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The Honourable Paul Delorey, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 9, 2011****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:44 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Paul Delorey): Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome back to the Chamber. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, Mr. Beaulieu.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure the people of Tu Nedhe that the Premier, in signing the devolution agreement-in-principle with the federal government, has thoroughly gone through some very important details. That is what the Dene leadership in Tu Nedhe want to know.

I'm sure that the Premier was being honest earlier in his term when he said that the work on the devolution agreement was on the backburner. Leaders in my constituency believed him and so did I. However, now the Dene leaders feel that the Premier has been working on the devolution agreement all along. My leaders said to me, he's been working diligently on the agreement-in-principle in the background all this time.

As I said last week, it was wrong to sign the agreement without the Dene governments on side. It was also noted that there were some other major problems with the AIP and I will speak on some of those today.

It is very possible that running a regulatory system will end up costing more than the federal government has agreed to transfer to us. This is made more likely with the fact that the \$65 million pledged to manage the land and resources was not indexed to inflation. It will be easily five years before this transfer takes place. We would basically lose a percentage of that money right off the top.

I'm worried about the cleanup of waste sites. There are many abandoned mines and exploration camps

in Tu Nedhe. I know the federal government has agreed to clean the older sites but I don't see a commitment or time frame to do that.

We would have to make sure that the federal government isn't making another empty promise. This could be a great opportunity to create jobs and clean up our environment. It would be essential to the Aboriginal government...

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Beaulieu, your time for your Member's statement has expired.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: In Tu Nedhe alone, there are 25 waste sites. That's not counting Pine Point and, of course, all the diamond mines are currently in Tu Nedhe and, therefore, these will require future remediation for sure.

There's also the issue of cleaning up the more recent industrial sites regulated under the legislation implemented since 1984. The public cleanup required on these, the GNWT will have to pay for 100 percent.

I'll be asking the Premier questions on this at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is Canadian Mental Health Week and I'd like to offer a few comments on the state of mental health care and wellness.

One of the keys to good mental health is a balanced outlook, so first let's dwell on the positive. Community commitment and caring are the common threads. We have a long history of the NWT Helpline, where compassionate people give their time and attention to help people get through the hard times. We have the recent partnership of BHP and the Union of Northern Workers putting up \$10,000 each for the staging of support groups. The Women in Progress Program jointly staged by the Centre for Northern Families and the Canadian Mental Health Association local chapter help

women learn skills for healthy choices. Help from the Canada Post Foundation for Mental Health has provided counselling services. Mental Health Week gives us an opportunity to recognize these achievements and I offer my kudos to these people.

Still, the needs are great. There is still no resident psychiatrist practising in the NWT. Although we are fortunate now, having our Yellowknife physicians filled by longer-term locums, access to the care of psychiatrists and psychologists is virtually non-existent in our communities. Twice since the fall we've had two major ground searches in Yellowknife looking for people on release from the Stanton mental health unit and missing in the community. One of these unfortunate people has still not been found. When people are released, where can they go? The city's new day program, crisis housing and the Centre for Northern Families are where many outpatients end up, but we are relying upon the services of overstretched, non-government organization programs that lack the resources and especially the skilled staff to deal with mental health care. When things go wrong, I am told that there are often difficulties in getting outpatients readmitted; leaving these people parked without care in places already stretched to the max.

While there's a lot of commitment and some progress, we have to admit that mental health care is often considered an add-on or "nice to," rather than a central element of care. I will be asking the Minister of Health on the place of mental health care in our total approach to healthy citizens. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT RESPONSE TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS REVIEW
OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to talk about the response of the Standing Committee on Social Programs report of the review of child and family services that was recently tabled by the Minister of Health and Social Services.

I'm happy that the report was tabled earlier than suspected. I was a little surprised, but I'm happy that it's here because it gives an opportunity to talk about it early in this session, especially when the health budget is before us.

I have mixed feelings on the response, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of good stuff in the response, a lot of positive direction that the department is taking, and the department has accepted 22 of our recommendations full on. They've also accepted 13 recommendations in principle and 28

recommendations conditionally, which is good. I'm a little disappointed at the 10 that were, in fact, rejected.

One area of concern that I have is when it comes to the accepted in principle and accepted conditionally recommendations. I've read through all of them several times now and there's some wording in there that concerns me. Often the department will respond, especially when we're talking about legislation mostly in the areas where they've accepted in principle, that what we are asking is already implicit in the act. If it was implicit in the act -- and we've all read the act -- we wouldn't have had to make the recommendation. What we're looking for is for certain items to be explicit in the act so that it's hard and fast. I'll be asking some questions to the Minister about that later.

Often, especially in the conditionally accepted areas, you'll see where the Minister or the department, or the government I guess in this case, indicates that they agree with the intent of what our recommendations were, but when you actually get into the information and action column, it explains why they can't or won't do anything on those particular recommendations; not all of them, some of them. They often indicate within the conditionally accepted area that what we are asking already exists in policy. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't have been asking for the recommendation if we had seen it in action. So it may be in the policy but let's see some of these things on the floor.

This afternoon during question period I will be asking the Minister some questions on this and seeking a commitment to work with committee as we move forward. The department is planning to do a strategic plan around this area and I think it's important that we, the Social Programs, sit with the Minister and her department to work out some of our differences in those areas to reach common ground on each of those recommendations in moving forward. That's what I'll be talking to the Minister about later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ELECTRIC POWER SURGES IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A common concern in my constituency is damage done by extreme power surges of electricity coming into the homes. One constituent has been discussing this problem for some time with the NWT Power Corporation time after time. NTPC has tried to solve the problem, with no success. It may be a part of the problem is the lack of qualified professionals who can truly diagnose what's going wrong and fix it in the community, Mr. Speaker. This constituent had to wait a long time for a specialist to fly into the community, evaluate the

problem, only to watch the individual climb the power pole, tighten the connection and tell him the problem was fixed. He knew that was unlikely, and sure enough, the power fluctuations continued and he had more damage to his appliances done. Maybe the Power Corporation doesn't have the resources to hire qualified and knowledgeable professionals.

As a resident of a small, remote community, I know this first hand, the damage done by power surges. This is rarely an issue in larger centres as they get the power failures just as we do but rarely have such extreme fluctuations in their power. This is yet another example of the lower quality of services to our small communities, Mr. Speaker. This should be corrected and NTPC needs to ensure that it reimburses its customers in small communities for appliances that are damaged by poor quality of electricity. This requires them to do proper evaluations of the damage. I hope they have qualified people to do that.

Mr. Speaker, this should be fair and easy to NTPC customers to make complaints about the service, but I couldn't find any information on how from the Power Corporation on its website.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to congratulate the Northwest Territories Metis Nation. There was a signing ceremony today in the media room at noon and the representatives and leadership of their government were on hand to sign and to witness this historic document.

Mr. Speaker, as Ms. Betty Villebrun noted in her comments today, she said: "In signing the agreement-in-principle, the NWT Metis Nation is now in a position to be a part of the negotiations that will ultimately determine the final agreement that will come and will be in the best interests of their citizens."

When we took office, Mr. Speaker, as the 16th Assembly, as always, we had an eye to the future. We said that our role was to build a foundation and to put in place decisions that would advance the agenda of the people of the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, on January 26th the Government of the Northwest Territories and the federal government took a bold step in that direction, in my opinion. Today the Metis Nation joined with their

official signing, and this, again, another crucial piece in forming this foundation of how we move forward together as a Territory.

Mr. Speaker, once completed, the devolution agreement will provide us with the resources and decision-making authorities to shape our future. But it is important to remember at the same time, the signing of the AIP is not the conclusion of the work; instead, it is a roadmap to continue to move to a different level of negotiations with the federal government.

The AIP, as it reads, as I said, is simply the beginning. It opens the door to a final agreement and next steps towards that final agreement. Much work is yet to be done, many negotiations still to be completed. I believe that, to that end, the Premier will be going into the different regions of the Northwest Territories to continue to meet and dialogue with the people about this agreement that we have embarked on.

As we have done until now, I am competent that we can and will continue to work together as the Northwest Territories leaders, for the benefit of all of our people. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT RESPONSE TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS REVIEW OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I today, too, want to comment on the government's response to the Child and Family Services Act review report. On first reading of those responses, I was disappointed. Although the majority of recommendations are accepted, they are not accepted unconditionally. To paraphrase Mr. Bromley, those responses indicate, yup, we agree, but can't do anything because there is no money; and yup, we agree, but there is no change required.

The government's response was determined by examining each recommendation in light of two criteria. One, will it improve service delivery and make a difference to children, family and youth? Two, will it strengthen community and stakeholder confidence in the system? After using these criteria, several extremely important concepts reflected in the Child and Family Services Act review report's recommendations have been ignored by the government or they have chosen not to act on them.

Firstly, the principle of prevention and early intervention is basic and crucial to improving child and family services in the NWT. Yet the government's response to that recommendation is do not accept. I am unable to understand how this

principle fails the test of the criteria I already mentioned.

Secondly, the concept of having child and family service committees in our communities is also basic and crucial to improving the implementation of the Child and Family Services Act, but a recommendation to actively pursue establishment of these committees is accepted only if and when money is available. The department did not indicate any willingness to begin work on establishing these community committees in the 2011-12 fiscal year. What value accrues to our child welfare system if we wait 15 months until the start of the 2012-13 year? I say none.

Lastly, most of the committee's recommendations to make amendments to the act are rejected by the government. Committee suggested the amendments because we felt certain aspects of the child and family services system needed to be mandated, not just implied or allowed. The changes to the system are important enough that the act must require them, not just say they can be done.

Mr. Speaker, I've got many other specific concerns with the government response but not the time to speak to them. The CFSA review report was a good one and the recommendations properly implemented can have significant impact on the NWT child and family services system. I hope the government will reconsider its approach to our recommendations and implement some of them in the upcoming budget year, not leave them all for the next Assembly. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR WRIGLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, during my recent constituency visit to Wrigley in January, I was contacted by the Wrigley DEA members and parents who are concerned that students who went to Fort Simpson for high school were having a lot of problems. If these students are to complete secondary school, their only alternative is to live in Fort Simpson and attend the Fort Simpson high school, and they cannot. Those that do attend are at the expense of the parents.

I am proud that in the past three years there have been a total of 14 children who travelled to Fort Simpson to begin their secondary education. However, I'm sad to say that presently there are only two students eligible for support by the Dehcho Divisional Council. I believe that our educational system is failing the parents and the students of Wrigley.

The parents feel that the Wrigley youth are not given enough support by the school system. Also, the parents do want input into how the residence is run and they do have some suggestions like extra professional guidance for assistance and also they identified that perhaps a male supervisor is needed at the student residence. Once again, Mr. Speaker, parents are calling for more support to ensure their children have the same opportunities as other students in the NWT and have requested a meeting to discuss experiences with the residents in Fort Simpson. I share the concerns of these parents.

I recommend that a review is done of this whole situation, including alternate accommodations as a solution. In a time when Aboriginal achievement is of great concern to all of us, we must find ways to encourage and support our secondary school students who come from small and remote communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS FOR NWT TEACHER ASSISTANTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to a good education, there are many challenges youth and adults in small communities in the Northwest Territories have. An education, Mr. Speaker, we are told will provide opportunities to find good jobs for our students, a job suited to them and one that will give them satisfaction and a decent income. That's why we support our young people to go to school.

An adult student in the Sahtu is facing the barrier challenges right now, Mr. Speaker. She has completed coursework at Grande Prairie College in Alberta to be a teacher assistant. In order to complete her program she must do a practicum, working as a teacher assistant in the school. This woman intends to complete her practicum in the Sahtu. After she made some inquiries and a request to the Sahtu Divisional Education Council, the council actually agreed to supervise her practicum. However, when the superintendent of the education council phoned Grande Prairie College, he discovered that the college would not accept a practicum placement that was offsite. This is a sad state of affairs, Mr. Speaker.

I'm sure this is not the first time nor will it be the last time problems regarding practicum in the Northwest Territories comes up. I think that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment should determine some way to address this situation. Perhaps it's as simple as ECE discussing the situation with contacts at the Grande Prairie college and entering into an agreement on work experience placement that is satisfactory to both parties.

ECE finances students to attend post-secondary school and encourages them to return to the Northwest Territories to work. There should be some way that the department can advise students who are entering programs that require practicum of this potential issue. The department could provide a protocol for arranging for education, health and other education programs work experience in the GNWT where possible.

I understand that not all education training programs can be offered in the Northwest Territories but I hope that we can ensure that when possible, that students can get to practice their practicum in the Northwest Territories, that they earn and do it in their home community. I have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EMPLOYMENT OF NORTHERN NURSING GRADUATES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to be speaking today about the Northern Nursing Program at Aurora College. As Members are well aware, this program became a four-year degree-granting program a few years ago. It is affiliated with the University of Victoria.

One of Ms. Lee's first speeches as Minister of Health and Social Services was to address first-year students of the Northern Nursing Program at Aurora College in the fall of 2007. Ms. Lee's address that day was full of encouragement, support, and promise of full-time employment in the Northwest Territories for each graduating student. Well, these students that Ms. Lee addressed back in 2007 are now just months away from concluding the program and what is very alarming is the lack of any job openings for graduate nurses in the Northwest Territories.

I'd like to understand how the Minister explains the lack of postings and the promise of employment for new grads. What about our expensive addiction to locum and agency nurses in the Northwest Territories? Where is the plan to integrate our northern nursing grads into our health care system in our Territory? Conceptually, wasn't the idea of having our own Northern Nursing Program at Aurora College our best effort to alleviate our reliance on agency and locum nurses?

It would be a shame if we trained and developed grads from our Northern Nursing Program and then they packed up their families and left our Territory. Certainly you would think the Department of Health and Social Services and this government would have a plan to accommodate new grads; not just this year but in the years to come.

There are scheduled to be 19 new grads in 2011, 16 grads in 2012, and 32 grads in 2013. I find it very disturbing that the Minister and the department will be making decisions in the near future in the absence of any sound planning. I'll certainly have some questions for the Minister at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT SENIORS CHARTER

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the priorities of the 16th Assembly has been to develop healthy, educated people. When reading our 16th Assembly priorities, I noticed that seniors and elders are missed in our collective statement.

As leaders, we have made a commitment to our present and future generations. One of the ways I feel strongly that we can work towards achieving a goal of supporting our seniors is to develop and adopt an NWT seniors charter. In 2006, our very own House of Commons adopted a similar concept in recognizing seniors. As such, they adopted the Seniors Charter of Canada.

The NWT seniors charter, if adopted, could recognize older Northerners as creative, active, valued members of our society. It would serve as a mission statement and set out the government's commitment to their well-being, equality, and certainly a standard of living.

An NWT seniors charter would speak to such areas as income security, housing, wellness and health care, our commitment to stopping elders' abuse, accessible opportunities for recreation, education and training, and timely access to government services, to only name a few.

To highlight in comparison of simple fairness, the Minister responsible for official languages tables an annual report that looks at the state and progress of languages each year. I certainly support that. Why would the official state of our seniors' care, if programming, progress and development not receive the same type of respect? If there was any area in Canada that talks about its respect, care and importance of seniors and elders, it's certainly here in the Northwest Territories. That support seems to be lacking.

A seniors charter could be the compass rose of where we need to be and definitely where we want to go with seniors' issues. It would, in essence, be our mission statement and our plan. We would not want to develop this on our own. We would certainly need the help and guidance of those we've committed to care for and those who have walked before us.

There are many examples out there as to what implementation models could look like, but certainly we're not here to solve that today. What would be important today would be to take the first step forward in organizing our commitment to seniors by developing an NWT seniors charter which would definitely define and recognize the valued contributions they've made to our North and our commitment to stand behind them.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the gallery today and the presence of our Languages Commissioner, Ms. Sarah Jerome, who is with us today. We will be tabling her annual report at the appropriate time today.

The honourable Member for Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to also recognize Sarah Jerome, NWT Official Languages Commissioner; also David Reid, NWTTA president.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Krutko, Mr. Roland, and Mr. Robert C. McLeod are not in the House and would have recognized the Languages Commissioner, Sarah Jerome. I'd like to recognize the Languages Commissioner.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to be able to recognize the chaperone for the two handsome Pages from Fort Smith -- Marcus Bourke and Ferron Beamish -- Ms. Melinda Bourke.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. The honourable Member for... I'm drawing a blank.

---Laughter

The honourable Member for Nunakput, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Only the most important riding in this whole Territory, Mr. Speaker.

---Interjection

MR. JACOBSON: Anyway, I'd like to welcome Melinda Bourke as well. She's my wife's niece and I'm her uncle. I'd like to welcome Marcus, as well, for doing a good job helping out as a Page in the Page Program. It is a really good program. I'd like to welcome Ms. Sarah Jerome, too, into the House. Good to see you, Sarah. And Mr. Reid, one of my

old teachers up in Inuvik. We had a lot of good runs and a lot of good times. Thank you, Mr. Reid.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Member for Yellowknife South, Mr. Bob McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mr. Darrell Beaulieu, chairman of the Business Development and Investment Corporation, and Ms. Shirley Bohnet.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. If we've missed anyone in the gallery today, welcome to the Chamber. I hope you're enjoying the proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 410-16(5): PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS FOR NWT TEACHER ASSISTANTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about the practicum issue I talked about. I want to ask the Minister if there are any ways he's working to arrange for students in the Northwest Territories to come back to the Territories to do their practicum once they complete their courses in southern educational institutions.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, definitely we're continuing to work with various institutions that we have partnerships with down south. At the same time, the Grande Prairie Regional College is also interested in considering some modification. The modification will take some time but it is in the works. Those are areas that we continue to work on with the college.

MR. YAKELEYA: The one instance I made reference to and the Minister has just talked about, the Grande Prairie institution. Is the Minister now giving the House a deadline on when maybe a resolution could be satisfactory to the student or the community to have the student or future students come up to the North to do their practicum?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I can't really give an exact time right now. The discussion just started with the college. That is my understanding. There are talks about the modification of the program for future usage, such as those teachers in training having their practicum in the Northwest Territories. Those are areas we need to work on and we'll be working closely with the DEAs in the regions, the college and my Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

MR. YAKELEYA: When these students enter into post-secondary institutions and take on the career of a teacher or teacher's assistant, has the department notified the students ahead of time about their practicum and the requirements we need? To also let them know ahead of time that it's not possible to come back to the North to do their practicum, such as this student in Grande Prairie that was disappointed that these things couldn't be worked out ahead of time? Can the Minister notify me if these things are told to students entering into the teaching professions?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I believe that there are different parties involved. It is also the student's responsibility to do their research on what they want to get into, the field of studies, and the requirements of that particular program, including the practicum and whether or not it can be delivered in the Northwest Territories. That is information that is available on the college website or the college application. We need to work with the students. We as the Department of Education, Culture and Employment have staff that can provide some information, but it's also the student's responsibility to do that part too. We'll continue to work with those students.

MR. YAKELEYA: I hope the department can rectify this situation as soon as possible. As you know, students who leave small communities and come back to do their practicum or to go back to work, it's a good incentive for other students to continue on their education and role modelling. I would ask the Minister again if he would commit to see if this resolution can be done sometime within the life of this government.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: That would be one of the plans we'll be working on to expedite the process. There are a number of students who are taking this particular program and we definitely want them to come back to the Northwest Territories to do their practicum. That will be our goal.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister if he could share what type of arrangements or what type of barriers that Grande Prairie has put up in terms of not helping the student to get to the North to do her practicum. What are some situations that his department is looking into?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Some of the obstacles or challenges that may face the college is the travel to the communities. Those are the areas that have been identified and we need to work with that. There may be other areas, other concerns that may have been brought forward, but this is an area that they're willing to modify their program. This is definitely an area that we need to focus on. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 411-16(5):

HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I want to ask some questions related to housing for physically and mentally challenged residents in the NWT. In general, we talk about assisted living housing for our persons with disabilities and those that have mental challenges. We have a number of different types of housing, I know that, and we have different models of accommodation, but I'd like to ask the Minister whether or not her department, or the government in general, has a policy that addresses this particular housing need. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have a program and policy to address the persons with disabilities. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I would have liked to have heard the name of the policy, but that's fine. I'd like to know from the Minister, her department generally manages the programs, the assisted living programs. I'd like to know if we have a policy that looks after housing needs for people who are challenged and who need assisted living. Does the department work in concert with any other department? I would hope they would work in concert with the NWT Housing Corporation, but do they work in concert with any other department in order to acquire and build the necessary housing for assisted living? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: The Member knows that the Department of Health and Social Services is not in the business of building houses, so we would not be involved in that. The Member also knows because she had asked in the past and I've given her information about the kind of support we provide for persons with disabilities. We have various programs. The Member mentioned an assisted living complex in Hay River, but we also have group homes, we have supported living, we provide respite care. I mean, the persons with disabilities don't come in one shape and size and need, and so individuals are assessed and they are supported in the best way we can with the programs we have and the resources we have. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: To the Minister, I didn't ask about whether or not you were in the business of housing and I wasn't asking about particular placement options. I'm talking about housing and getting the necessary capacity of housing that we need. It's

well known that we have a need within the whole of the NWT assisted living housing, whether it be rented, whether it be built. I'd like to know if the department would consider establishing a process to actively build up the housing supply for assisted living and whether they would partner with the Housing Corporation to build the necessary types of housing that's required so that we can place more of our people in assisted living accommodations. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I think the mandate of the Health and Social Services is busy enough, full enough, demanding enough. I don't think, unless the government tells us to, the department is interested in getting into the housing business. We have the NWT Housing Corporation that does that. I am aware that the Housing Corporation has built units and renovated units for persons with disabilities, whether they be seniors or non-seniors. I would ask the Member to kindly refer the question to the responsible Minister. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister, I would like to ask again, I'm not asking the department to build houses, I'm asking the department to establish a process to work in conjunction with the Housing Corporation who does build houses -- I agree with you -- but asking if they would set up a process to partner with the Housing Corporation to provide the assisted living housing that we need. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: We do that already. We work closely with the Housing Corporation. So if the Member has specific situations or a constituent that she would like me to look into, I would be happy to do that. As I've stated, the Housing Corporation does have a program that addresses the persons with disabilities and, of course, Health and Social Services works closely with ECE and Housing and Justice or whoever we need to.

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

QUESTION 412-16(5):

ELECTRIC POWER SURGES IN NUNAKPUT

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, my Member's statement is on the Power Corporation's procedure for dealing with damage done to people's appliances over the power fluctuations that we've been having. Mr. Speaker, how many of these claims have been received each year from our Nunakput communities that are paid out from the Inuvik office? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Power Corporation does have a policy in place on dealing with customers who have had problems within their homes and can file a claim. I don't have the level of detail with me that I could respond to the Member but I will get that for the Member. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, what's being done to ensure that the troubleshooting with the electrical systems can be done in our communities instead of waiting for technicians to fly into the communities? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: With the new CEO, Mr. Axford, in house now in the Northwest Territories, he's been looking at the operations of the Power Corporation, their structure, how they deal with our customer issues and our response times, so I expect that in the near future I would sit down at the next board meeting with the CEO and the new chairman and the board to go over some of the work they've done and see what flows from that. Thank you.

MR. JACOBSON: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister ensure that my constituent complaints be looked into by the Power Corporation and be dealt with as soon as possible? They have been ongoing. Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Those that have made application, I will ask on the results. The first thing, as I had committed to earlier, was the total number of complaints or applications that were sent in, what were the responses to those applications and if there are any outstanding issues. I will get that information back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Your final supplementary, Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What will the Power Corporation do to improve the communication with the customers in the small communities so that their complaints will be resolved sooner rather than later? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must say that in initially meeting with the new CEO for the Power Corporation it was refreshing. His experience in that sector of the business and dealing with many customers is, I think, a breath of fresh air, as I see it, in reaching out to our customers in the Northwest Territories. Again, I've had discussions with both the chair and the new CEO to discuss the issues around customer relations, and we'll follow up on that, as well, to ensure that we work on improving that relationship. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 413-16(5):
NWT SENIORS CHARTER

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about the need for an NWT charter for seniors. I think we could develop something that brings clear focus to your beliefs and principles on caring for seniors and elders. If you look across the government, there is no clear coordinating role. The Minister responsible for Seniors is title alone. There is no direct mandate to seniors and certainly as the Minister responsible for Seniors, they have no specific money targeted in order to help and support seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I think that's a sad state of affairs, and I certainly hope that our government eventually will rectify that problem that we don't put that type of initiative behind our seniors. Mr. Speaker, my question would be to the Minister who is responsible for Seniors. Would she consider taking to Cabinet the idea and certainly the issue of developing an NWT seniors charter?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister responsible for Seniors, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not familiar with what details that concept entails, but if the Member would like to provide me with that information, we will have a further look at it. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to provide a copy of my Member's statement I made today as well as a copy of the House of Commons' position on a seniors charter. Mr. Speaker, knowing full well that this issue has never specifically been brought up in the government certainly in my time, is the Minister saying clearly she would be willing to take this issue, address this issue and bring it to the Cabinet table to work towards developing an NWT seniors charter? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't be the responsible Minister, or the Member would be responsible if we were to make decisions without having at least some information about what it is we are being asked to take a position on. I am interested in getting the information from him as to what he has in mind, understanding that different ideas about overarching or comprehensive sorts of models on seniors was introduced before. I think we are also aware, though, that seniors' issues, whether it be housing, fuel subsidy, health benefits, touch so many different departments that I don't know if it is just something we need to look further into. I would be happy to, once again, say what I

said before, take a look at what he has in mind and then we could have a position. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer from the Minister, the willingness to pursue something new and different. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister see a problem in the existing state of affairs where seniors' issues are spread out throughout the government without a clear mandate or a coordinating role, and that being said, a Minister directly responsible for seniors and elders program? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member that the programs are spread out, but I don't think it is there without mandate. I think all of our seniors programs have specific programming and criteria mandate that are housed in responsible divisions and sections.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I am interested in looking at what he has in mind. Maybe it is something that the Standing Committee on Social Programs can take a look at as well. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to seeing what he has. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 414-16(5):
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT-IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement I talked about future cost of the devolution agreement for the GNWT. I have questions for the Premier. Why did this government agree to an AIP that does not place full responsibility on the federal government for inflation and the cost of running the regulatory system? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The honourable Premier, Mr. Roland.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member's statement earlier, leading up to these questions, made a number of comments about secret negotiations and so on. I will say for the record that there were no secret negotiations. All bilateral discussions that may have happened between the GNWT and the federal government, specifically because there are areas that we clearly are for or would be, those issues and discussions were shared at the main table with all of the partners that were at the table.

As for signing this agreement, there are many things to be negotiated as we go forward. One of those is the escalation of the dollars identified for doing the work that would be required of us as the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The negotiations up to establishing the numbers for the initial transfer were very intense, as we clearly

stated that we felt, under the existing authorities, we need to do a job that would require more resources than is being expended now. We have that agreement. In fact, that is one of the reasons why we would say that we are in agreement with signing this.

Other areas that are of concern to many of the Aboriginal groups, as well, are around waste sites and monitoring and management. There is a chapter 8 that goes through quite a number of issues that look at addressing what we would do as we enter into negotiations. I think this is another reason why having the Aboriginal groups and governments come back to the table to help influence the discussions is probably one of the biggest things, since we hold our environment in such high regard in the North. That would be one of those that would draw us back to the table, I would say. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, what is the Government of the Northwest Territories doing to ensure that the waste sites that are listed or that are contemplated in such devolution agreement in the future are cleaned up in a timely fashion? What is the time frame for this? Is this going to go on forever or is there going to be a time frame for a clean-up of these waste sites? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, by signing the agreement-in-principle, we actually kick in the year of process that has been under discussion for quite some time. We have already done a fair bit of work in the North around waste sites that are there, looking at historical programs that were run under previous and ministrations and decisions made under previous governments, federal governments as well. That is why there has been such an emphasis put on this document. It triggers the work that needs to be done. For example, in the responsibility of waste sites, chapter 8, point 3 talks about Canada will be responsible for management of waste sites on public lands which were wholly created prior to the effective date and it speaks of what our responsibility would be after the effective date of final agreement, and then it goes into a lot of detail about some of those subject areas. But, clearly, by signing the agreement-in-principle, we also trigger work that is going to be done on clearly establishing what is out there and comparing that work. Thank you.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, my last question is the area of time frames. There is a possibility inside the devolution agreement that these sites could be just left as is for extended periods of time. Also, in the economic measures in the AIP, they indicate that economic measures could be accrued to Aboriginal governments. This is an opportunity for Aboriginal governments to clean up with the GNWT at the federal government cost to clean up those

sites. Why isn't the government insisting that the federal government take responsibility in a kindly fashion for cleaning up industrial sites established under their control since 1984? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Mr. Speaker, the identification and the categorization of waste sites, those were decisions made by previous governments that, as I said, the preliminary work was done. Quite clearly, we leave the responsibility for decisions made by the federal government prior to the signing of the final agreement is their responsibility needing to go forward, but they still have to share that work with us and come up with a budget that we would have to negotiate on dealing with the full remediation of those sites or that they would remain holding onto the liability of those sites. For example, by signing the agreement-in-principle, Canada will develop at its own expense a preliminary inventory of waste sites, and in compiling such preliminary inventory, they will have to share that initial summary with us through their own historical records and current records and we will, as well, do our own work in reviewing that. That will help us as we go forward and coming up with the right negotiation for dollars in remediation going forward and who holds onto that liability going forward. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Roland. Final supplementary, Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Dene people see this as a loophole by the federal government. It does not seem fair when the federal government designed and implemented a regulatory system, will take 50 percent of the royalties on these developments but won't pay for the cleanups. This is a loophole. Why is there no definite plan in place to place full responsibility for the remediation that's needed on the federal government? Thank you.

HON. FLOYD ROLAND: Thank you. Clearly, we know the importance of our environment to northern peoples and that is why so much effort has been placed through the working group of our Aboriginal partners and the Government of the Northwest Territories. We've learned from some of our own previous transfers and transfers to other provinces and territories, in making sure we've set up a process that will clearly identify the challenges, the risks, the liabilities and who they belong to. So as the Member is saying, why haven't we done that? That work is about to be done because we've signed the AIP. Otherwise, we would continue to work on the basis we have in the past of identifying those sites.

The federal government has remediated a number of sites across the North and are in the process of remediating sites as we speak in a number of areas. So that work continues, but as we now, through the signing of this agreement-in-principle,

will be able to clearly identify going forward into the future what those challenges are, what the risks are and who should hold onto the liability and then the budgets of what needs to be done going forward in that area. So we do place a high priority on this.

Again, when it comes to the identification, we talk about this preliminary inventory of waste sites in the Northwest Territories, talk about the location, the nature of the site, the summary of information going to Canada about the waste site, including location, former use, current use or status, known operation, groundwater analysis. So many things will begin to be shared by Canada with us and they will have to share such information with all the parties. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 415-16(5):
EMPLOYMENT OF NORTHERN
NURSING GRADUATES

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got questions today for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Getting back to my Member's statement where I was talking about northern nursing grads, this year we're expecting to graduate 19 and next year 16 and then in 2013, 32. So we're going to have close to 65 northern nursing grads enter into our health care system hopefully in the next three years.

I'd like to ask the Minister, it was almost four years ago she went to Aurora College and spoke to the students just entering the program, promising them jobs upon completion of the program. I'd like to ask her what planning has gone into help integrate northern nursing grads into our health care system. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that our Northern Nursing Program is a success story. We have produced a lot of excellent graduates and the last fiscal year we were able to place all 11 of them; nine of them in Yellowknife and two in Hay River. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that we will be able to use the training that these nurses have received in various communities and health centres and hospitals around the Territories. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you. I hope the Minister can appreciate the fact that these graduates are months away from completing the program, yet when they look at the government website and any job postings, there are just none available and they're left scratching their head saying, well, the Minister was here three years ago and promised us jobs, where are they? Then they see locum and agency

nurses working in our health authorities and at Stanton and they wonder where are the postings. I'd like to ask the Minister if she can explain the fact that we have these locum and agency nurses here and no job postings for nurses. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. We are in communication with the graduating class of nurses at Aurora College. They are made aware that they wouldn't be applying for jobs on the website, that they will be eligible to join the Graduate Employment Program process, that we will have a list of jobs available for them. HR and HSSA, Department of Health staff, are going in there to talk to the nursing graduates and we will be working with them to find placements for them. They will be asked to give their preference of what communities they would like to practice in. We want to match those, but those are not always possible.

This is an NWT employment program. The Graduate Employment Program is an NWT program, this is Government of the NWT. We would like to recruit and retain nurses to work in all parts of the Territories, so we are fully committed to working with the nursing grads to match them with employment. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you. It sounds like as far as the department is concerned, it's a year-to-year process and they just take each year as it comes. I'm not sure if coming up with a better plan and a long-range plan to accommodate, like I said, 65 grads in the next three years might be something that's worthwhile to the department and to this government. I'd like to ask the Minister, does the Department of Health and Social Services and the health authorities consider positions that are currently filled by locums and agency nurses to be vacant and why aren't those positions posted? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. As we've discussed over the last two days, the use of agency nurses has gone down substantially. Locum nurses we have in Stanton, for example, are really, really hard to recruit nurses. So as the Member knows, or anybody who knows about nursing, nurses all come with different training, different backgrounds, different skill sets that we need. So I don't think we should be distracted by having to use some locum nurses that means that we're not giving those jobs to new grads. New grads have to go through the Graduate Employment Program, they need more training in different settings before they can be put into practice settings. They wouldn't be, I don't think, ready to apply to a job that's available on the website right away. So I've stated, and of course we work year by year, every year we get a new graduating class of nurses and as I've stated, the Department of HR and my department and the health authorities are and will continue to work with the graduating class to place them in an

appropriate setting and in as a compatible setting as possible, but we need to ask the grads to be able to look beyond Yellowknife if they can't be matched in Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final supplementary, Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sounds like we've resigned ourselves to the fact that locum nurses are going to be in these positions and the department and the authorities are not going to post the positions to be filled by resident nurses here in the Northwest Territories. Is that what I'm hearing the Minister say? That locums are there permanently, we're not posting those jobs? I'd like to ask the Minister why aren't we posting the jobs that locums are filling today. Thank you.

AN HON. MEMBER: Good question.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, it has to go without saying that our system would rather hire our own local nurses before we would have agency nurses or locum nurses. So if there are any jobs that are...

Mr. Speaker, as I've stated, if the Member would listen, these nurse graduates don't go through a regular hiring process; they go through a Graduate Employment Program. They go through a separate preferential program that the government has organized with HR, and HR people are talking to the graduating class. We are going to have a list of positions that could be matched up with them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to state for the record for the people out there and the graduates and nursing students in the classroom, that we are committed to working with them to make sure that we do everything we can to find them employment and that we will be providing them with the information. The fact that the jobs are not being posted should not be a distraction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 416-16(5):
CONCERNS OF WRIGLEY HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS AND PARENTS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education some questions on the Member's statement I provided earlier today on the students of Wrigley on the concerns of their parents about not accessing proper education for their children in Fort Simpson.

The issue is, Mr. Speaker, there is a residence in Fort Simpson that is exactly designed for out-of-town students but, for whatever reason, they're not able to attend there. There's no option to provide education to our small, remote communities if we do not access that residence. There must be

alternate solutions. So I'd like to ask the Minister what can be done about this situation. Mahsi cho.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there's a reason why these students are not in a residence and we need to get that confirmation from the DEA or DEC, probably the DEA. I will be following up on this particular matter with the DEA. There are various options. The students and the parents in the community can work with the DEA, if they can meet with the local DEA and erase those concerns. We will do our part as well.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: When I spoke with the parents and the members of the DEA in Wrigley, they asked that... It's a long way to travel. The DEA and the Dehcho Divisional Education Council have the resources for them to come to Wrigley, meet with the parents and discuss some of the solutions and issues around their children not being able to attend school in Fort Simpson. As I indicated in my Member's statement, we have an obligation for Aboriginal education and we must find solutions no matter how tough they are.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Obviously there is a solution we need to find within the system. This is an area we need to work closely with the district education authority on. We allocate funding based on the operations and maintenance of the school board and they work closely with the students and the parents in identifying where issues arise. We need to find out the situation that the Member is referring to. What is the real issue? Why aren't the students in their residence? I'm sure there's a reason. We need to find that reason. As the Member alluded, there's a solution to this, so let's work on that.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'm pleased that the Minister and I are of the same mind. I think if we take it one step further, of course the Dehcho Divisional Education Council must meet with the parents in Wrigley, sit them all down in the same place and find out some of the issues. I think the next step is to also get an independent evaluation of the residence system that's there to see how it can better fit for the smaller communities and students in the post-secondary education from the smaller communities. I'd like to ask the Minister if we could work towards that for the time being.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I will work with the DEA on having those Wrigley students attend Simpson with regard to the residence. Also the independent evaluation would have to come from the DEA if they wish to do that.

We as a department will work closely with them. Maybe this is a concern that we can bring forward

to the DEA. The Member raised that issue. It's a concern to the Member and to the community. We'll follow through with that.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The first step I always believe is communication. I'm glad the Minister is willing to work towards that and work with the Dehcho Divisional Education Council. I would also ask the Minister to bear in mind that other communities are having the same issue, like Nahanni Butte, Trout Lake and Jean Marie River. Please bear in mind and ask them to get involved at some point. It's an issue that concerns all the small, remote communities in my riding.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I agree with the Member. It is across the board in the Northwest Territories, not just in Nahendeh. It is in Beaufort-Delta and other places. This is an area that has been brought to our attention and we are working within our department and the DECs and DEAs.

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

QUESTION 417-16(5):
GNWT RESPONSE TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS REVIEW
OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services and relate to the response that the Minister released on Monday on the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Child and Family Services Act.

The recommendations within the report needed to be considered in the context of the entire report. There was a lot of information in the report that helped us form the recommendations we had.

Unfortunately, when I'm reading through the responses and the information and action items, I don't always get the sense or feel that the context of the report was considered. It seems to be more specific responses to the recommendations out of context in some cases.

Having said that, the responses and the information and information action items seem pretty vague to me. There's not a lot of information there. I'm assuming that there must be some greater level of analysis. I was wondering if that analysis exists for each of the recommendations, and if it does, can the Minister share it with us so we have a better understanding of how they came to their conclusions and the recommendations they came up with.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's response lays out our response where we say that we have accepted 22 recommendations and on the whole we've accepted 61 out of 73 recommendations. In reading those recommendations, we have explained what our responses are. We have made the effort to include as much information as possible. I understand and I am encouraged by the Member's statement earlier and other Members saying that we have a good start. They like some of the things that we have said. They are happy with the fact that we have accepted so many of those recommendations. I understand that they would like to work on some more of them. I'd be willing to sit down with the committee and go over some of the details if the Members or committee would like to do that.

MR. ABERNETHY: I would have thought given that these responses and the information and action items, if you actually read through them, they do seem vague. They're not always clear. I'll just give you a real quick example.

We asked the government to mandate prevention and early intervention and include a presumption of prevention and early intervention in the principles of the act. They responded by saying the presumption of prevention and early intervention is implicit. This is what I talked about in my Member's statement. We read the act. We've identified the sections that they've identified in their response. We also felt it was implicit. But it's not being done in the communities. It's not happening on the ground. What we're looking for is explicit action. If we make it explicit in the act, then it will happen.

Going to the Minister's agreement or commitment to meet with us, I understand that they're also developing a strategic plan. It's identified in this. My question to the Minister is: will she commit to meeting with us and sitting down with us and going through each of the recommendations and the suggested responses to find some common ground so that both sides understand what is going on here? We know what we expected. We don't fully understand the recommendations, but I'm not sure they fully understood our recommendations. I'd like to sit down with the Minister and have a meeting going through point by point. Will the Minister commit to doing that prior to developing a strategic plan?

HON. SANDY LEE: I've already agreed to do that on many occasions and I'd be happy to meet with Members and the committee. The example that the Member presented here is a good example. I want to state that the department and government took every recommendation very, very seriously. We

approached it in a very positive way. Our responses are about how do we make this happen. The Member raised a question about the way the law is right is it's implicit. We would like to make it explicit. The example he gave is under section 7 of the act. It already states very explicitly that child protection has to, it must, it shall consider cultural implications. It must. It's as explicit as we can get.

I think there's a philosophical debate about how much force and power do you put into legislation. Our government's position is we understand what the committee is saying. We agree with what you're saying. We were there when the committee met with the people. We're suggesting different ways in which we can do that. Legislating and making it explicit in legislation is only one way. But you know, laws can only go so far. I think what they're asking us to do is do things differently. Our suggestion is that we can do that.

I'm encouraged by what the Member said. We have a common ground. We want to work together. We should look at the report as water being half full rather than being half empty. I think there's a lot of ground for us to move on. I think we may have a difference of opinion about whether we should do it by mandated legislation or by policy change or attitude change, but I am definitely willing and prepared to work with the committee and Members.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For just a point of clarity, this question, this example that I gave was about prevention and promotion. The response that she gave me when she quoted section 7, if you actually look at their response, their response only refers to sections 2, 5 and 6 and there's no reference to section 7. I think she's talking about a completely different area than I am.

The other thing I want to point out with respect to that example is after they say it's implicit in the act, they also go further to say basically no amendment is required so no action is required. So they're not planning on actually doing anything. This is the problem. Implicit is fine if it's being acted on. Unfortunately, a lot of these things are not being acted on which is why it needs to be explicit.

Going back to the other part about the commitment to meet with us, great, fantastic, thanks. We hope, and I was wondering if I could get the Minister to commit to having the strategic plan done before the life of this government comes to an end.

HON. SANDY LEE: The section 7 I believe is the interpretation clause which helps us within the legislation to interpret the other clauses. Anyway, we could have this discussion.

The other example that the Member mentioned, it is true. I just want to make sure that I put it on record and that I just want to express to the Members

again, which is what we spoke about yesterday, yes, I would like to work with the committee. I am committed to work with the committee. We need to find a common ground. We have to work it on the basis of mutual respect and understanding. I need the committee to know that we are approaching this in a very proactive, positive way.

When the committee suggests that a legislation should be amended to get to the result that they would like, I need the committee to entertain possible options of other options as well. Amendment and legislation and law making is just one option. It's a very blunt tool and there are other things that we should be able to consider. I just wanted to confirm again.

The strategic plan, yes, we hope to get that done within the life of this Assembly and we will work with the committee to get that done.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the record, I believe the committee does have an open mind but we do want to see action. A lot of it is back-and-forth debate on points. It's not really adding much value and it's not really helping the people of the Northwest Territories, from my point of view and from her point of view. No question.

MR. SPEAKER: May I remind Member's this is not time for...

---Interjection

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

QUESTION 418-16(5): MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement on mental health issues and pose questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

My first question deals with patients being released from the Stanton Territorial Hospital's mental health unit. Mental health unit staff sometimes make it a condition of release that the released patient stay at the Centre for Northern Families, presuming that there are skills and capacity at the CNF to meet the special needs of mental health outpatients. Yet the Centre for Northern Families has only hard-won experience with these people and some space, whereas trained staff, and especially funding, are needed to provide full care.

Can the Minister tell me why our health facilities would place such a condition of release, knowing full well the required capacity doesn't exist?

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not familiar with the details of what the Member is suggesting. I would have to assume that was something that a physician might have done, but I will have to get more information from the Member and get back to him.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that and I look forward to that commitment. I'd like now to consider the recent instances of outpatients who have gone missing, resulting in the major searches of the community that we have all sadly heard so much about. I realize the judgments for release are difficult and complicated and there can be no certainty in every case, but since we've seen two cases in less than five months of massive community searches -- one still underway -- has there been an examination of the wisdom of the practices for release currently being used? Mahsi.

HON. SANDY LEE: I believe the health authority and the hospital and the unit there do review incidents as the ones that the Member is referring to and I will undertake to get the relevant information for the Member.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's commitment there. Obviously this is not something you want to see continue.

Mr. Speaker, this leads us to the issue of outpatient readmission, recognizing again the complexity. I know patients who are released, only to immediately go to a return of their drug and alcohol abuse, which are core elements of their mental health illness. Then when requests are made for readmission it's refused, because substance abuse is deemed to be a behavioural problem requiring referral of the patient to alcohol and drug counselling and treatment. If patients were sufficiently ill in the first place to have been admitted for care, their relapse through drug and alcohol abuse is evidence of continuing serious mental health issues. Could the Minister provide a response either now or again later if an investigation is needed on the logic of this approach?

HON. SANDY LEE: I do appreciate the Member's questions and I do appreciate that these are of concern to us. I am a little concerned that what we are talking about here may go into clinical decisions that our health care professionals make by whatever knowledge they have or the legislation or policy, so this is a very complex issue. I think the better thing for me to do is just to undertake to get the information for the Members and provide them with the information.

I do want to say that they are governed by legislation, so we need to get to those. I do share the Member's concerns about improving what we are doing. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: In summary to those questions, the bottom line here is that I, and certainly the public, want to be assured that there is a safety net in practice, and as we know from the child and family services review, there's quite a difference between policy and implementation or practice.

My last question, Mr. Speaker, very briefly, back to the Centre for Northern Families, which, equipped or not, is delivering mental health services. It is now almost a year since the Minister promised to complete the audit of the Centre for Northern Families, take action on a secondment and devise a financial recovery plan for this important institution. Can the Minister tell me the status of those efforts?

HON. SANDY LEE: The audit was conducted by Education, Culture and Employment. I have been working with the Minister on that. I do not have the recent updated information on it. I'm sorry. I will undertake to get back to him on it. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 419-16(5):
SENTENCING AND REHABILITATION
OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got questions for the Minister of Justice again today following up on some of my questions and my statement from yesterday. Again, getting back to sentences that are handed out to individuals who have repeatedly committed offences of a violent nature, you know, yesterday the Minister was talking about the programs and services that are available to people who are incarcerated in our corrections system. Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Minister, perhaps he can explain to me and to this House and to the public in the Northwest Territories how the system that we have in place could fail this individual 19 times. Nineteen, Mr. Speaker. How is that explainable to the public in the Northwest Territories that the system has failed this individual and others, Mr. Speaker?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Once inmates are in the institution there are various programs that are offered to them, whether it be treatment healing programs, substance abuse, sexual offender relapse, family violence, men who abuse program. There are all these different programs. There is also specific to healing. Those are the areas that the rehabilitation of those inmates that our staff is focused on. But there are certain circumstances where individuals

who if they are very high risk then take different programs as well.

Mr. Speaker, we can't control those individuals that are outside the institution. They have their own life once they leave the facility. But when they are in a facility, the department, the corrections staff, the counsellors are working closely with them until they leave the facility so they can be reintegrated back into the community. There is also an on-the-land program that we initiated a couple years back that has been very successful. Those are just some of the areas that we continue to focus on, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, this individual that has 19 prior offences of a violent nature, in fact, killed somebody, got five years. Mr. Speaker, according to some folks that work with sentencing, this individual could be walking the streets of the Northwest Territories in 22 months' time. Mr. Speaker, 19 times the system has failed him. I'd like to again ask the Minister of Justice what safeguards are in place or what are we going to do differently with this individual that is going to ensure public safety when he gets released, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, these individuals that the Member is referring to, they are in a system where they may be released earlier than expected. It is at the discretion of the judge. They make the final decision.

The programs are in place within corrections and outside of corrections. It's interdepartmental. It's not just our Justice department. We work with the RCMP 'G' Division with respect to awareness programs, information being sent out that these individuals are out there. They do what they can. We work closely with the RCMP 'G' Division, the Justice department, and we will continue to do so. We work closely with the Department of Health and Social Services as well. Mahsi.

MR. RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, I hate to think that the next victim is part of the justice system here in the Northwest Territories and part of an individual's rehabilitation plan. That's hard to imagine, Mr. Speaker; the fact that someone can reoffend 19 times of a violent nature, in this case, and there are other instances.

I spoke of an individual that has 18 prior convictions. He got five months for assaulting his partner. This speaks to some serious flaws in the way that we are rehabilitating offenders of violent crime here in the Northwest Territories.

Again, I'd like to ask the Minister -- I asked him yesterday -- can we have some type of wholesale review of the services and programs that we provide to inmates that are incarcerated in our correctional system for violent crimes? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have. Within our programming there's been a review undertaken to have an overall look at the whole programming that we offer at corrections. There have been some changes reflected on that, Mr. Speaker. We've heard from inmates, from the people in the public to say these are particular programs that should be offered, whether it be the on-the-land program, that we've heard over and over. Definitely, this is an area that we continue to monitor, Mr. Speaker. If there are going to be changes required, then we'll make those changes. But again, it is federal legislation, federal law that we have to follow and the decisions lie with the judge, the final decision, Mr. Speaker. It is at their discretion. Mahsi.

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

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If individuals are recommitting offences 15, 16, 18, 19 times, Mr. Speaker, doesn't the Minister want to state to this House and state to the public that, yes, we have a problem with the way we are rehabilitating individuals that are incarcerated in our corrections system, Mr. Speaker? That's obvious. I'd like to again ask the Minister to commit to a review of services and programs provided to individuals who are incarcerated in the Northwest Territories today for violent crimes. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, again, these are the programs that we offer. We made some changes and we will make some changes again if the need arises, dealing with reintegration back to the community or rehabilitation. This is the main focus that we have in the system. We're also, within the community of justice and also the RCMP 'G' Division, the focus is on preventative measures as well. Those are the areas that we continue to work with within our department and other partners that are involved. Yes, those are the areas that we need to closer monitor, Mr. Speaker, and change is always in the system with the programming. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Time for question period has expired. The honourable Member for Great Slave, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7 on orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted

Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 420-16(5):
EMPLOYMENT OF NORTHERN
NURSING GRADUATES

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and

Social Services and are in follow-up to the questions my colleague Mr. Ramsay asked earlier. Mr. Speaker, the Grad Nurse Placement Program was intended to offer all northern graduates an offer of employment in the Northwest Territories. It did not guarantee that those nurse graduates would be offered a job at Stanton. I think when the original promise was made by the Premier of the day, the intent was that we would be able to fill some of our community positions where the need truly lies. Unfortunately, you will notice that most of the placements occur in Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife and Inuvik. What are we doing to actually facilitate grad placements into communities where a real need lies? Our real staffing difficulties, Mr. Speaker, are getting nurses into small communities in the Northwest Territories. What are we doing to help facilitate grad placement in those communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Graduate Placement Program is being delivered by HR on our behalf and we work with HR to address the issues that the Member is speaking about. When the nurses graduate from the college program, they need additional on-the-job training and often they work in Stanton because they do want to have some emergency and hospital setting so they become more comprehensively trained and be ready to go out to communities, because a community health nurse needs a different set of skills that they might learn; well, additional skills than what they learn in the school setting and the hospital setting.

The short answer to that is the Department of Health and the health authorities work with HR and the potential graduates to finish their training and make them employable to jobs available. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I know that HR delivers the programs on behalf of Health and Social Services, who actually administers or actually holds the budget for health recruitment and retention. My question was pretty specific. I want to know what the Department of Health is doing, even if they are doing it through the Department of HR, but what is the Department of Health and Social Services doing to facilitate the placement of northern nurse graduates into community health centres throughout the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, we work through the Graduate Employment Program to look at their training needs, and if there are any out of the graduating program, match them with jobs available.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Minister could give me a sense of over the last two or three years, how many northern graduates have actually gone into community health centres through grad placement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I have to admit I am unclear about exactly what he is getting at. Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that we placed 11 nurses out of the Nursing Grad Program last year. Nine of them are in Stanton and two in Hay River. I think the Member is aware because his background is in HR, and especially in Health that different nurses have different requirements and where it is necessary, we work as an employer to match training and employment situations. Mr. Speaker, I think I need more information on exactly what he is getting at. Thank you.

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will tell the Minister where I am going and then I will ask a question. Mr. Speaker, the department has money for and runs a program called Community Health Nurse Development Program which is designed to help northern nurse graduates transition from school into community health centres. We have used it in the past. In fact, I know that we have placed at least three northern nurse graduates into community health centres in the Northwest Territories in the last five to seven years, but I haven't seen it working lately. I haven't seen northern nurse graduates entering this program and transitioning into the communities. It is a program that works. It is a program that is valuable. We have so many grads coming, we need to be proactive. We need to make sure that we are doing things to help them transition to communities. At what point is the Minister going to place great priority on a program that we know works and will get nurses from the North into our northern communities? When, Mr. Speaker?

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, now I see where he is getting at. Okay. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of success in HR training for health care professionals. We graduated 11 nurses last year. We are expecting 19. We are expecting way more over the next couple of years. CHNs, as the Member stated, we have trained them and we have placed them in communities. I would be happy to undertake to get that information for the Member. I think actually now we have embarrassment of riches for nurses because we have been so successful with the Nursing Program.

As we go forward, what we see now is we need more community support workers and home care workers. I think part of the review that our department has to do is to work with HR and see what our HR health care training needs are and we

will continue to work on that. Mr. Speaker, the point being is our department works very closely with HR and Education to make sure that people we train are in line with the demands that our system will require. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 421-16(5):

HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to go back and see if I could get some specific answers to some of the questions I asked earlier. I would like to address these questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services. I am not talking about a specific case. I would like the Minister to try and think globally and think a bit beyond any specific individual or group of individuals. Firstly, I would like to ask the Minister if she can give me the name of the policy that addresses the provision of housing for NWT residents who require assisted living. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will get back to the Member on that specific point, but the Member knows already because we have had many communications between the two of us that we have programs available and we do provide assistance to those residents in the Territories who need support in living situations due to their disabilities. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister for telling me what I already know. Yes, the department has programs. Those programs, however, are absolutely full. I don't believe there is any more than maybe one vacancy within the whole of the NWT for somebody who needs to be placed in assisted living. I am trying to get the Minister to think beyond what we know and to go into the future.

We know there are many people coming forward who are going to require independent living, assisted living as adults and we want them to stay in our community. I would like to know from the Minister if she can tell me why they would not go to the NWT Housing Corporation and ask to work in conjunction with our housing provider, which is NWT Housing Corporation, to build houses to house the people who need independent or assisted living. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Speaker, I don't think there is any disagreement between the Member and myself that there are more demands than resources available. I am thinking that the Member is thinking that I should just go and build some more or something like that.

The way the programs are being delivered, we have lots of providers. We have NGOs who have group homes. We don't build housing. It is really about resources. It is not about lack of policy or programs or intent. We have more demands and supply and on a case-by-case basis, we work on our residents and we assess them. We place them where we can and we try to support them as much as possible. I don't think it is lack of policy, program or will. It is always about resources. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thank you. If it is about resources, I'd like to ask the Minister is she planning for the future, and I would hope that she would say yes. If she says yes, I'd like to know how the Minister intends to accommodate the 20 or 30 individuals in Yellowknife alone who will need accommodation in independent or assisted living in the next five to 10 years. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: The Member has been here for three and a half years. She knows how we get resources. It's through the business plan process. All the departments and programs make business cases. There are unmet needs, yes, in Yellowknife, but there are unmet needs in every community. We have lots of people in our communities who could benefit from having supported living that are being taken care of by families and friends and communities. I have met them in every community in the Territory. So one of the ways we are doing that under Foundation for Change is including home care programming. Respite care is one of them.

Giving them housing is just only one option, Mr. Speaker, and the solution to that is not the Department of Health and Social Services getting into the business of housing, because we have organizations like the YWCA and YAACL and private homes who could take care of them. It's about priority decisions, Mr. Speaker, and it's not lack of intent or desire or the will on the part of the current Health Minister. It is about the Department of Health and Social Services with \$30 million in deficit, with huge demands, and the entire government under fiscal pressure which is a responsibility for every Member in this House, not just me. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lee. Your final supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister for that passionate response. I was not suggesting that there was not will to accommodate these people. I'm asking the Minister to look to the future and to try to envision a different method of accommodating people who need assisted living, and that means supervision for some of those. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, no question.

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

QUESTION 422-16(5):
MEASURES TO PROMOTE CULTURAL
DIVERSITY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to use this opportunity to pose a couple of questions to the Minister of Human Resources. As he knows very well, I believe strongly in a diverse and representative government and certainly our government's efforts to reach out to all communities, the Aboriginal community, the disabled community ensuring that we're an equal opportunity employer for everyone. Mr. Speaker, some of the questions that I'd like to ask are specific to hiring policies and how we encourage a culturally diverse workforce. I'd like to ask the Minister what does his department do to encourage a culture of both awareness and harmony to ensure that we're hiring people with diverse backgrounds, whether they're Aboriginal or disabled, but through an environment that they enjoy, they like working for and they feel respected. Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we first got elected as the 16th Assembly, this was identified as a priority for our government and we recognize that we wanted to develop a representative public service and we had been flat-lined for about the last 10 years where we had about 31 percent Aboriginal employment, recognizing that in the Northwest Territories the population represents about 50 percent Aboriginal people. So we've been working very hard. We've developed a Human Resource Strategy -- 20/20: A Brilliant North, Public Service Strategic Plan. We developed an Aboriginal Employees Advisory Committee as well an Advisory Committee on Unemployability. We've been working with those committees to identify ways to move forward, increase employment of Aboriginal people and also have a more diverse workforce with our people with disabilities and so on. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. The Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the Employability Committee, have they had a chance to develop or, I should say, seek out responses from employees to ensure that the employer, which is obviously the Government of the Northwest Territories, is certainly meeting the needs of a diverse and sensitive culture that we're trying to build in our government? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. The Aboriginal Advisory Committee has representation from each of the regions and has been very beneficial to identify the challenges that we've been facing in hiring more Aboriginal people. One of the areas that was identified as a concern was hiring Aboriginal people in senior management, so we've identified

three associate director positions that have been filled with Aboriginal people and we will be continuing in those areas.

As we go forward, recognizing that this is a problem that has been there for the longstanding and it will take awhile to turn things around, but we're working very hard to increase the representation of Aboriginal people in the public service. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: It comes as no surprise of the Minister that I worry constantly about ensuring that there are fair opportunities for everyone in this regard, both Aboriginal and the disabilities community, and I've raised my concerns ensuring that the disabilities community certainly gets a good foothold.

With our government having, I believe, about a 0.5 percent representation, what type of awareness campaign, be it both seeking out further Aboriginal candidates for senior management positions or in the same type of gain for people with disabilities to ensure or reach out and show that this government wants to hire people who can bring something to the table to be part of our government and be productive members that we appreciate and respect? What types of things does this government work on? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. Our government is undertaking a number of initiatives. First of all, we've hired an Aboriginal recruitment and retention specialist, as well as a diversity officer and a duty to accommodate officer within the Department of Human Resources. So those specialized positions will go a long ways to improving our hiring and promoting diversity.

As well, through the committee, we've looked around the country to see which jurisdictions had best practices, we've brought in people from the Yukon to give us some indication of what they undertook to have one of the best programs in the country. We recognize there is a tremendous need for sensitivity training for all of the departments, because the departments will be the ones that will be doing the hiring because we've delegated staffing authority to all of our departments. So we have to develop the culture and the environment so that the departments working with HR will hire people in these different areas. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I mentioned about a reflective public service, I certainly wouldn't want to say that I didn't think Gender Equity Policy and issues need to be representative in that particular vein. So it was remiss to mention it at the time.

Mr. Speaker, my last question is that I'm very well aware that the Department of Human Resources does an exit strategy and I know, from a bit of

research, there was approximately 50 of them done in the last year. I'm just curious as to what are some of the fundamentals learned by the exit strategy and what is the government doing to encourage that people aren't leaving for the wrong reasons where they're not feeling culturally appreciated. Are there gender issues, are there maybe disability biases or whatnot? I want to make sure that we're learning something and we're doing something about it. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. The Member is correct; we do do exit interviews, but it's on a voluntary basis. So this past year 51 people that were leaving the public service undertook exit interviews and one of the questions that was posed to them, and we gave them three choices as to why they left the public service, and when we asked them if they were leaving because of our promoting diversity and inclusiveness, 68 percent said that they were dealt with fairly and inclusively. So that wasn't the reason that they were leaving. With regard to gender, I think we still have a long ways to go, but 65 percent of our public service are women. In senior management, 40 percent are female. Things have improved significantly.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the gallery and to the presence of a former Member of the House, a former Member for North Slave or Monfwi, Mr. Lafferty is in the House.

The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

QUESTION 423-16(5):
EROSION OF HIGHWAY BETWEEN
HAY RIVER AND ENTERPRISE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make this question brief. I've raised in this House before issues about the road, the highway that's operated by the GNWT Department of Transportation that runs south of Hay River to Enterprise, in the Minister's riding. For the record, could the Minister please update us on what his department has done about the erosion taking place beside the highway so that people in Hay River and Enterprise who travel that highway and others don't need to worry about falling over the cliff into the abyss?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Transportation, Mr. Michael McLeod.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We did take note of the concerns raised by the Member regarding the erosion that's taken place on Highway No. 2. We have put in some money in our budget to deal with the situation and we will be doing work on it this coming summer.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I'd like to ask the Minister if he could describe what the nature of that work would be.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: No, I'm not an engineer so I couldn't really tell the exact type of work that will be done. With discussion with my staff, they've indicated that we'd deal with the safety issue and we'd try to curb the erosion that's happening there. As to what exactly is being planned, I'd have to commit to getting back with the details to the Member.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I would assume that little portion of the highway there would be rerouted or moved so that it's not so close to the edge of the riverbank. When does the Minister anticipate... I mean, this is February, it's almost spring. When would the tender be going out for this repair?

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: I don't believe we're planning to realign the highway at this point right now. My understanding, and I'd have to confirm that, is we'd be looking at types of guardrails and maybe some riprap or things of that nature that would curb the erosion and try to deal with the safety issue that's happening there.

This has been an issue that's been ongoing for quite a few years. My staff have informed me I think as far back as 20 years ago there was a concern in that area that there was erosion. It's continuing to be a bigger concern, but right now to try to deal with it and prevent it from causing any harm to the travelling public would be our first and foremost concern. I can find the actual type of work and the time frame that it's going to be done in. That it's proposed for this coming summer is all I know at this point.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's unfortunate because I did think it was going to be a road realignment. That's the word I was missing was "realignment." Because there already is a guardrail there, actually. Here's the edge of the road and here's the drop-off to the riverbank. I mean, it's impossible. What would you set any kind of... How could you shore that up? It's like a sheer drop down of a hundred feet. I don't know how you could possibly shore something like that up. I will ask the Minister if he will provide me with the details as soon as he has them on what the solution to this what I consider dangerous situation is and a tremendous liability to this government.

HON. MICHAEL MCLEOD: The Member has reinforced the fact that she's very concerned about this erosion that's happening on Highway No. 2. We've had our staff look at it. We've been monitoring the situation for quite a few years. We have other situations where there are sheer drop-offs. We have guardrails. We have guardrails on

our bridges. At this point we want to ensure that it's flagged. We will start looking at whether realignment is warranted.

I have not been informed by any of the experts that have looked at it that it's needed right at this point, at this time, but it's something that we will consider. We will provide the details of what we're doing to remedy the situation to the Member and we can further discuss issues that she's bringing forward.

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

QUESTION 424-16(5):
COSTS OF PROGRAMMING AT
NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Justice what the average cost is of housing an inmate at the North Slave Correctional Centre.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to find accurate information. I don't have it at my fingertips right now but I will get back to the Member on that, the actual number that we have to date.

MR. YAKELEYA: Some time ago I understood the number to be around \$90,000 per inmate per year. I'm not too sure how much that has changed. The reason I ask this is I want to ask the Minister about the number of inmates at the North Slave Correctional Centre, the population there.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I stated, those are the detailed information that I need to get back to the Member on. I don't have the information with me right now, but I am making a commitment to get back to the Member on those numbers that have been requested.

MR. YAKELEYA: I want to ask the Minister about the programs that they offer at the North Slave Correctional Centre or any other correctional facility in the Northwest Territories. It seems like we're having people enter back into the system. Once they come out, they come back to it again. It's been said in the House here that we seem to be recycling some of the inmates and it seems like we're not giving enough resources to rehabilitate them properly so that when they get out, they stay out. I want to ask the Minister of the type of dollars that are committed to programs to help the inmates while they're in the centres.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We do provide, as I stated earlier in the House, the programs that are available to the inmates. The dollar figure depends on the institution that we have across the Northwest Territories. The most important thing is to have

rehabilitation programming and to reintegrate the individuals back into the community. I think the important part is the Aftercare Program. We can do what we can within the system, within the institution, but once they leave, there's another venue they need to access and that's the Aftercare Program. As I stated, I work closely with the Minister of Health and Social Services on delivering those programs.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister look at future planning to implement strong bush camps in the Northwest Territories rather than continuing pouring dollars into a concrete facility that just seems to recycle our people over and over again and nothing is changing? Would the Minister look at implementing some strong bush camps that would possibly help the justice system?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: We are very proud of the programs that we have with respect to the on-the-land programs that the Member is referring to. One of the programs is also in the Sahtu region and it has been very, very successful. We want to continue with that. Not only that but within corrections across the Northwest Territories we do have those programs. I agree that we need to strengthen that. We need to build on it. That's one of our goals, is to rehabilitate those individuals. Obviously, we don't want to see them back in the system, but it's out of our control. That's our goal as the Department of Justice and I will commit to working on that.

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

QUESTION 425-16(5):
ON-THE-LAND CORRECTIONS
PROGRAMS IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I want to ask the Minister about his statement that he's very proud of the Sahtu. In the last four years the funding level has not changed once in the Sahtu for the on-the-land program in the Sahtu. It's been in the...(inaudible)... Costs have increased with the program. Will he look at putting this into a permanent program with the inflation costs of running the program? Because right now it's something that is desperately needed in our region. Would the Minister look at that?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This is an area that we are closely looking at. We are currently in the final stages of having a review done on the community justice

programming. This will fit well with what the Member is referring to. Definitely this is an area that we have been pushing and we will continue to do that. We feel that this is an important piece of work, that rehabilitation and reintegrating those individuals back to the community will be a success due to these programs that are being offered.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the orders of the day, please.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Leon Lafferty as a former MLA and also from Behchoko. Also the two most important people in my life: Maurice and Dora Marie Lafferty, my mom and dad.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. If we missed anyone in the gallery, welcome to the Chamber.

Item 8, written questions. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 18-16(5): PRACTICUM PLACEMENTS FOR NORTHERN STUDENTS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

1. Can the Minister list all the post-secondary educational institutions that enable our northern students to do their practicum in the North?
2. Also, can the Minister provide a work plan and implementation schedule that would show how the Grande Prairie College and our Education department help our northern students begin their work experience placement in the North?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. The honourable Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Lafferty.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 137-16(5): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LAW FOUNDATION 28TH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2010

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled Northwest Territories Law Foundation 28th Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2010.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty.

TABLED DOCUMENT 138-16(5): OFFICE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT, 2009-2010

Pursuant to Section 23 of the Official Languages Act, I wish to table the Office of the Northwest Territories Languages Commissioner's Annual Report, 2009-2010.

Item 16, notices of motion. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 34-16(5): SMALL HIGH SCHOOL STAFFING FUNDING FORMULA

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, February 14, 2011, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Legislative Assembly strongly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories revise the school staffing funding formula to ensure that all schools with at least 10 full-time equivalent students enrolled in grades 10 to 12 receive funding for at least three secondary teacher positions.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project; Table Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members Compensation and Benefits; Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits – What We Heard; Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northwest Territories Water Stewardship Strategy; Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future; Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010;

Tabled Document 133-16(5), NWT Main Estimates, 2011-2012; Tabled Document 135-16(5), Response to the Standing Committee on Social Programs Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services; Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act; Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act; Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act; Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act; Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights; and Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement, with Mr. Bromley in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The wish of the committee today is to continue with the Department of Health and Social Services and, time permitting, to begin with the general comments on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We will continue with Health and possibly move to Education today, but we will start with a brief break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order and we're working on the Department of Health and Social Services. I'd like to ask the Minister if you will be having witnesses today. Minister.

HON. SANDY LEE: Yes, please. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses into the House. Committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Sergeant. I'd like to ask the Minister to please introduce your witnesses.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have Deputy Minister Paddy Meade and director of finance, Mr. Derek Elkin. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the witnesses. Committee, we left off on page 8-29. Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I seek unanimous consent to go back to page 8-25 for a short, quick question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): There has been a request to go back to page 8-25. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. Go ahead, Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday in this session there was some talk about the extended health benefits and the Minister indicated that she was going to be bringing back their direction on that. I look forward to that, but there were also questions on how the department plans to provide support for what we once categorized as low-income families who didn't receive insurance or any support for health benefits from their employer. Now I understand fully that that is gone. That policy was rescinded, but there are still employees out there who do not have health benefits or whatnot from their employer. I still think that we need to find a way to help those employees who do not have coverage from their employers. Many of them are low-income families.

When I look over the principles in the report from the working group, one of the things it talked about is companies must be encouraged or required to obtain private insurance and then there were recommendations that indicated that employers must be encouraged, both directly and through the structure of programs, to provide third-party insurance to employees. All members of Chambers of Commerce have access to its group insurance program, public sector employees. To that end, I thought the department was committed to trying to help these employees who didn't have insurance obtain some sort of insurance. I thought that is how we were going to deal with those what we once categorized as low-income employers who do not have coverage. Can the Minister confirm that that is still one of the directions that this department is going to be taking to help fill that need of those individuals who don't have any coverage today? Are we still trying to actively encourage or are we looking for a mechanism whereby we can actively encourage employers to provide insurance? Is that still something that is underway? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, that option is there but what I was speaking about is the fact that we are not going to have strength of a policy change to do the things that we had wanted to do under the Supplementary Health Policy. It was a package under the policy and the policy has been rescinded. Encouraging or asking companies to provide insurance is one option, but without policy change or more weight behind it, it will remain an encouragement.

Yesterday much of the discussion was about more direct involvement and interventional role by this government. I was saying that to do that, it will need a new policy and the way we are going about it right now is to try to work as much as possible within the existing Extended Health Benefits Policy. Short answer to that is yes, but it wouldn't be as strong as we would have been able to do with a policy change. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Chairman, that is good to know. I am happy to hear that there is still some work being done on that. I understand that it will likely need policy change and, as a result of the decision to rescind, I know that you are not planning any policy change now. But this is obviously something that is important, and anything the department can be doing with its partners -- maybe ITI as an example -- to work with employers to find reasonable ways or reasonable mechanisms by which they can provide insurance to their workers where they don't currently.

I know the chamber offers things and whatnot that are available. Anything we can do as a government to encourage our employers to help their employees so they can maintain health coverage, regardless of income level, I think is the right thing to do. I am encouraging the Minister to don't let that one split by the wayside. Keep working on it. It might be the 17th Assembly where something has to come forward, but we sure would like to see something that helps those families who do not have any coverage at this point in time. I think it is in the best interest of the population. There is a good chance it could save us expenditures in the future. Healthier people tend not to use health care as often. That is all I have on that section, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. I will give the opportunity to the Minister to respond to that.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I generally agree with what the Member is saying. I think we will be able to have more discussion once we could make the proposal available to the House and the public. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Let me repeat this, then. We are on page 8-25, Health and Social Services, activity summary, supplementary health programs, operations expenditure summary, \$26.218 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, committee. We are returning to page 8-29. Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This section covers, obviously, an area that is important to a number of us, community health programs,

which also includes the Child and Family Services Act. I thank the Minister for providing us with the department's or, rather, government's response to the Child and Family Services Act in time that we could discuss it as we get to this section.

A lot of work was put into the review by committee and a lot of work was put into the responses by the department. Although we may have some differences of opinion on some of the wording within and we may not fully understand each other yet on what the recommendations and what the responses are, I look forward to an opportunity and I look forward to continuing to work together on that to find some real meaningful solutions and a real solid go-forward plan so we can benefit the children and families in the Northwest Territories.

However, there are some specific finance questions I would like to ask, things that are obviously timely and things that we or I and some committee members feel may have been missed in this business plan and these main estimates that we see in front of us. In the Child and Family Services Act, one area that is critical and makes our act unique in many, many ways is the establishment of the child and family service committees in the communities. During our journeys we heard many, many people talk about these committees. Some people were talking about them because they just learned about them for the first time ever when we mentioned that they exist; others didn't know about it. But these are unique aspects of our act and it is something that we should be proud of. Unfortunately, we haven't done a very good job of implementing these committees.

The Minister can correct me if I am wrong -- I may be -- but I could have sworn that there was some reference during previous discussions that the Minister made reference that the department was hoping to have five committees up and running during 2011-12. My question is around those committees. If you look at the response to the Child and Family Services Act, it actually said that it doesn't make any reference to establishing any new committees at all. It says that you agree that these committees are important, but that there are significant financial implications associated with this recommendation. A detailed cost analysis will be included for consideration in future GNWT planning and full implementation will be dependent upon available resources, which worries me given how important this is. Could the Minister commit to ensuring that at least five child and family services committees are established in the Northwest Territories by the end of the 2011-12 fiscal year?

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, as the Member knows, that suggestion is one of a number of proposals that have been given to me that are

under consideration. We are analyzing them and we will get back to members in committee on how and what options we have to make those happen. I am going to have to answer that in that way.

I do want to add a couple of things. The Member is right that the current legislation allows us to have children and family services committees. It is actually one of the pioneering and hallmark of this legislation that is different than many other legislations across the country. I was not aware, actually, as a Regular Member, that there was no funding that went with that. I think when we look at like committees, say there are other community justice committees, for example, I think there are budgets attached to that, but we've never had a budget attached to children and family service committees.

Regardless, the department has worked over the last couple of years to get these committees going. We've done it by contacting and communicating to community leadership, community governments, and it has been difficult. We have tried, it's due to lack of capacity, but also we do need to have money to expense those to be able to consider paying per diems, or organizing money, setting up. So it will require some investments. So I take Member's requests, I reiterate that it's one of the things that the committee has asked me to look into and we are analyzing those and we will get back to the Member. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: For the record, you can hear all four of them today as well. When it comes to the child and family services committee, short sights from previous governments are hardly our problem. This is something that's in the act, it's something that should have always been there and we need to find a way to make it happen. There are options. Let's think outside the box.

There are, as you pointed out, already existing committees in other departments. If there are opportunities to have the two departments work together for mutual benefit and provide these services, I think we should explore those options. I would expect the Department of Health to consider any and all opportunities to grade these committees and going out to the communities and listening to them and hearing how they would like to see these committees established is incredibly important.

Every community is different, every community is going to have a different concept and idea how this will work best for them. I think it's important to find the money. These are the children, these are the families we're talking about, this is a big deal. So I would like to hear some more commitment to move and be flexible on this.

The second one I have to ask you about is prevention and early intervention. Recommendation number 4, we asked the department to commit to the '11-12 budget money to move forward on

adjuring funding for prevention and early intervention in every community, and the department, the government rejected this recommendation. We think this is incredibly unfortunate. Prevention is critical to improving the lives of children and families in the Northwest Territories and we would like to see some prevention and intervention in place.

The department travelled with us on our journeys. They knew that this was an issue. It shouldn't have been a surprise. We also dropped the report in the Minister's hands weeks before its official release. So they had opportunity and time to consider building something into the main estimates on this one. So I'm disappointed that there wasn't an attempt. It may be unreasonable for us to expect that every community could have programs and money in place within a fiscal year, but there's no reason we can't see progress and movement in at least a number of communities. So my question to the Minister is: could she commit to ensure funding for prevention and early intervention in communities throughout the Northwest Territories in the '11-12 fiscal year?

HON. SANDY LEE: As the Member indicated, this is one of the items that we discussed when we met with the committee and I am considering those and analysing them. Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Member that this is something that we need to work on and that's the reason why, when I did my opening statement last Friday for this budget, I announced an extension of these programs to Early Childhood Intervention Program in Fort Simpson and Inuvik. So, obviously, the department has made that a priority and put it into the budget and within the opening statement.

The recommendation, how I read it, was that that should be made available in 31 communities, and that's fine. We don't have a problem with that in principle, which is what we said, it's just that that has to come with dollars, and it has to come with significant dollars. The very rough estimate we could think of is at least \$6 million. So it's not something I can just do by moving the money around. I don't have \$6 million sitting around that hasn't been spoken for, but I am encouraged by the committee's interest in working together with me to see what options I can come up with. As I committed yesterday, I will get back to the committee about options available to us that we can consider together, not to do 31 within this budget, just to be clear, but to do anything that we can do. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: I'm happy to hear that. Thirty-one would obviously be our dream, but some progress in this is important and progress builds upon progress and hopefully eventually we'll have all 31, but we definitely want to see some movement in this area.

Just for the record, the Minister did make reference to the Healthy Families Program. That was a completely separate recommendation and I'm happy to see that the Minister is moving on the recommendation.

One other area that we talked about when we were out in the communities was we clearly heard that people just were confused, frankly, just had no idea what their role under the Child and Family Service Act was, what their rights were under the Child and Family Services Act. Some plain language clarity on the act and their rights within the act would go a long way to improving implementation and the lives of children and families. So one of our recommendations was to develop a plain language policy and procedures document for public information, such as guidelines, how-to resources, a website and pamphlets for parents, families and children involved in the child protection system. This was recommendation number 34. We don't see this as costing a significant amount of money, but we have significant benefits to the people of the Northwest Territories. Understanding goes a long way to streamlining the process and helping the families. We want to see progress in this area, in this recommendation in the 2011-12 fiscal year. Once again, we don't see a significant amount of money, we are happy that you conditionally accepted it, but please include this in '11-12 with some dollars and start making progress on it for the sake of the children and for the sake of the families in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Clarifying comments there. Anything further, Minister Lee?

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've discussed this and we commit that I am giving it full consideration and I will be communicating with the committee. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to start by following up on the issue of child and family services committees further to Mr. Abernethy's comments. In looking at the business plan that we reviewed in September, there's a specific reference in the business plan to establishing child and family service committees in at least five more communities in this business year, and that was targeted for year '11-12. I'd like to know from the Minister what changed between September and the finalization of the department's budget that she now says they will try to get five communities with child and family services committees. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated, this has been in our work plan. It has been

the objective of the department to set up more children and family services committees. This issue has come up before the CFSA recommendation and, as I stated to Member Abernethy, we have had difficulties setting that up. So the business plan said our goal is to have at least five.

Right now, and as the Members know, the only real possibility right now of setting up within this year is Fort McPherson, and that has been in the works for three years. It has been extremely difficult. It's not just about the department going out and setting them out. We need the community support and community participation, we need the capacity building and such.

So I think what we need to do is we need to put in some financial resources and that's the next level that we need to think about in light of the Standing Committee on Social Programs' suggestion that we take a more interventionist role in that regard. It will take some money and we need to look at finding funds.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I totally understand that there are resources that are required. I guess I'm trying to understand why the business plan in September indicated that resources would be available in budget year 2011-2012 to establish five committees and now that money seems to have disappeared.

I also want to mention, and I believe it's in the Child and Family Services Act review report, that one size does not fit all in terms of child and family service committees and we emphasized in the report that there needs to be flexibility in how these committees are established. In some communities there's a very strong possibility that the child and family service committees could be part of the community justice committee that they could operate together and the same people could do two different jobs. That's just one possibility. There's any number of different avenues that communities can use to establish a committee which will assist them in child and family services and in apprehensions.

I wanted to speak a bit to funding for the Food First Foundation. It is something which has been funded, I think, by both the Department of Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment over the last couple of years. I'd like to know if there is funding in the budget for 2011-2012 to assist the Food First Foundation with their programs.

HON. SANDY LEE: Just on the first two points, the Member is right that we had as part of the business plan that we would like to have five children and family services committees set up, but that doesn't necessarily mean that we will put resources or that dollars are attached to that. The business plan is a plan. It's what we want to do as a department. There are dollars allocated but there are lots of

other policy framework and directives that we lay out there.

The second thing is, yes, I agree with the Member that flexible approach is desired and that is what we have been doing. The director of our child and family services have travelled to many different communities meeting with the community people, community leadership, and working to set up the child and family service committees. While I appreciate the committee saying this is so important and why can't you just get going, we need to have partnership with the communities. This can't be just a top-down approach. I just want to reiterate that we will continue to work on that.

On the Food First Foundation, we don't have any information here on whether we've given them money or not. I am aware that that organization has had funding assistance from some parts of this government, but I will have to take that question on notice and get back to the Member.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. I guess I would refer the Minister to a letter from the Executive Council that responded to a letter from Food First Foundation. You might ask the Minister of ECE for a copy because I think he signed it.

I wanted to also ask in terms of mental health and addictions. The information that we were given, again in the business plan in September, is that the department was doing a review of mental health and addictions programs. That review was going to be completed, I think, in November 2010. I'd like to ask first if that review is indeed completed, and if yes, can Members get a copy of that review?

HON. SANDY LEE: Just firstly on the Food First Foundation, I have seen the letter from Mr. Lafferty. It was under the heading of Executive Council because it involves more than one department. That's why I said it might be getting funding from somewhere, I just don't know exactly which department. I'm going to get back to the Member, as I had already stated.

The Mental Health Program review began in November and we hope to have that finalized with recommendations to the standing committee in the spring, April-May.

MS. BISARO: Obviously things change over months. The business plan stated that the review had been completed, but there we are. I certainly look forward to the review when it's done. I would hope that the review would come with some sort of an action plan at the time that we get it.

I wanted to also ask the Minister about the staffing for the Joe Greenland Centre. I know the purpose of that facility is changing. It will be seniors housing. Yes, I guess kind of home care assisted housing to a certain extent. There are any number of employees there who I gather will not be able to be

employed. My question goes to the staff that will be required once the long-term care half of that building has been changed over to seniors housing or assisted housing, whichever it is. My understanding is, from what I've read in the plans, that there will be, I think, three home support workers required. I've anecdotally been advised that some of the people that are going to be hired for there are not home support workers but health workers that require far higher qualifications. A dietician I think is one name that was mentioned and I can't remember the others. I'd like to ask the Minister if she can confirm what staffing is going to be required for the renovated section of Joe Greenland Centre. I gather there's one home support worker there now. Will they be hiring two more home support workers and that's it, or are they hiring home support workers and other types of health staff?

HON. SANDY LEE: The program change at Joe Greenland Centre is to use the facility for what it was really meant to be. It was not designed for level III and IV care that we've delivered there for the last number of years. Since 2007 we've had very few residents there.

When this wing is renovated and converted into independent units, we don't anticipate that we will have staff in that building. It will be like the other wing. There will be a caretaker and that sort of support.

What we anticipate is to expand the Elders Program for the entire community. Right now for the entire community of Aklavik there's one home care worker. We anticipate that we could have up to three home care workers. We want to be able to run any elders day programming out of Joe Greenland Centre. We believe there are about 30 to 40 elders there in their homes who need support from home care workers with all sorts of things that home care support provides.

The question about whether this home care worker will require more skills, that's not the information we have. We believe that those employees that are affected, HR rules require that we give them notice at the earliest possible opportunity when there are any contemplations of changes in jobs being considered. So that's why they had to be given notice very early and they are all eligible to apply for not only these jobs but also any other jobs that come at the community as well as in the region or anywhere.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just with regard to the delivering of community health programs. As I travel to the communities in my riding, the communities have been requesting, I think the communities get a \$5,000 allotment for developing their own

community-based community health programming. One of the communities, I think it was Trout Lake, found out that for the amount of in-house programming that they wish to deliver, \$5,000 they feel doesn't really cover their needs. They've often asked me to forward that concern on to the Health Minister. I think I have on a couple of occasions in the past year, requesting to see if there can be more funding for community-based health care prevention services. They can bring in their own healers if they wish for their different unique needs in each community. They did find that \$5,000 was... In a community like Trout Lake, it gets eaten up a lot by transportation costs. That's a real consideration for that. I'd just like to ask the Minister what the reason is for the \$5,000 limit. Is there opportunity for communities to access more programming dollars for their needs?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I need to find out more information about exactly what that \$5,000 program speaks to. What I can tell the Member is that it may be that is allocated monies under one program. Communities like Trout Lake, or other communities, can access other programs and funding whether they be within the authority or department-wide. Sometimes there's federal funding and such. Without having more detailed information, I would just like to tell the Member that if a community is interested in something specific, I'd be happy to inquire within the department and the authority to see what's available and work from there.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: I'd like to thank the Minister for that response. I'll be glad to follow up on it.

I know that the Minister of Health and Social Services is looking at expanding the respite care programming and piloting a couple of programs. I see that even the budget for that line item went up by almost a million dollars. I'd like to know if that is the case and are they looking at communities such as Fort Simpson for something like that. I do have some constituents that could benefit from respite care services. In fact, I had thought that we were using it at one point for some constituents in Fort Simpson, but I was mistaken. Certainly something like that, I know that it will certainly benefit constituents as we work to develop health and wellness amongst all families. I'd just like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what kind of pilot program and which communities will be used.

HON. SANDY LEE: I'm not sure what \$1 million he's referring to, but I can tell the Member that there are different types of respite care programs that the Department of Health and Social Services is involved in. There are respite care and long-term care facilities in our health facilities and in institutional settings as well as a respite program

that we are trying to expand in the Territories. As the Member is aware, in Yellowknife we had a pilot program with an NGO two or three years ago, but we saw the need to expand that program to outside of Yellowknife and we have allocated, under Strategic Initiatives committee, an investment of \$363,000 for this year which is a \$73,000 increase from last year. We are in the process of developing a territory-wide program but at the same time providing some programs in communities with the highest need. I do believe Fort Simpson is one of the communities, but I don't have that information. The communities we are moving into right now are Fort Smith, Aklavik and Deline. I will have to undertake to see what needs there are in Simpson and where they lie. We are anticipating that we will continue to fund this for next year as well. That's where we are with coming up with an NWT-wide respite care program. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. I wonder, Mr. Menicoche, if you could clarify where that million dollars is that you're referring to, what page that's on or what line. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'll be glad to go through the Minister's budget for her. It's the line item on prevention and promotion services. The budget item is up a million dollars from the previous year, from the revised estimate. That was my comment there, Mr. Chairman.

I'm glad to hear that we're expanding respite services and I'd certainly get the confirmation if it will be done in Fort Simpson. Most particularly for families of special needs is what I was asking for there, Mr. Chair.

As well, I think, if anything, one additional item that I've raised with the Minister already earlier on is in the community services and funding of social workers. Once again, the community of Fort Liard raised the issue. We thought it was handled by Christmastime but it wasn't and it's still an issue of having a second social worker on a casual basis until the return of the one who's having medical issues there, Mr. Chair. That's really got to be reviewed and followed up. The community does need a second social worker. They want that full coverage. They want local coverage, and I believe that we should listen to the community, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I'm happy to note that that increase of \$1 million under prevention and promotion services speaks to Healthy Choices Framework and Healthy Families programming that I spoke about earlier, and Fort Simpson is one of them.

On the social worker question, I am committed to following up on that. I agree with the Member that we need to know what the status of the current incumbent is. We were not able to fill the position

with a casual just because... I mean, they have social work coverage, it's just that to have a position there, because this position requires to have all kinds of statutory powers bestowed on them and it's not possible to do that on a quick turn-around with a casual. I committed to do that. I am following up on that right now and will get back to the Member as soon as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Next on my list I have Mr. Ramsay.

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a few questions on community health programs. First off, I wish the Minister and the department every success in trying to get together a respite program for the entire Territory. I think it's a big piece of work and something that I think will be greatly appreciated in communities around the Northwest Territories. It think that's a step in the right direction.

I also wanted to thank the Yellowknife Association for Community Living for the program that they've run quite successfully here in Yellowknife for the last number of years. I've seen, firsthand, constituents who have had a big impact on their quality of life by accessing the program through YACL. Again, I want to thank the Minister for agreeing to continue with that program here in Yellowknife. So thanks for that.

The other issue -- and I just wanted to touch on this -- just recently there was a report that the Yukon government had a third party do an evaluation of the addictions programming in the Yukon Territory and the findings were that the addictions programs in the Yukon Territory were woefully inadequate. I'd like to just get a better understanding of how adequate addictions programming is here in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Chairman, and whether or not we would stand to gain anything by conducting a third-party, independent, objective review of what addictions programming we have here in the Northwest Territories.

Again, if you look around at the social ills that are out there, addictions certainly plays a huge part in what plaques our communities and our families, whether it's alcohol or drugs or even gambling, for that matter, and we need to have some safeguards in place that are going to help people get through and deal with addictions problems. I guess that's the first question I have, Mr. Chairman, is where are we at with addictions? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are aware of the work that was done in the Yukon. The review we are doing is in a similar vein. The same group has done a review of similar programs in B.C. and Alberta. We are doing that and we will get recommendations and action items out of that

and work with the committee on that in the spring. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I thank the Minister for that. I'm not on the Social Programs committee, but that's the first I've heard of the department going down that road and, again, that's good news. I guess you have to ask questions to find out what's going on, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to hear that.

Again, with the issues I've been raising in the House here with the incidents of spousal assault, violent crime in our communities, in our Territory, and the money that we're spending, I don't think that we can underestimate it enough that we have to take the programs that we are delivering today and ensure that they are maximizing the return for us. If the statistics keep increasing like they are, we really have to, I think, go back to the drawing board and find out what's working, how it's working and why it's working and expand upon our successes. For things that aren't working, I don't know, maybe stop throwing money at it. That would be my suggestion, is we need to review what we're doing, because year in and year out we're spending millions and millions of dollars on prevention and programs and services and are they having an impact. I'd like to think they are, and I think for the most part they are, but the numbers need to be getting better and not worse. I think that's an indication that something's wrong with what we're doing if the numbers are getting worse and not any better. Once again, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Did the Minister have a comment there?

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. I just want to thank the Member for the comment. Yes, this is an ongoing challenge that we need to work on, but I just want to add to our discussions here some of the things that people involved with the Family Violence Coalition, Lydia Bardak was on the radio this morning speaking about... We rely on NGOs to help us with this. I think the government has undertaken a number of initiatives to combat family violence at different levels, whether it be through the courts or enhancing shelter money, working with children who witness violence, there's an initiative to work with men who abuse. We have staged programs to address this very serious issue.

I think we should just be cautious about statistics, because it is subject to interpretation and an argument can be made, and I'm not going to in any way dismiss the stats we have. I mean, stats give us good indicators, but there are various things you could attribute to why the numbers are rising and one of them being that sometimes keeping better track of what's going on keeps the numbers up there too. I think Members are aware that we need multi partners and multi initiatives, which is what we are doing right now. Thank you.

MR. RAMSAY: I thank the Minister for that. I know the good work that's done around the Territory by service and program providers in the area of family violence. It's much appreciated and our residents are glad that those services and programs are out there for them. I wouldn't want to underestimate the work that's happening there. I think it is good work.

The Minister talked about partnerships. Some of the dialogue that I have had here in the last couple of days has been with the Minister of Justice. I think a big part of this is targeting really the only person that can make a difference in domestic violence and that is the perpetrator, the abuser. We have to find a way to target and rehabilitate or reprogram that abuser. To me that is the biggest thing that we can do. If we have individuals out there that are committing 18 or 19 violent offences and getting light sentences and getting back out and reoffending, we are not rehabilitating, we are not reprogramming. They are just becoming institutionalized and going through the system time and time again. I would like to ask the Minister how the Department of Health and Services interacts with the Department of Justice on violent offenders, especially offenders in the area of domestic violence, and what input do you have in the programming that takes place at North Slave Correctional Centre or any...or is there an open dialogue between the two departments in trying to come up with the best, most suitable programming and services at our justice or corrections facilities to deal with that? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, on family violence issues as with the situation with some other like topics, we work very closely with departments like Justice. Family Violence Coalition is comprised of NGOs that are involved in this work as well as the Department of Justice and Health and Social Services and other people who are working in that field. Mr. Chairman, I can assure the Member that a lot of the same people are involved in sharing information and working on strategies and evaluating the programs and such. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister. Next on my list I have Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to start off where I left off during my last round of questioning.

In discussion with the Minister, the fourth point that we have with respect to the child and family services is that we feel that recommendation 39 should also be implemented or at least begin implementation of recommendation 39 during the 2011-12 fiscal year. Once again, we don't feel that a recommendation indicates or asks the department to make updating the policy and standards manual a priority, but assign staff to lead and manage the project and to complete it within a reasonable time frame is going to cost a significant

amount of money. Value for dollar on the rewrite is significant. I would like the Minister to commit that she will move on this recommendation in 2011-12 and begin the process of updating the policy and standards manual under the Child and Family Services Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, I know the Member... This is one of the number of items that we discussed in the standing committee. I just want to make it clear that, as I stated yesterday, I am fully committed to looking at all of the suggestions that the committee made yesterday.

I just need the committee to understand that the response is government's response and any changes or reconsiderations of budget will be a Cabinet direction. Our department is analyzing those recommendations right now. I will get back to the committee on how we go about with the options. I am not trying to evade; I understand what you are saying. I want to keep on working together with the committee on these. Mr. Chairman, I am fully engaged. It is just that it is the government response. The budget is a government budget as well. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Chairman, government response, government budget, Health and Social Services' responsibility, so we look forward to your commitment to getting that information but we are talking about the budget now. We need to know what is happening before we move forward.

The last thing I want to ask on the Child and Family Services Act is actually a question that I stood up to ask during oral questions. I completely blanked on it. As soon as I sat down, I remembered what the question was so I will ask it now. The response indicates that you guys will be doing a strategic plan. I asked you during question period if that meant could you please commit to completing a strategic plan, with our input, obviously, committee's input, before the end of the 16th Assembly. I didn't hear you say yes. Could the Minister now commit that that strategic plan will be completed before the end of the life of this government and that committee will have some involvement in that and, lastly, that you will keep us briefed on progress regularly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, yes, the answer is yes. We will have the strategic plan done this fiscal year. We are hoping by August and we will work with the committee. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to ask any more questions on child and family services. You are probably happy to hear that.

This section of your department, community health programs, one of the areas that you provide grants

and contributions to are non-government organizations. A lot of what the department is affording in respect to counselling and addictions and stuff like that is done through NGOs in the voluntary sector. They are a very responsive group. They can do an awful lot. They can often go a little further with the money they provide them. We could, if we delivered programs and services in-house. I see them as being a critical aspect of business in the Northwest Territories. We need to make sure that we are providing them meaningful and ongoing support. Not every NGO is obviously in the category where multiyear funding is necessary, but certainly some are, some that are providing obviously some key counselling service, addiction services, treatment, housing, all the things that you heard us all talk about today.

I noticed over time some NGOs have slipped to one-year funding as this review of the NGO sector has gone on. I am wondering if you can tell me -- how many might be too specific -- but do we have many NGOs that are running on one-year funding from the Department of Health and Services? If so, what are we doing to ensure that we can provide some of these key NGOs multiyear funding so they can stabilize their service delivery and better meet the needs of the residents of the Northwest Territories?

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, we do support multiyear funding for NGOs. Not all NGOs are able or equipped to do that. We consider the multiyear funding arrangement on an NGO-by-NGO basis. We are currently reviewing our funding arrangement with NGOs in the department. Thank you.

MR. ABERNETHY: Mr. Chairman, in past years I remember seeing a bit of a summary from the department. I think it might have been your department. It might have been a different department outlining the NGOs that we are supporting and which ones are multiyear and which ones are more one-time. Could you please get us a current update on the NGOs you are funding, how much you are funding them and which ones have multiyear funding, just for our information? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, we will do that. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too was going to ask about multiyear funding agreements for NGOs. I just have a quick follow-up question to Mr. Abernethy's. The government has recently put out a program manager's guide to NGOs. The Minister mentions they are reviewing agreements that the department has with NGOs. Are they using that program manager's guide to assist them in their reviews? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, yes.

MS. BISARO: Mr. Chairman, thanks for the answer. I wanted to go back just quickly to the Joe Greenland Centre staffing. The documentation that we received, I know it is from the NWT Housing Corporation and Health and Social Services. A little while ago we received a briefing note which indicated that two home support workers would probably be hired. The Minister mentioned up to two home support workers at one point and then a little later on in her remarks she stated hiring of one home support worker, so could I get a clarification as to how many staff are being hired for the renovated portion of Joe Greenland Centre? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I need to reiterate that we are not hiring employees for the renovated Joe Greenland Centre. Home care workers, we are talking about home care workers that will be employed by the authority to work for the entire community.

In answer to the Member's first question, the briefing note said two home care support workers. When I was in Aklavik meeting with the community, after that we have looked into that further and we are working toward having three home care support workers. So it is one more than what was suggested in the briefing note. Right now there is one home care worker in Aklavik and he spends, apparently, most of his time driving elders around. We need people to do more than that. We need to have home care workers that will support elders with their medication or medical, working on light housework, making sure their chronic disease conditions, or just be able to do more home visits, so we are going to expand the home care supply there by 300 percent with reprogramming. We are not going to be staffing. Joe Greenland Centre will be renovated and returned to what it was meant to be, which is an independent living unit. The NWT Housing Corporation has at least eight or nine elders who are on the waiting list who could benefit from moving into that unit. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister and thanks for the clarification on the staffing. I knew that and kind of didn't state it that way, but I am glad to hear there will be three home support workers in the community of Aklavik. I think that's a good thing.

I wanted to ask a question about the amount of funding in this budget for homelessness. Could the Minister initially tell me what programs that we run for homelessness? I believe there is a couple but if she could name them for me. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I might have to ask my staff here to get me the details, but we run the Small Community Shelter Program, that is for \$250,000

and then we have another program under a different name where we help our people to be relocated or go back to communities they came from sometimes. That is a separate funding for \$200,000, but I need to revisit the name of that program. These are the two that I can think of right now, other than O and M funding support that we provide to lots of different NGOs.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. Those are the two programs that I was aware of. I guess I would like to ask the Minister, she mentions O and M funding for various NGOs, but the Small Communities Homeless Fund and the other, I think it is Homelessness Assistance Fund or something, they don't really apply to larger communities, so I would like to ask the Minister if there is any money in the 2011-2012 budget that can assist homelessness programs and needs within the larger communities, regional centres and the city of Yellowknife. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: We do provide, for example, we do have a day shelter program which is a form of... I mean, we are not obviously the users of that facility, don't stay there, but we do serve the same clients that come out of Salvation Army or other homes in Yellowknife. We have funded the SideDoor Youth Centre with one of these two programs. We provide funding to Salvation Army, Centre for Northern Families and YWCA, so that is sort of the multi-spectrum of funding that we provide to different groups that deal with the homeless population or, you know, it is not entirely accurate to say that none of that money goes to programs in Yellowknife. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: I don't believe I said that we don't get any money, I recognize that there certainly are organizations that run programs and that there are contributions from the Department of Health and Social Services, but I am a little concerned that there is no fund for larger centres that is application-based, which I gather that the Small Community Homeless Fund is. I guess I would encourage the department to try and provide some funding at some point, if it is not in this year's budget, then consider it for next year's budget. There certainly are needs within all of our communities for homelessness funding and it shouldn't just be based on operations and maintenance funding for existing shelters and programs.

My last question has to do with the Healthy Choices Framework and the Healthy Choices Program. I want to say that I think it is an excellent program. It is one of the few areas, in my mind, that we have cross-departmental coordination and I think things seem to be coordinated rather well there. Somewhere along the line, a while ago anyway, we received a copy of the Healthy Choices Framework and it was an evaluation framework at that time, it

did not show any evaluation of the program, so my question to the Minister is: has there been an evaluation of the Healthy Choices Framework and, if not, when could we expect to see the results of an evaluation of the program? It has been in place for a couple of years now and I think it is probably due to be evaluated. The evaluation framework we got is really quite detailed and I think it would be a valuable tool to determine whether or not the money we are spending is being well spent. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Member's comments on that. This initiative is part of our Building Our Future Strategic Initiative Committee project and Ministers across departments and deputy ministers sit in this group. I will undertake to follow up on that evaluation suggestion and follow up with the Member on that.

I just want to add one more note about this Small Community Homelessness Funding. I take the Member's point, but just going back to the history, those programs were set up precisely to address the needs of small communities that didn't have shelters. I understand shelters are under, they are stretched and they are in need of more resources than what they get, but the Small Community Funding Program was set up to assist small communities because they just didn't have any other resources. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Just a quick follow-up on the Healthy Choices Program. I didn't get from the Minister whether or not an evaluation has ever been done. I am presuming from her answer if she is following up, that no evaluation has been done. Could I get clarification on that, please?

HON. SANDY LEE: My information is that it hasn't been done and we will follow up and I will get back to the Member on timing of when that could be done. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Minister Lee. Next on my list is Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of community health programs, is the department looking at a comprehensive family program? We have a bunch of programs all over the place, and have they put together a unique northern, even an Aboriginal cultural family program, and yet in my seven years I haven't really seen a family program come out of the communities in terms of treatment in terms of addiction, family violence or any type of abuse for the whole family. Is that something that we should be asking more forcefully in terms of putting family programs together? I want to ask the Minister in terms of what is really being done in the North, and if she can keep it brief.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Yakeleya. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Mr. Chairman, I don't know how to be brief, so I am going to ask the deputy minister to give more detail, briefly. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Ms. Meade.

MS. MEADE: Mr. Chairman, as mentioned earlier, the department is doing a comprehensive review of the mental health programs, both from the in-patient psychiatric and the flow-through for coordination, mental health and addictions. We hope to have that review completed in the spring. The people conducting the review and working with getting authority and community input are actually given the direction to ensure that it is not southern program but that it reflects the North and the Territory's needs and the cultural component, their recommendations around the family component. We do currently offer family counselling in the areas of if there are members of violence, children who witness violence, and on mental health and addictions, but it is not a said family program, it is family specific at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bromley): Thank you, Ms. Meade. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the review in the springtime and having some further discussions. I want to ask the Minister in terms of going forward in this area here, Mr. Chairman, it seems that we are spinning our feet here in terms of getting help for people in our communities. I recall an old lady in Colville Lake that talked about having a program on the land. It has been about seven years now since I have been in the Assembly. It is very difficult for this government to put a program on the land. We spend about \$2 million a year in Nats'ejee K'eh and we see that every year we have a hard time putting drug and alcohol programs on the land. I wonder if we really are listening to the people.

Again, I come back to my same comments that I made before. Are we really listening to the people? They keep asking, can we get a program? We get these three-day programs, but we really need a strong program on the land that won't cost much. It will save this department a lot of money, save the families a lot of money and certainly it will bring the families together. If we don't show any type of leadership and motivation or some courage by taking the bull by the horn and putting a program out there...

Families do want to go out there, yet we are not there yet. We have to fight the bureaucracy and the system. I guess it is frustrating at times, but I am not going to give up yet on this notion of having on-the-land programs. I want to ask the Minister in terms of when the Minister does her review, will there really be emphasis to Aboriginal people like

the old lady in Colville Lake? Now that she is getting older, she is telling me it would be nice to have programs on the land. I wonder if the bureaucracy and the Department of Health and Social Services gets it. Are they still stuck on facilities like Nats'ejee' Keh or mental health? It is the culture you are dealing with. The culture is being heavily influenced by a lot of things. We need to move in that area in the Health Promotion Program. We can save the communities a lot of money, but we are not. This is what the people are telling us. Why should they keep telling us what to do? We keep asking them, but it is just like we are spinning our feet and not listening to them. We need to move away from that, Mr. Chairman.

It has been seven years, and yet I haven't seen a document that says this is how we are going to do the program on the land. I haven't seen it. It is frustrating to sit on this side going back to the communities. You can work with families, children, fathers, everybody, but we have them all separate, even with the issue of residential school. It is right across the valley. Our jails are full with people that, for whatever reason, have put them there. People are killing themselves, young people. I talked about that earlier. Today we have homeless people. We have to give them hope and inspiration to do something. The only way that the elder told me -- and I believe the elder -- is if we have our system that supports to go on the land. That is the way I believe. But somehow our health programs don't quite honour that or respect it. They give us lip service, but their actions are very weak when it comes down to actually doing it. I have experienced it with this department and other departments. Some departments are a little better than others, but can you really tell the old lady and the elders in Colville Lake we will now do a land program?

Now there are young boys in more trouble than ever because we haven't helped them out. We need to listen to our people. Youth are asking for help. If there is a death in the community of close family, we tell them to get over it in three days and go to school, and they are expected to sit in school and deal with this emotion. We need to put them out somewhere where they will get good help. Mind you, this is only one part of the health programs that needs to be changed. I wonder if this department is big enough to make those kinds of changes and have faith. That is what I wanted to tell this department. I am not going to go over my wish list again because I could send them all what I said in the last seven years and ask them to follow up on some of those things. That is what I want to say, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Mr. Yakeleya. Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure the Member wants me to be brief, so I'm going

to try to be brief. The Member is right that we spent \$2 million at Nats'ejee K'eh but we also spent \$6 million for the community counselling mental health program. That's not to include the psychiatric unit and the heavy duty mental health work that goes on at the hospital. I understand the Member's frustration, but what we are talking about is a huge demand. We have this huge need among a large portion of our population who needs mental health support, right up from psychiatric and most acute care that needs to be delivered in the hospital to what the community people want to do on the ground level and on-the-land programming.

The Member knows that we have provided funding for communities. We have provided funding for communities in the Sahtu as well. I know that the Sahtu Health Authority has provided funding for on-the-land programming. Granted, they're not an established and consistent programming, but it is not the bureaucracy or the lack of will. It is that we are dealing with a massive, massive mental health and addictions challenge in the Northwest Territories.

I said we are reviewing the Mental Health Program, as I answered MLA Ramsay. We are going to come back to standing committee with the findings in April and May. In the meantime, I will be announcing the integration and some reorganizing of our mental health programming to improve the service in the interim. This is a huge challenge for us and there is just so much demand and stretching of the resources. This is the challenge.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We talked a little bit about community health programs yesterday. I didn't have an opportunity to get into one of the subject matters that I consider to be very important in Tu Nedhe. That is the whole area of the issue with suicide in the small communities. I'd like to ask the Minister if there is anything significantly different in the sense of an increase of attention or programs or anything on suicide prevention in this budget compared to what was in the previous budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Ms. Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: No, we can't say that we are substantially increasing the funding for suicide prevention.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'm assuming that it would be a matter of the prevention and promotion services. In here it's indicated that programs assist with emotional and social problems such as suicide, homelessness, and dealing with residential school issues. The majority of those, homelessness and residential school issues, are of course something that I recognize the department has to pay some

attention to. I know that it is difficult to address the homelessness issue because it's difficult to find absolute homeless people in the small communities because relatives take them in and they end up becoming relative homeless people, which is an actual term. So there are people that don't have their own home but kind of drift from home to home. It's a difficult area to work in.

Suicide prevention, on the other hand, I think is something more emphasis has to be put into. I think it actually virtually devastates a family. Even it happened a handful of times in Tu Nedhe since I've been elected as MLA and I've seen the devastating impacts on the families. It's an area that's difficult to work in and a lot of people just don't know how to deal with that area. The department has resources to maybe explore some options, explore some services outside of what's available now and put some extra resources into this area in order to assist the families.

I don't remember the program CBC runs on Friday afternoons. Edts'ula or something like that. Actually, they had a program on people that were affected by suicide. This particular individual spoke on there that had two incidents in the family and said that had they actually received some support in between, they may have saved the life of the second individual in their family that committed suicide. I guess one life is worth more than anything else that we hope to save in a budget. To that family, it's not an issue of cost.

I guess, again, I'd like to know if there is no increase, then the department may feel that there is a sufficient amount of money and resources, human and otherwise, human and financial to address this area. I'd like to know if that's the case, if the department feels that they have sufficient resources.

HON. SANDY LEE: As I stated, there is no substantial increase to anything in our budget because it's, as people have called it, a status quo maintenance kind of budget under our fiscal circumstance.

With respect to suicide prevention work, we are doing some new work under this initiative. We have obtained some funding with the Mental Health Commission, which is a body set up nationally, and we've been getting some money for the last couple of years. This year we will be flowing \$460,000 in federal funding for community-based suicide prevention projects. One of the initiatives that we are embarking on is to set up an NWT Suicide Prevention Steering Committee. This committee will be made up of the Department of Health and Social Services, Education, Culture and Employment, MACA, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, Canadian Mental Health Association, and the national program Graduates and Trainers on Suicide Prevention, as well as Dene and Inuvialuit

community members. We are working also on, they call it Mental Health First Aid: Training the Trainers for the communities. That's the initiative that we're working on. We have also always had some programs under the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, called ASIST, and those programs have been held in some of the communities as well. There's not a substantial increase in the amount of money, but we are working on some initiatives to address this issue.

MR. BEAULIEU: That's good, actually. That sounds good, the money from the federal government. What is the plan to roll out the budget? Is it just filling budgets that are already at the community level or is this a little bit of new money? If so, what's the communication strategy of the department to the small communities for this particular line item?

HON. SANDY LEE: We'll be floating this money into the authorities to work at the community level.

MR. BEAULIEU: Does that mean that Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority will get the money for Fort Resolution and Lutselk'e?

HON. SANDY LEE: I need to have my deputy minister give the information, as it's operational.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Lee. Ms. Meade.

MS. MEADE: So there are multiple ways that this can go but in the mental health and addictions funding, therefore the suicide funding, does go through the authorities and in the department. For the Train the Trainer model, we actually are using our own department resources to go out and train both staff at the authorities as well as the community.

We were unique in Canada that we got money from the Mental Health Commission of Canada to actually get the Mental Health First Aid Program and some trainers. Again, the money flows through the department and the authorities but they paid for some community representatives -- I know there were two out of Fort McPherson that come to mind -- to take that training. This is not money that is available for communities because the program is run through the authorities and connected to their ongoing mental health addictions and community wellness programs. We're trying to do as much to also build community capacity and awareness. It's not as much a money flow as trying to use the existing resources and people to do that expanded training. If it was an authority, then they're responsible for their areas within their authority boundary.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Ms. Meade. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: It's very unfortunate that money can't go directly to the communities. I think that the communities would have a better idea. I know that in speaking to the elders in the community -- I know I'm out of time, Mr. Chairman, I'll be short -- the elders in the community indicate to me that their idea of trying to work with the emotional and social aspects around suicide prevention would be to be bringing people. I had asked the Minister on this on another matter, to bring people in that will work with the communities, like healers and so on that will work with the communities. I think that's something that communities should have the option to look at.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. More of a comment but I'll go to the Minister for the question.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Healers and other initiatives that the Member mentioned would have to come from other sources of money. This is something that I've been communicating with the Member and it is an ongoing challenge for us to come up with those resources.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The first thing I have on my list here is the Healthy Families Program. I wanted to say that I appreciate its expansion. Modest to what is required, but this is such a good program that every community we get it in is a major gain. I know it's also expensive and the Standing Committee on Social Programs knew it was expensive when we made the recommendation to get this in every community. We also think it's the very best investment we can make.

Could I just ask the Minister first of all, the \$500,000 that's provided for expansion, I believe that would be for a team in each community like a nurse or social worker and that social worker can work with about 30 families maximum. This will provide key support for about 30 programs in each of those two new communities. So I'm just wondering if I've got that right.

While the Minister's at it, I'm wondering how long this program has been running. I'm wondering when we established the Healthy Families Program in the four communities that have it now. Thank you.

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

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I am going to have to take that comment under advisement. I'm sorry; I'll have to follow up. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I assume that holds for how long the program has been going too. Jurisdictions that

have had this, as I mentioned in a Member's statement several days ago and I profiled the advances and benefits that have been achieved with programs like this, I am wondering have we an evaluation program in place. If we do, when can we get the results on that and, if not, can we get that in place? I think, again, possibly this is our single biggest opportunity for savings and gains in both lives and consequences. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Right now our focus is to expand them, but I understand the need to evaluate and take stock, so I will commit to doing that. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that commitment. The strategic plan and implementation of it, I assume, will have some costs associated and I think the Minister is hoping to get that done in the next several months, so presumably the implementation of it will happen during the 2011-2012 budget year. Have there been dollars identified or will that implementation be expected to be from internal resources?

HON. SANDY LEE: I don't believe we get separate funding for implementing a strategic document. There will be programs that we will have to go through a business plan process or we would have to do it internally, thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I am sure the Minister sees the dilemma that I am trying to sort out here that here we are putting a program together but not providing any dollars for it, even for its implementation. So you know we are preparing a plan that we could have to wait another year to implement, that is what I am wondering. I know the Minister has also mentioned in terms of the five community child and family services committees they were hoping to establish has been trying to get that going and sampling the water out there, working with communities. I am wondering if the community of Dettah or Yellowknife have been approached for establishing child and family services committees.

HON. SANDY LEE: I can tell you that we are looking at the possibility. The Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, the CEO is meeting with a community group outside of Yellowknife, that being Dettah and N'Dilo to discuss the possibility of that committee. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate that information from the Minister. I would encourage the Minister to look to the MLAs to help try and develop support and engagement with that process. I think that would be a legitimate request from a Minister and a legitimate role that you could expect an MLA to play, to do work in that area. So that is just a note.

I would like to move on now to the mental health program review started in November. I don't recall having any input to the terms of reference for that review, but knowing my memory, that could be a

plus or a minus. I would appreciate to know whether such a process would include the opportunity for Regular MLAs or committee to have input on the terms of reference. Specific to that review, does it include patient release and readmission policy; a review of those policies in the mental health program review? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: I will ask the deputy minister to give more details, but just to explain to the Members here, under the Foundation for Change, there is a work item there to review mental health programming. I was advised, after the deputy minister came on board, when she looked at all of the programs and we identified right away that this mental health program needed to be looked at very closely with a view of improving that and restructuring that, so we have undertaken those actions. I don't know the process is in terms of getting the terms of reference reviewed and such. I don't think that we do that for all reviews. There is always a question, but I just want to let you know that we internally identified to look at this programming for all the reasons you have mentioned. The acute program right down to all of the community services that are available, so it has been tendered and we are getting it reviewed. I feel that the real good work can be done by looking at what the findings are and how do we move forward from that. If there are any more details that you need on this review, I would be happy to have Paddy add on to it. It is up to you. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I am very happy that this review is going forward. I think it is great that the department has had the initiative to do this. Again, I think this is probably a given that the Standing Committee on Social Programs would appreciate the opportunity to have input on the terms of reference for those sorts of reviews because I can say as an MLA for Weledeh, that I have had many issues and concerns from my constituents over the years in this area and have developed some concerns and an awareness of the sorts of things that are happening out there. I am very happy to see this review going ahead and I look forward to the results. I wanted to know, thanks to the Minister for her offer, one additional detail and that is whether the review covers the availability and effectiveness of addictions treatment programs in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Ms. Meade.

MS. MEADE: Many but not all people with addictions have comorbidities, they also have mental health or other issues, so we are including that group. There is also the difference between those that have manageable mental health issues, manageable meaning can be dealt with in the community, or those with severe psychiatric issues. So most of this review is connected to community

mental health and addictions, but it is dovetailing with the work we are doing on our psychiatric intake and psychiatric management of patients at both Stanton and the Beaufort-Delta in the hospitals. It is also building on the fact that we do now have, finally, two psychiatrists, and while they are still on a locum contract, we are working to get them to be full time or permanent here, because that has been significant.

You had mentioned earlier about the issue of policies around release. This is very complicated because it also dovetails with issues around release of corrections. When you get a core group, it is not very large, it is significant as to how to manage them, and the actual cycle between justice facilities, both federal, by the way and not just territorial, and in-patient, and can be quite problematic in our hospital settings. Also on release of patients we have human rights and issues around how that happens, so we are dealing with some of that with our look at the psychiatric not covered here, but as they come together this will be dovetailed. I have raised the issue with the deputy minister of Justice that we need to look at some of this cycle between a correctional facility and not just in the Territories, RCMP holding and hospital-based, because it is a core group not unique to here and very difficult to manage.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Recently I have inquired with the Department of Health and Social Services to follow up on some costing and focus on what we do for the Quitline and that would, of course, be people who have quit smoking. As many of us know, I guess it is a cessation phone line you call to speak about your woes of smoking cigarettes. I haven't called it myself so I don't specifically know, but I believe it's set up in that context.

As I've learned from the Department of Health and Social Services, the response from the Minister, I believe \$24,000 has gone to radio advertising and there's a contract, I believe an Ontario company called Sykes. I guess they take the phone calls. Now, I realize some of this is federal money, if not all of it is federal money. Under this heading of healthy programs, has the Minister looked at setting up phone lines here in the North that could deal with people to take their addictions calls in the same manner of in a follow-up treatment?

Now, I know there's a mental health line. You hear that on the radio, where people can call if they're having trouble, which I think is a great service because, obviously, it wouldn't be up if people didn't need it. I certainly hope that that's the case, obviously, that it wouldn't be there if people didn't need it or use it. But that said, I'm specifically looking for the area of addictions treatment where

people can call and talk about their addiction problems and hopefully avoid a relapse. Has the department set anything up or followed through on any particular follow-up treatment process in that type of regard? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are lots of issues wrapped up into the Member's statement there. The Quitline, that program is being delivered outside of the NWT because we could not cost-effectively man or woman that phone line and to give the kind of technical information to those who wished to quit smoking. It's not just us but many jurisdictions across the country are using the same service provider so that you have people who are equipped to answer those questions. We expect that demand for that service will increase when the federal government launches a more aggressive campaign on the cigarette packaging.

The Member then asked questions about whether there is a phone line people could call about their addictions issues or aftercare and all that. I don't think we can solve that by having a phone line. Those are things that our health care providers and social workers and everybody on the ground deal with. It was brought up earlier that we spend about \$6 million in mental health programming with our community mental health workers on the ground. All of our care providers, whether they be doctors, nurses, social workers, they are the ones people need to go to get help in that area. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: My question really wasn't about the radio smoking cessation Quitline. It was more to draw a parallel that this government has sought out in one manner or another whether the federal government came knocking or we went looking, as a government, looking for money to help sponsor that type of addiction treatment, which I think is good value for people. But by and large, the bridge I was trying to demonstrate in the sense of comparison is the government works to provide a phone line for people to talk, or I guess, talk out their problems about why they want a cigarette and perhaps someone on the other line talks to them and convinces them not to reach for that extra cigarette. What stops the government from investigating and proceeding with allowing, sort of, a follow-up line or a call line for people to speak to some of these service providers, whether they're in the Lutselk'e region, the Beaufort-Delta region, or the Nats'ejee K'eh region, whatever the case may be? One that's relevant to them and perhaps one that they've already been to. What's stopping the government from setting up a follow-up line for people who have gone through these programs to be able to lean back onto for extra support when

working through the struggles? What stops the government from doing that? Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: Well, nothing stops us from doing that other than the fact that there is no real, I don't think... I mean, the phone lines we've tried, like the Health Line, per cost basis it wasn't the most effective service because our people still want to have face-to-face counselling. People don't even like calling the RCMP on a phone line. Our people would like to have care providers face to face.

My point is we have those services available in communities for people to go to for their treatment options or aftercare or anything like that. I don't think there's anything stopping us. It's one option, but it would be a whole new initiative. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: What's stopping the department from making it part of the programming dollars we supply to various service agencies that provide addictions treatment and support for obligating them as part of the service agreement to provide an aftercare phone line for people to talk about, perhaps, the strains of fighting their addictions? If it's good enough for Poundmaker outside of Edmonton to have a follow-up line where they actually do follow-up calls and whatnot to ensure the clientele have gone through their program so that they know they're still supported outside once they've finished the program and while they continue to struggle with the addiction until they gain control, why wouldn't it be a considerable effort that we'd pursue as a consideration of our service level agreements? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Ms. Meade.

MS. MEADE: I think we need to clarify between a 1-800 quit line, call line, addiction line that are available, you know, the children's line in Canada, for example, and the follow-up lines that treatment programs give to their clients, which often also happens in our own programs already. People who are also in addictions refer to some of the other groups like AA, NA and multiple groups like that, which also provide access through sponsors or call lines. I think the issue of setting up a 1-800 territorial-wide line is more complex and certainly we were able to do the Quitline because of federal funding.

The issue of being able to have our resources available to people for aftercare and when they need to talk, that's a different issue. I think we do need to continue to encourage and support that through all our providers and to link with the other organizations like AA and NA. They are a highly successful organization for people that that program fits. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What would stop the Department of Health from making this a requirement of the service level agreement

we do sign with these agencies to set up a phone number where people, not just a phone number, but also requiring the counsellors to do follow-up phone calls with people who have worked through a treatment process? What would stop the department from doing that? If you made it part of your agreement, perhaps it wouldn't cost significantly anymore for asking them to do some follow-up. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister Lee.

HON. SANDY LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We couldn't do that to authorities. We couldn't ask them to do something unless we could provide the funding. To have a 24-hour phone line for every authority, going by the H1N1 flu line, those are very, very expensive program options. We have to make a decision. It's a duplication of service. Yet nothing stops us from requiring the authorities as long as we are willing to provide the funding. A 24-hour phone line will require two to three staff. That's, right away, \$300,000, and that's people with knowledge about addictions. If we were to do that to all six authorities, right there it's at least a couple million dollars. I don't have a couple million dollars sitting around. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Chairman. Perhaps the more efficient way of doing it is making it a part of our service level agreements we've cast in...(inaudible)...some type of compromised negotiation in having the agencies that we actually negotiate directly with. In other words, the Department of Health directly negotiates and draws up service level agreements with certain groups. Why don't we have them have these groups phone people as part of the Aftercare Program on a contiguous basis of some manner to make sure people are on track with their programming? Would it not serve some interest in everyone's efforts, be it service agency or the government, in trying to find a way to stop them from coming back for further treatment in the future by a little proactive care? You just made the case of not doing a 1-800 number that's not staffed 24 hours a day. I find that reasonable, but you could demand that we require a higher level of service. That could be done today if your department was willing to commit to it. Thank you.

HON. SANDY LEE: We have, I believe, 62 positions dealing with mental health and addictions already. There is underground support for that work. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Abernethy): Thank you, Minister Lee. My clock shows that it's 6:00 p.m., so in recognition of the clock, I'll now rise and report progress. Minister Lee, if I could get you to please thank your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, if I could please get you to escort the witnesses, that would be fantastic.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The honourable Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Ramsay.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

PRINCIPAL CLERK OF COMMITTEES (Ms. Knowlan): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 10, 2011, 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. Replies to Budget Address
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
 - Motion 31-16(5), Setting of Sitting Hours by Speaker
 - Motion 32-16(5), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 14, 2011
 - Motion 33-16(5), Supporting Veterinary Education
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills

21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 4-16(5), Executive Summary of the Report of the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project
- Tabled Document 30-16(5), 2010 Review of Members' Compensation and Benefits
- Tabled Document 38-16(5), Supplementary Health Benefits - What We Heard
- Tabled Document 62-16(5), Northern Voices, Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy
- Tabled Document 75-16(5), Response to the Joint Review Panel for the Mackenzie Gas Project on the Federal and Territorial Governments' Interim Response to "Foundation for a Sustainable Northern Future"
- Tabled Document 103-16(5), GNWT Contracts over \$5,000 Report, Year Ending March 31, 2010
- Tabled Document 133-16(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2011-2012
- Tabled Document 135-16(5), GNWT Response to CR 3-16(5): Report on the Review of the Child and Family Services Act
- Bill 4, An Act to Amend the Social Assistance Act
- Bill 14, An Act to Amend the Conflict of Interest Act
- Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act
- Bill 20, An Act to Amend the Evidence Act
- Minister's Statement 65-16(5), Devolution Agreement-in-Principle, Impact on Land Claims and Protection of Aboriginal Rights
- Minister's Statement 88-16(5), Sessional Statement

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 10, 2011, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

