impact that I think junior kindergarten will have on the profitability for the daycares in the city that exists.

We need to provide an increase in funding to existing daycares. One of the things that has not changed in many years, from what I understand, is the daily subsidy per child. The motion asks about assisting supporting existing daycare facilities. I think that is something that the department needs to look at. What is the daily subsidy? What is it going to need to be to support daycares to be profitable once junior kindergarten starts? It definitely is a different scenario when you have zero to three instead of zero to four. I certainly don't want to see existing daycares fold. We have so few spaces now in the city of Yellowknife, for instance, that we cannot stand to lose any more daycares than we have already lost. In the small communities, we need to put money into creating daycares where possible. Certainly there needs to be community support. There has to be some sort of an initiative on the part of the community or the part of someone in the community to start a business, if that is what it is, but they need the assistance to get that started. That is what this motion asks for. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Chair, a couple of things. I certainly will be supporting the motion. I would like to note, as well, that some existing daycares will be in trouble as a result of losing four-year-olds to the government JK Program. Younger children that they are left with require a higher ratio of caregivers, so some daycare facilities will certainly become uneconomic and will have to close, leaving parents stranded and unable to work.

My second point is there is an important caveat here and that is this House has already directed the Minister to investigate universal daycare along the models of Quebec and do feasibility work on that. We might hear a progress report on that today. Who knows? On that basis, we have already directed the House to look at daycare for every community in the Northwest Territories at an economic rate. Certainly there is evidence from elsewhere that shows that it pays. In fact, it can easily pay for itself. The caveat is that this would be superseded by that. I expect that the Minister is going to come forward with a positive report on that fairly soon. In the meantime and in this case, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chair, I have questions and issues with this concept of universal daycare and daycare in every community and subsidizing daycares because the government is now going in competition with daycares and junior kindergarten. The economics of all of this just sounds a little bit sketchy to me. Mr. Chair is giving me a questioning look. If we are going to take away the four-year-olds, is that going to make all of the private daycares unviable so now we have to financially support businesses that are in the daycare business because the government is... We're going to pay twice. Let's put it that way. We are going to pay for junior kindergarten and then we're going to pay because the zero to three age category needs some kind of subsidy because the staff child ratio is higher with the younger children. I know that. I actually built a daycare once. I ran a daycare once. I know about those ratios and I know about those economies. The more children you have, the more staff you need. It is not really a good money-making proposition at the best of times.

I'm not really sure about this. I mean, daycare in small communities, could I say that if you're saying that there's not much employment in those communities, like, who's going to bring the kids to daycare? I guess some people maybe would. I don't know. If there are people who do stay home and don't work outside the home, isn't it a great economic opportunity for those people to take a couple of children in if there are a few people working, if there are mothers working in the community, and if there's a place like Norman Wells where they said there are so many people working that they need daycare, well, that seems like a really good business opportunity for somebody to open a daycare if they don't already have one, and I don't know what the impediment would be. Pardon?

---Interjection

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Oh, okay, so it's our Junior Kindergarten Program that's going to make private daycare unviable. I don't know. The whole economics around this just sounds a little bit different to me and a little bit difficult to understand. It's a great idea, universal daycare, everybody can take their kids from zero to three then the school will take them from four to...

But to the motion, well, this is the motion. You're asking this government to spend more money on creating daycare spaces. That is the motion. That's what I'm talking about. Anyway, I can't support the motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to the motion here now, I will be supporting it, but I don't see why we need to support the existing daycare facilities. I'm not sure if the mover of the motion would be able to amend this, but the real problem that I see is in the small communities... I know in a lot of the tax-based communities like Yellowknife, Inuvik and Hay River it's not an issue when it comes to daycare because you have the numbers of children to fill those buildings, but in the small communities you're constantly losing money when you're running a daycare because you might have one or two children in that facility yet you have to have at least two people to watch them. I've seen in the past, well, I'll just use Tsiigehtchic for an example. Almost half of the children that are in the daycare program are children of the people that are running it. It's a challenge, I know from past experience. In other communities, I know it's really successful in Fort McPherson. We have in the neighbourhood of 10 to 20 people going to the Head Start program, actually, and that's very successful and the people that run it are doing a great job there.

I think that we need to work with a lot of the communities that are having difficulties. As I've said, again, the cost of operating these facilities, I know it's a big challenge for some of the communities. There are discussions of junior kindergarten, but you can't put a price on these children. These children need a good education. We've seen it in the numbers that we get under education. All the presentations we get in committee, it's very clear that we need to do something better and putting our children to school earlier, that's what we need to do, so I don't think we should be putting a price on that. With that, I'll be supporting the motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Blake. To the motion. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. It's kind of like a big community motion built on using the word small communities, but I am going to support it, but only because it's a recommendation at this

point. Of course, committee will be wanting to have full discussion with government on it and I will look forward to further details as we move along on this motion.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. To the motion. Minister Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Members for highlighting this as one of the priorities of this government.

These 10 communities that the Member is referring to, the one that that has been highlighted, this will obviously provide child care programming into these 10 communities that we currently don't have any licenced programming, licenced early childhood programming. So we are capturing those 10 communities.

Part of the discussion I'm hearing is that we're not providing or supporting these daycares in the communities. We are currently providing subsidies to these daycare operators in the Northwest Territories and currently delivering existing funding. I will just capture some of them. It is a start-up contribution, \$340 per infant as a start-up cost for these infants for these daycare operators. Operations and maintenance funding is another one. Minor health and safety contribution, up to \$10,000 per year that these operators can access. We also cover rent or mortgage up to 25 percent annually. There is also a Small Communities Initiative of \$15,000 per year. The list goes on with the subsidies.

My department is willing to work with all the daycare and child care operators. That is what we have done in the past, will continue to provide those supporting mechanisms and we will continue to provide the support.

This is obviously direction to this government and we are currently delivering and providing those support mechanisms in place already and we will be capturing those 10 communities for early child programming. We are currently delivering it, we will be. So, Mr. Chairman, Cabinet colleagues will not be supporting this initiative at this point. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. To the motion. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a number of brief financial comments. The number that I have heard for universal daycares is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$42 million in new money. This motion talks about reallocating existing resources. I would point out that junior daycare is reallocating existing resources and I hear, especially from the Yellowknife MLAs' considerable heartburn, that in fact the reallocation has been done and the government should pay for everything. So, it is the issue of affordability, and we want both, we want

both the daycare and junior kindergarten. I don't know how you would propose to fund that, knowing that reallocation of resources has already been done on the junior daycare. This is a motion that has significant implications. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Question has been called. The Member has asked for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

PRINCIPAL CLERK, CORPORATE AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Menicoche, Mr. Blake, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): All those opposed, please stand.

PRINCIPAL CLERK, CORPORATE AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (Ms. Bennett): Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): The results of the recorded vote: seven for, seven opposed; a tie. In this case, colleagues, my vote as Chair is against the motion in order to retain status quo and provoke further debate. The motion is defeated.

--Defeated

Ms. Bisaro.

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

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I will rise and report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you for your assistance tonight.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 22-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK, CORPORATE AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (Ms. Bennett): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 27, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 12-17(5), Extended Adjournment of the House to March 3, 2014
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 13, Devolution Measures Act
 - Bill 14, Waters Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 12, Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act
20. 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 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act
 - Bill 10, Northwest Territories Lands Act
 - Bill 11, Petroleum Resources Act
 - Committee Report 2-17(5), Report on the Review of the 2012-2013 Public Accounts
21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 27th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

