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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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ORDERS OF THE DAY648

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Monday, May 28, 2012

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:36 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 5-17(3):
ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, since the implementation of the New Deal for NWT Community Governments in 2007, community governments have been in control of their own infrastructure priorities. The New Deal has changed the way they do business with Municipal and Community Affairs, and as a result, the department's role has transformed into that of coach, advisor and supporter.

Building on the ideas and intentions of the New Deal, MACA worked with the NWT Association of Communities and the Local Government Administrators of the NWT to develop the Accountability Framework. It will emphasize and reinforce the goals of the New Deal initiative, and support the Assembly's goal of a strong and independent North built on partnerships.

By providing advice and guidance to community governments, MACA's staff have become advisors, encouraging communities to assume responsibility in implementing their own capital plans. MACA's role is to be a strong, effective and supportive partner to community governments, acknowledging our shared responsibility in managing public funds.

The framework is designed around five core areas of responsibility: good governance, financial management, sound administration, planning and safe communities. We will continue to provide practical support to community governments in all of these areas.

In April 2011 MACA delivered a brief presentation on the project to the NWTAC board of directors and the LGANT board of directors, and has since presented its initial concepts to the NWTAC in May

2011. Following the presentation, the department reviewed feedback, refined its framework and prepared the final steps for the implementation of the framework.

We are nearing the completion of the Accountability Framework and anticipate implementation to begin this year. We will be asking communities to provide quarterly reports to ensure that the framework continues to meet their needs. This project is integral to building sustainable, vibrant, safe communities and is equally valuable for the future partnership between the Government of the Northwest Territories and community governments. Through the implementation of this framework, we will continue to strengthen our relationships with community governments and remain active, supportive partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 6-17(3):
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Early childhood development and the early years of learning in kindergarten are a priority for the department. As we are all aware, healthy childhoods are the best foundations to develop healthy, productive adults.

The departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Health and Social Services are revamping the 2001 Early Childhood Development Framework for Action. To assist with the work, the departments reviewed the programs and services called for in the framework. And we've looked at other Canadian programs, policies and literature.

As Members know, we are working to develop two of the child and family resource centres called for in the Framework for Action. A number of northern communities have programs and services that are the foundation for this kind of initiative. The GNWT recently held a successful first meeting with community stakeholders to discuss an action plan for these centres. We want to work with them to build and streamline existing programs and services for children, families and communities to link service providers and decrease the administrative burden.

Mr. Speaker, the framework review showed us that we have limited information on children's development in the Northwest Territories. In February and March we began to measure children's development in kindergarten with our Early Development Instrument. The results will be available in the fall. They will give us information on our children's development and the early childhood programs and services they encounter before entering the school system. We can use this data to improve our support for healthy child development.

Although kindergarten is not mandatory in the Northwest Territories, for many children it is the transition year into the formal education system. The department developed a new curriculum to better support children's learning and development in kindergarten. It integrates learning by harnessing children's natural learning processes, and is culture-based and relationship-based. Eleven teachers from across the Northwest Territories are currently piloting the curriculum, which will be implemented territory-wide in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, I will keep this House informed as this work in the area of early childhood development moves ahead. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Deputy Premier, Mr. Lafferty.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 7-17(3):
PREMIER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Bob McLeod will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend the Western Premiers Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CREATION OF AN
NWT BUILDINGS ACT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need to improve the quality, energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of our NWT housing and building stocks through an NWT buildings act.

Right now, mandatory standards in all provinces and Yukon require new buildings to meet the EGH 80 energy efficiency standard and 25 percent better than the National Model Energy Building Code.

GNWT buildings and houses in Yellowknife are required to meet this standard, but there is no such requirement on new construction in the rest of the NWT.

While the standards of the National Modern Energy Building Code are required, there are no assurances these standards are being met due to the lack of small community inspections and enforcement systems.

Project management capacity at the community level is also a concern. For example, there is no guarantee that a new community building won't be sited on permafrost for lack of a geotechnical survey. This raises major concerns. Public safety can be put at risk. Without standards there is no assurance of operational quality, energy efficiency, durability or security of investment. Because the best expertise for northern construction resides with our northern architects, engineers and consultants, lack of standards can allow our public dollars to leak south to those unfamiliar or under-qualified with northern requirements.

We need to ensure GNWT funds transferred to communities are used to build long-lasting and efficient buildings. The NWT Association of Communities has long called for the creation of NWT-wide building and inspection capacity, and passed resolutions pointing to the need for improved construction. There is a beginning of a response from the department, as we heard this morning.

The NWT Association of Architects, a bunch of professionals, has repeatedly brought forward the need for standards and compliance. The NWT Greenhouse Gas Strategy and the new ministerial mandates call for NWT building standards to assist communities in reducing their energy costs.

An NWT buildings act would meet our responsibility for addressing these concerns, but we will also need to help our communities and citizens meet these standards by establishing an advisory and inspection capacity and by establishing systems to require professional assurances that standards have been met. We need to aim higher by ensuring our NWT standard for energy efficiency recognizes our northern conditions and exceeds southern standards. I will have questions for the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SPORT NORTH FEDERATION
ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET 2012

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to take a moment to reflect on our incredible event that our Commissioner Tuccaro, our Premier, our sports Minister, four MLAs and, of course, you, Mr. Speaker, who attended the Sport North Federation Annual Awards Banquet this past Saturday night. What an honour it was to be amongst some of the most gifted athletes in our

territory and share ideas with some of the strongest supporters of amateur sports.

Of course, we were in attendance to recognize athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers for their performance and contribution to sport in the NWT. These awards are no doubt a valuable role in supporting athletic success and recognizing the NWT's growing talent.

I would like to take a moment to once again recognize Sport North Federation award recipients for 2012:

- Youth Female Athlete: Madison Piling for speed skating;
- Youth Male Athlete: Isaac Wideman for speed skating;
- Coach of the Year: Shane Clarke for speed skating;
- Community Contributor: Valerie Gendron;
- Official of the Year: Doug Swallow.
- Of course I'm going to be biased for the next one as obviously I had some dealings with coaching this individual, Junior Female Athlete: Cassey Mooney for swimming;
- Junior Male Athlete: Christopher Lirette for biathlon;
- Corporate Contributor: First Air;
- Senior Male Athlete: Bernie Bennett;
- Contributor to Sport: Shane Thompson;
- Of course the members of this team are in Range Lake, Team of the Year: Team Koe for their outstanding performance at this year's Briar.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, let's once again congratulate this year's awards recipients and praise all the hard work for the people of the Northwest Territories who dedicate their time to amateur sport and fitness.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RENT CONTROLS UNDER THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Residential Tenancies Act of the Northwest Territories was first enacted about 25 years ago, in 1987. It was modelled on legislation that was in effect across Canada at that time. It's been amended over the years since, but only on a piecemeal basis. There are three areas of the act in particular which require some amendments: rent increases, the lack of power in the rental officer position, and coverage in the act for residents in

transitional housing. Today I want to talk about rent controls.

The Residential Tenancies Act does not currently control the amount by which a landlord may increase a tenant's rent. It does restrict increases to one in any 12-month period and it requires the landlord to give three months' notice in writing of any increase. Beyond that, tenants have no protection from unscrupulous landlords who can increase rents every year, year after year, and can raise rents as much as they think they can justify to a court should the increase be contested.

The issue of rent controls has been brought to this House a number of times but no action has been taken yet. The government generally considers the imposition of rent controls as a major intervention in the housing market. Every indication is that rent control as a way of dealing with excessive rental increases would be expensive to implement and administer, and the negative aspects could well outweigh the positive by a large measure.

Research in the experience of other jurisdictions suggests that rent controls could divert resources away from the provision of housing and could even contribute to existing housing problems. That may be so, but the Justice Minister needs to revisit this issue and consider potential solutions.

To quote a local lawyer, one who sees the impact of rent increases on her clients, "This supply and demand monopoly is created by the low vacancy rate, and middleclass families are sinking under the poverty line because of this." If rent controls are not the answer, this government has to look outside the box and find something that can be the answer.

I will have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BREAKDOWN OF THE 2012-2013 GNWT BUDGET

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] Today what I'd like to talk about is the finance and how the territorial government handles financing and \$1.4 billion. If we think about that amount of money, it seems like a fair amount of money and in regard to how you want to look at it, and every one house gets a certain amount of money and how it should pertain to the residents that are living there. Our territorial government works on our behalf, or if there is \$1 that is spent and if we evaluate how \$1 is spent, we can get a concept of the way they operate.

Health and Social Services seems to expend a lot of the money. It seems like every 25 cents of the dollar that we have goes to health and social services, and this goes to hospitals. Also, students

that are going to the schools, it's about 25 cents of the dollar that is spent on their behalf. This expense also encompasses teachers. Our language and museums also expend a bit of the money. It seems like about every 40 cents of the dollar goes to these items.

Also, in regard to Transportation, about 10 cents of the dollar goes to transportation and Justice expends about 10 cents per dollar as well. This goes to operations of the RCMP. Our territorial government, if a person were to live a good, healthy life, expends about 25 cents of the dollar. This is what I would be asking questions about.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCREASING DEMAND FOR SENIORS HOUSING PROGRAMS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to discuss the increasing need of our seniors. In Hay River the situation for seniors housing is reaching a critical point. Many seniors are finding it difficult to maintain their own homes and are trying to secure a place in senior public housing. As we all know, these spaces are very limited. At this time I would suggest that if we were able to assist the seniors to stay in their own homes, it would take the pressure off the government to supply more senior housing.

Currently, seniors are given some assistance for heating costs, but with the increase in our cost of living, seniors feel that they will no longer be able to afford to stay in their own homes. Something as simple as breaking down or replacement of an appliance can leave a senior unable to pay their other bills. The infrastructure of seniors housing is very high to this government and the demands are increasing. Is there a way that we could subsidize them in their monthly utilities or the maintenance of their homes so that they could continue to live in their own homes?

I feel that if we do not act on this issue quickly, we will see seniors housing demands double of what we can provide, and this will encourage seniors to sell their homes and put the government into a crisis mode, or subsequently, many seniors will have no option but to move south where seniors housing is more available.

My questions today will be for the Minister of Housing regarding helping our seniors stay in their homes. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCREASED COSTS FOR ELDERS IN CARE FACILITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am going to talk about the long-term care room and board rate increases that occurred April 1, 2012. I am very concerned about... [English translation not provided.]...that is pretty much all of their elders' income support... [English translation not provided.] I truly believe that it is in the treaties that our health care is provided for, so I don't know how our government is charging our Aboriginal elders rent increases for hospitals, even for people that aren't elders that want to go to the hospital. Their health needs are taken care of by Health Canada, so when it comes to elders, we are charging almost all of the little old age security income that they get. It is a real conundrum.

I raised it in the past. I would like to pursue it a bit further. I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services questions about this. Why isn't our government pursuing it with Health Canada? Why aren't the treaty aspects being addressed from that perspective? Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year marks the 50th anniversary of community health representatives, a very integral part in our health and social services system.

CHRs are front-line workers in all of our communities and they do a lot of our groundwork that we ask them to do in terms of prevention and promotion. However, although we do ask them to do a lot of work in our communities, we don't always provide the necessary resources financially for them to make sure that they do their job as efficiently as we would like them to do or as what they have brought forth to this government asking for help.

Community health reps do a lot of prevention and promotion to keep our residents healthy and they do it through education awareness programs. A lot of them go out of their way. They are counsellors, community counsellors. They are also nursing assistants, data entry clerks, as well as administrative duties that they have to do for the health centres as well as some of our public health units.

I believe that we need to support our community health reps a lot more. This is the 50th anniversary that they have been an integral part of our communities, making our communities a lot

healthier and our people a lot healthier. As one of our Caucus priorities and prevention and promotion, I feel that we need to utilize our CHRs in the best way we can by providing support so they can do the best jobs that they can.

Being that this is the 50th anniversary of the CHRs, I would like to take this moment to say thank you to all the CHRs throughout the Northwest Territories for all their hard work, dedication and compassion in helping our residents live a healthy lifestyle and making our communities a better place to live.

When I finished college, my first job was a community health rep. I wanted to become a teacher in the school system, but seeing all the hard work that these individuals do in the job and how much impact it has on the communities, I stuck with that job for four and a half years and there were a lot of really good changes that we made in the communities. When I started my job as CHR, in about two years, 2000, there were a lot of people working in that area and field and they are still working in that area. They are dedicated individuals that have a compassion for the people.

I just want to say thank you to all the CHRs across the Northwest Territories and across Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT LENDING GUIDELINES FOR
SMALL COMMUNITY BUSINESS LOANS**

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement again today is on fairness. We all know that there is economic disparity between the regions of the Northwest Territories. Last week I asked the Premier if departments would ask this question: Is this a position, a program, a project or a gathering that could be located outside of the capital in order to support strong, viable regions and communities? As I said before, we can't control the decisions of the private sector, large industries, and we can't control where natural resources are located, but we must look for ways to maximize benefits to Northerners, individuals and companies and bring meaningful economic activity to all regions to offset the gap that currently exists.

We have energetic, innovative entrepreneurs in our private sector that could sustain and create employment in various sectors of our economy, but here's the challenge: access to working capital is often not readily available from conventional lenders. But here's a real opportunity for our government. We have lending limits through our government lender, the BDIC, but it's time to review those limits again and I think, like so many other government policies, we can craft the policy to

achieve specific outcomes and specific goals. We have done this through the NWT Manufacturing Policy, Business Incentive Policy, Negotiated Contracts Policy and our Tourism Development Product Initiative. We need a policy that allows the BDIC to extend credit to businesses with a proven track record, which are willing to take on expansion and risk, focused on regions that are currently experiencing an economic downturn. Within the parameters of all due diligence, this can be done.

This is an initiative that could be a real boost to our economy and cost this government, all things going well, absolutely nothing because we are offering these loans at the going interest rates. So this would be a self-sustaining increase in the amount of money that we loan at this time and we need to look at the times, we need to look at the \$2 million limit, we need to expand on that and I think we need to do it in the regions outside of the capital where right now we are experiencing significant economic downturn. We need help. Thank you.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DRIVE ALIVE "BUCKLE UP" AND
SUMMER BOATING SAFETY
COMMUNITY CHALLENGE**

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories has gone from the worst to the best. In our 18 months of our transportation program, we have had zero fatalities on our roads and our trails.

---Applause

A large part of the reason is that people are getting in the habit of wearing their seatbelts in their vehicles, or in the habit of wearing their lifejackets in their boats. The Drive Alive program has challenged communities to buckle up. The Drive Alive program has a challenge and your community can win big. All of the communities that we represent can win big in this challenge program. One of the big prizes is having Leela Gilday have a concert in your community on Aboriginal Day in 2013.

Also, your fire department could win \$5,000 to take on this challenge if they win. They say you can win big by promoting safety seats, buckling up and wearing lifejackets in the boat. You can win big by saving lives.

So today I challenge all of the MLAs to encourage their community to get involved. Write to your fire department, e-mail the fire department to say we want to take the challenge and buckle up and water prevention. If your community wins, the Department of Transportation, through the Drive Alive program, would support your community by allowing you to have \$500 for the community or the fire

department. You can win even bigger by getting \$5,000 for your fire department and having Leela Gilday come to your community to play a concert.

I say this to all the people: summertime, we need to save lives. We in our communities, especially when we use our boats, that's our highway. The communities down south of us, they use the road so that's their highway. So I ask them to promote this in the community, promote safety on the water, promote safety on the road and that their communities can win big. Get into the Drive Alive program, get onto Transportation's website and get your communities involved. I challenge all of the MLAs to save lives. Everybody then can be a winner. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TIMELY CABINET RESPONSES TO REGULAR MEMBER QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many promises and commitments were made in the TLC some months ago about being responsive to Members. Most notably, many of the Members, and some of them sitting on the other side of the House, pleaded with their colleagues and told them how hard they'd work for them and they'd be responsive. I'll acknowledge that sometimes forgetting things is the reality of doing a job and it does happen to all of us whether we want to admit it or not. Often it's referred to as being human.

There is a certain exception to that. If you're in Cabinet, you're expected to rise above those problems and, of course, you have to work around them at the same time. Some of the biggest critics, or I should say often the harshest critics who are now sitting on the other side of the House, have been ignoring some e-mails and questions even by myself. Several Ministers, to put the point even sharper on there, I've e-mailed even the Premier, who has had no replies. I've e-mailed and even visited the Minister Robert C. McLeod, with no replies, and in one particular occasion I've waited three months for a response that I had to remind them the other day. I've got an e-mail outstanding 20 days ago that still has no reply.

When you make a commitment in the House to follow up on a particular issue such as the road salt used on Ingraham Trail, that's been waiting 103 days for that response from the Minister of Transportation. These commitments are not just to us but to our constituents in trying to do the job. If a Minister says in this particular House they'll follow up on those things, it's very important. When a Premier or even a Minister decides to ignore your e-mail and chooses not to answer it, that affects our

job. How do we do our jobs as MLAs without those types of responses? It makes it very challenging.

We want to work as hard as possible and certainly in a collaborative way, but the challenge before us is to do these things. Later today I'll be asking the Deputy Premier, who is the first lieutenant of this particular ship we know as the McLeod government, what leadership he will provide at the Cabinet table to ensure that Ministers are responding to Members and their concerns. It is an important duty if they're in that office that they respond to us, because we're working for constituents and how do we do that in the absence of the information.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a former resident of Aklavik and Inuvik, a good friend of mine, Mr. Frank Edwards Jr., better known as Somoe. Welcome, Somoe.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize, as I have before in this House, a constituent of mine: Mr. Rocky Simpson with Concept Energy in Hay River. I'll let my colleague recognize his constituent; I won't take that from him.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize one of my constituents, Janet-Marie Fizer. Rocky Simpson also owns a business in my riding; so welcome, Rocky.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. I, too, would like to welcome Somoe in the House. Good to see you. And Janet-Marie, we worked together years ago at Norterra, so it's always good to see friends. I'd like to welcome all visitors in the public gallery here today. Thank you for taking an interest in today's proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 34-17(3):
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND
ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs following up on my Member's statement and actually the Minister's statement as well where he notes that the department has a role as a coach, advisor and supporter in terms of infrastructure. I think it's much more than that. I think there's also a responsibility for inspections on the safety and efficiency front.

I've noticed that all provinces and Yukon, our sister, have building acts to ensure these sorts of safeties are in place. In contrast, lack of comparable law here leaves us out of step with the times. Why would we not follow the established wisdom of every other Canadian jurisdiction to ensure quality construction through creation of a buildings act, or perhaps that's already underway.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The honourable Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member raises a very good point and I think it's one that we need to have some follow-up discussion on as a department, because as he's said, across the country all the jurisdictions have their own Building Standards Act. We ask our communities that are putting up projects to build it with best practices in mind following, obviously, all the building codes, the National Building Code and that. As I said before, it's to the community's benefit if they build buildings that conform to all these regulations and they have good quality product. It's been raised on a couple of occasions now and it has been suggested by the NWT Housing Corporation as to having building inspectors in all the regions. With that much concern coming on this particular issue, I think it's one we need to follow up on.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you very much to the Minister for that comment. I'm glad to hear we're thinking that way. I just want to note that all jurisdictions, we have faith in our communities, as the Minister has repeatedly said and used as an excuse for not having a building standards act, but I do think all other jurisdictions do have communities. Would the Minister agree that it is consistent to play this role and have some standards in legislation and that's still consistent with having faith in our communities, which I think we all do?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: First of all, this is not an excuse that we've used. We don't make excuses. The Member has said, as well as I have, that we have great faith in our communities' ability

to build quality products and put them on the ground. However, it is felt that there is some need for this particular service and I've committed to the Member that I will follow up on this and see where we can take it from here and put all the proper research together and see if it's something that we can carry on further here in the Northwest Territories.

MR. BROMLEY: I take that criticism. Excuse was probably not the best word. Perhaps "reason" was a better word for that.

I again appreciate the Minister's positive response here. I would say that we're very fortunate to have a resident community of world-class experts in building standards and so on. They're very active in national organizations and government-level inputting to national standards and so on. Would the Minister agree to meet with those representatives of those associations and professionals as one of the steps towards developing this legislation?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Obviously, it would be to our benefit if we were to meet with all those that were able to provide some expertise and how we can best move forward on this. I would commit to the Member that as we look at developing this particular initiative, I will commit to meeting with the experts in this particular field.

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

QUESTION 35-17(3):
RENT CONTROLS UNDER THE
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Justice. I talked in my statement about rent controls or the lack of and the impact that rent increases are having on constituents, particularly in the market communities and particularly here in Yellowknife. Without a rent ceiling, many residents have been finding it extremely difficult to find the rent that's needed every month. Our cost of living is always going up and rent is a huge part of that. I would like to know from the Minister, he's a new Minister to this department, and I'd like to know from him when this issue of rent controls was last considered by the department. I don't mean just talked about, but when was there a thorough review of this issue?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do know that a number of amendments have been made to the Residential Tenancies Act over the last couple of years, but I can't say exactly when and if any action was actually taken with respect to rental controls or whether that was

actually considered by the government. I would say that rent controls, there are as many people that support them as oppose them and it is a double-edged sword. We would have to look at that very seriously if we were to look at it. At this point in time we don't have any plans to review the Residential Tenancies Act.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I do agree with the fact that there are as many opinions for as there are against rent controls, but I have to disagree with the Minister that the government is taking the position that there's no intent at this point to look at the Residential Tenancies Act.

I'd like to get a little information from the Minister on what tenants can do if there's a huge increase or if there's a major increase one year and then for the next three years running. Can the Minister tell me what process exists, what avenue exists for tenants to deal with what they consider as an unjustified rent increase under the current Residential Tenancies Act? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: If a tenant has a concern with something done by their landlord, they always have the ability to go to the rental tenancies officer.

MS. BISARO: That just leads me right into another failing of the Residential Tenancies Act, and that's the powers of the rental officer. The rental officer, at this point, cannot make any decision that is binding.

I'd like to ask the Minister, if I have had a 15 percent rent increase for three years running and I appeal to the rental officer, what exists for me to make sure that my landlord is not going to give me another 15 percent increase in the following year?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not familiar with every detail of the Residential Tenancies Act, but I'm happy to find that out for the Member and get back to her.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Your final, short supplementary, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister, I'm glad he's going to get back to me with information. I would like to ask the Minister if he would commit – although there are no plans at this point – to developing some plans to look into the issue of rent controls, and as I mentioned in my statement, find a solution other than rent controls if rent controls isn't the way to go.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm always happy to sit down with the Member and committee to discuss their concerns and issues, and I'd be happy to discuss this in greater detail with the Member.

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

QUESTION 36-17(3):
GOVERNMENT LENDING GUIDELINES FOR
SMALL COMMUNITY BUSINESS LOANS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. As the Minister well knows, the government crafts many different policies that help it achieve its goals. One of the stated goals of this government is to have viable and strong communities and regions, and as I've stated in my Member's statement, there is a growing disparity amongst the regions in the Northwest Territories when it comes to their economic well-being.

One vehicle or tool which this government has at their disposal to assist with this would be greater access to funding, to loans by businesses in the regions. I would like to ask the Minister what is the current amount of money that the Business Development and Investment Corporation has at its disposal to lend within the Northwest Territories.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, the total credit facility portfolio for the BDIC is just under \$50 million at \$49.6 million. Approximately \$7.6 million approved in credit facilities and \$257,000 approved in contributions for this past fiscal year.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The lending limit of the Business Development and Investment Corporation, I believe, is currently \$2 million. When is the last time that that cap was reviewed and considered?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The timing of the Member's questions is good. We're currently putting together a terms of reference for review of the BDIC and the programs that are there. The hope is that those terms of reference will be established sometime this summer so that the review – and it's being conducted by the program review office of the GNWT – will be underway this fall. I certainly look forward to working with the Regular Members as that program review plays itself out. Certainly, the limit on lending at \$2 million is something that will be in the mix.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The Minister did give me the full amount of the lending portfolio, but how much room is there left that is not fully subscribed? I didn't do the math. I didn't write it down in time to do the math here. What avenue does the BDIC have to come back to the government to expand on the amount of money that they have to loan out to NWT businesses?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I don't have that exact figure but I would be more than happy to get that for the Member.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would it be possible to include within the terms of reference of the review of the Business Development and Investment Corporation, the possibility of a policy that would recognize, as I referred to, the economic disparity which would look at the way that this government could help businesses in the regions at this current time who have viable business plans and proposals that could help them employ and expand on the employment they have within their communities?

We know that the Yellowknife economy is doing well. It's healthy. What have we got that we could do for the regions by way of policy that could be included in those terms of reference?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That certainly would be a possibility, and I believe as the Minister responsible for economic development here in the Northwest Territories, it's important that we're not duplicating our efforts, that it's seamless, that we're getting capital into the hands of those folks who can do something with it, that can grow our economy, especially out in the regions where we are seeing high unemployment and we need those types of investments in the regions that will grow the economy here in the Northwest Territories. I certainly look forward to the discussions as the terms of reference are established and we get to work with the committee on next steps of that review.

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

QUESTION 37-17(3):
SENIORS HOUSING PROGRAMS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my statement today I questioned the assistance to seniors housing and helping seniors that are currently in their own house and what is available. My question to the Minister of Housing is: What programs are currently available for seniors in their own home?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that we do have a lot of seniors across the Northwest Territories that try to be very independent and live in their homes. Through Housing we try to support them as much as we can. We have repair programs for seniors. Within the other departments they have some programs within their departments that are geared towards assisting seniors, because seniors like to be independent by nature and the fact that a lot of them want to live in their own places, but living on

fixed incomes, with a lot of them, it is a bit of a struggle, so as the government we recognize that we need to do what we can to offer them some assistance to live in their unit. It's still a work in progress, but I think for the most part, the government's doing a very good job with assisting our seniors.

MR. BOUCHARD: My question for the Minister of Housing is: What is Housing doing to alleviate some of the pressures for the seniors that are in their own house other than charging seniors rent, I guess?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Obviously, this government takes its role at trying to look after our seniors very seriously. That's why a lot of seniors, for the last 16 years, that are living in public housing are not paying public housing rent, and a lot of seniors have sold their units to move into public housing because of that. We feel with the initiatives that we're undertaking right now, it might keep more seniors in their own homes and free up public housing units for those that are really in need of public housing.

But as the Housing Corporation, I've relayed to the Member that we do have an emergency repair program that we are planning on rolling out. A lot of seniors have been able to access a lot of our repair programs where if they had to pay for it themselves, they'd be unable to do so and it would be a great burden to them. We have some of our programs that we roll out for the seniors, and again, government-wide there are many programs that offer some assistance to seniors.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next question is: What kind of wait-lists are there in the Hay River area for senior housing currently?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: If the Member is referring to a wait-list to get into public housing, I would have to get the information and relay it on to the Member. Obviously, a lot of our communities across the Northwest Territories have some waiting lists, but I will gather the specific information and relay it on to the Member for Hay River North. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: I appreciate that information. Could the Minister be able to coordinate some of the information he provides to me that the government's currently doing for seniors, along with coordinating with his other colleagues to give me the specifics on all that available for seniors in their own homes? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I would be pleased to do that. I'll have discussions with my counterparts and we'll try to put all the information together with all the services that are provided to seniors. Because we are quite proud of the fact that, as a

government, we do assist our seniors very well. I will put the information together and pass it on to all Members. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 38-17(3):

DRIVE ALIVE "BUCKLE UP" AND SUMMER BOATING SAFETY COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions on the Buckle Up water prevention campaign. What types of initiatives has his department done to allow or to notify the communities of this campaign? Have there been radio ads or newspaper ads? How do the communities, other than what I am saying this afternoon in the House, possibly know that there is a challenge out there for all of the communities to take up this challenge and win some good prizes? What has the department done to communicate this to the communities in Dene, and French and English?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Transportation, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the Member's support for the Drive Alive program and other initiatives by the Department of Transportation. We had an excellent safety record in the past 15 months. We look to continue that.

The department views safety as the number one priority. To the Member's questions, the public awareness campaign distributes safety information through the Internet, through newspapers, radio, television, printed material, audiovisual resources and community activities across the Northwest Territories and will continue to do those types of initiatives so that the public is aware of the campaigns that we have. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, in the Buckle Up program, I mentioned in my Member's statement that it's usually for the people who are mostly south of the lake, but I also mentioned that up in the Mackenzie Delta they had Dempster Highway No. 8. Hopefully in the future we will have Inuvik-Tuk highway. They would be part of the campaign on the road there. In the Water Safety Program and the Buckle Up program, in the communities that apply for this program. We need this for the community council, hamlet council, town council or the fire department. They also go up to \$1,000 for promotion dollars. When will the Minister be able to tell us when is the closing date and when will the big grand prize winner be known to the people?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, DOT coordinates the awareness campaign related to drowning prevention, helmet use and child

occupant restraints to support injury prevention. That is our component of the Healthy Choices framework, so we continue to work with communities on establishing those resources. If there are community organizations that want to take part in this and help us spread the message of safety first, we would be more than happy to discuss their participation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, the Drive Alive program has been a very successful program. It certainly shows in the records. Has this program had any type of appetite from the other provincial jurisdictions that look at the North in terms of leadership and safety on the road, trails and water? Have other governments looked at the North on the Drive Alive program to say this is one good program and we should also be using it on a national level?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, on a national level, as the Minister of Transportation I have yet to attend an FPT on road safety or get together with my counterparts from across the country on that, but certainly, when you have zero fatalities on your roads and waterways in 15 months, other jurisdictions will pay attention to that and the public awareness campaigns the GNWT have had have been first rate.

Certainly it is a message we are proud of. It is a story that we are proud of and we continue to get that message out there. We need to ensure that it is summer and people are using lifejackets. If you look in the past 21 out of 23 drowning fatalities here, 21 of them were not wearing a lifejacket. Again, that is a message that has to get out there. When you are in a boat or on the waterways, wear a lifejacket this summer. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the future, thinking forward and creating some territorial potential on this national campaign, has his department ever looked at a day that they could all celebrate Buckle Up, water prevention day? They do that. They have national days to recognize. Would his department look at something like that? Would a campaign like this be kicked off in the Territories?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, that is something that we could look at doing. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

QUESTION 39-17(3):

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today will be for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and will have to deal regarding the emergency preparedness action

plans for communities as well as the National Alert System.

The first question to the Minister is obviously to set the stage here for the questions I have today. It is basically setting a standard in terms of content here. Can the Minister inform this House of how many communities have a current emergency action plan and how many do we have that do not have a plan in place? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently we have 21 communities that have community emergency plans. We have four communities that have updated plans. We have four communities that don't have community emergency plans. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Mr. Speaker, thank you to the Minister for this response. Again, out of the 21 communities that do have a plan, some of those plans were not looked at for at least a two-year period, so obviously opportunities. So if you add those 21 with the four, we have a large proportion of our communities out there that require updates to emergency action plans. I think the national leaders or community leaders are making that known.

With that in mind, recently our Community Affairs department and our Minister refused to sign the NWT on the National Alert System that deals with emergency preparedness. Some of the reasoning behind so is the lack of cell phone coverage and some issues of communication or infrastructure which was holding our territory back from doing so. Can the Minister indicate to the Members of the House why he and his department feel not joining the rest of Canada is not a priority for protecting the people of the NWT in the wake of a possible emergency?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question because knowing a few of the media reports that were out there said we did not refuse to sign the deal and in no way did we say it is reliant on cell phone service across the Northwest Territories. That got some good play a few years ago, so I thought they played the same card again, but we did say, and I clarified in the second interview, that they did and thankfully they played it, was that we are going to sign on.

We are in discussions right now with the company. We are having some discussions with the providers in the Northwest Territories, so it is our intent to sign on but we wanted to make sure that we did our due diligence first and be able to provide the alert in case something happens, because there is no point in having a public alerting system when you have nothing to alert the public with. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. Again, I do appreciate the honesty of the Minister and by no means is this an issue about cell phone coverage, because obviously there was mention of other infrastructure design. Quite frankly, obviously cell phones could be used, but that as it may, cell phone service or lack thereof, is not really I think the major concern here. Nunavut, for example, has very similar concerns to us. They signed on; they felt that television and radio were the proper tools that they could use in a lack of cell service as well. Because they felt the need to do so, why does the Minister feel that cell phones or mobile services really need to be upgraded in order to sign on?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. Again, this is not all contingent on cell phone service, but we need to improve our communication across the Northwest Territories and that's one of the things that I had said. One of the things we discussed in the FPT Ministers meeting in Victoria was the fact that some of the information now they want to send out via Twitter and Facebook and that's not available to a lot of communities.

Again, I go back to it is our intent to sign on to this. We're in discussions with the service provider and the providers in the Northwest Territories. So we're in that process right now and we should hopefully be signed on fairly soon. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I do appreciate the angle we're going here, and again mention the fact that we're waiting for communication capability to be as good as the department feels it should be and we've got to go through this due diligence process here before joining really the rest of Canada.

Again, we're the only community or territory or province that has not signed on to the National Alert System. Can we have more specifics from the Minister when he feels and when the department feels that we are ready to sign on board? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. We did provide a letter of support to CRTC to support the application that was going in there. We felt that we should do that because we wanted to look at our capabilities here in the Northwest Territories. So we've done that and that was done right away so the application could go in and we need to do our due diligence and not just sign on because everybody else has done it. We wanted to make sure we're ready. We feel that now we're in a fairly good position in taking advantage of the technology we do have with the hope that technology across the Northwest Territories will improve in the future so we can use some of the other devices such as the mobile devices that we discussed in Victoria. So

the short answer is we wanted to make sure we did our due diligence before we signed on. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 40-17(3):
RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Housing. I know he's fielding a lot of questions here today. It's just in regard to the address that we heard last week in the House and there was mention of the \$1.2 million rent supplement for private rentals, and as some of my colleagues mentioned today, the increased costs of living in our communities, and they're only going to go higher. Some of my colleagues in the past have talked about the working poor. My question today is with this rent supplement of \$1.2 million, when will this program become available to residents of the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister responsible for NWT Housing, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our discussions across the Northwest Territories during the very extensive consultation process, it was pointed out that there was need to assist, as the Member pointed out, the working poor. We have a lot of people that are just starting in the workforce; we have a lot of people coming out of school going into the workforce. So we felt that they needed a bit of help for the first couple of years and then after that they would either graduate into home ownership or be able to afford private market housing. So we designed a program called the Rent Supplement Program and the launch date is expected to be September 1st of this year. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. My second question on this is pending the applications that the department receives for assistance in this area, is he willing to amend the policy to increase more funding across the Northwest Territories in future years? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. This is very early in the process, so we're not sure what kind of uptake we're going to have on this. We're looking at possibly 175 across the Northwest Territories initially, graduating them into quarterly sections. So there will be a continuous intake instead of doing all of them the first quarter and then having nothing left over for the rest of the year. So the initial plan is to try and assist at least 175 by quarterly installments. Thank you.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. In terms of getting this information out to the general public, does the Minister or the department have a marketing strategy to let people in the communities know that

this program is available for them to access, and what is that marketing strategy? We only have pretty well the summer to get that done. So over the next three months does he have a marketing strategy to let the public know? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. There have been a lot of changes in the Housing Corporation with the shelter policy review, a lot of proposed changes. We have a very extensive communication plan that we're planning on rolling out very soon here to make the public out there aware of all of the programs and some of the changes that are going on within the NWT Housing Corp. So we're hoping to roll that out fairly soon, and get the information out, and be on the website and a fairly extensive communication plan. I'd be willing to sit down with the Member or Members and share that with them. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One final question in regard to this new funding. In some of the communities what we are seeing is much like public housing. We do have a lot of people staying in the same house. With some of our professionals and young professionals out there that are trying to take care of their debts from school, we do see multiple people living in the same house to decrease their debts. With this program coming out, there's a possibility that they might take advantage of this program where they can get supplemented for their rent, which will even decrease their lower costs. How is the Minister going to regulate those kinds of applications so that the people who really need them get this program for them and not people who are looking to take advantage of the program? How is he going to regulate this? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. There is always a danger that there are going to be some people that try to take advantage of some of the programs we have to offer. We have to do our part to ensure that this is distributed fairly and to those that are most in need. I think in such small jurisdictions in the Northwest Territories, working with the communities we all know the people in the communities that are in most need, those that are trying to get a good start in life. We feel that this is going to give them that good start, and like I said before, they can either graduate into regular market housing or they can graduate into home ownership, which we are intent. But we feel this is an excellent program that's geared towards giving these people a good start and not have to be so dependent on the government right off the bat. So this is a very good program and the Member makes a good point. We have to monitor this very closely to ensure that those that need it are the ones that are using it. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 41-17(3):

TIMELY RESPONSES TO REGULAR MEMBER
QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions will be directed to the Deputy Premier of the House, the Honourable Jackson Lafferty. In my Member's statement today I talked about the concerns about lack of response and, in some cases, timely response. It's funny, as I'm sitting here I got a print-off of something from Mr. Ramsay's office regarding information I asked in February, but actually that started off the discussion where the commitments were actually all made in the House, which I will table later today.

So to draw some sort of comparison here, this is the same problem we had in the last Assembly and we tried to take steps with this. So that's why I'm asking the question directly to the Deputy Premier, like at the time I'd asked the Premier.

So my question to Jackson Lafferty is: What is he prepared to do to take to the Cabinet table to encourage his colleagues at that Cabinet table to ensure that they act and certainly respond appropriately when Members ask questions, whether it's through e-mail or in the House, that we get a timely response? Because we're acting for our constituents and we're working for them.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: This particular issue does come to the Cabinet table. We do have a standard rule that any information or concerns that are brought forward by Regular Members are responded to within five days. It all varies on if there are organizations that we have to reach out to to get more clarification. It will take some time in some areas, but our overall goal and objective is to get back to Regular Members within five days. Either to respond back saying we're looking into it or at least respond back to them. As I've stated before, some areas will take some time as well.

MR. HAWKINS: I'll thank the Deputy Premier for that particular response. I'm glad to hear that they have a bit of a framework. I didn't think I heard the word "policy" or "procedure" but I certainly heard the sense of a framework, five days.

Would the Deputy Premier find in his understanding of that framework that waiting 103 days for a particular commitment made in the House or 90 days for an information request made to the Housing Minister's office, would he consider that timely within that five-day framework and if not, what is he going to do?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: All the Ministers are here today. They are listening to the concerns and questions that are raised. There are some areas that do take time. We have to work with NGOs as

well as department organizations within the communities and Aboriginal organizations. Sometimes we are limited in resources, as well, to dig up some more research analysis and so forth.

The 90 days and 120 days that the Member is referring to, we need to get more information on those areas. The standard rule is to reply within five days as best as we can and at times it will take a longer time.

MR. HAWKINS: What I heard was a lot of dancing around the question, which was simply: Does the Deputy Premier find it reasonable if a Member has to wait 90 days or 103 days? Does that reasonably fit into that five-day framework? Respectfully...

---Interjection

MR. HAWKINS: No, I'm asking if it fits within the framework, sir. Respectfully, I would say that, you know, I understand people are sick. I'd like to ask that question. Does that fit within the five-day framework, the 90 days or 103 days that I was referring to? What's he about to do about it?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Again, it is a case-by-case basis. Some cases are very unique. It will take some time. But it is a standard rule of up to five days.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In particular to the 90-day reference, that was the department of Housing regarding the naming of one of their buildings. Does that still fit in the description, the framework, I call it, that the Deputy Premier has referred to? Does that fit into that description and why would or wouldn't it?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I do believe this information needs to be discussed. There are times when we do discuss these situations within Cabinet as well. At the same time, we're just down the hallway as well. If there is information that is not reaching the MLAs, please stop by and inquire about those with the specific Ministers or the Premier and then we can follow up instantly. There are times where information takes time to explore and do more research with our community organizations. We'll do our best as a government to follow up.

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

QUESTION 42-17(3):
GNWT FISCAL STRATEGY

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I referenced in terms of trying to explain people that are unilingual, just an opportunity for them to understand the complexities of how this government disburses within the year the \$1.4

billion it's proposing to spend. My question is to the Minister of Finance.

I know that we seem to be kind of forecasting how it is that we're going to spend this amount of money within the year. I would like to know if the Minister could apprise this House in terms of perhaps some consideration of a savings and investment strategy or plan that the Minister perhaps might bring to the floor.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The honourable Minister responsible for Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we laid out in the budget, we are in fact going to be focusing a lot of our attention on replenishing our depleted cash reserves to put money aside so that in year three or four we will be able to add additional resources and revenues into increasing our commitment to infrastructure in a lot of the key areas. This is going to be done in a number of ways. We're going to limit the forced growth; we're going to continue to work on being efficient and effective; we're going to continue with the attention to how we spend the money within government to avoid unnecessary expenses.

The key piece for us is we're \$656 million in accumulated debt, most of it long term; about \$240-some million in short-term debt. We need to be able to engage those savings. We're projecting revenues that are going to be contingent on what happens globally. It's also going to be contingent upon things that are constantly in flux, the main one being corporate income tax. Throughout all that we do have a plan that will in fact make us more fiscally stable and able to invest more greatly in infrastructure and at the same time spend \$1.4 billion on programs and services.

MR. NADLI: My follow-up question is perhaps my last one too. Has the Department of Finance considered perhaps the concept of an investment fund that the government would consider and implement right away? One of the concepts that's been, already I think people know it, is the idea of a Heritage Fund.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I agree with the Member about the Heritage Fund and its role. We've committed to when we do devolution and when we get into year three and four, we'll be looking at trying to finally put some seed money into that very important fund.

It was also raised in the House today about trying to increase the money for investment in businesses to the Minister of ITI. We had to, in fact as part of our financial restructuring, turn back the Opportunities Fund where we had about \$120 million sitting in a bank for investment, but it wasn't covered by our borrowing limit; it would have gone against our borrowing limit. We do have a number of areas

we're looking at. Some will happen in due course here in year three and four.

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

QUESTION 43-17(3):

LONG-TERM CARE ROOM AND BOARD RATES

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my questions about the rate increases to long-term care room and board. It's something that has been going on for awhile within Health and Social Services. I'd just like to find out a bit more about it and ask the Minister exactly what these charges are for and what they do with the money.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The long-term care fees for the tenants are for meals and accommodations.

MR. MENICOCHE: I raise the issue that a senior went into long-term care and is charged the full rate of \$746 and he still has a house and a spouse to take care of. How is the department taking these types of situations into consideration?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The fees are in accordance with the legislation for long-term care. These meals and accommodations are not insured services. All other services that are provided in long-term care, such as nursing and daycare, are an insured service. The two items that are not an insured service are accommodations and meals. Those are charged according to that and that's what those fees are. I'm not sure if there's consideration for what expenses they have outside of that, but this is to cover the areas that are not insured.

MR. MENICOCHE: During my Member's statement I spoke about the case that I'm talking about. He's an Aboriginal elder. I know that in our treaties it says that health is going to be taken care of for our people. We do it many ways. The people that aren't even elders get covered by Health Canada. Why are our Aboriginal elders being charged full fare at the long-term care centres?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The charge for meals and accommodations is under 10 percent of what they charge the cost of maintaining individual long-term care. There's nursing care, medical care, medical supplies, nutrition, rehabilitation, housekeeping, laundry, janitorial services, which are all covered by the department and the organization providing long-term care. Those two expenses, as I said, are not covered and it's outside of insured policy. There is no money coming from the federal government to cover those two specific items.

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

MR. MENICOCHE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister is opening up a whole different area and I'd certainly like to ask more questions and debate this further. I'd like to ask him to review the situation. My question is: How does the treaty impact our Aboriginal seniors that are in long-term care and why are they paying fees?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I know for a fact that the treaty does not enter into any charges for long-term care. Long-term care is provided to individuals within the Northwest Territories whether they are Dene, Metis or non-Aboriginal. All charges are the same. It's not really a treaty issue. The costs, like I indicated, were only charges to cover meals and accommodations which were uninsured. All other items in there are insured. If there is money in the overall federal transfer to the government and it gets incorporated into covering the other costs, then that may be the case, but for this particular item I don't believe it's a treaty issue.

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

QUESTION 44-17(3):
SOLUTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT HOUSING
FOR SENIORS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In other cultures a great deal of importance is placed on the role of the extended family. In our culture, even here in the North, we often take our seniors to a different community, put them in facilities. Seniors living in their own accommodation, as my colleague raised today, struggle to maintain themselves in their independence in their own home. A number of years ago there was a prototype of a granny suite developed. They actually had it in the parking lot up here at the Explorer Hotel. The wisdom of the NWT Housing Corporation at the time was to build these modestly sized units, take them into the communities, and actually co-locate them on a lot in a community with the grown children of this elderly person. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation where did that idea go. It was a great idea. Seniors could watch their grandchildren come and go; they could come and visit them; they're completely self-contained units. With the growing population of elders – as stated in the budget address, it's going to double in the next few years – shouldn't we be revisiting such a thing as that and encourage the involvement of the extended family in a seniors life?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Mr. Robert McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is actually the first that I've heard of this particular program and I would have to follow up with the NWT Housing Corporation and see what happened with that, where it went, any future plans.

As I said before, through the independent home ownership program they had a couple years ago they were able to get a lot of independent seniors into their own units. But the Member has raised a good point on co-locating with family members. I will commit to the Member that will follow up with the corporation and see where this is at, because I haven't heard of it before.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I asked the question because, of course, we happen to have a business in Hay River that could build them for you and get them out to the communities. I appreciate that the Minister will go back and check. I mean, sometimes these good ideas come about and then something happens, the government changes direction, they fall off the table. But I particularly like them because the other thing is that they are fairly readily moveable, so they can be deployed to wherever the situation arises, because there is a continuum of care for seniors. They may not always be able to live there, but to me the idea is excellent. I really appreciate if the Minister, maybe even during this session, could get some research done with his corporation and bring it back and table it and let's look at it again.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will follow up, and obviously, as with all the departments in the government, they're over there monitoring the conversations we have in here, so I'm sure that they're putting some information together for me right now. I will follow up and see where that went. It's a very novel idea and it has some merit, but we'd have to follow up on it further.

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

QUESTION 45-17(3):
SAFE SCHOOLS POLICY

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister for Education, Culture and Employment. In February of this year I asked some questions of the Minister with regard to a safe schools policy for all of the schools within the NWT and the Minister responded. Thank you very much to the Minister. I did get a letter which pretty much told me that all schools have an emergency response plan in place. But I was not referencing an emergency response plan, which is like a lockdown if we have a shooter in the school, or a bomb threat or so on. I'm referencing a safe schools policy which looks at all aspects of the safety of the students and the community: bullying, kids at risk, kids involved in

drugs and alcohol, involving partners like the RCMP and so on, family violence and violence in the school.

I'd like to ask the Minister, in his letter he advised me that the department would review and revisit fairly regularly, and I'd like to ask the Minister if there's been any movement on the part of the department to look at a safe schools policy for our schools in the Northwest Territories.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This particular subject is very important to our school system and especially with the school boards across the Northwest Territories. We did address that with the school boards and they're fully aware of it. There are, as the Member indicated, potential partners that are involved, RCMP, NGOs, and also parents getting involved in this. There's also a question of an anti-bullying policy into the schools. Those are the areas that we are consistently working on, and I'm glad the Member raised that issue because this is an area that is broad to cover all schools so we are doing what we can as a department to work with the school boards across the Northwest Territories to make it happen.

MS. BISARO: One of the other things that was in the letter that I received in March, further to my February questions, was that the Department of Education, within negotiations with the NWT Teachers' Association, would bring this issue to the table. I would like to ask the Minister whether or not, now that the negotiations have been concluded with the NWTTA, there was any decision made during negotiations whether or not there is an implementation plan as he's referenced in his letter?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: With specifics to the NWTTA negotiations that were undergoing and the conclusion of that, the Member is asking for specific information on this which I don't have in front of me, but I will be more than happy to get back to the Member on what is the status on those initiatives that were discussed at that point.

MS. BISARO: I appreciate the Minister's commitment. I'd like to ask the Minister, I'm well aware that one of the boards in Yellowknife, Yellowknife Education District No. 1, has a very involved Safe Schools Policy. It could be used as a template for all the rest of the schools within the territory. I'd like to ask the Minister if the department would consider taking the YK No. 1 Safe Schools Policy and sending it to all the schools within the territory and encouraging them to develop their own policy from this template.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are the types of discussions that we do have at the board chair level. The Safe Schools Policy of YK District No. 1, we can certainly utilize the policy that they currently have instead of reinventing the wheel.

What's before us, if we can enhance that policy for other school systems then, by all means, we will definitely pursue that and have our discussions with my department and the YK No. 1 as well.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the Minister is going to do something, that he's going to talk to board chairs. But I think this goes beyond board chairs and I think this is something the department could do directly with the schools. I'd like to ask the Minister when I could expect him to provide some concrete action... Sorry. When he could report to me that there's been some concrete action on developing policies in all our schools.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Before the end of session I will get back to the Member on the status, what my department is pursuing on this particular subject on the Safe Schools Policy and working with the YK District No. 1 and other research that we've done within Canada and will provide that information to the Members.

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

QUESTION 46-17(3):
SCOPE OF THE 2016

ARCTIC WINTER GAMES COMPETITIONS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next line of questions are for the Minister of MACA concerning a CBC news report on 2016 Arctic Winter Games, which indicated that there's going to be limited sports on the ice surfaces. What involvement has MACA had with this Arctic Winter Games planning?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Minister responsible for Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a cause for some concerns; however, it's a decision that's made by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee. They make the decision and I think they take into account the location of the games and the fact that they don't have some of the facilities. Obviously, we've relayed our concerns, because a lot of the ice sport activities and games are a core part of the Arctic Winter Games. It's a decision that's made by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee and we have relayed our concerns on to them. However, I'm expecting that we'll be hearing a lot more about this particular issue in the future.

because it does affect a lot of folks out there across the Northwest Territories.

MR. BOUCHARD: Obviously, it's a concern to me. I know Hay River and Fort Smith put a proposal back a couple years ago to combine the two communities together to host the Arctic Winter Games and they were declined because they didn't want to put the two communities together to host all the events, yet they're allowing this one community to do it with limited sports. What is the next step for MACA involved with the Arctic Winter Games planners to ensure that these games are included for the youth of the North?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We can have discussion with our representative on the International Games Committee and see if there might be a way that something could be worked out, because a lot of kids look forward to the opportunity to compete in the Arctic Winter Games, compete in the sport of their choice, and having to respect the next host, which is actually Greenland and their lack of a lot of ice facilities, I think some kind of alternate arrangements might have to be worked out. We'll have to have those discussions to see where we go from here, because it is going to be a concern for a lot of people in the next year or so. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Has the department looked at any, as he indicated, alternates for some of these youth that would be deprived of their opportunity to be in the Arctic Winter Games at this time?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we have had some initial discussions as to some of the alternatives that might be available. We have to further those discussions and see, because we have a lot of athletes that take part in the ice portion, which I said before is a core part of the Arctic Winter Games. We have to try and ensure that they have an opportunity during the Arctic Winter Games season to gather and compete. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have no further questions, but I am concerned with this issue. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I have no further answers. I am also concerned with this situation. Thank you.

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 8, written questions. 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. Mr. Hawkins.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 5-17(3):
E-MAIL DATED FEBRUARY 14, 2012,
FROM D. RAMSAY TO R. HAWKINS

TABLED DOCUMENT 6-17(3):
E-MAIL DATED MAY 28, 2012,
FROM L. COMERFORD TO D. RAMSAY
AND INCLUDING NOTE FROM
D. RAMSAY TO R. HAWKINS

TABLED DOCUMENT 7-17(3):
HANSARD EXCERPT DATED
FEBRUARY 15, 2012

TABLED DOCUMENT 8-17(3):
TAIT COMMUNICATIONS TWITTER MESSAGE
DATED MAY 28, 2012

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table a number of documents today. The first package of documents is the e-mail from the Minister of Transportation to me dated February 14th.

The next package I would like to table is a note, plus a similar package of information, an e-mail Monday, May 28th.

The third part of this compendium would be the copy of the Hansard particular page I was referring to that highlights a bunch of commitments.

The next item I would like to table is off a Twitter account under the name of Tait Communications, notably page 3. It cites Det'on Cho Construction in Halifax at the Marriott hiring for construction in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 16, notices of motion. Mr. Bromley.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 3-17(3):
INCREASED SUPPORT FOR
RENEWABLE ENERGY

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, May 30, 2012, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, that the Government of the Northwest Territories reinstate funding at least equivalent to the budgets devoted by the 16th Assembly for programming and support of renewable energy generation and more efficient use of energy;

And further, that comprehensive planning and implementation of new hydro generation and grid

connections be reinstated towards the achievement of both reduced and stabilized power costs and expansion of hydro zones to communities currently relying on diesel generation of electricity;

And furthermore, that the government provide a response to this motion within 120 days.

Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Abernethy.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 2: MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, May 30, 2012, I will move that Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 18, motions. Mr. Hawkins.

Motions

MOTION 1-17(3): REFERRAL OF COMMISSIONER'S OPENING ADDRESS TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, CARRIED

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

WHEREAS Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Condition for Success, has been tabled in the House;

AND WHEREAS the Commissioner's opening address requires detailed consideration;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Condition for Success, be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

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

MOTION 2-17(3): SETTING OF SITTING HOURS BY SPEAKER, CARRIED

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Mr. Lafferty.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 1: AN ACT TO AMEND THE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the Student Financial Assistance Act to raise the maximum aggregate of the principal amount of all student loans that may be made by the Government of the Northwest Territories by \$4 million for 2012-2013 and subsequent fiscal years. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Bill 1 has been read for the second time.

---Carried

Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 69(2) and to have Bill 1 moved into Committee of the Whole.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty, and thank you, colleagues. Bill 1 has been moved into Committee of the Whole.

Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We are still dealing with Tabled Document 3-17(3), Main Estimates 2012-13. We left off on Human Resources. The next two departments after that would be Public Works and Services and Education, Culture and Employment. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to deliberate Human Resources, Public Works and Services, and Education, Culture and Employment.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will take a break and we will resume after we have had our afternoon snack.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Committee, I'd like to call you back to order. When we departed on Friday, the question had been called asking if we were ready to move on to detail. Are we ready to move on to detail for the Department of Human Resources? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, I'm going to ask Minister Abernethy if he would like to take the witness table and if he'd like to bring in witnesses.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses in to the table.

Mr. Abernethy, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. On my right is Ms. Sheila Bassi-Kellett. She's the deputy minister of Human Resources. On my left is Michelle Beard who is the director of human resource strategy and policy.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. If Members could please turn in their main estimates book to the Department of Human Resources on page 3-7. We're going to stand that page down and come back to it at the end. Infrastructure investment summary, page 3-8. Any questions? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Revenue summary, information item, 3-9. Active position summary, information item, 3-10. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 3-13, operations expenditure summary, directorate, \$607,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Information item. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. If I could just ask you to slow down a bit there, Madam Chair, if you don't mind.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Sure. No problem. So we are on page 3-14, information item, active positions in the directorate. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed, thank you. Page 3-17, operations expenditure summary, human resource strategy and policy, activity summary, \$7.134 million. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've slowed down from the blistering pace of reviewing the budget. I was just wondering, can the department provide some examples as to what purchased services are for \$69,000 and as well as some examples of the contract services it looks like for \$974,000. Now, I know this is the '12-13 budget, but they should be able to give me a predictability or framework of things they intend to purchase or what should typically fall under this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

MS. BASSI-KELLETT: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Typically the purchased services used, the expenditures under purchased services include any budgeted items for conferences, meeting services, delivery and courier charges, postage and telecommunications costs as well. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I'm not sure I heard contract services, but at the same time can I get fees and payables? Most Members would note that there's over a \$900,000 jump in fees and payments and I'm trying to understand the prediction between that. Would that have to do with negotiations and how would they break out? Thank you.

MS. BASSI-KELLETT: The contract budget has to do with various amounts that we have in the budget to deal with our human resource information system. It also included some funds to support the collective bargaining for three collective agreements that are a part of the '12-13 budget. As well, the fees and payments, the large increase that's noted in the main estimates reflects the inclusion of the fees for the Technology Service Centre for all of the computer equipment within the department that has been moved from TSC

chargebacks into fees and payments. Thank you very much.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you for the answer. Why is it so high, though, that it seems to be a bit of a distinguishing gap between what looks like a couple of years prior, \$14,000, \$21,000 to almost \$1 million in services. So why?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's a change in line items. If you look at TSC chargebacks in previous years, in 2010-11 it was \$907,000 and in 2011-12 it was \$916,000. You'll notice that its zero on this line at this point. That's because this number has been moved up into the new fees and payments and that's where it is showing now.

MR. HAWKINS: So the obvious question is why do that then? If it's just TSC services like other departments, why is it? Is it an accounting problem? Why would you do that if we've already got it listed under something? Predictably I guess it's more of a finance question by saying this is the type of process we'd see in other departments. But as far as Human Resources goes, why would we change line items if you're trying to follow the budget?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

MS. BASSI-KELLETT: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This is a reflection of what intrinsically meets the test for fees and payments. So instead of having the Technology Service Centre charges as a stand-alone, we felt it was better reflected to be incorporated into the fees and payments section. Thank you very much.

MR. HAWKINS: Just of particular note, I paged over to 6-7, which happens happily to be of course Municipal and Community Affairs, and coincidentally it's also the DM's old department, but TSC chargeback is consistent under that heading. Therefore, it does beg to wonder why we're changing the heading under this particular one. It doesn't follow any consistent practice. Now, I only went to one department, but it was the first department I went to and I'm just curious, does it come to a formal direction by some accounting experts? I'm not trying to put too fine of a point on it, but we're changing the language. The public itself could have some trouble with this.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Member is correct; it's actually an error within the Department of Human Resources and it needs to be put into the right category.

MR. HAWKINS: I thank the Minister for coming so clear on that. The question would then beg: What are the fees and payments for this particular department if there is a number there in that column?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That would be \$916,000, similar to previous year.

MR. HAWKINS: So I'm going to suspect that it's \$21,000 for the account. I'm seeing a nod, so no need to go to the Minister. I'm happy with that answer.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Anything further, Mr. Hawkins? Okay. On this activity I have Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Great, thank you, Madam Chair. This category contains issues like major programs and service initiatives. More importantly, I believe French language services falls under this particular category. Can the Minister or delegation give us a status or progress update on the advisor position for the French position?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The position is currently out for competition. We hope to have it filled very shortly.

MR. DOLYNNY: Keeping within the parameters of this category here, we know that with other programs and services we have the transition within PeopleSoft from 8.9 to 9.1. There's also an e-Performance project initiative that I believe is happening within this fiscal framework. Those two initiatives, can we get more clarity as to exactly what those costs will be for those changes?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

MS. BASSI-KELLETT: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The overall cost of the PeopleSoft upgrade to go from version 8.9 to version 9.1 is approximately \$1.6 million that we have been funding over two fiscal years, over the 2011-2012 fiscal year and then now in the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The e-Performance project will be something that we will build onto once we've finished the upgrade, and that's going to enable department managers to be able to really effectively manage an on-line performance management system with employees to really make it a very attractive and useful and much more constructive tool. We're looking at a cost again straddling two fiscal years of \$600,000; \$300,000 in each fiscal year 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. The e-Performance module is funded through the capital process as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. No further questions on this section.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'm sorry, I didn't hear that.

MR. DOLYNNY: No further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 3-17, operations expenditure summary, human resource strategy and policy, \$7.134 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. On the following page 3-18, human resource strategy and policy, active positions, information item. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We may have to go back. I'm just seeking clarification from the department. Bilingual services, there's an allowance program built into Human Resources. Is this under this particular section or can the Minister point to a more specific page that should be referenced on it and we can talk about it then?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): What is the wish of the committee? Are we amenable...

---Interjection

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I understand correctly, the Member is asking about bilingual bonuses that employees can get. That comes out of each individual department out of their compensation and benefits section. So it will show up in every department under compensation and benefits. It's not broken out specifically because the number changes fairly regularly as people come in that are receiving the bonus, but it all comes out of individual departments' compensation and benefits.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure if I'm in the right place but I would like to ask a question with regard to service level agreements. The Auditor General recommended that Health and Social Services and Education, I believe, develop service-level agreements. They were to be developed in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources. I would like to ask the Minister where things are at in terms of the service-level agreements for both health and social services and education authorities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The service-level agreements are a critical component and we do need to get those in place.

Right now we're working with Health and Social Services to set up some service-level agreements which we're going to be piloting. We're having those negotiations and discussions this week and hopefully we'll have those in place soon. We wish to pilot through the 2012-2013 fiscal year and then assess, figure out what works and what doesn't, fix the more appropriate, and start implementing them across the government over the following years.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for the response. I'm not sure again if this is the right place. I could be directed to the right section if I'm out of line here. I wanted to ask a question with regard to the role of Human Resources in our devolution negotiations and implementation. I believe that there is an employee within Aboriginal Affairs who is working on human resource matters. Is there any money within this budget for the Department of Human Resources that is going to the devolution work that we're currently doing as a government?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Department of Executive has a committee that's working on the devolution issues with respect to where positions may go. With respect to devolution in general and bringing in employees, we are there to provide guidance and direction with respect to Human Resources policy. We don't have additional money in our budget to do that. We are doing it out of Human Resources strategy and policy with the resources we currently have.

MS. BISARO: I guess I'm just trying to clarify, I don't remember where I read it but I believe I read that there is an employee working in DAAIR who is doing nothing but human resources work. I wondered if that is somebody who has been seconded from Human Resources to DAAIR to do that work. Maybe the Minister could speak to that for me.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We do have an ex-employee of the Department of Human Resources who is working in DAAIR on this file. He's not our employee currently, though. He is on a transfer assignment, which makes him their employee right now.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Anything further, Ms. Bisaro?

MS. BISARO: No. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Page 3-18, active positions, human resource strategy and policy, information item.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 3-21, management and recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, \$3.97 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again a little bit of uncertainty on whose mandate. I know that during the middle part of the 16th Assembly there was a website and other resources established specifically to enhance recruitment and retention of health professionals. I'm wondering, if this is a Human Resources responsibility, what is the success of those programs that were put in place specifically for this purpose and what's the result of the evaluation. If it's not this Minister's responsibility, I'll direct that later.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. In the Department of Human Resources within this – it's actually not in this section, it's in the corporate human resources section – there is a recruitment and retention unit that's responsible for the big picture recruitment. Planning, figuring out how to convince people to come here, also supporting programs that will actually train people here in the Northwest Territories. Programs that they do run out of there, there are a number of health-specific programs. They do the bursaries, they do the professional development initiative, they do some marketing on the big scales, not for individual jobs, the Community Health Nurse Development Program. A whole variety of programs. It's complicated. It's a joint responsibility because ultimately the budget for those programs is a Health and Social Services budget even though it's administered by the Department of Human Resources.

The two departments have to work closely together. I don't believe there has been a recent sort of evaluation or review of the effectiveness of the bursary program's professional development initiative, Community Health Nurse Development Program, or a number of the programs that are being delivered in there.

I can tell you that the bursaries are being utilized. They continue to be distributed. The Community Health Nurse Program is still in place. There has been a recent intake. I believe there are four people in that program right now. So there are things that are happening in that area.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that clarification and additional information. We should obviously be doing some monitoring and evaluation. Can we expect that to happen and would the Minister have a time frame in mind or can he establish one working with committee here?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Department of Human Resources and the Department of Health and Social Services will be discussing this particular issue next week, as a matter of fact, and how we want to work on this particular division to improve effectiveness. Once we have those discussions and figure out what we're going to do,

I'll be happy to share that with the Member and the appropriate committee.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. Now, Madam Chair, thanks for your forbearance there returning to this section. Could the Minister tell me just for my own edification here, the allied health recruitment unit mentioned here, how does that fit into the picture and how does it relate to what we've been discussing?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The unit that we're talking about which is in the corporate human resources is more of a planning unit and delivers some specific programs to encourage people to go into the health professions. The allied health recruitment unit is the unit that's actually doing the staffing for individual jobs, out there recruiting or advertising for position X and following it through to the hiring of somebody in position X. They're more the action unit with the actual individual jobs who are doing the actual hiring with the authorities.

MR. BROMLEY: My last question here is: Is this a unit of your department or is it a private enterprise contract? How does it work?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Bromley, sorry, to conclude your question.

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, thank you. Just the word "allied" caught my attention there. It's normally used in the title of companies and so on. Perhaps it has another meaning here.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It is a section of this unit. It is six employees who are GNWT employees. The allied health recruitment unit is titled that because we didn't want to focus just on nurses. It's got to be for all allied health professionals, which include PT/OT, respiratory therapy, pretty much every health profession. They're commonly referred to as allied health professionals. So we wanted the unit to be consistent with those individuals that we were trying to recruit.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. My question has been asked and answered.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 3-21, management and recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, \$3.970 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 3-22, active positions, information item, management and recruitment services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Page 3-25, corporate human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$12.371 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd just like to follow up with sort of an alert I gave in my general comments on the green teams, part of the Brilliant North, the plan. There was a record of failure on that and getting those established in the past, and I know in the 16th Assembly there was agreement to try and focus more on that. Has the Minister been able to get on top of that situation yet and what are the plans during 2012-13 here to make sure that those are up and running more effectively in all departments rather than in one or two? I know the one or two that are up and running have tried to share it but I'm not getting the impression that they're very successful yet, and I, again, do regard this as an important element especially for young people and people that are really plugged into the state of the world as a job place quality issue. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just going back a little bit, this corporate human resource section is the section that has that health recruitment unit that we were talking about previously. The GNWT Green Team currently has representatives from 12 of 14 departments, including the Housing Corporation sitting on our committee. There is also one outside agency, the Arctic Energy Alliance, who has committed a member to participate on the committee. The committee has initiated conversations and relationships with the federal government Green Team and is participating in their meetings as well.

Our Green Team holds quarterly meetings and will be engaging guest speakers and other participants from other jurisdictions and communities interested in helping us educate and foster new ideas how the GNWT can contribute to becoming a greener workplace.

Some of the initiatives that are taking place or have taken place include reducing the use of paper through the use of iPads and double-sided printing, purchasing recycled papers, organizing healthy lifestyle activities for staff including taking the stairs, in-office recycling stations and composting, and a GNWT Event Catering Contract Policy. As that committee moves forward, I am happy to share other future recommendations with the Member. I don't know what those might be but I'm happy to share them with committee. We think this is an important initiative within the Government of the Northwest Territories and we will continue to support it.

MR. BROMLEY: So there is a government team or committee, in this case. Are there departmental committees, departmental teams as well? My understanding was that that was the intent and that was not happening. But maybe the Minister could, again, clarify that for me.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, we've got a representative from 12 of the 14 departments. I know some departments do have stand-alone committees. I don't have that number in front of me right now. I am happy to get that number pulled together and I will share it with the Member and committee once I have it.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Member's comments again. I appreciate his understanding of this issue and support as an important issue. I guess I haven't quite seen the use of two-sided paper yet from departments. I see it pretty good in the Legislative Assembly, though not necessary amongst Ministers' statements this morning, but I think we are on track in the Legislative Assembly at 50 percent or greater reductions and certainly the electronics are happening, but I'm still not getting the feeling that it's happening routinely within departments, unless maybe it's going over at the Ledge. Occasionally there's more scrutiny. That might be a good one for the Minister to look at. That was just a comment.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm guilty of that myself once in awhile. It's noted and we will make sure that it's brought up to the committee to make sure we continue to push that initiative.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a couple of questions here. I'd like to at the outset, though, to say that I was very pleased to see that three negotiations which were entered into in the last several months were settled in short order and that basically everybody on both sides is happy. Kudos to the department for that.

A couple of questions with regard to, well, I'll start with the UNW agreement and the statement that there will be interim whistle-blower phrasing, I guess, for lack of a better way of putting it. I'd like to know from the Minister or from the department when they expect that this sort of interim whistle-blower protection will be in place, and secondary to that, the intent, I think, is to develop legislation as well. Does the Minister have any idea when an LP might be before committee?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Once the UNW Collective Agreement is ratified officially by both sides, we will have a six-month time period to complete the interim whistle-blower protection. It isn't going to be legislation. It's going to be interim protection that we're going to work in partnership with the union and other stakeholders to put in place. That's going to be our first priority, to get that in place. Once that's in place we will proceed with the LP for whistle-blower legislation. As I've committed to before, we hope

and want and expect that we will have whistleblower legislation introduced in this House and passed in this House before the end of this Assembly.

MS. BISARO: I'd love to pin the Minister down to a specific time and date, but I appreciate the answer. Thank you very much. I look forward to the interim document in six months' time. I think that's going to be something which is needed and I think it will be much appreciated by our employees.

The other couple of questions I wanted to ask are around persons with disabilities and duty to accommodate and so on. The department has recently done a survey of persons with disabilities. I haven't seen anything that indicates that that survey is done or that there have been any results from that survey. I wonder if I can get an update on where things are at with that. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, the Member is correct; we have done the survey. We've gone out and collected a bunch of data. I do have to say that we had a technical difficulty with the computer system that people could enter their information to and it put a bit of a delay in, two or three weeks, but it has closed. We've got the data and the analysis and a report is expected towards early June. Hopefully, we will see something during this sitting.

MS. BISARO: That's good to hear and I look forward to seeing those results as do many people, I think.

We've had, over the last year or two, some changes within the department in and around the issue of duty to accommodate. I believe we have a duty to accommodate an officer now, and I think we also have a policy. It's been in place, I think – the Minister can advise me – but I think about a year. I'd like to know whether or not there's been any evaluation of the position and/or the policy and the affect that it's having on our employees. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Duty to Accommodate Policy has been in effect since August 2011. From there, we developed a bunch of policies and protocols that went in place. Those went in place closer to December 2011. There is a position – the Member is correct – that's responsible for assisting the departments in their obligation and their duty to accommodate. We haven't done an analysis of the effectiveness of that position. It's still early days and we're still trying to smooth out all the ripples and find ways to make sure that the departments understand the policy and that we're able to provide them advice that they act upon, so it's still in progress.

MS. BISARO: Just to follow up, I can appreciate that it's been a relatively short period of time since you've, sort of, started to implement the policy, but can the Minister tell me when they will do an

evaluation and whether or not Members can get the results of that evaluation?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, there are a significant number of accommodation cases in the Government of the Northwest Territories. We have our officers and staff working with the different departments to accommodate those individuals. As with any accommodation, it takes work on behalf of the employee being accommodated, the department that is doing the accommodation and HR providing the advice with respect to the policies and procedures.

Our first priority is to get some of this backlog down and to get as many people accommodated as possible, understanding that it does take all three parties to find a reasonable solution. Every party has to be flexible in the accommodations.

As far as a program to evaluate, we are continuously pulling together data with respect to each of the accommodation's duration, how long it takes, situation, but there are no immediate plans to do a comprehensive evaluation of this section in the next year or two. Nothing at this point, but we are continuously gathering data as we move forward.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I guess I would encourage the Minister and the department to seriously consider a formal evaluation after about a year. That will be the end of this particular calendar year, from the sounds of things.

I appreciate that you are collecting data all of the time, but collection of data is not necessarily doing an evaluation of how well you are succeeding with the policy. Just to comment, Mr. Chair, but I would encourage the department to not wait two years to find out whether or not we are doing the right thing.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I think that was more of a comment. Would you like to respond, Mr. Abernethy?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Duly noted. With respect to data, we need the data to do the evaluation, so it is important that we continue to pull the data.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): I have the honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Chair, I want to ask the Minister on the Aboriginal cultural awareness training within his department. I know they are drafting a framework that will set up the GNWT's desire to increase the Aboriginal cultural awareness and appreciate this in the workforce. Are you going to have it ready by this fall and where are you going to do the first pilot of this cultural training with our workforce?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, that is the intent for this fall. Location is yet to be determined.

Training will likely take place in Yellowknife for Yellowknife employees, but it is also going to be available on line. It will be digital as well.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. I look forward to it. I hope they have some digital. We can go on the land and experience that. I'm not too sure. I guess that they'll adjust to it, so I felt all the time that we have a population in my region very strong Aboriginal. I felt that senior government people need to be immersed into our culture. I feel sometimes that we missed the boat and I found that, with this government here, with the Minister, we may be bridging some understanding amongst ourselves. I do want to say good luck. I do want to know where you're going to pilot. I wouldn't mind a time where we could find some time to talk about this Cultural Awareness Training Program. It has been long overdue. Those are just my comments, Mr. Chair.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This is an important program. I share the Member's opinion and thoughts. It's going to be an e-training curriculum. It's going to be on line. That way the greatest number of GNWT employees and respective GNWT employees can access and start gaining the awareness that they need of the different cultures and realities in the Northwest Territories.

I understand the Member's point, as well, about getting out with members of the communities, getting into communities, and I as a Minister have committed to getting to those communities and bringing some of my staff with me on a regular basis. I know the other Ministers are doing that as well. So it is a starting point and we need to continue to work together.

I will happily come to committee to talk about this program once we have an RFP and we move a little bit further down the line and we start doing a little bit of analysis on the effectiveness. The input is appreciated and sought.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Aboriginal cultural awareness training, I would hope the Minister would not bank 100 percent on the e-training. It's easy to go there and click things and don't really have a relationship. It's all up here. You can say I know how to make fire because I learned it on e-training or how to do this and that. That is not what I hope I envision this government is going to do. I hope they would take half that training, 50 percent, and go out and do the experiential training, out on the land with the real McCoy and do the real thing. I hope that is there also, that they take the senior bureaucracy and go out on the land for two or three days. That's just a warming up to the culture and that they have that training solved.

I know the Minister is looking at rolling this out. It's going to be a huge, enormous challenge. It's the first time I think in the history of this government that we are embarking on a journey of

understanding the Aboriginal people and their culture. How they work it, you might not have all willing, happy campers going. Some of them will question the policies. Some are going to question why we are doing this and some of them will question the validity of this. They might even tell us we're wasting money. Well then, we have an answer for that: we really don't want those types of employees working for us, for me.

We need to work it in a way that the Minister has some good support systems in place and good structures in place to say this is important. We want to attract young Aboriginal university and college students or students that are just out of school to our workforce. We need to make sure that they are okay. For me, this is a long process and I think that the Minister is starting out on a good process. I look forward to the next three years to see how this develops into a world-class Aboriginal training for employees, not only the government but for corporate. This is something that they can use. I think it's a program that I would like to put my rubber stamp on it and say yes, I was part of this government, I did this, in 10 or 15 years. I want to wish the Minister good luck.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Chair, I look forward to working with the Member over the next three years as we try to develop training that is both appropriate and cost effective. The trick is that we do want to respect and appreciate the Aboriginal cultures, but we also have to do that in the fiscal realities that we're faced with, which is one of the reasons we are starting the eRecruit. We figure we could get the greatest amount of access to GNWT employees in all communities – Yellowknife included – at all levels, anybody that has access to a computer, so that is a starting point.

I don't want anybody to think that is the only thing that we're doing. Individual departments are doing things specific to the departments. Justice has a Corrections Entry Level Training Program. There are Aboriginal components in there, cultural awareness in there. RCMP have made a commitment to having their officers engage with the public and the communities that they serve. In smaller communities, get to know the chief and councils, and where appropriate, get out on the land with the members so that they can get a true sense of what's going on in the communities and understand the people as much as possible.

Health and Social Services in their Community Health Nurse Development Program has a cultural component. So there are things that are being done out there that are a lot more specific and include getting more into the communities and engage more in the communities. This is a starting point. I want to stress that it's just a starting point, but we want to get this one in place and make it work as an initial tool to develop awareness of the cultures and

from there we can build. So I look forward to building with Member Yakeleya.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. One final supplementary question, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister listed a number of other programs the departments are doing to increase the understanding of Aboriginal culture. I think it works both ways. That's the beautiful part of reconciliation and healing. I think the Minister has listed some fairly good initiatives by some of the departments.

I do want to say that the Department of Education and Culture so far, for myself I think, has done an excellent job, because those teachers go out for one week on the land and spend a week on the land. It's a directive by the Minister. For the teachers, you have to go out to the land. There's no ifs, ands, or buts about it. You're on the land for one week and our people really appreciate that in our communities. They come back and have fun, they laugh, and the teachers I've talked to say that's the best thing they ever did in all the four years of university, where they learn the most. So I just want to remind the Minister that he's got the power.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Fortunately the Minister of Education is sitting here as well, so he got to hear everything that you just said and I look forward to working with both the Member and the Minister.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Moving to our other speaker here and I'll remind Members we're on page 3-25, corporate human resources. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again I seek guidance. I'd like to speak to the failure of this department in the past to establish a Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission policy that resulted in fines of hundreds of thousands of dollars amounting and totaling to millions. Is that appropriate under the corporate human resources or would that be the next section on employee services?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is the appropriate section. This is the section that that responsibility would fall under. The Department of Human Resources continues to lead the development of the GNWT Occupational Health and Safety Program. A work plan is currently being developed to improve health and safety practices within the GNWT workplace.

Ultimately every department is responsible for their own occupational health and safety plan or program. We provide guidance and advice on what works in other jurisdictions as well as what works

well within some of the departments within the Government of the Northwest Territories. We've had, as a government, pretty good uptake in some departments. Some departments are still a little behind and still working on that, but yes, this is the section that is responsible for assisting the departments.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that information. I know there is a sort of bifurcation. There are some responsibilities of this department and then there are responsibilities that accrue to each and every other department as well. So maybe I could get some clarity on what exactly Human Resources is responsible for, and if I could just save time a little bit by also asking if we know what the status is, have we received a fine, how much in the past year and are we anticipating further fines this year. Any crystal ball estimates there? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'll start with the easy one first. We have been fined in the past and we are expecting to have a fine again this year. I can't tell you what that total is going to be, but as soon as we know, we will certainly share that information with Members.

With respect to the role of the Department of Human Resources, we provide leadership and guidance. Ultimately it is the departments that are responsible for putting their committees in place and making sure that those committees are meeting on a regular basis and providing that occupational health and safety perspective within the individual departments. We are responsible for putting in policies such as the Duty to Accommodate Policy and whatnot that has some play here. When an individual is injured in the workplace, we do have a duty to accommodate them. So the policy was drafted by the Department of Human Resources in cooperation with input from other departments, but once again, when it comes to the actual implementation, we are a provider of information, best practices and recommendations based on policy.

MR. BROMLEY: Maybe could I just get what the amount was in fines for '11-12? We had been fined under two categories. So if it's possible to break that out, that would be great.

Would the Minister maybe commit to keeping us updated when we know what's happening this fiscal year in terms of that and maybe even an update on how things are going at some point with trying to seal this issue once and for all and get all of the departments responding appropriately? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Safe Advantage Program, there are two parts to this program. The first part of any penalty or any fine comes as a result of claims history and experience, and that's based on a formula that the WSCC has put in place that looks at the government as a whole because they consider us one employer as opposed to many

employers. But they run it through the formula and we are assessed based on the number of claims in the government. If we're over a certain threshold, we get a fine. If we're at the threshold, obviously we don't blow it; obviously we don't. In 2010 and 2011 we were fined for \$243,000.

There is a second part of the process that individual employers, the GNWT in this case, are put through a questionnaire process. So they'll go to one division, section or department in the government and they will go through a questionnaire process. Last year the questionnaire was asked in the Department of Human Resources and we passed that. As a result there was no secondary portion of the fine, which is usually half of the claims fine. If we failed that, our fine would have been about another \$120,000 higher. We passed it; we didn't get that second portion, but we did have the initial fine of \$243,000. Based on what we know of our claims to date, we expect that we will be over the threshold, assuming the threshold stays the same as it was in previous years. So we are expecting a fine once again.

The second part of the questionnaire would depend on how the departments, division, section or whatever went through the interview process, how they fared through that interview process, and once we have that data, we will be obviously sharing it with committee to let them know the status. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROMLEY: I think that's it for now. Thanks for that information. I'll look forward to updates.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'll direct committee to page 3-25, activity summary, corporate human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$12.371 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 3-26, activity summary, corporate human resources, grants and contributions, contributions, \$115,000, total grants and contributions, \$115,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 3-27, information item, corporate human resources, active positions. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. What is that new job in headquarters? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe this was brought up during the interim budget as well. There has been an increase of one position at corporate human resources. There was a labour relations advisor that sunsetted. We're bringing it back. Is that correct? One sunsetted, we're bringing it back, and then we're

bringing back an additional one to help us with some of the workload in the labour relations division. So two there, one new.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. That's good.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 3-27, information item, corporate human resources, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 3-29, activity summary, employee services, operations expenditure summary, \$14.080 million. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Question here with regard to pay and benefits. A number of years ago we had quite a backlog. Staff were hired to get rid of the backlog. I'd like to just get an update as to where things sit now with our pay and benefits. Are we up to date, so to speak? I realize that there's probably always some stuff that needs doing, but does the Minister feel that the department is on track and getting things processed in a timely manner?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct; there is a constant workload in this section. It's a heavy workload in this section. It tends to build up. It comes in waves. We did put in a new, or, rather, some staff in there to help deal with the tremendous amount of backlog that existed and I'm happy to report that currently we're down to 300 files outstanding or backlogged in this section. So there has been some significant improvement in that area. That number will shrink and swell given just the realities of employee terminations, final pays, all those types of things that need to be done. As more casuals come in, the demand decreases because there's a lot of final pays that have to be done on casuals, so it does ebb and flow, but we have managed to get the backlog down to 300, which is significant.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. Three hundred sounds like a lot, but I can appreciate with some...

---Interjection

MS. BISARO: Yes. From 1,400 to 300, that's a good thing. My other question has to do with other expenses the travel has been reduced significantly from \$103,000 down to \$15,000. Was this an anomaly in 2011-2012? I note that in 2010-2011 it was only \$20,000 as well. Why the difference? Why the huge reduction?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I can't tell you why it swelled up to \$103,000 in previous years. The actual uptake was only around \$20,000 so we felt it was more appropriate to indicate what the trend

has been as opposed to whatever this \$103,000 was in previous years. Or last year, sorry.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Ms. Bisaro, no further questions? Page 3-29, activity summary, employee services, operations expenditure summary, \$14.080 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 3-30, information item, employee services, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 3-33, activity summary, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, \$4.634 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 3-34, information item, regional operations, active positions. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I note on this page the reduction of three positions in the regions. Can the Minister explain that? Also, yes, if he can explain those.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's not really an elimination of positions in the regions. What this is, this was the regional superintendent/director training positions which are more like interns in their application. They had been showing up in the Department of Human Resources but they're actually employees of other departments. So it was more appropriate to treat those positions more like the Intern Program. So the Intern Program doesn't necessarily show all the positions in the Department of Human Resources. They show them where they exist. In this case those training positions continue to exist, they're supernumerary, they're extra, and it wasn't appropriate to show them in the Department of Human Resources where they don't actually work. But they still exist. Those positions have not disappeared. We are still facilitating the training of the regional director/superintendents as appropriate.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: So my particular concern is in the Deh Cho where it showed seven positions last year. The Minister is saying there are six positions showing on the books this year but it's still seven people working, or was that a virtual person?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are three training positions in the associate director training positions every year. They change locations on a regular basis, depending on who is recruited into them and where they're from. Last year there was one in the Deh Cho. There may not be one in the Deh Cho and these numbers suggest that there

isn't necessarily one in the Deh Cho this year. But there also may be. I don't know which department that particular associate director training person was in. I can confirm to the Members where the current group of associate director trainees are and it could be that there isn't one in the Sahtu or the Deh Cho but there could be one as well. I don't know off the top of my head. They will change from year to year to year to year to year as individuals come up and are identified for that particular training opportunity.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Just for confirmation then, the Minister is saying that the regional operations have not decreased by three positions.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Not sure I completely understand the question. The Department of Human Resources used to show these positions even though they didn't necessarily work for the Department of Human Resources. To be consistent, given that this is a supernumerary training position, they will no longer show under HR's establishment but we still have those training opportunities available and we will put individuals in those training opportunities. We will always try to have those training opportunities full. We'll always be training somebody in the regional Superintendent/Director Training Program. There are three new ones a year and I think at any one time we could have as many as six in the program. Those six will be in a variety of locations and it will change every year. Three new individuals will be identified. Wherever those individuals happen to be and wherever the training is taking place is where they'll be located. So it will change fairly regularly, a lot like the Intern Program. We don't know where the interns are going to be in any given year but we continue to support the Intern Program with roughly the same number of employees because that's what our budget will cover. In this case we will always be taking on three new ones and they will be located wherever's appropriate for the individual. Sometimes that's going to be the Deh Cho, sometimes that's going to be the Sahtu, sometimes that's going to be the Beaufort-Delta, and it will continue to move around.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Menicoche, any update?

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Yes, I'm good.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): With that, page 3-34, information item, regional operations, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): If I can get Members to turn back to page 3-7, Human Resources, department summary, operations expenditures, 2012-2013 Main Estimates, \$42.796 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I would like to thank the Minister and his delegation for being here today. If I could get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses from the Chamber, please. Thank you. We'll take just a quick five-minute break before we begin with Public Works and Services.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Welcome back, committee. I'd like to address everyone to turn to section seven of their book. I would ask Mr. Abernethy, Minister of Public Works and Services, if he has any opening comments.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to present the Department of Public Works and Services' main estimates for the fiscal year 2012-2013.

The department's main estimates propose an operations expenditure budget of \$93.6 million for 2012-2013, an increase of 0.7 percent over the 2011-2012 Main Estimates. This change can be primarily attributed to the following adjustments:

- increased maintenance and utility funding associated with new GNWT facilities coming into service;
- addition of two positions in support of the ongoing implementation of the government's new Document Management System; and
- a reduction in base utility funding resulting in energy conservation initiatives implemented by the department.

To help demonstrate how Public Works and Services is positioned to support and contribute to the priorities of the 17th Assembly, I would like to begin by mentioning some of the departmental activities and initiatives planned for 2012-2013.

In support of this governments' priority to increase employment opportunities where they are most needed, the department uses a combination of local and regionally contracted services to assist in completing its ongoing prevention and deferred maintenance programs. In addition, the department has 12 indeterminate settlement maintainer positions along with 11 apprentice positions in communities across the NWT. These frontline positions enable the department to better manage maintenance activities and availability of resources at the community level, while promoting and strengthening our local northern workforce. They also allow the department to be more proactive in completing its mandate of building maintenance, complying with code-mandated checks and repairs

and completing deferred maintenance requirements.

Many of the government programs that support priorities of the 17th Assembly and the services available to residents are dependent upon information and communications technologies. The Technology Service Centre's ongoing efforts to improve the technology services available to government continue to be a priority for this department. As the demand for electronic service delivery continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to manage the network and its growth effectively.

Over the past three years, enhancements to local network infrastructure have increased access speeds into regional communities by way of upgrades to the digital communications network and Internet. The new digital communications network contract is introducing new technology to provide additional bandwidth, while some of the other benefits of this new contract include:

- improved network performance and reliability due to additional bandwidth and new technology in microwave, satellite and fibre-served communities;
- ability to prioritize different types of service to allow the flow of critical data over the network, an example being health digital imaging;
- ability to easily add bandwidth at lower per unit costs; and
- improved service response times when service issues and outages occur.

Additionally in 2012-13, the Technology Service Centre will offer its support and expertise to the office of the chief information officer in its review of the government's ongoing telecommunications requirements and the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project.

I would now like to mention a few of the department's other important program and service initiatives for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Created in 2008-09, the department's Risk Management and Safety Program established there was over \$470 million in deferred maintenance associated with aging GNWT infrastructure that poses potential safety risks to employees and the public. In coordination with the capital planning process and other program funding, the Deferred Maintenance Program has addressed \$145 million in deferred maintenance issues.

For 2012-13 and ongoing, the department will continue to focus on this very important issue to ensure government facilities remain safe, reliable and available to GNWT departments in delivery of programs and services.

I would now like to turn my attention to the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund program, one of the department's most important energy management initiatives. This program is focused on reducing building operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions by assessing government facilities to identify and target program funding at those projects best suited for energy saving retrofits. Energy retrofits can reduce annual energy use by as much as 15 percent while greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced as much as 30 tonnes per building annually.

Since utility funding was consolidated in Public Works and Services in 2010-11, I am happy to report the energy conservation initiatives implemented by this department have realized \$654,000 in ongoing annual utility cost savings. Since 2007-08, when the department commenced energy conservation activities, the cumulative energy savings have been \$2.65 million while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 16,600 tonnes.

Preliminary estimates from the 2011-12 energy conservation initiatives undertaken by the department could generate an additional \$550,000 in ongoing annual utility costs savings, bringing the estimated utility savings for the past two years to \$1.204 million. The cumulative reductions in greenhouse gas emissions could reach 25,156 tonnes by the end of 2012.

For 2012-13, the department has re-profiled the 2010-11 confirmed utility savings to support ongoing capital investment in energy reduction through the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund program. With government support, this program is on its way to becoming a self-sustaining government program that reduces costs and increases energy efficiency.

The last initiative which I would like to mention is connected to the government's increasing reliance on electronic systems and the paperless information they produce. I am specifically speaking to the e-mails and other electronic documents we and all government departments generate in the delivery of programs and services. The Digital Integrated Information Management System is an electronic records management system designed to effectively manage the electronic records created, received and maintained by government.

This initiative is a multi-year project managed by the office of the chief information officer for the implementation of a government-wide document management solution. The first phase of this initiative involved the document management system being implemented within Public Works and Services in 2011-12, while future implementations in other government departments will be completed in a phased-in approach starting in 2012-13. In support of this initiative, the department will be

establishing two indeterminate information system support positions starting in 2012-13.

It is through these and other departmental activities that Public Works and Service will continue to provide its many clients with the high quality of services they have come to rely upon.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide an overview of the department's 2012-13 Main Estimates. I look forward to discussing them with Members in more detail.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Does the Minister have witnesses that he'd like to bring into the House?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does the committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): If I can get the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses into the Chamber, please.

Minister Abernethy, would you care to introduce your witnesses to the House, please?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me, immediately to my right is Paul Guy, the deputy minister. On my left is Steve Lewis, the director of corporate services; and on our far right is Laurie Gault, the director of the Technology Service Centre.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. I'd like to welcome the witnesses to the House again. I appreciate you coming down today. With that, I will open up the floor to general comments on the Department of Public Works and Services. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome to this plan for the budget there. Minister and your staff, certainly, a couple points I want to make this afternoon and then we can go through the business plans in detail.

I do want to say that the challenges that this department has had to do with the diesel price increases that they seem to be dealing with. In the document it said that since 2007-08 that the diesel prices have increased by 57 percent. I look forward to the types of initiatives you will have to deal with this issue of the high cost of energy in our communities by implementing or initiating alternative energy heating sources.

You have...(inaudible)...of the wood pellets, biomass and the different types of energy initiatives that are going in various communities. In my community you don't see very much of those initiatives or any type of hydro or especially wood pellets or biomass. You see them mostly in southern parts of the Northwest Territories and little projects going, I should say huge projects going on

here and there. For my region we are not very successful in attracting the attention from the government to put in an alternative heating source so we have to revert to the good old diesel and natural gas. Even natural gas isn't even safe to say anymore. Our reliability comes from the high cost of diesel and we all want to make some changes. However, we need the support of government and we're hoping that this government here will be warming up to an invitation by the Sahtu and say we could put in an alternative source of heating. We have done some small projects such as the solar panel heating in our swimming pools. However, there needs to be a little more capital infrastructure commitment to putting some other projects that could save the communities a lot of money. In the small communities, to heat our community arenas it costs a lot of money for the communities to run it.

I think you pretty well have a sense of where I'm going with this so I'm going to be asking some questions. Through the business plans we also looked at the water upgrades in our communities. We've done some pilot projects making sure the water upgrades are safe and that training is there. The cost of taking over those plants and the infrastructure is quite expensive. I noted from my visits in my communities that even though we do have a New Deal and the funding, that the maintenance, the amount of times you have to change the filters costs a lot and we just don't have the money there. So the communities are somewhat reluctant to take over the operations.

I do want to say I support your officials and your staff to look at how we get effective video conferencing in our health centres, especially in our health centres. The Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link is a very good initiative and you have my 100 percent support for that. I would like to see that because I know that will cut down for the efficiency. We could have that hooked up into our schools and especially in our health centres. So, Minister, you've got my support on that initiative, no questions asked. So I want to support you on that initiative.

Two other points I have, Mr. Chair, and I'll close off. The Apprenticeship Program has been very successful. The Settlement Maintainers Program has been good for the small communities because it worked in the past and we did have those programs and somehow we got away from that. The last government made it a priority to get those programs back into our communities. There are many benefits to have those programs there. So the Apprenticeship Program is good and the Settlement Maintainers Program is pretty unique because our own people are doing things that they didn't at one time think they could do. Now they've got the training and we're empowering them and we're setting up good role models saying that this person can do it, that's my uncle or that's my

auntie. So we're setting up a path of other younger students in our communities could maybe one day be one of those people. This government is contributing to the growth of our communities through their capacity.

My last point I want to ask the Minister is to take a real serious look at the energy projects in our communities. We need the wood pellet system. We have some facilities going up in the Sahtu that maybe a huge wood pellet boiler can go in there to cut costs. I don't know too much of the detailed stuff; however, I think that some of the costs we have were woodstoves. We had woodstoves in some of our places. Maybe I'm not speaking to the right department, but for your department having wood pellets in the school or the health centre, it makes a huge difference, unless Imperial Oil or some oil company decides to build a refinery in one of our communities, then our fuel would be cheaper, but that doesn't seem to be the case. So I look forward to the Minister looking at the various alternative heating supply systems in our region.

It costs us quite a bit of dollars and it costs this government a lot of dollars to continue using the diesel. If we do not get that type of support, then I'm all for diesel and natural gas, but that's what keeps my people warm. If we have to pay the price, then we pay the price. So unless this government makes a change in the Sahtu with the hydro, with wood pellet, biomass or other geothermal, start looking at that type of heating, alternative energies in our communities and putting some of that infrastructure in our community, then I'm for it. I have a list of the projects in one community and it's amazing how much money you pour into one community and that community has a low cost of living.

So I look forward to this Minister's leadership in seeing what can be done in the three years on the planning or on the budget, everything, knowing everything. If he can deliver on a couple, I would be very happy and I think the people would appreciate it.

I know I said a lot in 10 minutes. So I want to leave it at that and thank the Minister and his staff coming through the Sahtu on a tour. We really appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Before we allow the Minister the opportunity to respond, it was agreed upon earlier today that we'd do an aggregate of the general comments and then I'll ask the Minister the opportunity to reply. If there are specific questions, they can make reference to the particular Member.

With that, I'll open up again to general comments from any of the Members. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a big overlap between my colleague from the Sahtu

and myself. So I'll try not to go into too much detail here until we get to detail.

I guess in general terms I appreciated the Minister's opening remarks and I thought he gave a good update on the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund, and the benefits of work done on that, and the future outlook for that program and the environmental benefits in terms of reduction and greenhouse gas emissions. Again, I see a very responsible department towing the line fiscally and I appreciate the effort there. I know that it takes a lot of effort. So kudos for that and I'm not used to seeing the Technology Service Centre funding requests so stable. So that must be a huge effort there and I appreciate that.

This department plays a big role in our communities, a really big role that is not necessarily written into their mandate. I just want to give that some profile, express some appreciation to the employees who actually fulfill those roles and anticipate, really, that there is that understanding at the executive level as well.

One example I can think of is there are many communities that simply do not have commercially available expertise if you want your furnace fixed or some issue like that. Frequently it's the individuals from this department who play a huge capacity role in communities, both by sharing their expertise with those that are inclined to absorb it and enhance the community capacity that way and ultimately providing some pretty effective on-the-ground service when the situation requires it. I know that's stepping out, I think, beyond their mandate.

In line with that, my colleague's compliments on the apprenticeship positions and programs, which I wouldn't mind hearing more about at some point, is also very much appreciated and a key part of our really practical community capacity building approach. I'm always particularly interested in terms of energy efficiency and oil burner mechanics. I don't think we have enough of those in our communities. This is something that the Housing Corporation also does and I hope that there's one or two or five of them in those positions as well.

This department has subscribed to a standard of 25 percent better than the National Energy Code for buildings. I think that's now out of date. We need to go to 40 percent. Essentially all of the provinces have gone to that either for the entire province or for the northern parts of the provinces. It's time for us to recognize that we can effectively benefit from going to a higher standard in the North.

I will be commenting on other aspects in the detail, petroleum products division and procurement policies and so on. But I think I'll save those for the detail and leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Any further general comments, committee? If not, we'll move over to Minister Abernethy for an opportunity to respond to general comments. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll just touch on a few of these areas and then we can get into some details where I can answer some specific questions.

With respect to Mr. Yakeleya's comments about the high cost of energy in the communities, we see that and we recognize that, which is one of the reasons with public infrastructure we have been looking at alternatives and we have been using the Capital Asset Retro Fund to help us deal with those things. I acknowledge that we haven't gone to any alternatives necessarily in the Sahtu with respect to heating, but we have been working in the Sahtu. One example is the Norman Wells school, the Mackenzie Mountain School, where we've been putting in plumbing and electrical retrofits to increase the efficiency of that building. In the studies for that building, as an example, there is a plan where we can switch to a pellet boiler in that school. The problem being, obviously, is the supply of the pellets and the technology in the Sahtu.

We've had recent conversations with SSI where they've been talking about alternatives, as well, and we'd like to continue that conversation and see what's out there as far as an opportunity. Most importantly, what is the supply opportunity for pellets, so if there is a guaranteed supply of pellets available on a regular basis to the Sahtu and everybody's comfortable with the distribution of those pellets, making sure they are getting in there and we are confident they can get in there, it makes it easier for us to utilize the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund to put in those technologies in the Sahtu. So we want to continue to have those discussions. We see future possibilities but we need some certainly around the supply.

Video conferencing and whatnot that was mentioned, we've heard constantly over the last four years and even into this year the need for bandwidth into the communities. We hear about the fibre optic link which is certainly going to increase that opportunity into the future, but we couldn't afford to wait. We have services and programs we have to deliver now, and as a result, the department has gone out and negotiated for increased bandwidth into the Northwest Territories which is going to benefit all of the communities throughout the Northwest Territories. We are pretty excited about that. We can go into some more detail when we're going page by page.

To Mr. Bromley's point about the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund, we are very proud of this program. We see a lot of potential, a lot of future here, and we'd like to keep building on it. We'd like to

continue to move to alternatives as we can afford it. As we save money by utilizing the technology, it's a double positive. For one, we're contributing to the environment, supporting the environment, and we're also saving money which is allowing us to invest more money. So it's a good news story and as we save more, we should be able to invest more.

I'm going to get my deputy to just talk a little bit about the apprenticeship programs. Both Members brought that up, so we'll get him to talk a little bit about that.

Just in closing to Member Yakeleya, we are serious about finding solutions in the Sahtu. It may take a bit of time, but we know there are good people there who want to work towards the same end and we will continue to work with them in moving forward.

So to Mr. Guy for apprenticeships.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Following up on the Minister's remarks, we have a number of apprentices in the department who support our maintenance staff in delivering our maintenance programs with regular preventative maintenance, but also our Deferred Maintenance Program. We have carpenters, electricians, plumbers. Many of these apprentices come to us through the Apprenticeship Program and stay with us to get their full training status and then go on to stay with the department for many, many years. Many of our long-term employees started with us as apprentices. We look at it as a way of building capacity in the department, capacity within the trades industry. Those who don't stay with us go on to work for the contractors that do our contract work, but also as part of our success plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Any further comments, committee? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Very quickly, I would ask the Minister what would constitute certainty around the supply of wood pellets in the Sahtu. Is it a contract with a supplier or is it a transportation issue? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are still trying to figure that out. If we're going to invest a significant amount of money putting in pellet technology into somewhere like the Sahtu, let's say Norman Wells as an example, the only way pellets could get up there would be in the winter by winter road or by barge in the summertime, but there's no current supplier of pellets in the Sahtu. There's nobody in the business

of selling or providing a quantity of pellets. We would need to have certainty that there was someone who could get that to us on a regular basis so that if we turned over to pellets as an option, that we know we could continue to heat our buildings 12 months of the year where necessary, seven days a week. It's kind of a little of both.

MR. BROMLEY: My comment on that is Canada ships about 90 percent of our pellets by overseas, so I don't see an issue there. Obviously, the economics are there and so on and the pellet supply is available. In fact, there's a glut right now in BC because of some of the other environmental impacts they are experiencing in the way of the pine beetle and so on. So I don't see that as a big one to overcome if there's a will to get it done.

I just wanted to ask the Minister does he agree that the department plays an important role in helping support some of these renewable energies becoming economic by being the big customer themselves locally and bringing the price through that move and the opportunity for others to move it to reality. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The problem, as I see it, is there is currently nobody in the business of providing pellets in the Sahtu at this point, but I agree with the Member. In his comments, he kind of answered the question for me. As we are a client, we increase demand and, therefore, increase affordability and make it easier for others. But there still has to be a supply source. We're not a distributor. We would be a client. If it's there, it certainly increases our options.

MR. BROMLEY: I think that was a good, brief discussion. As for your last statement that you're not a supplier, I will hold my comments until we get to petroleum products division. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does the Minister wish to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We can wait for the division.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. With that, does committee agree to proceed in detail? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to follow up on Mr. Bromley's exchange with the Minister and the reason why he's stating that possibly there's no supplier in Norman Wells, for example, or the Sahtu. Because we don't have the support there. No one's going to get up and just start putting the wood pellets to the fire and say, come. It's ludicrous.

We've been saying that if you had an initiative to put a wood pellet boiler in one of the communities, like the Fort Good Hope new school, you would have had the suppliers in Good Hope. It would have

been there. I guess I'm moving into an exchange here but you have to get realistic, too, with this type of initiative. That's what I'm asking this Minister here. If you want to put something in, wood boilers, it takes a couple years, you can get somebody going. They have it in Fort Simpson. Just out at Checkpoint they have a company there putting these wood pellets together. They're testing it out. They're testing out what's the best market they can have. Right now we get them out of Alberta. They used to do this in the Sahtu a long time ago. They used to cut cords of wood for the church and the steamboat. They're no stranger to it. Even when I was in Old Crow they used to have cords of wood outside the Old Crow school. That's how they heated the school. If the government said we're going to do this and we want a supplier in the Sahtu, I think you're going to have a few people step up and say let's do it. But it's got to be a business for them. It's got to be business viability.

It's all about money. Interest in their supplier of petroleum but we're not a supplier of wood pellets. That discussion we'll have later.

Give us an opportunity to get into this and not just blame the people saying there's no supplier. Quit blaming us. That's something that this government needs to know. We will do it if the demand is there, but like I said, all the projects are not around the Sahtu. They're somewhere else. I want to just tell the Minister that if you give us the opportunity to be a supplier of wood pellets, we would do it. Actually, the people in Good Hope said, we want to get into this business. But they said, why? There's no wood pellet business. They're going to go broke. It's the cart and the horse; which one goes first? You're putting the cart before the horse here. I think we need to have some more discussion on this here. Put in a little bit of emotion. I take it as being too hard on the Sahtu.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think ultimately we're agreeing with both Mr. Bromley and Mr. Yakeleya. We would obviously like to see and utilize this technology up there but currently there isn't a distributor. I'm only purely talking about distributing. We have had conversations just last week with the SSI and they did express an interest in starting to have more conversations about this and creating opportunities for the utilization of things like pellets in the Sahtu. We're absolutely open to that discussion and we'd like to be part of that discussion and solution, but we have to have those conversations before we can commit to doing anything specific. Ultimately whatever we do has to be cost effective and in the best interest of the pocketbook of the Northwest Territories so that we can continue to provide all the

programs and services that we do provide as a government.

In short, yes, we're interested in this. This is something that we'd like to work with the Sahtu on. Find a way to utilize this technology in that region. A lot of discussions need to be had and we're ready to have them.

MR. YAKELEYA: When we look at these types of programs, like I said I felt before in my statements, that the Sahtu didn't really have a fair shake at this type of initiative. I felt that we missed out.

I was a little bit forceful in my language on our use of the diesel fuel. That's a reliable source for us right now. I found that we need the government to be supportive. If you're looking at the Norman Wells health centre and long-term care facility. Does Public Works and Services see that wood pellet would be a viable heating source of energy for any other large facility? If it is, then tell the people in the Sahtu we need to get a supplier going here.

There are all kinds of excuses not to have this. This is only one source of energy that we're talking about. We're not talking about geothermal or hydro. That's my comment. Make it so that we can have a good discussion. The Minister said he's having discussion with the Sahtu Secretariat right now. I look forward to the outcome of those discussions with the SSI. I'll leave the rest for detail.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: With respect to the health centre, absolutely it's something we'll look at as alternate sources of heating, such as pellets. Absolutely. The bottom line is we need to make sure that the cost savings are there and that there's definitely payback. Right now without all the detail – and I want everybody to recognize that we don't have all the detail – it looks like the transportation costs of pellets could be quite high. So we need to work with all the parties to find some solutions to some of the complications that will keep the costs high. Overall we agree with what the Member is saying, and with the health centre we'll absolutely consider it.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Does committee agree to proceed to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. I'll direct committee to page 7-7. Just to note, the department summary will be deferred until after the consideration of the detail is completed. We can move to page 7-8, information item, investment summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-9, information item, revenue summary.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-10, information item, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-13, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$7.958 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Yes, was that page 7-17, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-13, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm up to...okay. No. It's okay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Okay. We'll repeat that again. Page 7-13, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$7.958 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 7-14, information item, directorate, active positions. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Page 7-13?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 7-14, Mr. Hawkins. Go ahead.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. It's actually hard to hear you over here. I seek unanimous consent to go back to page 7-13.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Hawkins, that activity was called three separate times so we will not be able to go back to that activity on page 7-13. Page 7-14, information item, directorate, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Page 7-17, activity summary, asset management, operations expenditure summary, \$82.229 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let's see, my first one on this page is, I believe this is where the energy standards are set for our buildings and some of our energy management work. My understanding is that currently we subscribe to the 25 percent better than the National Model Energy Code for buildings. As I was saying, though, really the times are moving on and we need to continue to ratchet that up and increase our efficiency. I'm wondering if the Minister would commit to investigating the possibility for moving to a 40 percent better than the National Model Energy Building Code for buildings.

---Interjection

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Excuse me. Mr. Bromley does have the floor. Thank you very much. Mr. Bromley, I apologize.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It does get hard to hear here. I think the Minister knows

where I'm coming from here. I have to say that I'm not totally comfortable with his comment that it always has to be purely based on economics, these decisions, but I think so far we obviously have been doing very well, just based on economics. Although I see there are other government mandates and responsibilities here as well that need to be serviced. Could I get the Minister's reaction on moving to a 40 percent better National Energy Building Code?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll go to Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member is correct; right now we subscribe to the 25 percent better than the national. That's our target. We do actually direct our staff in the department to meet or beat even the 25 percent and go beyond that. In most cases we do. We're comfortable that we're actually beating the 25 percent that we're targeted for.

With respect to investigate, I'm happy to have the department look at some options. I will not commit to 40 percent at this time because the analysis hasn't been done and I'm not sure whether or not we can actually get to the 40 percent. I'm happy to have the department look at it and provide me with some information so that an informed decision or informed direction can be made.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that commitment. That's what I was asking for. Obviously, as I mentioned, almost all other jurisdictions have already gone to the 25 percent and they're more southerly than us. Our savings are bigger, obviously.

My second one is on the contracting and procurement services. Again, sort of an asset revolving issue, you might call it. I brought this up before. We do have a Green Procurement Policy in place but it's worth beans. The department knows that and had committed in the past to coming up with a real Green Procurement Policy with best practices and standards and so on, getting that in place. Can I ask where the department is on that and when we'll be getting a briefing and see that into implementation, hopefully within the next few months?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Abernethy. I believe we're going to go to Mr. Guy.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, as the Member has said, the procurement guidelines for the Government of the Northwest Territories are maintained by the Department of Public Works and Services on behalf of the Department of Finance. Within those guidelines, there was a guideline on green procurement and that has been going through the process of being updated, and I believe the procurement council is reviewing the most

recent draft. I don't know what date it will be complete, but I'm expecting it will be brought forward in the near future.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): We'll go to Minister Abernethy as well.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to Member Bromley. Like Mr. Guy said, we don't have the exact date, but we will have some discussions this week and we'll get back to Mr. Bromley with a more concrete date as to when he can expect to see and look at the suggestions of the proposal.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister and deputy minister for those comments. I'll look forward to that.

On the inspection services side of things, again, I know this department has their own building standards and so on, but unfortunately our communities don't have a building standards act. I know that there are many cases when they're at a loss, they do approach Public Works and Services and when they are able, they do provide a response on an informal basis to help out there. I'm just wondering, is there an assessment of that sort of service that's provided or is that something the department should be doing, and would this department be willing to work with Municipal and Community Affairs to put together a buildings act and provide advice on the basis of their considerable experience with their own standards and codes. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Ultimately, as the Member said earlier today, the responsibility for a buildings standard code in the Northwest Territories would ultimately be up to MACA, and we're absolutely happy to work with MACA, share our expertise, provide any sort of guidance around the specifics that we can, and we will do that if MACA does take that direction.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for those comments. I know there is a lot of experience with the department, so that would be useful if we do go that way.

I was also asking, I know that communities have projects and often turn to Public Works and Services personnel on an informal basis. Is there a way of capturing that sort of thing and reporting on it as to the degree of activity that happens in that format given the absence of an NWT building standards act? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm actually going to Deputy Minister Guy on that one.

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

MR. GUY: Our technical services staff get requests from all sorts of parts of the community, whether it's the community government or other governments. They get requests from consultants, practitioners on matters related to building construction, so it would be difficult to track and report on every request we get. The formal requests we do get in relation to supporting communities and technical matters are normally brought forward through MACA. Primarily, we prefer to see communities go to the private sector and get the technical help that they need. And where, if there's a specialized need or a request from the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs for us to provide that technical support, then we'd do that through that mechanism.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: That's all the questions I have, and I appreciate Mr. Guy's comments there. I understand that this is not the mandate of this department. They're providing that service in the absence of proper responsibility by other parts of government. I appreciate that service. I know our communities do too. I'll be working with the Minister of MACA to see what we can do to take that off your hands. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. We'll go to the Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of questions here. The Minister mentioned that some of the increase in this budget is because we've added new facilities to our total numbers of facilities, and that the O and M operational costs of these facilities are increasing the bottom line for the budget. I wondered if the Minister could advise which buildings he's referencing when he says that we've added buildings to our stable of facilities. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For some of the specifics on that and the actual costs and the individual numbers, it's best to go to Mr. Lewis, so I'd like to pass it on to Mr. Lewis.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of the assets that we'd be referring to that have come into service would be the new data centre. It would be the new government building in Inuvik and records storage facility. Those are two of the larger ones that just come to mind. We do have a number of other smaller facilities that we've added. I can provide those if you can just bear with me for one second.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny): Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is a big list, so rather than reading the whole thing out, we can commit to providing that to the Member. But we'll go back to Steve just to give us some of the finances around that. But as far as the list, I just want to check if the Member's okay if we provide that later.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay. For 2012-13 an example would be the new school in Inuvik and funding associated with that. There is an ENR crew trailer and associated funding that was added to that. There was lighting assigned to do with the DOT runway, cold storage facilities for ENR, Health and Social Services senior assisted living facilities. They're fairly small numbers. I can continue to go on if the Member would like.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Minister Abernethy, before we have you answer again, if we have commitment to provide that detailed information to the Member. Any further update, Mr. Abernethy?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Originally I committed to providing the list of the infrastructure, but we can actually provide the costs, as well, and make it a little bit easier for you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister and his staff. I'm okay with the costs that have been outlined in general. I was just wondering which buildings, particularly the new school in Inuvik, and Mr. Lewis has advised that that's included in this budget, so that's a good thing. I don't need that list. Maybe, Mr. Chair, you can confirm whether or not other Members wish to see that list, but I'm okay without receiving more information at this point.

I did want to ask a question, though. The description of asset management talks about inspection services. I know that it is certainly something that we do as a government, but my impression is that we don't do very much and that inspection services in general in the Northwest Territories by communities and/or by the government is pretty minimal. Could I get a bit of a description of the extent of the inspection services that the department provides? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. By legislation we're responsible, as a government, to provide inspections on certain types of things like electrical, elevators, boilers, pressure vessels and gas safety. But for a little bit more detail, I'd like to go to Deputy Minister Guy.

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

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister did cover the list of things that we do inspect and many of these assets, certain types of boilers require annual inspections. Elevators require an annual inspection or whenever any work has been done an elevator it requires an inspection. The electrical permits are associated with all construction in the NWT, commercial and residential construction that will require a permit based on the act, but that service and inspection and permitting would be done through our safety division. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks for the information to the department. So I guess I'm just trying to understand whether or not the department covers every construction in every community in the NWT. So if somebody in Colville Lake is doing some addition to their house and they're adding on electrical, do we send an inspector there to look at that addition and to make sure that the electrical has been properly installed?

The other question I have relative to this is if we do not, what kind of liability are we taking on? Thank you.

MR. GUY: If there's a requirement under the act, then we would provide the inspection. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: To the question of liability, Mr. Chair.

MR. GUY: I guess, Mr. Chairman, I'm not really sure I understand that question, but about the liability, about any sort of undertaking is normally shared among the number of parties involved, whether it's the contractor, the equipment, constructor, the supplier and as well as the inspection side, there potentially could be some liability, as well, and that's often determined by the court process. So I'm not sure what the particular question is. But in terms of liability of on-the-ground inspections, where we have a legislative requirement for doing inspection, we would do that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Guy. Ms. Bisaro, if you want to rephrase your question, I'll allow it again. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. It wasn't so much that we wouldn't do it, but I'm sure there are times when, for whatever reason, we don't necessarily do an inspection. Then I'm not calling anybody's credibility into ill repute here, but my concern was that if we miss doing an inspection, what are we on the hook for as a government?

Secondly to that, the line here states these tasks protect the public by ensuring all installations are constructed dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. So in reference to all installations, are we talking just

GNWT installations or are we talking private installations?

I go back to my example of somebody in Colville Lake who is doing an upgrade or doing an addition to their house and it's not owned by the government, it's owned by me as an individual. So to those two things. What are we on the hook for if we don't do an inspection and do these inspection services apply to every piece of construction in the NWT? Thank you.

MR. GUY: I guess the role of inspection services to provide the services related to boiler, electrical, elevators, mechanical, gas to both GNWT projects, but also to the public, it's a service that we provide to the public through the inspections branch.

In terms of the inspections they do, they are related to the portions of the building that are covered under the act, and mechanical system, boiler, the electrical system, if there's an elevating device in that system and any gas or pressure vessels that might be in the facility as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. BISARO: I think that covers it. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Moving on our list we'll be going to the Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, it's okay.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Moving on, the Member for YK Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On this particular page we have \$51,000 under the TSC chargeback. I'm just trying to get a sense of, first of all, why does Public Works provide a TSC chargeback to itself and where does that revenue that accumulates from all of the TSC chargebacks actually show up?

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I actually think the TSC chargebacks appear on 7-13 in the correct line as opposed to HR where it was in the wrong line under TSC chargebacks under \$951,000. The \$951,000 on this page is for computer hardware and software. The reason that TSC chargebacks would fall on this department is because this department is still utilizing the services of the TSC to manage and administer computer services. So like every other department, we have to pay our share of the TSC services.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Now, that begs the question: Where does all the TSC chargeback go? If the TSC lies within the Department of Public Works, that money must go somewhere and where does it show up in our books? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Later on when we get to page 7-26, there's a complete, comprehensive list of projections and previous year estimates and actuals from '10-11 on all the dollars that came in from all of the departments, boards and agencies and the government services into the TSC. That money goes into the TSC to evergreen, to cover the cost of providing the services and all of those types of things. I might be missing something so I'll go to Ms. Gault to see if there's anything to add.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, committee. It's been identified that the answer to this question will lie later in this document. So it's my judgment that we'll respond to that at that moment in time. So I'll turn it back over to Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and actually it's not so much the answer on page 7-26 that I was after. It's about where does it show up basically in the revenue stream and noting that the TSC chargeback falls through on many pages, it does note the consolidated amount, but it doesn't show up under Public Works revenue and it doesn't show up under Finance revenue that falls into the general revenue. So I was just curious where the stream actually ends up. So we have great coordination and a wonderful spreadsheet on page 7-26, although we're not there yet, of course, I recognize that, but that's irrelevant. It's a matter of where does the money show up even though that line shows up on all of these particular pages. Ultimately that's the question, which is where do we find where that revenue goes back into the system? What page is that? Whether it's in this department or any other department, there's got to be a corresponding line item somewhere within this budget.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): We'll take it under advisement and I'll ask the Member to reiterate that question when we get to 7-26. Mr. Hawkins, continue.

MR. HAWKINS: Tough. Okay, that's fine. I guess seeing how it was brought up, the National Building Code, by a previous Member, although he does represent – and I appreciate that – certain idealism that probably isn't shared by very many people here, I will ask the department have they adopted the National Building Code and if not, why not. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The GNWT has accepted and utilizes the National Building Code.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. That wouldn't be the whole National Building Code would it?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not sure I understand what the Member means by that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Hawkins, can you clarify your question, please?

MR. HAWKINS: Has the GNWT fully adopted the complete National Building Code? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. We'll turn it over to Mr. Guy for a response.

MR. GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The responsibility for the adoption of the Building Code resides within the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs in the office of the fire marshal. In terms of buildings constructed by the Government of the Northwest Territories and in particular the Department of Public Works and Services, all buildings we build are built in accordance of the requirements of the National Building Code. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: Is it a fair assumption to say that certain particular parts of the National Building Code have been adopted by Public Works and maybe with the knowledge of the deputy minister, certain sections of the National Building Code have been adopted by Municipal and Community Affairs, but not the whole National Building Code?

MR. GUY: It's my understanding that the regulations in the office of the fire marshal require that all buildings over 600 square metres be designed and constructed in accordance with the Building Code by an architect registered in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: I thank the DM for that detail. During some of the assertions about building above and beyond the National Building Code, I heard the phrase that we had met or beaten those objections by the Minister repeatedly. Would he be willing to share some of those examples here today?

MR. GUY: One example that comes to mind is the Inuvik school project. I believe it exceeds the National Energy Code. It's in the area of 40 to 44 percent. That is my recollection. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: I guess the next question is: Has Public Works investigated the process and certainly the cost required to meet or exceed that objective of 25 percent? Then, in consideration, they must extrapolate in the 40 percent that there will be significantly more costs. Has Public Works taken this into consideration in meeting and beating the National Building Code by 25 percent? Have any qualified opinions as to how stressful on our financial pocket it will be if we try to exceed it to 40 percent? Thank you.

MR. GUY: I don't believe we've taken a look at what the costs would be to change our standard from 25 percent to the 40 percent. But in the case of any specific building we are designing, we do an energy analysis or an energy workshop as part of

the design process to see what the cost benefits would be of each of the various elements that we would incorporate into the design and construction that building would contribute to its overall energy performance. So that's taken into consideration and that's how we ended up to where we got to with the example I said in the case of the Inuvik school. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: I recognize that the more you exceed it in certain cases, you also decrease the operational cost. Is that type of analysis taken into effect on these energy observations? Would the deputy minister agree that it costs more to build a building the further we increase that percentage?

MR. GUY: There's no doubt that when you put more insulation on the building, more elements in the building than required by perhaps a code or a standard, then you're going to have increased costs. What we're looking at is optimizing and achieving the littlest lifecycle cost over the life of the facility and that's part of the analysis that's taken place when we do those energy workshops or analysis on a building that's being designed or proposed.

MR. HAWKINS: From the experience and expertise the deputy minister carries, is it likely that we could end up pricing ourselves out of the market of affordability if we continue to strive to 40 percent of the Building Code? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not necessarily. We do a cost analysis on a case-by-case basis to see what the addition of these improvements will be. If the cost exceeds the benefit or the cost benefit of doing it, then we wouldn't necessarily go up to that standard. We don't build to 40 percent. We build to achieving the 25 percent, but we have been working to go beyond that and we have gotten higher. As an example, the school in Inuvik. But we had to do the cost analysis on it to show that the benefit over time would pay for those improvements, and that's what it showed and that's what we did.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. One final supplementary question, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the last part. I see that the Minister has become a maven at construction. I would ask that any research or discussion paper on building standards be considered by all Members, not to take one Member's enthusiasm behind this. I just want it confirmed that it would come to committee long before anything like this is considered.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: When I was responding to Mr. Bromley, I would say that we would take it to committee. It would have to be

considered by everybody, reviewed by everybody. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

I will now rise and report progress. I would like to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort the witnesses out of the House. Thank you.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Could I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please? Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013, and would like to report progress. I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Is there a seconder to the motion? Mr. Bromley.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning at the adjournment of the House today.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, May 29, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents

16. Notices of Motion

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. Motions

19. First Reading of Bills

20. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Tabled Document 3-17(3), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2012-2013
- Tabled Document 2-17(3), Commissioner's Opening Address: Creating the Conditions for Success
- Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Student Financial Assistance Act

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 29, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:09 p.m.