



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, October 18, 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. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. Menicoche, Hon. Michael Miltenberger, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 56-17(3):
OCTOBER 2012 FISCAL UPDATE

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to update the Members on our fiscal situation.

I tabled the first budget of the 17th Legislative Assembly in May, just five short months ago. Our commitment to protect programs and services has not changed, and our strategy of limiting new expenditure growth to ensure surpluses has become even more important as global economic instability persists.

While our economy is recovering slowly from the global slowdown, we remain vulnerable to uncertain economic conditions. Statistics Canada's latest estimate shows a 2 percent decline in the NWT population from 2011 and reinforces our concerns about how our economy is doing and future revenues. Beginning in 2013-14, the five-year annual average territorial formula financing growth forecast is 1.7 percent. That's compared to the 6.3 percent average annual growth over the last five years. We must remain committed to our path of fiscal sustainability by curtailing expenditure growth because revenues are not expected to grow as quickly as in the past.

There is good news, however. As you will see in the interim public accounts that will be tabled in the House later today, the government has a small surplus of \$1.3 million for 2011-12. That's our first surplus since 2007 and it's a significant improvement from the previous year's \$23 million deficit. This demonstrates that we are getting our fiscal house in order, which will help us achieve our goal of increasing our infrastructure spending in the last two years of this Assembly.

Turning to this fiscal year, we are still projecting a moderate operating surplus of \$69 million, but we have already had some unexpected costs. We had a severe fire suppression season. We had to implement an emergency anthrax response, and the costs of the Nahanni flood are not yet accounted for. We will have to be resolute in our commitment to fiscal restraint to ensure we generate another surplus this year.

These surpluses are crucial to our long-term debt management and infrastructure investment plans. As you all know, we have returned to a conservative capital investment plan in order to adhere to our Fiscal Responsibility Policy. We need operating surpluses to fund at least 50 percent of our capital expenditures. Without these surpluses we will not be able to increase our infrastructure investments by 2014. For that reason, the fiscal strategy to limit annual expenditure growth confirmed in this year's budget remains unchanged.

We are targeting April 1, 2014, as the implementation date for devolution, when decisions about the management of NWT lands, water and non-renewable resources are finally the responsibility of our own residents. This includes management of the NWT share of resource revenues.

This Assembly recognizes that these revenues must be managed responsibly. Responsible management means not using resource revenues to fund day-to-day operations. It means investments and savings that convert non-renewable resource wealth into other assets to benefit both current and future generations.

This new revenue source is very volatile and fluctuates with the boom-bust cycle. We need to ensure stability and sustainability of our revenues. This is a high priority for our government and we are investigating the possibility of creating a Revenue Stabilization Fund.

We need to maintain tight control over our operating expenditures. We are challenged to manage the growth at 2 percent. That's about \$30 million annually. As you know, the Department of Finance is engaging residents in a conversation about the budget, to ensure that their priorities are reflected in our response to the challenge.

The budget dialogue process began in September and has brought budget discussions to the regions for the first time. In just four short weeks, I have met with over 80 residents in Inuvik, Norman Wells, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith and Hay River. I appreciate the time and effort NWT residents have taken to participate in the sessions or send written submissions.

Some common themes are emerging. First, residents appreciated hearing about the GNWT's fiscal reality following four years of stimulus spending. They told us we need to allocate more resources to prevention, particularly in the period from conception to four years old. We need to remove red tape, duplication and program overlap. They want our government to be as supportive of sustainable development as it can. They also want us to address our infrastructure deficit.

I look forward to concluding the final budget dialogues in Yellowknife on October 23rd and Behchoko on October 24th. I commit to report back to residents next month.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the right fiscal track. With the support of our residents and this Assembly, we will remain fiscally sustainable and yet still have the funds to invest in individuals, families and communities. Our investment will pay off by helping them grasp the opportunities to share in the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Before we go on today, I'd like to welcome Mr. Lorne Kusugak, Minister of Sport from Rankin Inlet. Welcome to the House, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. Good to see you here, Lorne. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 57-17(3):
COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION
MISSION TO CHINA

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, last month I travelled to China with my colleague Mr. Robert Hawkins and business delegates from the Northwest Territories as part of the Council of the Federation Trade Mission. The business representatives from the Northwest Territories were Don Bubar, president and CEO of Avalon Rare Metals; Mark Downey, CEO of Fur Harvesters Auction Limited; Verda Law, the operations manager of Yellowknife Tours; Huizhong Yang representing Blachford Lake Lodge; and Yanny Cordero, project development consultant.

This mission was intended to secure trade and investment opportunities and we have already had follow-up meetings with business representatives from China who travelled to Yellowknife shortly after we returned from China. I also had the

opportunity to meet with the consul general from China in Calgary soon after returning from China, and committed to speaking with the over 20 Calgary-based corporations in the near future. The Government of the Northwest Territories will be developing a strategic approach to our ongoing involvement with China and I look forward to input from Members of this House as we move forward with that process.

Building relationships with Chinese leaders, expanding markets for our products and encouraging investment all strengthen and diversify our economy, a priority of the 17th Legislative Assembly.

While the Northwest Territories has participated in trade missions to China in the past, this was the first time we participated as part of the Council of the Federation. We benefited greatly from this approach. It gave us a higher profile, and I participated in productive meetings with the Chinese Vice-Premier, Minister of Finance and others.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Robert Hawkins, the members of the Northwest Territories business delegation and the businesses that supported us in preparing for this important trade mission.

Partnering with Northwest Territories businesses to promote our territory internationally makes sense. Working together allowed us to leverage additional opportunities to meet with Chinese leaders and businesses. As a government, we have an important role to play in showing countries such as China that we are committed to supporting business and development to flourish.

China is a growing segment of Canada's global trade market, especially tourism, oil and gas, diamonds, mining and wild fur harvesting.

Tourism is a huge draw for the Chinese market and many people are interested in authentic cultural experiences and viewing the northern lights. We have experienced good growth in visits by Chinese tourists, from fewer than 20 visits a year to 300 a year, since Canada received Approved Destination Status from China in 2010. During the mission, the Chairman of the Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents gave us advice on how to build a market within China, working closely with the travel trade. We were fortunate that the managing director of the Canadian Tourism Commission for China had recently visited the Northwest Territories and was very enthusiastic.

We also met with potential Chinese investors and business partners to discuss ways to diversify the Northwest Territories economy and keep the territory prosperous. The meetings focused on the potential for developing Chinese markets.

We saw great interest in our oil and gas resources and our mineral resources, including some positive developments for Avalon Rare Metals. They are leading the Nechalacho Rare Earth Elements Project near Thor Lake, which is now ranked as the largest rare earth deposit outside of China. Members from our delegation met with representatives from the jewellery industry, including Chow Tai Fook, the largest jewellery company in Hong Kong. They confirmed their interest in Northwest Territories diamonds and diamond mining.

We also visited a world-leading solar panel manufacturing facility that designs, develops, manufactures and markets high-output, cost-effective solar products for electric power applications. Exploring the use of environmentally friendly alternative energy solutions is part of the Government of the Northwest Territories' ongoing commitment to reducing our dependence on imported diesel and lowering our greenhouse gas emissions.

Chinese interest in Northwest Territories wild furs is another opportunity to further diversify the economy. China is the world's leading manufacturer of fur garments, and demand for our high-end wild fur is high and increasing year after year. Our fur is always in high demand at auctions, with China as one of the top buyers. The Yuanlong Fur and Leather Company president, Mr. Li Qing Yuan, met with us and told us they are anticipating growth in the sector due to high-end fashion outlets and designers using wild fur as accent pieces on garments.

Now is the time to build on the opportunities that opened up as the result of this mission. I look forward to seeing the benefits of this work reach our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID PROJECT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have all seen tragedies in our communities. Many of them happen while someone is struggling with mental health, and too often people, our constituents, don't get the help they need.

In general, there's a lack of support for families and friends and even lack of support for the agencies who have to work with people who are mentally ill. People are often faced with really hard questions. What do you do when a mentally ill person refuses help or someone with a mental illness refuses to take their medication?

It's also fairly common for someone to be hospitalized under the Mental Health Act, only to get themselves released a short time later. They come home and the uncertainty begins again for their family, friends and neighbours.

If a person is abusive, they typically cannot be admitted to the hospital; but if they haven't committed a crime, the RCMP is not there to help either. I have experienced this personally, Mr. Speaker, in a small town like Hay River where a person who was suffering from a mental illness could not be received at the hospital because of verbal abuse, could not be received by the RCMP because they hadn't committed a crime, could not be received at social services because there was no hotel or anywhere in town that would actually take them in because of their condition. What do you do when it's 40 below, and it's the middle of winter and you have a person in this situation? It's very, very frustrating. Sometimes I think there is too much emphasis on police in our so-called mental health system. If a person commits a crime, it's actually easier for them to get help.

I'm very glad to hear the Health and Social Services is starting a Mental Health First Aid project. It's based on a course designed by the Canadian Mental Health Commission. I read in the paper that the first two communities to take part will be Tuktoyaktuk and Fort McPherson. I wish them every success, but I would like to see people taught Mental Health First Aid all over our territory. Next maybe try a regional centre. I think Hay River would welcome it.

Thirty years ago there was very little known about anxiety disorder, panic attacks, schizophrenia, bipolar, all of these mental illnesses for which now there is a lot more knowledge and understanding, and a lot more awareness. I think we as a government have a long ways to go yet in terms of addressing the supports and the facilities needed to address the issue of mental illness. If we come across a person who is having a heart attack, people know CPR; if somebody's choking, they know how to do the Heimlich manoeuvre; but when someone is suffering and having some kind of crises that is mentally ill, we have very little support.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ANTI-BULLYING LEGISLATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of months ago this House took a stance on bullying. We wore the colours, we each spoke passionately on why we needed to make a stand against bullying, and the department listened. Shortly thereafter, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment joined Regular Members

in a promise to come forward with legislation to address this issue for the latter part of 2013.

So why am I bringing this up again? Well, it seems that a young BC teenager's life has been taken away and the world has gone viral once again. The question of why this happened is swirling around the Internet and media mainstreams. Watching the YouTube video of this young teenager's despair clearly made me angry. How did we let this person down? Was there not at least one friend to come forward and help her in her darkest hours?

What about here in the NWT? Are we immune from another Amanda Todd from happening? A recent CBC report clearly depicts that this very issue is in our own backyard and yet many of us go on with our daily lives oblivious of such occurrences. Many may say, let's wait for new legislation to help take a stand against bullies. I say, don't wait for us to magically put discussion papers, policies, guidelines and regulations to the issue, because this in itself is not going to stop the action.

Take the distracted driving legislation, for example. We know it's out there, yet coming to work this morning I counted at least six people with their phones to their ear. This legislation in itself didn't worry these drivers and it was apparently so.

My message is clear: as parents, as teachers, as adults, as concerned citizens of the NWT we all need to take an active stand on our kids' behaviour. Legislation is only one tool in our anti-bullying tool belt. We need to band together to collectively keep a watchful eye on our children's use of social networks and mobile phone usage. We need to spend time talking to our children about the harm of bullying. We need to listen but more importantly hear their concerns. Moreover, while the situation like Amanda Todd's is tragic, news reports can also be used as a teachable moment. As I said months ago, together we can change behaviour and together we must.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE MUNICIPAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN ISSUES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to follow up today on my colleagues' comments made yesterday about this week's municipal elections.

I offer congratulations to all elected councillors, trustees and mayors, especially those who ran in Yellowknife. I say thank you to everyone who entered the race. Your commitment and sacrifice are much appreciated.

Across the North, six cities, towns and villages felt the wind of change on their faces. We have five new mayors, and here in Yellowknife, six of our eight council members are new to the game.

I attended several election forums last week, and I heard many concerns expressed by the Yellowknife candidates and I was struck by how intertwined municipal issues are with those of the territorial government. Here is some of what I heard: Yellowknife is struggling to find solutions to deal with an increasing homeless population. Yellowknife's downtown core was described as a mess and unsafe. Some residents avoid the core because they don't feel comfortable there. Many candidates used the words "revitalize the downtown." Yet, homelessness is a housing issue and housing is a territorial responsibility.

Infrastructure was also often mentioned during the campaign. Members know that all of our communities have a large infrastructure deficit, and by that I mean repairs, retrofits and replacement of buildings, roads, water and sewer pipes. But what is our NWT government doing to bring down that deficit, other than pointing to the federal gas tax revenue as our communities' saviour?

Candidates also spoke of new government regulations that demand different treatment of YK's water source. To comply with those regulations, Yellowknife is building a new water treatment plant, to the tune of some \$20 million but without any assistance from the GNWT or the federal government. If the GNWT demands upgrades to our water systems, the GNWT should provide financial help to get it done.

As mentioned by my colleague Mr. Hawkins yesterday, many candidates spoke of the need for an addictions treatment centre other than Stanton Hospital. Like homelessness, health programs and services are a territorial responsibility. There seems to be general acceptance that YK has the worst record of people with addictions. It only makes sense to provide treatment here, but there's little appetite on the part of the GNWT to provide the necessary financial support to the city to help with this problem.

It's time for the GNWT to recognize the needs of our capital city, to accept that the city has greater needs than other communities because it is a magnet community for residents from all of our communities. It's time for the GNWT to act on Yellowknife's needs.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SENIORS HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories has established a way to help elders with home heating costs over the fall and winter months. Eligible residents 60 years of age and older can benefit from the seniors home

heating subsidy. This program has been in place for a long time now.

Last year 448 households applied for a subsidy that provides assistance for the cost of heating fuel, cut wood, pellets and electricity. This is a good program. I can see that a lot of thought has gone into updating it to reflect the cost of living in the North and to refine it to make it fair to residents. However, there are still challenges.

Lately some elders in my riding received notices that they are ineligible for the subsidy because they have other people living in their home. In one case there are three elder siblings living in one home, each receiving old age pensions. The policy is such that the total household income is assessed and if it exceeds a certain limit, they are not entitled to the benefit. In this situation I believe the policy is being applied unfairly. These people live together to reduce their overall cost of living and find ways to support one another. They are being unreasonably disqualified from the very program designed to assist with their needs.

There are also an increasing number of situations where children and grandchildren live with grandparents. Some younger adults live with their parents and grandparents because of limited opportunities for employment or because of unfortunate experiences that impact their housing situation, rental arrears, evictions or domestic violence. We are all too familiar with the cases of younger people taking advantage of the benefits that older family members may receive.

It is important to protect seniors from elder abuse, but it is the custom in more traditional cultures for two or three generations of a family to share one home. We need to find realistic solutions to accommodate elders who have immediate and extended family living with them, especially if a younger family member is caring for an elder as well as working outside the home.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment works with an average of 467 home heating subsidy cases every year. Our population is aging and the cost of heating our homes continues to rise. I'm also concerned about how long we'll be able to sustain the program at its current level. This is an important subsidy and it should be available to eligible applicants in a fair and consistent manner. We need to help our elders continue to live independently, and contribute to our families and communities in meaningful ways.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YELLOWKNIFE DOWNTOWN DAY SHELTER

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This winter is closing in on us very quickly and I want to

revisit the subject of the Yellowknife downtown day shelter. This is a very important service and the people who are homeless out there need somewhere safe and warm to go. It may come to the Minister as news, as well as many Members of this House, but the fact is the shelter is not just about Yellowknife. Only a third of the people using the downtown day shelter call themselves Yellowknifers, then about half of the other people that attend the shelter identify themselves as from other communities, while the remaining small percent is made up of people from Nunavut as well as other places and provinces across Canada. Rather than just referring to it as the Yellowknife day shelter, it should truthfully be referred to as a territorial day shelter in the downtown of Yellowknife.

As many already know, as the winter months are fast approaching, we have at least 16 different individuals that attend the shelter every day, and with the existence of the shelter it has been a much needed respite on many of the problems in downtown, so malls, businesses, public libraries and even the hospital's emergency room has been very thankful for this shelter and why it exists.

The shelter's three-year contract, as we all know, is about to run out at the end of this fiscal year, so a lot of people are asking, what next? All Yellowknifers are waiting to hear the lead from the Health Minister to talk about the future of the new downtown day shelter.

What does the Minister envision for phase two of this particular project? At the same time, not knowing the Minister's plan, this community has a number of concerns about phase two and where it will take us, such as people want to know will the shelter get support financially from the Department of Health. Will it continue? Many others have suggested should we change the operator and make sure we have an open competition to ensure we bring in someone for change.

Everyone agrees, and I have spoken to, that phase two definitely needs daily programming. As we all know very well, we have a very credible society called the Tree of Peace that offers great programming only a few feet away. If this downtown day shelter is going to continue at the same location, the department must take a bit of courage and address some of the concerns raised by the residents who only live a few feet away from the shelter. I stand to be corrected, but the fact is I have heard that they have never had a knock on the door from the department to ask them how it has worked out for them.

The fact is the Department of Health needs to build a relationship, needs programming and needs to work with the riding and the residents of that area. I believe it is a service that needs to continue and

definitely warrants attention from this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NAHANNI BUTTE FLOOD

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The flooding in Nahanni Butte that happened this spring might not be making headlines anymore, but it still is very much part of the day-to-day reality of the residents of the community. I have heard from other communities that have had similar disasters, that it takes about a year to get back to normal.

After my visit of last week, I can surely say that life is still not the same in the community of Nahanni Butte. I want to commend the people of Nahanni Butte for their patience so far, and encourage them to continue being patient as they go through the rebuilding effort. It is going to take time. Our GNWT emergency response effort through Mr. Mike Drake and all regional managers in Nahendeh have to be applauded, as well, during that time. But mostly I really want to commend the residents for how they have responded to the situation and helped each other out. For example, one family recently took the initiative to re-open a much needed store out of their own home.

As we go about rebuilding, I think it is important that we also learn from our experiences of this, that we also need a long-term plan for Nahanni Butte which may even include relocating the community over the flood plains it currently sits in.

Also, repair to the access road has been delayed. That takes patience, even though residents are very upset about it.

At the territorial level we often need to take a look at what we can do to improve our emergency response plan and our disaster systems policy. Most importantly, I think the real lesson of this experience is how the people of Nahanni Butte and Nahendeh can really pull together in a time of need. We should all be inspired by the example that they have set.

I would also like to express sincere appreciation to all the workers, volunteers and community members who helped Nahanni Butte through this crisis and who continue to help as we work to get things back to normal, and also to the many groups, businesses and communities that contributed and raised funds to assist them. It will take time but we will get there.

Throughout the remainder of this session, I will speak more specifically to some of these concerns that have not been addressed yet during our session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE INUVIK EAST THREE SCHOOL

MR. MOSES: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. On October 10, 2012, the community of Inuvik celebrated the official opening of the much anticipated East Three School/East Three Illisavik/East Three Gah Tronadeh Zehh. The event had a great turnout as guests, students, staff and community members listened to encouraging speeches about the newly constructed facility and the importance of education.

The facility is a great environment for learning and promoting culture among new education and trades programs that could not be done in the previous school. The school also provides a great teaching environment that will allow staff to excel in their jobs. It also provides a strong, healthy and safe environment for all staff and students so that all can be productive this year and succeed, as well as in the years to come.

East Three School is not just another infrastructure project for this government. It is an investment into our children, our youth, families, communities and for the future of our territory as we develop strong, educated adults. It also shows that the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to creating infrastructure projects throughout the NWT to support our regional centres and our small communities.

The official opening wrapped up with students Don Gruben and Julian Chipesia joining our two longest serving staff members, Shane Brewster and Ross McCallum, on stage for the official ribbon cutting.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Shane Brewster and Mr. Ross McCallum for their ongoing commitment to education. I'd also like to thank Members Frederick Blake Jr. and the Honourable Robert C. McLeod for attending this significant event.

The official opening of East Three School is a great story for all the hard work, dedication, support and effort of community members, and also the GNWT to make this become a reality.

East Three School/East Three Illisavik/East Three Gah Tronadeh Zehh was completed a year ahead of schedule and under budget. However, at the end of the day, this project is really about the education of our children in a safe, stable and healthy environment. I'd like to thank Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly, as well as the Honourable Robert C. McLeod and former Premier Floyd Roland and the Minister of Public Works and

Services, for making this project become a reality for the people of Inuvik and the region. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HOUSING AND POVERTY ISSUES
IN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday was the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and today I want to focus on the need for housing to help people get out of poverty.

Housing provides the basis for productive, dignified lives. The ability to cook, wash, get adequate rest, be called for a job, having a place for children to study and families to enjoy leisure are huge challenges when there's no place to call home.

Research proves that lack of housing can double or even triple the cost of government services from reliance on emergency room medicines and overnight shelters to income assistance and the justice system costs when some homeless people become desperate.

Experience across Canada is showing remarkable results when we put housing first. Calgary, Vancouver and other centres are showing huge improvements in social conditions and dramatic cost reductions. A National Housing First movement is growing.

The need is drastic. There were 137 names on the Yellowknife Housing Authority waiting list on September 22nd. There's a waiting list of 500 names right across all our local housing authorities. Last week the YWCA received 10 calls for housing in one day. Rockhill Transitional Housing hasn't had anything like it in 15 years of operation. Staff there say, "the size of the need scares us."

Urgent action is needed, starting with better use of Housing Corporation stock. Public housing vacancy rates must drop to zero. We need Housing Corporation policies that enable families to purchase the many vacant home ownership units, or we should put these units into public housing.

Local housing authorities must repair damaged units and place them with tenants. The new Transitional Rent Supplement Program is a positive step, but many low-income residents are ineligible, like YWCA tenants and those renting rooms in landlord occupied homes. With our 0.8 percent vacancy rate in Yellowknife, people must turn to rooming houses and transitional housing; they shouldn't be penalized for lack of housing choices.

We are making some progress. We've adjusted the rent to income ratio in public housing. Bailey House is up and operating and we are contributing to Betty House, but clearly a crisis is at hand.

As Members come to work here in the morning, we pass the homeless walking to town from their tents behind this building, and the waiting list for housing expands.

Winter is coming, people are suffering, and meeting their housing needs must come first.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EMPOWERING SMALL
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I met with the leadership of Deline. They want to work with this government. They understand the tight fiscal restraints and limitations we are under, and also that there are a certain amount of projects that can be done in this government.

Over the last Assemblies I have heard from many Members from this side of the House who have very good ideas how to work on some of the projects in their community. Sometimes we wonder if the government on this side is listening because we've passed information to them and somehow it gets lost or we get resistance. We can't do it because it doesn't quite fit the system or doesn't quite fit the criteria.

The Minister of Health and Social Services and I visited Colville Lake. We were trying, and we finally did it. With the Minister's help, we put washrooms in the health centre.

When I hear Members talk about other situations in the North that our communities and small, isolated communities don't quite have the same type of infrastructure or programs and services. The communities know best how to fix their solution but sometimes the policy doesn't recognize that. It says, we have to do it for everybody else, everybody has to be the same. It's not the same.

Only when the Minister of Health sat down with the leadership in Colville Lake and got some straight answers, and Colville Lake said, we could do this under budget and in a timely manner. If you went to PWS it would be too late, too long, and a whole bunch of policies would be put in place. I thank the Minister and thank PWS for allowing this to happen. We allowed to let go some of the control of our communities to give them the dignity and partnership to say, you know best in your community how this is to get done. It will get done. When we hold tight to the community, like Colville Lake says, we want the government's hand off our throat. We want to breathe. We know what to do. Give it to us. Case in point, the transportation airport in Colville Lake was done 95 percent because the community was allowed to do it. Thank

you, government, for doing that. I hope we can do this throughout the next three years. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SESSIONAL BUSINESS

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be back here in the House with my colleagues dealing with the important issues of the Northwest Territories. I will equate it to coming to a big family reunion. Everyone is happy to see each other, shake each other's hand, and shortly after that give each other a jab or two. This morning I was a recipient of most of the jabs, the ribbing, because I wasn't here for the first day of session. I was travelling with the Minister for Arctic Winter Games. My colleagues know that, but they still had no problem giving me not-so-smart comments. Glad you could make it. Travelling again? Even staff, do you know we start work on Monday? That's okay. As my family and friends know, I will take these comments and I will take my chances when I get a chance to make comments to them.

Just like family, I'd like to remind everybody, after we're here for a while we're going to get short with each other, so let's just remember when we do get together we remember it fondly.

Seriously, I know we have a great deal of work to do over the next four weeks and the capital budget is one of them. I'm here. Let's get to work.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MACKENZIE DELTA RECIPIENTS OF THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDALS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday in Aklavik we were very honoured to have Premier Bob McLeod visit and pay tribute to the recipients of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Awards. Dean McLeod, Barbara Archie, Mary Kendi and Nellie Cournoyea were the four recipients in Aklavik.

The residents of Aklavik and the Mackenzie Delta joined the Premier in extending congratulatory greetings to the recipients and wish to commend them for their tireless effort in making their community a better place to live, and for contributing to Aklavik, the Northwest Territories and Canada.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Awards are unique and very special. The recipients were honoured during a community feast and the medals were awarded and presented by leaders from Aklavik,

the president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the chair of the Inuvialuit Development Corporation.

Thank you, and again I would like to thank Dean McLeod, Barbara Archie, Mary Kendi and Nellie Cournoyea for their tremendous efforts in making Canada a special place to live.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Robert McLeod.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize a good friend of mine, Minister Lorne Kusugak from Nunavut, who I've had the opportunity to work with over the last number of years and I've always been very impressed with his commitment to the people of Nunavut. Welcome to the Assembly, Quasa.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Minister Kusugak from the Nunavut government for joining us today. He's also a counterpart to the Minister responsible for WSCC.

Also, I would like to recognize Gayla Meredith, president of the NWTTA, who is here with us. Welcome.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a couple of interns working for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Krystal Shaben, who is the Public Works and Services policy and communication assistant intern; Rebecca Dupuis, who is the Justice policy intern; and Harjot Sidhu who is the HR policy intern.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Lorne Kusugak from Nunavut, who I also had a chance to travel with over the last couple days. Welcome to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. I'd like to welcome all our visitors here in the public gallery today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings. Again, Lorne, thank you for coming.

Item 7, acknowledgements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 8-17(3):
97TH BIRTHDAY OF PETER KAY SR.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to wish one of the most respected elders of the Mackenzie Delta a very happy 97th birthday.

Gwich'in elder Peter Kay Sr. from Fort McPherson is to be commended on healthy living and for taking care of his family, and also living the Gwich'in cultural lifestyle.

Mr. Kay's livelihood, active living and positive outlook on life and family have given him the opportunity today to spend precious time with his family at 97 years young.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Assembly. Please join me in congratulating Peter Kay on his 97th birthday.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Item 8, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 175-17(3):
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID PROJECT

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about what I see as a lack of support in the smaller communities for people suffering from mental illness. This is a problem which has come into very clear focus in Hay River in the last month. I am very interested in this Mental Health First Aid program which is rolling out in a couple of small communities and I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services what the plan is for the roll-out of this. If he could just describe it for us briefly and give people some hope that maybe there is something coming here that will help smaller communities deal with issues of mental illness.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mental Health First Aid course is something that our department is offering to professionals from the regions and communities, that they go back to their communities to put on workshops on mental health that would be open to the citizens, teachers, anybody that wishes to learn more about mental health issues at the community or regional levels.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I mentioned that two communities have so far had the opportunity to partake in this: Tuktoyaktuk and Fort McPherson.

What's the agenda, what's the schedule look like for taking this important training, workshop information to other communities?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: This week we are running the course again, the Mental Health First Aid course. It's going to be offered to all the regions, and some of the major communities that I notice on the list – I don't have the list here with me - but I believe one is Hay River. Somebody from Hay River is here. For sure someone from Smith, Yellowknife, Deh Cho, Sahtu, and the Tlicho communities are here taking that course that they will take back to their regions.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I see this as only being helpful. When there is a crisis of mental health issues in a community, what are we doing about protocol so that everybody knows what the plan is? You don't hear very often of people being medevaced because there's a mental health crisis. You do certainly when there's a physical illness, you hear that, but, when there's a mental illness and there's a crisis, you don't hear of what the protocols are for dealing with that.

We live in a severe climate and environment, and when you're in the smaller communities, if we do not have those kinds of protocols and infrastructure in place, it can be a dire consequence for the person that's ill and those trying to help them. Is there any work going on in the department to come up with a protocol so that everybody knows who is in the social services or health care profession and the policy or whatever services are in those communities what the plan is?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Laid out in the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan was the attempt to try to remove the stigma of mental health so that individuals are able to work freely with people who are afflicted with mental health issues. It's a very, very difficult area.

As the Member indicated, you can't just, you know, if somebody gets hurt, a physical injury, people know what to do. There's a certain process. You get the person into the hospital. Mental health cases are different.

We are trying to train people. We are trying to set up a system where individuals are able to identify mental health. We're trying to set up a system where individuals are able to deal with mental health issues. It's a very difficult situation that we are starting to get more heavily involved at this point and by the time we get rolling into the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, we should be able to develop some protocols on how to deal with mental health cases as well.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Because of the remoteness of some of our communities, I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware if there is still any kind of a crisis helpline that is available for

people that they can call into when they are experiencing difficulties and what role does our government play in sustaining such a service.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I don't have that information with me. I don't remember if the crisis line is still open or not. I can verify that information for the Member and advise the House whether or not that crisis line is still open.

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

QUESTION 176-17(3):
ANTI-BULLYING LEGISLATION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, in my Member's statement, I talked about anti-bullying legislation. It's unfortunate that tragedies usually put a lens on subjects such as this. I think the public and also Members need to be reassured that we're working towards good legislation.

My question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment is: Maybe giving us an update, what's happening in the department as we're preparing for this anti-bullying legislation for the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Since the motion was brought forward to this House, my department has been working on various other jurisdictions to identify, or do a complete review of the anti-bullying legislation in other jurisdictions, as well, and developing a safe school proposal, which will be developed, and implementation of a safe school plan as well. Those are the areas that my department has taken on the initiative.

There are two major projects or pieces of proposals that will be introduced in the spring session. In the spring 2013 session we want to introduce the bill and also, at the same time, develop a territorial-wide plan to denounce bullying in NWT schools. That is part of the plan as we move forward.

MR. DOLYNNY: I think what the Minister indicated here is that it sounds like we've got legislation ongoing here and there's talk about a safe school plan in a bill format. I guess the question I need to ask the Minister is: Why are we doing both at the same time? Should one not follow the other?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The legislation can set a clear definition on this particular anti-bullying legislation and mandate the need for policies and training. Also, ground involvement of effective resources is required to address the complex issue of generating safe schools in the NWT to meet the

challenge of both legislation and comprehensive territorial-wide to prevent bullying in the NWT schools are needed. Both pieces are needed as we move forward on a comprehensive plan that we are currently working on. We are moving forward on those two initiatives.

MR. DOLYNNY: The Minister indicated a safe schools plan. I guess the question we should ask is: When will this be implemented? Are we seeing this early on in 2013 or in the latter part of 2013?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, part of the plan is to introduce the safe schools plan completed and implemented at the beginning of the 2013 school year. That is the overall plan, so we are moving forward on that.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is all very good information, and I think many parents, many students out there are looking forward to seeing this come forward. As the department is preparing the final steps, the final journey, so to speak, and the consulting piece and where amendments are going to be taking place, who is going to be invited to the table to be doing this in the consulting phase, and will Members have an opportunity to be a participant?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: There will be various consultations that will take place with the stakeholders, prior to putting forward the legislation to addressing the bullying. From December 2012 until January 2013, the consultation will take place, and they will consist of, of course, Regular Members, their input, and also those involved within the education field. The NWTTA, divisional education councils, district education authorities, superintendents, principals, teachers, the parents, and also those parents, students and Members of the Legislative Assembly, Corrections Division, Justice, RCMP. A variety of organizations will be part of the stakeholders that we'll be consulting with.

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

QUESTION 177-17(3):
GNWT MINE REMEDIATION
FINANCIAL LIABILITY ISSUES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Finance. I'd like to ask him some questions around the issue of financial liability at Giant Mine. With the environmental hearings that were held a couple weeks ago here in Yellowknife, a number of constituents have spoken to me about Giant and about the financial situation that we are in as a territorial government. My first question to the Minister would be if he could advise me and advise

the public and my constituents what is the nature of our partnership with AANDC, the federal government department responsible for the cleanup at Giant Mine?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a federal waste site that they're remediating. We are in partnership with them. We've booked about \$27 million, the federal government in the neighbourhood of \$300 million, as initial figures. Clearly, it is one of the biggest waste site remediations in the country, so it is fundamentally a federal responsibility.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that explanation. I have to say, I'm a little bit concerned when I hear the Minister say that \$27 million is an initial figure. I have to say, I'm a little concerned when I hear him say that it is basically a federal responsibility. I'd like to know from the Minister: Do we anticipate further financial requirements on this government to do with the cleanup of Giant Mine? If the \$27 million is an initial figure, what are we in the long haul for?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We have committed to that amount of money. This is a federal responsibly. In fact, as we take over devolution, the signed devolution to take over land, water and resource development, Giant will be a separate issue that will stay under the purview of the federal government. At this point, the hope is, the plan is that that money will be sufficient. If there's any more money required, once again, this is a federal responsibly.

MS. BISARO: I appreciate the Minister's response. He says that it is a federal responsibility. A question from my constituent was pretty much relative to devolution and our current situation and the situation following devolution. My question to the Minister would be: If it is basically a federal responsibility, once devolution occurs will the federal government be able to come back to us and tell us as a territorial government that we will have responsibility for cleanup there?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: As I indicated, this particular waste site, Giant, is separate and not included in the devolution agreement. It is going to stay within the responsibility of the federal government to maintain and clean up and do all the things necessary to bring it back to proper use.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess my last question to the Minister would be, again, about money. If we are committed at this point to \$27 million, and that we – as the Minister says he hopes we don't use more than that – are we going to see a supplementary appropriation sometime down the

road to go beyond the \$27 million that we're now committed to?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There is no such anticipation at this juncture. Our involvement is for a lot of the ancillary land and commitment to try to assist to the extent that we have with the \$27 million. At this point, that is the extent of our commitment and there are no indications as Finance Minister, nor am I aware of any at this point that would require any further contribution on the part of the territorial government.

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

QUESTION 178-17(3):

SENIORS HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my Member's statement on the seniors fuel subsidy, I wanted to ask the question to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. At this point in the Northwest Territories we have a very large population of aging senior citizens and elders, as we call them, and of course, we hold them in high regard. We respect them and we try to do our part in serving their needs and looking after them as our parents and sometimes as our grandparents.

With that, with winter coming on, it is concerning that some elders are being told that they are ineligible for this fuel subsidy. What are some of the main reasons applications are turned down? Mahsi.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Part of the eligibility is those individuals have to claim household income, who are all living in the house, and sometimes there is a denial in subsidy due to the fact that some individuals are working within the household. They are making fair enough money that can go towards the fuel, as well, to heat the residence. Those are some of the examples, but it is all based on household income of the elders who are living in the residence.

Each individual would have to claim what they are making. It is not only our program. There is Housing and other programs that are based on household income as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out, it is customary to try to be inclusive in terms of our communities. One practice is ensuring that we uphold the whole principle of extended families. In some cases we have children and grandchildren living with their grandparents. We try to maintain that practice. What solutions has the department considered to accommodate elders who have extended families living with them? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, we did add the zoning, I believe, a couple of years back, by \$10,000. We are always exploring areas that we need to improve our programming. I did instruct my department to look at some options to deal with those individuals, children or grandchildren that are living with their grandparents, how we can remedy the situation so they can be eligible for home heating subsidy. We are exploring those areas. I believe we are at the final stages of going through those options. I will be presenting that to the Members once that is available.

MR. NADLI: It is reassuring that the department is exploring some options in terms of trying to remedy the situation. It can be very bleak in terms of looking forward to this time of the year, especially for elders as they prepare for the winter. What is the current budget for the seniors fuel subsidy at this time? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I have to provide the detailed information to the Members, but there is a threshold income and also the type of fuel and by zoning. I will provide all of that information to the Members so they are aware of what is within a subsidy area. I will provide the actual budget for the detailed information. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Nadli, your final, short supplementary.

MR. NADLI: Mr. Speaker, this is kind of a long-term dilemma that traces this government, because we have an aging seniors population plus, at the same time, rising costs for fuel. Is there a long-term strategy that this government and especially this department is examining? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Part of the changes that we make from time to time are reflecting on high cost of fuel or high cost of, let's say, food in the community. With respect to this seniors home heating subsidy, there is an increase in the cost of heating, the fuel. That will reflect on the zoning which we did a couple of years back. We increased the \$10,000 on each zoning. From time to time we will be making those changes. I appreciate the Member referring to this important piece of work that we will continue to monitor. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 179-17(3):

YELLOWKNIFE DOWNTOWN DAY SHELTER

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to use this occasion to refer back to my Member's statement today when I talk about the downtown day centre. It is important that I continue to emphasize this. This is more like a territorial shelter that offers no programming as of yet, that I hope will happen, but it offers opportunity for people

from around the North a place to go, who are homeless.

As I highlighted in my comments, there have been some stats taken that about a third of the daily users actually only identify themselves as Yellowknifers and it is the rest, actually, that sort of draws some strange attention to the problem.

I would like the Minister maybe to talk about what he plans to do in the upcoming budget and fiscal year to help support this downtown day shelter. Will his department be financially committed to continuing the operation of a downtown day shelter? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Health and Social Services, through the YK Health and Social Services Authority, is contributing their \$125,000, plus are now contributing the share that used to be contributed in a three-year pilot project by BHP for \$50,000, for a total of \$175,000. That money will run to the end of the 2012-13 fiscal year, at which point we will re-examine our position. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: I want to acknowledge how, with great delicacy, the Minister avoided, really, the question.

Is the department going to fund the downtown day shelter in the next fiscal year? We already well know, in this room and on the street, that the day shelter is being funded by the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority up until March 31st of next year. We already know that. Tell us something we don't know.

Will this new funding, if available, which I am waiting to be confirmed by the Minister here today, include programming funding so we can provide people with services more than just doors open?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I don't know if we are going to be funding it beyond March 2013, because this was originally a three-year pilot. All the partners were in for three years. Now we are alone. We are continuing to fund it. We have funded it for one more year. It has its opposition; there is no question about it.

We want to evaluate what is there. We want to see if there are programs that we are putting in there now such as a navigator type of service to help individuals to pursue employment, education opportunities. I am going to see if those things actually have an impact.

We are going to run this year out, this fiscal year up until March 31, 2013. We will take a look at those impacts and then make a decision on whether or not we will continue to fund the shelter. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Clearly, that is not the answer I am looking for per se, but at least finally we have an answer.

There is no plan to fund it beyond this coming end of fiscal year. If that is what the Minister is truly saying, then we should make sure we are clear.

I want to know today that the people going to this centre, that the businesses depending on this particular centre to provide homeless people opportunities and places to go, we need to be clear to the public that we are going to pull out from the process. Is the Minister saying clearly today that there is no funding in the upcoming budget for this centre? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, like I indicated, we will fund it for the rest of this fiscal year. That still gives us an opportunity to evaluate and get some funding into the shelter, if that is the decision we make beyond March 31, 2013.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the Minister is clear on his answer one way or the other. It is a yes or no question. Are we going to fund it into the following fiscal year? Yes or no. Why do we keep talking about we are funding it to the end of this fiscal year? Why do you keep telling me that? We already know that. Everybody in the public knows. I want to know and the public wants to know, yes or no.

Is the government going to get behind this project and fund it starting in the next fiscal year that starts April 1, 2013? Yes or no. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. Maybe yes, maybe no.

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Order! If I can remind the Members, people are watching in their communities expecting us to do our job. Make your questions short, to the point and the same thing with the Ministers. You're Ministers. Answer with all the respect as possible to the Members. Thank you.

The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 180-17(3):
NAHANNI BUTTE FLOOD

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. In my Member's statement on the Nahanni flood disaster, I raised a few concerns, but I will be more specific later on in this session. I just wanted to get some idea about has the department began looking at a post-mortem report on the flood disaster and when can I as the MLA for Nahendeh begin looking at some preliminary report, or at least the report on the response actions and

some of the things that happened at Nahanni Butte. Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We haven't started the report yet. Work is still ongoing right now, but once a lot of the work is completed, there will obviously be a report and we'll be sure that we share that with the Member for Nahendeh. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. Just along a similar line, I know that the Disaster Committee is evaluating loss for claims, et cetera. Maybe the Minister can correct me; but is there a deadline for this? Because I know that some of the repairs, some of the damages sometimes it takes three months, six months, maybe even up to a year for damages to show up. Is there a mechanism in our Disaster Relief Policy to address situations like that?

Just for an example, there were some housing repairs done and in my visit last week there was a woman homeowner. She said, well, since they repaired my house, my house shifted a little bit. Is there room in our Disaster Policy to address situations like that? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. All the homeowners' repairs were done. I think they were finalized and inspected on September 28th. If there are other issues that may have evolved because of the work that was done to repair those homes, then obviously we'd have to go in there and have a look at that, and assess it and see if there is any other way that we'd be able to assist so that the homes get back to their pre-disaster state. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much. It's a concern that there's no firm cut-off date, because these homes are still impacted by the flood, and I don't believe there should be a cut-off date and hopefully the Minister can raise that with his department.

Also, just getting back to a post-mortem on the community, it was pointed out that I think they have one piece of equipment, a large piece of equipment that surely could have been used, but it was damaged at that time. Can I ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs when they do their post-mortem, also to look at the heavy equipment needs of the community and how we can assist in future floods for any community? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I can commit to the Member that we'll look at all infrastructure and ones that may have been damaged by the flood. If they're municipal-owned infrastructure, obviously insurance would cover those, but as part of the post-mortem I'll commit to the Member that we'll

look at all aspects of the equipment in the community, and we'll go from there and see what could be improved to try and alleviate some of the damage for the next time. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The situation in this case with the heavy equipment was that they were all pre-owned vehicles which did not work during the flood. They were looking at all communities should have at least like a track vehicle available to help with their needs.

Aside from that, I'd like to invite the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs to come to Nahanni Butte this fall or this winter to see the community for himself. As well, we may even finally do a gymnasium opening ceremony in the community of Nahanni Butte. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. I look forward to the opportunity of going into Nahanni Butte, the only community in the Northwest Territories I haven't been to so far. We've had many opportunities to try to get there to open the gymnasium and I hope the gymnasium doesn't flood before we have a chance to open it.

I will commit to the Member and I think we are working on a possible tour of the Nahendeh, and Nahanni Butte would be one of my priority stops. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 181-17(3):
ABORIGINAL STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEES

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continuing on with the theme of education, I'll ask the Minister of Education a question in regard to the Aboriginal Student Achievement committees that he's been talking about for quite a while. However, before I begin on that, I'd just like to apologize, as I forgot to recognize the Honourable Glen Abernethy, Public Works and Services, who attended the opening of Inuvik's school as well.

Moving on, one of the questions that I had was in regard to the Aboriginal Student Achievement committees that have been working very hard over the past year to develop some initiatives into increasing our Aboriginal education in the small communities. What funding is allocated, if any, for these committees to make sure that their initiatives get started up this fall, this winter, or this spring? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. First, I'd like to commend the committee of Inuvik working on this ASA, one of the priorities of this government, my department.

The funding that we do provide through ASA, Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, is approximately \$1.8 million for ASA initiatives to fund a number of activities such as literacy coaches, the libraries, the cultural orientation for all teachers, an ASA coordinator and also an Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative public awareness campaign. This also deals with those communities that are initiating their own committee to work with the Beaufort-Delta Department of Education as well. So it has been made clear. The Member made a statement in the House last time. I did make inquiries to the superintendent to work closely with the committee to make it a real successful project. So I'm looking forward to seeing the outcome of that. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: Out of the \$1.8 million to the ASA committees throughout the Northwest Territories and all the good work that's going on within that money, how much of this money is actually being filtered into the initiatives that these committees have developed on their own, these innovative and unique initiatives that they've developed on their own? How much of that money is actually going into those programs so that we know that the work those committees are doing is not going unnoticed or not going unfunded or not being supported?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Again, this money is flowed through the Beaufort-Delta Board of Education, and the funding that flows through would consist of various activities that the committee can access, as well, through the Beaufort-Delta Board of Education. Also, working closely with my staff that deal with ASA, we are currently discussing that. At the current stage we're establishing an ASA steering committee to deal with these matters because we want to support the local ASA committees, such as Inuvik. They are part of the school system and others that take on the responsibility on a volunteer basis. So we need to make this an effort and we are working towards that. So we establish a committee to work with them. Mahsi.

MR. MOSES: A couple of weeks ago I got an e-mail from one of the committee members asking about when funding will start flowing to their committee so the initiatives that they're looking at implementing can actually start running. Can the Minister confirm that his department, his staff, is working with the Department of Education, the councils and with the ASA committees, that all three are working together so that the funding is actually going to initiatives that these committees have been working on for over a year now?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: The simplest answer would be yes. If they haven't done so, as of today they need to start working with my department, with BDAC, and also with the committee that's been established. Not only the Beaufort-Delta but other regions as well. We need to support those individual committees on a volunteer basis doing what they can. They are committed so we need to support them. I'm a firm believer in that.

I'm also meeting with the board chairs in December. I will raise that issue, as well, that we need to start implementing. It's a shared responsibility. We need to move forward and make it a successful project.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister provide me with some details on how many of these ASA committees have actually started implementing some of their action plans throughout the regions of the Northwest Territories, and if this side of the House will get a report on these committees and how many of them have actually implemented their action plan?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I'll definitely provide the detailed information of the committee that's been established. To date we do have three communities that are working towards implementing the ASA. I'll provide that detailed information to the Members.

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

QUESTION 182-17(3):
EMERGENCY HOUSING NEED

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. In my statement I outlined the desperate housing situation people are facing going into winter. There are 137 names on the Yellowknife Housing Authority waiting list, 500 across the territory, and several service organizations say that the situation is so bad it's scaring them. There have been some good changes in our approach to housing, but the facts, unfortunately, show that things are just getting worse. The statistics essentially reflect an emergency.

I'm wondering what the Minister is contemplating to deal with this situation and how are we going to get people housed as winter comes on.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do have vacant units across the

Northwest Territories where the public housing stock units are vacant, but those units are being worked on. We have approximately 130, I think, where there's some major M and I work done. We've tried to encourage our LHOs to have this work completed as quickly as possible so we can turn them over and get tenants into them. Unfortunately, sometimes due to lack of capacity, that does become very challenging. A lot of the units are under repair, and once the repairs are completed we will move tenants back in, which should shorten up the waiting lists in each community.

MR. BROMLEY: We have heard that answer before, yet here we have this situation where we have a huge waiting list that is building rapidly.

At my constituency meeting a couple of nights ago in Ndilo/Detah, I was told there are up to 10 vacant home ownership units in the community. Most are all still empty while un-housed people sit on these waiting lists, often because household income thresholds do not match reality. There are about 30 empty units in Behchoko for want of money to do repairs. We've been hearing about that for over a year now. Again, this is an emergency.

What steps will the Minister take now to get families into the vacant home ownership units, for example, and what steps will he take now to get damaged units repaired and back into the housing pool on an expedited schedule?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Members have heard the answer before and they will continue to hear it: As long as we have vacant units that need to be repaired every year, we will have vacant units that are being worked on. That answer will never change.

As to what we're doing right now, I understand the Member is concerned over the vacant home ownership units. That is one that we've aggressively been trying to address. Sometimes we can't get folks in there because the income doesn't match or there are other reasons. It's not always just the income. The ones that we've had in the past, we have tried to convert to public housing so we can utilize more of them.

I'll have to follow up on the 10 that are in the Member's constituency, because I do know we had 135 a couple of years ago and we had very aggressive plans, and we had converted a lot of these into public housing units so we could utilize them, because we've heard from across the Northwest Territories that we have all these vacant units. We don't want them vacant. Some have been vacant for five years. We've been trying to address that.

Again, I will follow up on the 10 that the Member speaks of and find out where they're at and how we can go about filling these vacant units, because we

don't want to see vacant units in the Northwest Territories. That's not our goal.

MR. BROMLEY: I was told at my constituency meeting – the Minister talked about the vacant home ownership units – that people are being turned down for home ownership units because the income ceilings are unrealistic. Obviously, with up to 10 vacant units in a community as small as Ndilo/Detah, there's something wrong with the program practicality. The Minister knows that. He just told us. Knowing that, let's do something about it.

Will the Minister commit to review those guidelines again and consider means to place home ownership units or transfer them into the public housing stock, which I know he said he would do the latter?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We've tried every which way to get as many people into these home ownership units as possible. We've tried having a 10 percent gap where if they were over the ceiling, then we would consider them. We've had some limited success with that. Some people have been turned down for other reasons.

I will commit to the Member that I will follow up on these units and see where they're at, because I would like to see, as much as the next guy, a lot of people moved out of the public housing spectrum and into home ownership, but we have to ensure that we work very closely with them and make sure that we're not setting a lot of them up for something that they are not capable of handling. A lot of the people are surprised, once they get into home ownership, the amount of money that they have to pay as far as bills go.

I will commit to the Member that I will work on these particular units and see how we can best do something with them very quickly.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's commitment there. I know the Minister realizes that housing is really the fundamental first step of getting people out of poverty. They need a basis to live and carry on their lives. This is so important.

I mentioned in my statement the new Transitional Rent Supplement Program and the current refusal to develop policy for people renting in boarding houses to access the program. With Yellowknife at less than a 1 percent vacancy rate in the residential market, will the Minister stop penalizing these people for the lack of housing choices and open a program to applicants who are renting rooms in houses?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: This was one of the concerns we heard across the Northwest

Territories. A lot of folks out there who are just trying to get into the workforce, however, rent was taking up a good portion of their money that they were making. We've tried to address that.

Obviously, being a new program there are still some things that need to be worked out, and then with most programs will be evaluated after a year, but for now our goal is to try to work with those who are in the market housing industry. There are many other cases that we can hear about and discuss, but those cases I think will have to have that discussion at a later date.

Right now when we're rolling this out, we want to just concentrate on getting them into private market rentals, and then we'll go from there and evaluate the program after a year.

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

QUESTION 183-17(3):
PILINGS REMEDIATION AT
?EHTSEO AYHA SCHOOL IN DELINE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Public Works. I want to talk about ?ehtseo Ayha School and I know Public Works does the maintenance of that school and does some work there. My questions are going to be directed to him.

I want to ask the Minister, the leadership this morning spoke to me from Deline and they said the school pilings underneath the school... They weren't too sure what the status was on it. Is it sinking? Is it being fixed? They were very concerned because of the number of children that are going to school and the parents that are sending their kids to this institution to get an education. They want to know what the status is of these pilings that were being put under the ?ehtseo Ayha School.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Public Works and Services, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Piling remediation work has been completed. It was completed in September 2008 and it provides a permanent foundation solution for the school. Remedial work is certified by an engineer and it has been given a life of 25 years. So the pilings under the school are good for 25 years.

MR. YAKELEYA: That's good news for the people in Deline, because they were complaining that nobody from PWS has actually talked to the leadership and said, this is the status of your pilings.

I want to ask the Minister if this is something that Public Works has neglected, or if it is something

that they are looking to see that they need to talk to the communities on these projects.

I do appreciate the Minister taking the lead on another subject, fixing those toilets up in Colville Lake. The community of Deline wanted to know why Public Works hasn't talked to them on these pilings. For them it's still an outstanding issue that needs to be talked about.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I can't say. The foundation work was done in 2008. I will commit right now to having staff from the Department of Public Works and Services contact the leadership in Deline and set up a meeting where they can come and talk to them about the work that has been done in that particular school.

Over \$1.64 million in maintenance and other activities has taken place. We do have some work scheduled for 2013-2014. We are planning to do some envelope work and some roof work. I understand there are some concerns about the roof and we'll have some work done there.

I'll commit right now to having staff from Public Works and Services go in and meet with your leadership to talk about the work that's been done, show them how the pilings were done, explain the assessments and the life of those pilings, but also talk about the work that's going to be done on the school, which is obviously an important building and an important centre for the community of Deline.

MR. YAKELEYA: The people from Deline hearing this will be very pleased with what the Minister is saying is coming into the school.

They have also talked about the roof as being paper thin and leaking. They are scared, because all the children are being sent there, and the safety and integrity of the school... The school is built over a riverbed; the riverbed is underneath the school. The elders have told them, don't build a school here. However, the government of the day refused to listen at the time and that's where they built the school. That's why the elders are saying that in partnership we need to have this government here listen to the people of our communities. I look forward to the Minister's commitment to having the people talk about some of the work that needs to get done.

Will the Minister look at an overall assessment of the ?ehtseo Ayha School and report that back to Deline on the integrity and safety of the school?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I've already indicated, for 2013-2014 Public Works and Services is planning to do an envelope upgrade and roof replacement under the Deferred Maintenance Program on that school, as well as some energy efficiency work and upgrades to the GNWT's energy priorities investment funding. These improvements will obviously help control costs in the school and whatnot.

Based on the facility condition and program requirements, Education, Culture and Employment has identified the need for major upgrading of the Grandfather Ayha School starting in 2018-2019, so that is on the books and is something that Education will be pursuing.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the department look at a comparison if the community would like a new school versus a major upgrade, which at this time makes more sense as to the community coming to a partnership maybe and looking at a new school or, rather, doing the major upgrade? I know the community really does want to look at a new school and I know the financial restrictions that we have. Can the department be open to looking at a partnership if they want to look at a new school for Deline?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That's a discussion that's going to need to be had. Fiscal year 2018-2019 is a little ways off and it will have to be a discussion between Education, Culture and Employment, the community and the builder, in this case Public Works and Services. I imagine and I expect those conversations will take place.

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

QUESTION 184-17(3):

RENOVATIONS TO JOE GREENLAND CENTRE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my statement, I was in Aklavik this past week and I was very surprised to see that the renovations to the Joe Greenland Centre did not happen over the summer. I'd like to ask the Minister what is the holdup for the renovations that were supposed to be done on the Joe Greenland Centre this past summer.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was our intent to start the renovations to the Joe Greenland Centre on the former side that Health and Social Services used to manage, and we still intend to proceed with those renovations.

MR. BLAKE: I'd like to ask the Minister when will the renovations be started and completed.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I said before, it's our intent to put a call out for tender and get the work started on the Joe Greenland Centre. I'd have to do a follow-up and see exactly where it's at now and I will communicate that to the Member.

MR. BLAKE: When can we expect to have the Joe Greenland Centre ready for elders to move in and have a full-time home care worker on site?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I said before, our goal is to have the Joe Greenland Centre open as soon as possible. If we can get the contract awarded, ideally we'd like to have them in there by the spring. As far as a full-time home care worker, that is out of my jurisdiction and that's a discussion that the Member will have to take up with the Minister of Health and Social Services.

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

MR. BLAKE: At this time I have no further questions. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 185-17(3):
CLAWBACK OF OTHER INCOME
UNDER INCOME SECURITY

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest as my colleagues raised the issue of the Child Tax Benefit and how that is clawed back. Mr. Miltenberger will remember in a previous government we had a Minister of ECE that we dubbed "The Claw." I'm sure that Mr. Lafferty would not like to receive such notoriety.

I had an incident recently in my constituency which causes me to wonder about how far we go to claw back things. This constituent had an unfortunate tragedy in her family. Community members came together and raised money and made donations to help this family cope with this. Now, I understand that when she went to income support the next month, that they treated those donations as income and actually clawed that back from her in the form of not giving her the income support.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, is it the policy of our government to treat donations to a family that's had a tragedy, which is a common, common practice in the North here, is it our practice to treat that as income.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have to look into that specific case, but any income that comes into the household, it is considered as household income, and due to that it's based on the policies that we have in place. Mind you, policies can always be amended, as well, and there is an amendment that's coming very soon on one of the subsidies that we provide. We're going to make some changes.

With respect to this individual case, I have to follow up with the Member on the specific topic on the donation itself, because it is an issue that we may have to be faced with and possibly make some changes, but I need to look further on this case.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: I do appreciate the Minister being willing to sit down and look at this individual case, but I want to know what is the general policy of this government. Because as we know, if people have a tragedy, if they have a death in the family, if they have to travel for some reason, a sickness, that it is common for people to rally around them and donate to that family to see them through that difficult time. Surely the Minister knows, in a yes or no answer, is it the policy of our government to claw back such donations? I have never heard of it ever before until this particular incident. Is it the current policy, regardless of the flexibility, is it the policy of this government to claw that money back?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I need to confirm with my department on the specific policy on donations. If it's part of the clawback, I will need to get back to the Members on that specifically. I do not want to give an answer now. It may be a question down the road. I want to verify that with my department first, prior to giving the answer.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, over the years we've had much debate in this House about whether impact and benefit agreement payments, beneficiary shareholders payments, bingo earnings, you know, we've had discussion about all kinds of, you know, the Child Tax Benefit, whether or not these things should be treated as income. Is there any review or does a policy review occasionally take place to determine or is it just on an as-required basis? Is there any forum, I guess, in which we can have input that could go towards changing that policy?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Yes, again, there is a policy that's coming forward, and I want to give the Members a heads-up that we want to make some changes and make some amendments to what the Member's alluded to, whether it be IBA or land claims or other areas. That we are, on a regular basis, listening to the Members, if they want to see some changes. We are taking them seriously, and this is one of the areas that is coming forward based on the Member's discussions, and I will be sitting down with the Members to give them an update on the amendments and changes before the end of the year.

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

QUESTION 186-17(3):
DELINE WATER TREATMENT PLANT
SITE REMEDIATION

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of ENR, I believe it's the Minister for handling the hazards of contaminated sites, if they have done some work around the Deline water treatment plant. I've been told by the leadership that they cleaned up certain specific parcels around

the new water treatment plant; however, they have not yet cleaned up other areas around that water treatment plant that are contaminated. Has that work been done?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of that specific circumstance so I will have to talk to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and I will take that question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is taken as notice. Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 187-17(3):

YELLOWKNIFE DOWNTOWN DAY SHELTER

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should also say thank you to Mr. Miltenberger, too, for leaving the time on the clock.

The Minister of Health and Social Services sort of left I guess I'd say certainly me, and I can definitely feel confident with the public, with a big surprise answer with this, sort of, maybe yes, maybe no answer we're going to fund the day shelter going forward. I'm asking for leadership on this particular file, because the day shelter has been heralded as a positive step forward on helping people in the homeless area that we need to help. What is holding the Minister back from making a clear commitment in this House, saying that his department will get behind this initiative, yet again, as a regular programming service we supply?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department will do an evaluation of this fiscal year, but it's not going to wait until the very end of the fiscal year to do an evaluation. We'll evaluate as we go along to see if some of those programs, like I had indicated earlier, a navigator service to see if there are individuals in there that can find employment or find education and so on. Once that evaluation is done, we still have time prior to the next budget review of main estimates and the finalization of budgets for the 2013-14 budget year which will happen, I guess, this coming January. That will be presented to the Legislative Assembly and the MLAs. We will then make a decision on whether or not we will be funding that project any further. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, that is a different answer. I will have to say it is a little more clear than the last couple he supplied the House. You would think the department has been evaluating this year after year over the last three and a half

years. You would think that they would have some grip of what is going on. He said January.

What type of consultation has the department done with the public to realize the value of this particular service in Yellowknife that has been helping homeless people with places to go during the day, warmth in the winter and certainly washrooms that was a much needed service in this community?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, initially when the shelter opened, it was just to give the people a warm place during the day so that they are not wandering around and up and down the main street. It was someplace where they could sit in a warm place, watch movies, watch TV and use facilities and so on that were available there. That was the intent of it.

As time went on there were more demands placed on the society that was running it, such as are there any programs available for those individuals? Is there something that could be done with them? Could you do in-house programs? Do you recommend them to counselling and so on?

As these things went, we can indicate, and everyone could see, that just having a shelter that only serves the purpose of providing a warm place for individuals to be was really not fulfilling the intent of a good social services program. Now we are starting to add on. So now that we are adding stuff on, we want to be able to evaluate that. We all know that we can provide a warm place for people to go. We all know that we can provide a place for people to watch movies. What we don't know is what type of impact it is having on the surrounding area. So far, some of the impacts on the immediate surrounding area have been very negative, but the impact on the main street has been very positive. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, some of the negative impacts have strictly been drawn out by the operator of the particular shelter. That has been a fact. All I am asking for the Minister here today is, quite simply, does he define the concept of the downtown day shelter a success, from his position as Minister of Health and Social Services, as it has impacted our community of Yellowknife.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no question there, Mr. Hawkins. It is an opinion. I will let the Member stand up and reiterate his question. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Speaker. Has the Department of Health and Social Services seen the establishment of the downtown day shelter a success story? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, probably more success than failure or we would have probably quit funding it after the three-year pilot. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister agree with me that the natural evolution of the downtown day shelter should envision programming and a safe environment that does not support substance abuse of any kind? Would his department support that type of philosophy? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, our department does support that type of philosophy. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 70-17(3):
INTERIM PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (UNAUDITED)
OF THE GNWT FOR THE YEAR ENDED
MARCH 31, 2012

TABLED DOCUMENT 71-17(3):
2011-2012 58TH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
NWT LIQUOR COMMISSION AND
LIQUOR LICENSING BOARD

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents, entitled Interim Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the year ended March 31, 2012, and 2011-2012 58th Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Liquor Commission and Liquor Licensing Board. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Abernethy.

TABLED DOCUMENT 72-17(3):
NWT CORONER'S SERVICE
2010 ANNUAL REPORT
INCLUDING 10-YEAR REVIEW 2001-2010

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled Northwest Territories Coroner's Service 2010 Annual Report including a 10-year review 2001-2010. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Blake.

Notices of Motion

MOTION 14-17(3):
ESTABLISHMENT OF ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 22, 2012, I will move the following

motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission, 2012, is hereby established;

And further, that the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories that the Honourable Shannon Smallwood be appointed chairperson, and Mr. Charles Furlong and Mr. Ian McCrea be appointed members of the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission, 2012.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Bouchard.

MOTION 15-17(3):
GUIDELINES FOR NWT ELECTORAL
BOUNDARIES COMMISSION, 2012

MR. BOUCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Monday, October 22, 2012, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that the following guidelines be set out for the NWT Electoral Boundaries Commission, 2012:

1. The commission shall review the existing electoral districts using the most recent and accurate census and other population data available;
2. In keeping with Canadian constitutional conventions and the notion of effective representation, the commission shall make recommendations to achieve relative parity between electoral districts while balancing community of interest considerations;
3. For greater certainty, relative parity means that the percentage variation between the number of persons in a riding and the average mean should be within plus or minus 25 percent, except where special circumstances warrant exceptional deviation;
4. The commission shall recommend how electoral boundaries should be drawn if the Legislative Assembly comprises (a) 18 members, or (b) 19 members, or (c) 21 members;
5. The commission shall prepare an interim report with proposed electoral district boundaries for review by the public and discussion at public hearings;
6. The commission shall establish a website or other publicly accessible mechanism(s), in addition to public hearings, to receive submissions on the existing and/or proposed boundaries;
7. All submissions to the commission shall be considered public documents;

8. Simultaneous translation of official languages shall be available at public hearings where the use of an official language in a particular community or region is sizable enough to warrant the employ of translation services;
9. If the commission is not in a position to accomplish its mandate within the existing budget allocated, it may return to the Legislative Assembly for additional funds;
10. The final report of the commission, complete with recommendations, shall be submitted in English and in French to the Speaker and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly no later than seven months after the Commission is struck; and
11. The Chief Electoral Officer shall serve as secretary to the commission.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 64-17(3), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2013-2014, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay, I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What's the wish of the committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 64-17(3), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2013-2014.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will commence with that after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. The Capital Estimates 2013-2014 is the tabled document before us today in Committee of the Whole. I would like to ask Minister Miltenberger if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. At the witness table we have deputy ministers Mike Aumond, Finance; and Mr. Paul Guy, Public Works and Services.

I'm here to present the 2013-14 Capital Estimates of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The estimates outline appropriations for government and community infrastructure investments of \$123 million for the 2013-14 fiscal year. This amount includes \$75 million for GNWT capital projects, \$12 million for projects funded through the federal government's Building Canada Plan, \$28 million for contributions towards community infrastructure projects, and \$8 million to continue the GNWT's Deferred Maintenance and Capital Asset Retrofit Program.

The estimates do not include appropriations for housing infrastructure proposed by the NWT Housing Corporation in 2013-2014, totalling \$14.5 million. The appropriation for these investments will be sought during committee's review of the draft 2013-2014 Main Estimates in January 2013. The NWT Housing Corporation's proposed 2013-2014 Capital Plan, however, has been included in the estimates document as an information item.

Including the proposed housing investment, the total planned infrastructure investment in 2013-2014 will be \$137.8 million. Although the 2013-2014 Capital Estimates are the second year of reduced capital spending, the estimates still provide a stable source of funding for community governments and permit the completion of many of the projects begun during the 16th Assembly.

As Members are aware, this level of funding will not address the GNWT's growing infrastructure deficit, which is currently estimated at \$3 billion over the next five years. This does not include deficits also accruing in our municipal and housing infrastructure needs.

However, the increase to our borrowing limit and adherence to our fiscal strategy will provide us with an opportunity to start addressing this deficit by planning to increase the GNWT's share of capital investment from \$75 million to \$125 million for two years, starting in 2014-2015.

The short-term increase in our capital spending will provide the GNWT the opportunity to make investments to improve our territory's essential infrastructure base to deliver programs and services and to allow the GNWT to participate in future federal infrastructure programs.

The increase, however, is not sustainable without new revenues from devolution or further expenditure constraints or reductions.

Major highlights of these estimates include:

- \$29.6 million for facility replacements and renovations, including funding for the upfront planning for the upgrades that will be required at Stanton Territorial Hospital;
- \$28 million to continue to contribute to the community infrastructure needs;
- \$23.3 million for highways and other winter roads across the NWT;
- \$12 million for small capital projects across all departments;
- \$5 million to continue the GNWT's Deferred Maintenance Program;
- \$4.4 million for information technology projects;
- \$2.1 million for improvements to NWT parks; and
- \$1.2 million to continue the Capital Asset Retrofit Program for energy efficiency upgrades to existing GNWT buildings.

I am prepared to review the details of the 2013-2014 Capital Estimates.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Would you like to join your witnesses at the witness table? I will now turn to Regular Members to see if anyone has general comments. Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to review the infrastructure capital estimates for next year, but I do want to share a few concerns.

I know that we moved to doing our infrastructure for the next fiscal year early, but I'm still finding that in my region we're tendering out capital projects in July and August. The reason that we did it almost six months earlier is so that it would avoid those circumstances. When that happens, especially with highway chipsealing or construction, then we end up constructing in the fall season. I don't think that's how we should be utilizing all the time that we've given ourselves there. I don't know if the Minister wants to answer why that practice is still happening. I think even with housing, I was just recently in Fort Liard, as well, and they're starting the base construction of a home. It behooves me to see why we're still doing that practice. Maybe the Finance Minister can find out more, or track it, or maybe government isn't aware of it. I think it's becoming more of a practice again that we're tendering out stuff later and later in the year and it impacts the construction season if they're doing it wet, when it's raining and snowing. That's one of my concerns there.

The other one is, of course, I'm speaking about Fort Liard, Highway No. 7 has always been quite high on my agenda. I do have to say that because we've had an exceptionally dry year, the Liard Highway has been very good this year. I'm sure that the tourism numbers will be up. I haven't had confirmation of that. That's something that we always want to see in the long term. Like I said, I've always said that Mr. Ted Grant, who owns Simpson Air, has always been a strong advocate of tourism in the Northwest Territories, and he always advises me that he does get calls from Europe about tourists that want to drive on Highway No. 7. They ask him the conditions and he has to be honest with them. In the years when it's bad, he has to tell them it's bad and don't send people up Highway No. 7. I continue to advocate that we still need more resources for Highway No. 7. I will note that certainly there are contributions towards Highway No. 7 that I'm pleased to see in the capital estimates; however, I still make the case that it needs more and more resources as we move along.

As well as the chipsealing. Another goal of mine is to chipseal all the way from Providence junction to Fort Simpson. I'd like to see that work done. Also, the residents of Fort Liard often feel that they're forgotten in the corner of the Northwest Territories, but the reality is that the road is their life there as well. They actually do a lot of work and travel between Fort Liard and the BC border. I've always advocated that that's got to be chipsealed. It was chipsealed at one point, and unfortunately, it deteriorated within months. With the investments that we've had over the past seven years, I think we've had a good 20 or 22 kilometres reconstructed. We still need another 200 to be reconstructed. We've got a long ways to go there. The good sections are reconstructed. I'd certainly like to urge the department to chipseal that and make life a little bit easier. I think that's one of our roles as legislators, is to make life a little bit easier for all our residents. We always strive towards that.

Other capital needs in my region, I've got many small communities and every time I visit them or I bring Ministers there, they constantly raise the need for schools. In the community like Trout Lake, their original school burned down and they're actually in the community hall. I've always made that case. The department refuses to acknowledge that, but the original school had burned down. Residents of Trout Lake have always said it is a temporary thing and put them in the community hall, but now they're actually calling that the Charles Tetcho School, but it actually wasn't designed as a school. So I'll continue to advocate for them. Many of our large schools have been, you know, we completed one in Inuvik. Great for Inuvik. That's a huge capital expenditure. In our small communities it won't be

that expensive to build. I think it's time to turn our attention to the small communities in that regard.

Also, while we're on general comments, I just want to touch a bit on devolution. I think that when it comes to capital planning and devolution, is that many of our small communities... Like Fort Simpson is the regional centre and I've been telling everybody that my role as MLA, when we're looking at devolution, is to see if we can get some of those jobs over to the community, but we're limited by the amount of office space, the amount of – I don't want to call it staff housing, but housing for staff. I think government really has to turn their attention about how do we develop that infrastructure so that we can benefit from devolution. Because decentralization should be part of devolution, I believe. So we have to focus and see if we can transfer some of those jobs to the regions and to the communities. Just an overall statement. I think that's what we should be focusing on in the future.

As well, I think in my Member's statement here today, like in the community of Nahanni Butte, who wants to really pay serious attention about relocating a community like that will be expensive. That's a long-term plan and I believe we should start that planning now. It's not about moving the whole community today or tomorrow, but we should address that reality, that the community was built in a flood plain and it just may happen again. It might not be 50 years, it might be next year, because climate change is upon us. We've really have to look at that.

With that, I thank you for the opportunity for those opening comments. If I can get some certainty about why we're still tendering out the capital projects in July/August.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. I believe the Minister is going to keep a note of some of these issues and speak to them at the end of the general comments. Thank you that most of your remarks were general comments. It's general comments, not general questions. Let's move on to Ms. Bisaro now, please.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I do have a number of comments I want to make with regard to the budget. They're in no particular order. At the outset I want to say that I do support the fiscal policy that we are currently following. I do agree with the government that we have to kind of keep things down to a dull roar.

With that said, there is a real concern on the part of myself and many other Members that we are leaving ourselves open to increasing our deferred maintenance to increasing our infrastructure deficit. It's entirely possible that we will be struggling if we don't increase our capital budget in the near future. I hear from the Minister that yes, in another year or two years' time there will be an increase to our

capital budget, but I think there are many things that are lacking and I'm going to outline a few of them.

One of the things that I think has been a positive in the last couple of years has been a reduction in the dollar value of the carry-overs that we've had from one year to the next. I think that's a really good move. We did take on a huge infrastructure budget because we were taking advantage of the stimulus funding from the federal government. I think that was a good thing to do but it did leave us, I think, a bit under the gun and I think our staff had a bit of a difficult time in getting all the projects out and enabling us to get contractors to get the work done. I'm glad to see that our carry-over has gone down and I hope that it's going to go down even more.

I think the ideal would be that we have projects identified in our capital budget earlier, as was mentioned by Mr. Menicoche, so that we can get the projects out and get them done, and I would hope that we'd get down to 5 or 10 percent carry-overs from where we are now. I think that would be optimum.

I note that the Minister talked about \$5 million in deferred maintenance. I agree with that. I think that's absolutely the way to go. We have been spending a great deal of money on deferred maintenance and our buildings, and our infrastructure is such that it's definitely needed. I fully support that, and if we could, I would increase the amount of money that we spend on deferred maintenance.

There are a couple of projects which are not in the budget which are of concern to me. In the last Assembly there was an indication that we needed, and the department had proven was needed, a facility for girls and women; a new facility for girls and women, for correctional purposes, that was intended to be built in Fort Smith to replace the current women's facility. That project is nowhere on the timeline of this budget. From what we've been told by the Minister and the department, it's not going to be anywhere on the timeline for another couple of years. That concerns me. The current facility is very badly in need of replacement. Again, our limited capital budget doesn't allow for us to get that project on the go.

Another area that concerns me, as well, is infrastructure within Education, Culture and Employment. Particularly in Yellowknife, we have two schools that have a need. One for upgrading and renovation, and that's Sissons. It's been on the books and then off the books for probably four years now. That is one school that is badly in need of renovation and I don't see it anywhere on the timeline either. That concerns me. Mildred Hall School is one that still has some work that needs to be done to finish off their renovation project from a number of years ago. Aurora College, the need for

a stand-alone campus for Aurora College is a huge issue for me. The Minister has talked about it a bit and the Department of Education has talked about it a bit but it's nowhere on the radar.

I am particularly concerned that this budget doesn't have anything in it that references the Inuvik-Tuk highway. This is a project which this government has committed to. As a Caucus we said it was a priority. We've put money into it already. It seems to be a project that we are forging ahead on, and yet in year 2013 we have no indication of capital costs for that project.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We have some time left on the clock. We can come back to you after. For general comments next on my list I have Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Within the plans for 2013 year I was very shocked to see the lack of spending within the Mackenzie Delta riding. Over the last year we've noticed a lot of residents moving back to our communities of the Mackenzie Delta. Whether it's lack of work either in Inuvik or a lot of students coming back from school in the south, we've seen a huge increase of students coming back to the communities. With that, we've seen a big demand for housing within the regions. I was hoping that we could plan for this coming year to put more infrastructure into the communities.

Also, to do with Public Works, Moose Kerr School in Aklavik was built in 1968. The school there is 44 years old and I do not see any plans within the next couple of years here to have a new one built. The school is really in need of replacement, yet there's no room on the red flag list.

Also, as a colleague mentioned, the Inuvik-Tuk highway; as many people know, there's very little work in Inuvik at this time and the residents of Inuvik could really use some work this winter. I'm hoping that this government could put in place a good portion of the highway to be started within this year, if possible.

Also on our highway, as one of my colleagues mentioned earlier, the condition of our highway. There is a lot of work that has been done on the Dempster Highway, Highway No. 8, over the last number of years, and I commend the government for doing the widening project, but the maintenance part of things has kind of fallen apart. There's actually less maintenance that is being done to our highway system even though our highway has increased. I know a lot of our residents would like to see that section of the highway chipsealed in the near future, which would attract a lot of tourists. We're seeing a lot of tourists that aren't coming to our region mainly because of the situation of the Dempster Highway. I'm hoping that we could address that issue over the coming years. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Blake. I'd like to ask Ms. Bisaro, would you like us to return to you for the conclusion of your comments? She said in a bit. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome to the finance delegation here today in the committee. I do commend the department for a prudent fiscal strategy in terms of tightening the belt for the upcoming year. I do have some concerns in areas such as health. Those are areas in which we've got to be a little bit more careful in terms of the term "tightening."

I think health is one of those areas where you have to make investments ongoing, otherwise you fall behind, I guess, the total plan of healing people. Making the proper investments in the community in terms of all types of infrastructure, I think, are critical for the health and well-being of the Northwest Territories.

That said, I think we've also heard from some of the Members here, some of the concerns with population migration and changes in migration patterns for the people of the Northwest Territories. When we get to the area of MACA, and when we do funding formulas, that will be something I know we'll bring up again, but I just wanted to say from a global perspective, a number of Members are concerned that population changes may have not been factored as effectively as we planned in the 2013 budget. This repopulation exercise would help, I guess, in the re-profiling of I know what the government uses as a needs assessment. I think this has a true reflection of the population. I know the NWTAC has been very supportive of that action as well. I just wanted to put that on the record, Madam Chair.

As the Member for Frame Lake indicated, we've seen less carry-over from the federal funding from years past because of a large increase in the year before, and I commend the department for becoming a bit more aggressive on that. I know it's a lot of work to look at matching federal funds to current funding and then to have enough people to deploy the much needed projects around the Territories, but I do commend them for bringing that number down.

That said, the highways, as mentioned, you know, our colleague from Nahendeh, Highway No. 7 is near and dear to his heart, and I think through attrition it's near and dear to everybody's heart here, only because we do feel for the Member and the people of that area. That said, we also have many other highways across the Northwest Territories which are in fairly dire situations or dire needs, and I think the current strategy is really not keeping up with what I think the people of the Northwest Territories are expecting. I'm talking about a safety issue as well as the trickling down effect to tourism as well.

I'm hoping that, as indicated, and we've heard from senior management here in the Department of Transportation, of a Highway Strategy. We really need to encourage and foster that environment, because without a strategy it would be very, very difficult to start adding more infrastructure strategy or dollars without that fundamental in place.

As mentioned by some of my other colleagues, the Inuvik-Tuk highway expansion program is one in which I think has been looked at, and again, many of us do support the principle of the highway for many reasons, and I'm one of them, but I'm also very concerned about the funding and how we're going to afford it. I think the more we talk about it as a government, the more we are able to discuss this with the people of the Northwest Territories, the more we can understand the financial impact of what this will have on everybody. I think it's a prudent exercise and I know there was probably a good reason for omitting it here in the capital plan, but we know it's going to come back this year and many Members are just hoping that it would be part of the overall picture.

Lastly, we are very encouraged to see devolution or the components of devolution well underway. Many Members here have great faith in our Premier and his delegation team and we're very happy to have a number of recent organizations come on board, and I think we see a true value moving forward. The concern I think I have as a Member is with devolution will trigger decentralization, which will go hand in hand, which would include also the planning for tomorrow, and that includes infrastructure for putting these people in communities and infrastructure projects, and I'm not sure if this budget is truly planning for the number of jobs that we'll be seeing going to the communities in a way in which, I think, would provide that comfort level. I think, you know, I speak not just from Yellowknife's perspective but I think from all communities, having a very clear plan of action as devolution is on a very good platform and a very good timeline, but 2013 should trigger some of this decentralization to start occurring and I'm hoping that we can get some comments to that.

Madam Chair, I'll leave it at that. I do have more specifics as we get into the detail. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Next for general comments I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The fiscal situation in our budget is we have been going through this, I should say I have been here for a bit and we've been going through this and all our needs in our communities are very high. We only have a certain amount of money and we need to look at each capital infrastructure in here. We did have a good run at it when the federal government

put the federal stimulus money into our communities.

I want to, through the details, ask the Minister what type of initiatives that could look at a partnership with the communities either in bridge work or some of the capital infrastructure that could be built in our communities and our regions and where the government sees that it makes more sense to work with the communities on a partnership, or have the communities come to some solution on building either a bridge or building, and where they can save money and provide opportunities for the communities.

The Minister has travelled a good portion of the North. The Minister has talked to good people down the Mackenzie Valley, in our communities down the south end of the lake here, to ask about our budget and talk about our priorities, and it has been duly noted that our needs are far greater than what we have to satisfy some of our constituents in our ridings on the infrastructure. For example, we talk about roads and I certainly hope that this government here advances the roads into the Sahtu region. I appreciate the forwarding of this project on the new wellness centre in Norman Wells. There is other dearly needed infrastructure in other communities that we are looking forward to advancing with this budget here.

The smaller wins for us: I spoke about earlier in the House on some of the smaller projects such as Colville Lake's washrooms at the health centre and in the school. For that community that is a big win. It may seem insignificant on the larger, grander scale of these millions of dollars that go into many of the projects around the North, but for that community it is a big win for them after many years of not having that basic infrastructure.

That is what I sort of look at in the budget. What is some of the basic infrastructure? Some of the communities I do not represent do not have them yet. I look forward to that in the budget. I know there is a fine balance because there are other communities we could say that are far more advanced in projects, such as my community of Colville Lake, or Good Hope, or Deline versus the other centres. That is what we are looking at, a balance.

I want to thank the Minister and the staff because it is a very delicate job what you guys are doing and how do you spread the money out, deficiencies in our aging infrastructure. We have some numbers that we desperately need to look at some of these assets that we have in our communities that are 50, 60 and 70 years old that need some attention. There are also other areas in the North that people in the ridings want to see improved.

I want to first of all look at this budget to see where it improves lives in my region. I also want to see where within government it makes sense to allow

the communities to develop their own solutions. There is some bridge work that I think the communities can do at a good value. It doesn't always have to go to a tendering process or the department has control over it. That is where I look for this government, through this budget, where the communities can be involved. It makes more sense. These dollars are going to be dwindling, unless we get some significant movement in the devolution area of coming to some resolution. There we still have our work cut out for us.

I think that the road leading to Tuktoyaktuk should be completed. It needs to be completed. We started and we need to continue building new infrastructure outside where there is desperate need for infrastructure.

We always need to look at how we bring down the cost of living. If some communities like Deline want to extend their runway, we should be able to talk to them and work with them and see if that is a possibility. We have done that with Fort Good Hope. They have put in a significant amount of money when they extended their runway. We need to look at that from a government's point of view and see where we can do some cost sharing around the communities for infrastructure so that we can stretch our dollars, so to speak.

These are my comments to the Minister. It is a tough job. We need to come back, also, to the basics of certain infrastructure in our communities. Like I have mentioned again, the community of Colville Lake has taken nine years to put basic washroom facilities in that school. These are the things that make a big difference in our communities, and washrooms in the health centre in Colville Lake. I am hoping that some of the infrastructure that we need to put in our communities doesn't take quite that long, but I understand from the Minister, in some previous comments, that it sometimes takes longer for some infrastructure to go into some of the communities. I guess for ourselves, with the amount of money that we have and the amount of weeks that we are looking at our regions and our communities, what makes sense and what can we put off so that other communities can catch up on their basic infrastructure. Otherwise, we will have have-not regions and have-regions in the Northwest Territories.

I just want to say these few things to the Minister. I look forward to going through detail. I want to thank the Minister for what he put before us and have a lively debate on some of the issues when we go through the infrastructure. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Next on my list I have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to thank the Minister and the staff for being here in

terms of giving us some overview of what the plans are for 2013-14.

I am somewhat optimistic and looking forward to the health centre that will be constructed in Fort Providence. As it may be known, the health centre that is presently there is common to those communities in the North. It is an aging infrastructure that perhaps is beyond its years. The community is looking forward to the construction stage of the health centre. Also, at the same time, I think there is a degree of anticipation in terms of community involvement in terms of the design of the structure and also perhaps just the construction stage as well. With great anticipation, the community looks forward to this project to take shape and form at some point.

While that is a positive new beginning of sorts, there are still some needs in the riding that I represent. For example, in Enterprise they have made a strong case of trying to be independent in terms of having their own water supply and ensuring that they provide that service to their citizens. So I encourage this government to be open, to be receptive, and to work with the leadership there to ensure that at some point that that responsibility in their independence is forged and that there's a working relationship that's established with the community of Enterprise.

Similarly for Kakisa as well. They've indicated, again, their aspirations to be independent of trucked water service that's delivered from Hay River. They have again made a strong case in terms of some cost advantages of ensuring that they have their own capacity to have their own water treatment plant in their home community to deliver water services to the citizens of Kakisa.

We're seeing at this point, within a month or so, the dawning of a reality perhaps we didn't quite expect, but, I mean, that's the biggest infrastructure that we've ever seen in this part of the North. It's a symbol of what we can accomplish here in the Northwest Territories, and that's the bridge. It's going to be completed. The community, of course, has been part of that whole initiative. We look forward to its completion and its opening, but at the same time, there are initiatives that I feel the community would like to at least be involved with. One of them is I know the marketing of the Deh Cho Bridge would be something that could be maximized in terms of drawing in tourists. It could be perhaps compared to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Not perhaps in that colour, but the point is that the community would likely continue to be involved in terms of operation and maintenance once the bridge is operational and we see 24-hour traffic going through the community.

Those are three major points that I wanted to highlight, but also at the same time there are still some existing opportunities, I think. For one, I think

this government has made great strides in terms of the biomass initiative. I understand that there are some discussions with the community in terms of forest management agreements. There could more likely be sustainable projects that will create not only employment but business opportunities for the district or the region that I serve, especially the communities. So we look forward to that.

Then again, there's also the potential to maximize on tourism. I think there are some initiatives in the works. We look forward to it, especially at the community level so that it complements the strength of communities, and that's basically people that have the skills to hunt and fish and trap and know the land that would like to bring tours out into the bush and teach them this in terms of how we live up here in the Northwest Territories.

In the community that I come from, Fort Providence, there have been some issues in regard to the swimming pool that was constructed several years back. It's unfortunate that it sat this year without being open and we had our kids swimming at the dock. Hopefully at some point there will be a solution arrived at so that the swimming pool becomes operational.

Again, there's the recent expression of a desire to perhaps look at an emergency runway, because with the dawning of the bridge, with it being in operation, in Kakisa the community has expressed a desire to see if there are measures that could be taken to look at establishing an emergency runway in the community. Not only for the community of Enterprise, but at least on the south side of the bridge where you have at least a contingency to measure if you need to medevac someone, perhaps, if there is an accident and there's a community response. You need to have a critical link to Yellowknife and one of the ways is by airplane. So the community has proposed to see if there's a way that that effort can be realized.

Of course, the other matter that I raise at this time is just with the cellular service. I've brought that up on several occasions, and again, with the bridge and the 24-hour traffic, it is going to become a necessity. It could be a vital link in terms of having real-time communications to major centres, especially first aid services that could be very critical if perhaps we experience a major traffic accident on the highway and it's a must at this point. I think if Fort Providence and the area would see an establishment of cellular services, it will bring us one step closer to the concept of ensuring that we have all the major points in the Northwest Territories covered and that we look at at least laying the foundation for a 911 call centre. That could be very possible.

The other point that I wanted to touch on is there are still issues with housing within the constituency in terms of how it is that some empty homes could

still exist in the communities, and how it is that there's a basic need and some houses sit empty in communities. Of course, people become envious when they see a house that's just sitting there unoccupied.

There's a lot of discussion in terms of devolution. I'd like to see perhaps more discussion in terms of decentralization. There's a real need to ensure that the communities survive and we look at perhaps opportunities and positions being transferred to the communities so we at least spread and share the wealth of all this massive institution that we establish.

So those are just some of the key points that I wanted to highlight in terms of what it is that we're discussing at this time. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Next I have Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. My first question, really, if you don't mind, Madam Chair, I'll throw that out for the Minister's wrap-up comments, but I've heard a couple of comments about carry-over and we haven't actually read anything about carry-over. So if I could get clarification on what the carry-over was last year. I'm just looking at the numbers provided today and I see that our main estimates were \$124 million last year, actuals or revised are almost double that: \$240 million. I'm wondering if much of that – obviously Housing Corp might have 10 or 15 million dollars in there – but it seems like there would be \$100 million in carry-over. So I'm not sure what progress has been made on that. So I'd appreciate some clarification on that.

I recognize the Minister has worked hard here to stick to our fiscal strategy, and it's a matter of competing priorities, and much discussion and debate and weighing of value and so on. Some of my concern over the infrastructure we will be working on is that it's not part of the budget here today; it's being left out to the later supps. I'm thinking of, for example, the Inuvik-Tuk highway and the energy infrastructure initiatives. That's something we seem to be falling into the habit of and I don't think it's a good practice. So I just want to make that point.

Another concern is that we are having a lot of infrastructure deficit concerns. I think it's peaking or profiling the highest point with the Department of Transportation. I think maybe we're holding the line a bit generally, but Transportation certainly is going in the wrong direction, and the committee, I know, has tried to profile this with Cabinet and we will continue to try. It seems to be a challenge to penetrate that. The barrier is there for communication.

Persistent long-term needs that still are not in the budget. There are a number of these. Certainly for

me, the Detah road remains absent. Again, I had a constituency meeting the other night and residents are still flabbergasted that there is not a plan in place to complete that project. It's been done with tail ends of other projects and so on. Not a real respectful approach there. That's still missing.

Stanton, again, I think we're still behind on that. We are moving and I think it's well recognized the needs there, but I believe we have really fallen down on that one. Not just this Assembly. I see a major deficit there.

Certainly educational facilities in Yellowknife, Mildred Hall, Sissons, the need for an Aurora Yellowknife Campus. Of course, outside of Yellowknife, the women's correctional facility, which has been mentioned. Sort of glaring gaps there that have been known for a considerable amount of time still not being addressed.

I am happy to see the energy efficiency upgrades that are being proposed and enabled by the Capital Asset Retrofit Fund. I think that will continue to build and is proving a good value. My compliments to Cabinet for following up on that.

Lastly, I wanted to mention that I see real opportunities for how we design and schedule infrastructure projects so they stimulate local contracts and high labour and local labour and local contract participation from the communities in which they occur. I do see major opportunities. We've talked about that at committee and perhaps even as a large group in Caucus. I don't think we're doing a good job yet at following up on those opportunities. It does take some work. It means we need to break down projects. We need to design projects with that in mind so that they are appropriately scaled and so on, to the sorts of resources that the community that they're being built in have. It may be a little bit challenging to do, but I think it's time for some really comprehensive thinking. The benefits from such an approach would be huge in many, many, many ways that address many of our broad government goals. I continue to push that and look forward to the Minister's comments.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. General comments. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Like my colleagues, I am fairly supportive of the projects that are in the capital budget. It's probably one of our lighter budgets, but I do have some concerns in the area of timelines, in the areas of highways and buildings being constructed and the fact that the government has decided to look at these in the fall time in order to be able to put them into operation in the summertime. Somewhere down the road, no pun intended, these are getting farther and farther down the line so we're beginning projects in July and August and getting into the rainy seasons in

the August-September time. I do have some concerns with timelines.

I think another thing that some people have mentioned that is not in the budget is the Tuk to Inuvik highway. I think we need to keep moving this project forward and at least assessing, getting the assessment completed and see what the next level of funding requirement is, and at some point deciding how far in we are. It is something that is an integral part of economic development in that region, so we need to continue to move forward on it.

The capital budget also discusses the infrastructure money or the deferred maintenance money. It's good to see that the numbers are going down but I don't know if the department really has any kind of plan to get rid of deferred maintenance or is this just an anomaly year where it's reduced and other years we're going to increase. My concern with deferred maintenance was brought up last year when I first became an MLA. If it's deferred maintenance and we just continue to be behind on it, then you might as well just rename it as regular maintenance because now we're just way behind. Deferred means, in my opinion, that we're actually going to crawl out of this hole that we're in, and I don't know if the government really has a plan to do that.

The other area in the capital budget process is the consultation with the communities, the public consultation. I understand some of these two have links together where there's capital, where there's O and M, but I think it is interesting to go to the communities and hear their voices, but I think time-wise it should also include the MLAs. I happened to have the opportunity to go into my community, but most MLAs didn't.

I think that's all my comments for right now. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you very much, Mr. Bouchard. Next I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the staff for coming in and listening to all the concerns that Members have today. I do understand that under the certain fiscal restraints, you do the best job that you can throughout the Northwest Territories. Looking at our list of work that needs to be done in the regions and small communities. Even here in Yellowknife with a lot of issues that are facing.

I guess I just want to begin with, up in Inuvik we have a pretty bad situation that we're facing in terms of infrastructure, kind of going along the same lines as possibly a disaster like what happened in Nahanni Butte and all the infrastructure that had occurred over the summer with the devastating floods that happened there. Up in Inuvik we have a gas situation in which we were

told that the community has less than a year left on natural gas. As some results that came out in the news, Inuvik Gas started running on some synthetic gas, some incidents happened, and as a result for the last two weeks to a month, I'm not sure, they've been doing tests around the community, meaning that the community had to go back on natural gas and use up some of its resources in that amount of time, and then when it was safe, certain units, certain areas of the community went back on synthetic gas. The main concern is that in a time when they could have been using synthetic gas they're using some of our resources from our inventory that's already been there. We were told before, that was longer. We were told two years, a year and a half. Now we're down to a year. Now this year we're not even sure what can happen. In terms of the synthetic gas being used in the community on all the units, which 85 percent of our residents are on natural gas as well as a bunch of business owners, depending on the load demands and if we have any outages in the community, anything like that that might use up some more of our fuel, and in terms of when it does get a lot colder, the synthetic gas, the effectiveness and efficiency of that fuel being able to work efficiently in the homes or in the community without having a heat trace on the houses or insulating the pipes, that can result in a lot of damaged infrastructure in the community. Whether I know a lot of our government buildings are going on synthetic gas to continue the natural gas inventory for the community, but should that happen during this winter when our natural gas, if it should happen to run out and if the synthetic gas is not working efficiently, there's going to be a lot of buildings that can result in long-term damage. That's just the scenario that I want to put out there and something that as I listen to concerns from the Members here in the House, that's something that we need to take into sight as we move forward and possibly look at the funding that's going into infrastructure.

Another big project that kind of concerned me, and I know concerned some of our contractors back home, was the Inuvik-Tuk highway. I was very glad to hear a lot of support from Members on this side of the House in terms of the Inuvik-Tuk highway being a priority for this 17th Legislative Assembly and moving forward that should we make a decision when our reports come in that we can start building as soon as possible so that we can get work in Inuvik, we don't lose months on the building season, and that project, should the Assembly go ahead and approve it, that we can get started right away. I know that's a concern for Members of our region and my community as well.

Some highlights: I'm really glad to see the funding in terms of deferred maintenance. I know it's a big list there but we're putting a dent in it with this money that's getting spent in there and looking at

some of our infrastructure that really needs the help.

Along those lines we do have some Aurora College units in Inuvik that needed some upgrades and they're very needed when it comes to families from out of Inuvik coming into the community to attend Aurora College. To put them into a home that's not very up to code is a concern. We want to have healthy families so they can be educated and become part of society.

Another concern was with devolution. It's been a discussion that I've had ongoing with various members of a bunch of different communities, really, and making sure that this government does have proper infrastructure, whether it's government building space, housing, so that when we do decentralize a lot of these departments or jobs to the communities and regions, that we have infrastructure in place so that we can start doing the jobs. There's no excuse to have more jobs here in Yellowknife when today you've heard around the table that we need the infrastructure in the communities so that when we do start decentralization, moving jobs and departments into the communities, that it wasn't overlooked and we discussed it ahead of time. We should definitely be putting a plan in place so that when those jobs do come, that our communities do benefit.

All the other concerns were a lot of concerns that were brought and raised by other Members, but I just wanted to raise and reiterate some of those.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you very much, Mr. Moses. I'd like to now go back for our conclusion of general comments to Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your indulgence. I'll try and see if I can finish this. Just a couple more things that I wanted to mention.

It's been mentioned already, but I think I also need to mention it from my perspective as a resident of Yellowknife, and that's the first section of Highway No. 3 from Yellowknife to Behchoko. It's a concern by many residents. The fact that we have to keep working on that highway is a bit of downer, but it needs to be done. I'm glad to see that it's in the budget, but I am concerned whether or not there's enough money in the budget to actually finish that project.

Stanton's been mentioned, as well, and I note from the Minister's comments that we are doing planning for upgrades required at Stanton Territorial Hospital. That concerns me. I would hope that we are doing planning for a new facility. I will have some questions when we come to that section of the budget, because I'm not sure whether we're throwing good money after bad if we're spending money on upgrades at this point.

Lastly, I wanted to just make a comment on the infrastructure contribution under the Department of Education, Culture and Employment which apparently is being made to a non-government organization. I will have some questions to the Minister when we come to that. It seems to be out of character of what we do as a government and I am a little concerned about the process that was used to get that project into the budget. It's a valid project, but I am concerned that we're setting a precedent and I will have some questions when we come to that section. That's all I have.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Any further general comments? If not, I'll go to Mr. Miltenberger now, if he would like to respond.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. What I will do is speak to the broad issues. There were a considerable number of very specific program areas that will be able to be addressed in detail with the Ministers coming to the table with their deputies on health, education, housing, environment, whatever the issue may be, but I will touch on as many of the big items as I can.

In regard to late tendering, once again, Madam Chair, we're interested in the specifics, but overall, if when you ask the departments and you ask the government, we'll tell you that we think this has been a distinct improvement, that we have, I think, a fairly high success rate in terms of getting projects out the door a lot sooner than we did with the old process where we were always a year behind and never passed our budget until springtime and sometimes later. We are interested in improving wherever we can, and there are clearly going to be circumstances where we didn't hit the timelines that we wanted to, so be it highways or housing or whatever the issues are, we would be very interested in having that kind of discussion.

The issue of decentralization and devolution, we are very committed to both those key priorities. We have reviewed with committee and the Members the plan on decentralization. Basically, there are a number of phases. The first phase, as we've shown and laid out for you in this current business plan coming before the House here this winter, is to look at opportunities that now exist. Basically the low-hanging fruit, as it were, of some possible moves to those communities that are in a position to readily accept new positions and have the infrastructure to do that. That part of the ongoing work tied to devolution is going to come up with the organizational design and then work collectively with the second and third phases of moving those positions out that are deemed to be appropriate, hopefully, and functioning units so that they can operate effectively outside of Yellowknife.

Tied to that, on a peripheral note, Madam Chair, of course, is the benefit of having the fibre optic line

up and down the valley is that regardless of where we go in the North, then every community, especially larger centres as regional centres will have the same type of infrastructure and IT capacity and capability that Yellowknife has or that some of the southern communities have, which will make it that much easier to, in fact, be able to move positions and programs.

The carry-overs I will ask Mr. Aumond just to touch on briefly to give you some of the numbers that we have with us here today in terms of percentages going back over the years. Madam Chair, if I could ask for your indulgence.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. For information purposes, the carry-over amount that was approved by the Assembly for '11-12 was \$92.455 million, which is the lowest amount of carry-over on an aggregate basis in the last five years. Since 2007-08, we've made considerable improvement percentage wise. In 2007-08, we carried over 42.86 percent of the budget. In 2010-11, we knocked that down to 26.6 percent on a \$454 million budget where we spent \$332 million. In 2011-12, as I said, we carried over \$92.455 million or 35 percent of the budget, and really, that was a result, for the most part, as an anomaly under the Department of Transportation, who generally would carry over a lot less than they normally did, but that contributed to the carry-overs we have. But as I said, Madam Chair, it's the lowest number we've had in the last five years. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. In regard to the concern about deferred maintenance, what has happened over the years, at least that I've been in this Legislature and yourself, Madam Chair, is whenever there were fiscal pressures and reductions in the past, capital was cut, often because it was the least painful. It didn't require layoffs and you could hit some of the targets and protect programs and services.

In addition, just a general financial condition that we operate in, for example, since 2008 with the recession, money has been a lot tighter. So will we ever get completely out of deferred maintenance? I would suggest it's going to be a multi-year process to do that. It's a large number and we will continue to work at it. In addition, to look at the other new infrastructure that is there. But it's a commitment that we cannot give up on. Otherwise, deferred maintenance then becomes critical crisis intervention if it's deferred too long. We need to approach all these different areas on an ongoing basis.

To speak to that issue, we are going to invest the money we can and we do our reviews and we prioritize and we try to keep all these processes going forward, and it will be enhanced once we start adding some money in '14-15 going forward.

The Tuk-Inuvik highway, if I could just lay out the chronology and process as we know it and as we've agreed to. There is a current request coming to this House for the final \$2 million to conclude the environmental engineering detailed work that we need to be able to pull together a package by this winter that we can put on the table to the federal government that will lay out the results of all the work in terms of the feasibility, the firmer estimate, the timelines, and to have the discussions with the federal government about the money that they do have and is there requirement for further federal money. The Premier has already raised the issue, as he's indicated, with the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister is aware of the concern and indicated that he is waiting, as well, for that information and that we are engaged with him on the number.

The money we have booked is for all this preparatory work, this front-end work, so that we can have enough information to come back to this House, as we committed to last winter, that when we have that work then we will come back to the House and when we know what the number is, the amount of money, what our actual commitment is to the Tuk-Inuvik highway, then we have a project that we can put on the table with cost-shared dollars and make a final determination. That there would be no deal signed, there would be no commitments made except by going through that process to fully involve this Legislature. We have not reached that point yet. There is no approved project, and while we have put money aside in our fiscal framework, there is no formal approved Tuk-Inuvik project except for all the preliminary technical work, engineering work, environmental work that has to be done to determine the road design, route, costs, availability of granular material and those types of things.

The Members are aware that we've booked this money and once we have that decision in this House, then it will absolutely appear as a formally approved project with a dollar figure attached to it. That will be the decision of this Legislature to do that.

Madam Chair, as I quickly go through my list, there was one concern raised about population changes, and we know that there are migration patterns, there is a lot of migration from smaller communities to the larger centres and into Yellowknife. While we do not do all our budgeting on a per capita basis, we do try to track and recognize those pressures. Magnet communities, for example, as has been raised by some of the Members, in particular, the

largest one being Yellowknife. We are clearly factoring that criteria in as well.

The Member for Sahtu talked about partnerships. In his statement today he indicated, for example, of Colville Lake, the community wanted to get the government's foot off their neck. As similar sentiment, I think, that every level of government has with the senior levels of government that they may have above them as we, for example, negotiate our way to devolution to take over decision-making. Are we interested in partnerships and what examples are there? Yes, we are interested in partnerships. I think what's being proposed where there's cost-shared dollars. The Tuk-Inuvik highway is an example. The fibre optic line that we are going to be building down the valley is going to be a classic example of a northern, hopefully, northern financed, owned and operated major piece of infrastructure that will involve all the Aboriginal governments and the territorial government in giving benefit to every man, woman and child almost without exception up and down the valley.

Another one, we talked about warehousing and partnering up in the community with Housing and Public Works and Services. I have had discussions with Deline, for example, interested in looking at all their infrastructure as well. In a smaller community it makes very good sense to have those discussions. Meet with band councils, community governments to see how we can put our scarce, small amounts of resources together and share 25, 10 cent, 50 cent dollars as opposed to doing it all ourselves. We believe that there are plenty of opportunities. In addition, the \$28 million that we flow to communities, the new Ndilo that is going to be under review, will all provide an opportunity to enhance that type of relationship.

I am just quickly going through my list, if you will bear with me. There are many individual program concerns. The Minister of HR will be coming here right behind us, as well, followed by the Minister of MACA to have those discussions.

Mr. Bromley indicated a broad issue of the design and scheduling of projects for maximum community benefit. I agree. As we look at devolution, tight monies, self-government, the things we just talked about with Member Yakeleya, I think there is an opportunity for that type of policy discussion. We have been working for years; 17, going on 18 years I have been here, we have been trying to fine-tune and improve the capital process the whole time. It has been based on those types of discussions.

The other point I would like to make is in terms of the pressures, the red flag projects. While they are not all for 2014-15, as we go forward and start the planning, as soon as we conclude this process and the budget process for the main estimates, the work on the capital for 2014-15 is already underway,

predicated on the assumption of the additional funds and the red flag projects which are those projects that have gone through the rigorous scrutiny and are determined to be next in line will be there for consideration, including the projects like the women's correctional centre. Stanton is basically a megaproject. They are all geared towards both the upgrades and renovations to end up at the end of the day of that cycle to have a fully refurbished acute care facility in the Northwest Territories. It has been in the works for many years, as Mr. Bromley has pointed out. There is going to be a considerable amount of dollars attached to that. We have, once again, money booked in anticipation of that to get this project well started. I believe we have an opportunity for that type of policy discussion.

The gas situation in Inuvik is a unique, critical issue that has drawn together the private sector, the community and the government. We have invested, and are going to continue to invest, considerable time and resources collectively to make sure we manage our way through this. There are the immediate pressures of the upcoming winter. There are the longer term pressures of a more guaranteed energy source, be it liquid natural gas, that gives the opportunity to tie into the potential of six or so megawatts of wind power as Diavik did. We can use it to offset some of our costs. That work has yet to be done.

In regard to a concern raised by the Member for Hay River North, the consultation with communities, we agree that next year we are going to make sure we do our timing in such a way that a number of things are improved on; three to be exact. There are some concerns about the information that the community members have raised that they would like more of. We will work out very clearly in advance with the MLAs to make sure that we do this in a way that MLAs are available to accompany us and to be part of the process. We are going to work earlier with the association, the communities, to make sure we get representatives from all the small communities to come into the regional centres so they are there to take advantage of that opportunity to discuss with us about the budget consultation.

That, I believe, covers broadly some of the government-wide issues. As I indicated, the Ministers and the deputies will be here to discuss in as much detail as committee likes, or requests the specific program areas. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Does the committee agree to move on to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. We will turn, please, in your document to page 2-2, Department of Human Resources. I will refer your

attention, please, to page 2.2, which we will stand down for now. We will move on to the first department, which is on page 2-4, activity summary, Human Resources, strategy and policy, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$300,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Thank you. We turn now to the summary page, department summary, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$300,000 for the Department of Human Resources. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. Does the committee agree that consideration of this department is concluded? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: I just wondered if we were going to have witnesses to answer our questions, if we have them.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): In terms of process, I think the questions would be directed towards Minister Miltenberger. Members, the intent is to bring in witnesses for other departments, but for this department are we in agreement that we have concluded the Department of Human Resources?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Now we move on to the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I would like to ask Minister Miltenberger if he would like to bring in witnesses to the witness table.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Chair, what we were hoping to do is the same as last time; Minister McLeod would be there with his deputy.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Minister Miltenberger, would you like to bring witnesses to the witness table?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I'll ask the Sergeant-at-Arms, please, to escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister Miltenberger, for the record, would you please introduce your witness?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have Mr. Williams, deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I would like to direct Members' attention,

please, to page 4-2, which we will stand down and we will move on to page 4-4, Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, regional operations, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$28.002 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome again here to the witness table. As I indicated in my opening comments or general comments, and I know that has been discussed in committee format, the demographics and the population changes that we're seeing in the territory are shifting. As resources or work occurs, people move to those areas. We know the Sahtu is going to be greatly influenced by many oil projects here in the coming year and we see that the funding formula for communities is not changing with what we think is population change. This has also been spoken to, I believe, as well, with the NWT Association of Communities, which also agrees that this possibly is something that we should be looking at. So, Madam Chair, I think my opening comment or question is: Has population changed? Has demographic shifted? Has this caused changes in the funding formula for this upcoming year? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The funding that goes to communities is a base-plus formula. So as the base is tied to, everybody gets the same basic amount and then the rest is on a per capita basis. So as the new population numbers come through, they are factored in. I'll ask Mr. Williams if he wants to speak any further about how often we adjust those population figures. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We work closely with the Stats Bureau, looking at the populations across the Northwest Territories in all of our communities. It's revisited on an annual basis, so we do take that into consideration. It is built into our current formula. We understand there will be, with the development in the Sahtu area, some impacts and some growth. So we'll be monitoring this very closely in the upcoming years.

The formula, when it was implemented, I guess that factor is a primary factor for consideration in our budgetary figures. I just have to point out the capital plan or the capital amount hasn't changed in the last five years. It continues to be at the value of \$28 million. One of the things that we have seen changes in is in the need for O and M funding and that's the big demand that we have in our community governments right now. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I appreciate the fact that the Stats Bureau plays a key role in this, but I guess further to that it looks like there's a fixed amount of money which is involved. I'm assuming that that fixed amount of money is...(inaudible)...shared accordingly to formula funding changes. Now, has the percentage of formula, have they changed in the last year and are the forecasts factoring and the so-called stats differential? Can we get a bit of an idea of the breakdown?

Let's pick the Sahtu area for example. Again, are we seeing those fundamentals being affected by funding formulas? It sounds like there are statistics being used, but can we get some reassurances that we've seen changes occurring in the last year and moving forward for the next couple of years? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are two key points. The infrastructure money under the New Deal, it was a five-year arrangement and it's currently up for review and discussion with the Association of Communities and the communities about its adequacy, and after this first five years, are there changes, do things have to be adjusted.

As we've demonstrated through the business planning process we've identified because of, if I can use the Sahtu as a very specific case, because of the pressures that are there with the increased exploration and pressures on infrastructure and demand that we've made some initial extra investments there to try to adjust for that, and if in fact the play there proves out for oil, then we recognize that there will be further work required and we are already in discussions with the region about that. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. I do appreciate the Minister for clarification here. I'll leave it at that, Madam Chair, and let other colleagues dial in. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is similar to that along those same lines as the funding arrangement for this capital infrastructure. Indications from the previous numbers... Are there no changes in those numbers? The \$28 million has been fixed in for a few years, and is there any indication from the department that that will change at all in the next

couple of years? It seems difficult to me, the fact that these numbers are staying steady, but yet the communities and municipalities are all seeing different pressures in CPI, other expenditures where we're not matching, we're not keeping up to any kind of index at all. So I'd like to ask that of the department.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I've indicated, that particular program and arrangement is up for review and that type of discussion will be taking place with communities and the Association of Communities.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Chair, may I also ask the Minister of MACA to elaborate further on that particular point, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. The numbers have been staying pretty consistent for the last number of years. A review had been completed. Part of the review was having some dialogue with the NWTAC and LGANT, Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories. They're more concerned with the O and M funding and their big concern was the O and M funding. So we're trying to address that. But as far as the infrastructure funding, they didn't have too much concern with the amount of money that's been going in there. I mean, understanding that there's been a huge investment in infrastructure in the last number of years and our O and M funding needs to catch up. So that was their big concern as far as the infrastructure money goes. They were comfortable with that figure for now. Again, it's one that was reviewed we have out there.

Mr. Dolynny raised a point about going to base-plus formula, and with population moving around, I think we're going to have to probably dig into this a little further and see. If one community has a huge migration of population and they move to another community, then we're going to have to look at that because we do fund on a base-plus.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: ... (inaudible) ... I understand that the infrastructure money and the O and M money are closely linked in the fact of demand and stuff. One of the questions I have is the formula, as far as my understanding, is it's a base-plus and base given to each community plus their per capita plus some other factors. I understand that the department consults with the Association of Municipalities; however, that association has two

sides. It has small communities and the larger centres. Some issues they separate the discussion; some issues they continue discussion together. They're an organization that works together, so it's very difficult for one group to say we think the base is too high for smaller centres and the smaller centres will say the opposite. They'll say it's more difficult to do infrastructure in larger centres. I'm just wondering in the review what the department is doing to alleviate some of those concerns from those two fundamental ideologies, I guess.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I said before, part of the discussion we have is with LGANT. I mean, they represent – or NWT Association of Communities – all 33 communities. All 33 communities will normally meet in a room and they're just one big organization. Their big concern was the O and M funding, not so much that we have to be fair and go to a base-plus.

One of the arguments I continue to have with Canada when we meet with them is as the Northwest Territories, if you fund us on a per capita basis, being such a small jurisdiction we're immediately behind the eight ball. We try to treat all our communities the same by giving them the same base and then the per capita will make up. Some of the larger communities will obviously get more money because of the population.

Again, LGANT and NWTAC were quite comfortable with the numbers and asked us if we were going to look more at the O and M funding to catch up with the huge investment in infrastructure we've had with some of the money we got from Canada over the last few years. That's what we continue to do.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Bouchard. Next on the list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Minister of Finance and the Minister of MACA have talked about the New Deal. I just want to get a little bit less confused. The Minister of Finance said it's under review and the Minister of MACA said they had the review. Can I get some clarification? Is the New Deal under review, done, analyzed, or is it still under review? ... (inaudible) ...

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Sorry. Mr. Yakeleya I guess was still speaking, so we'll go back to Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Just to ask the Minister, this New Deal, I mean, on the review, is it a review for under ourselves as the government, or is it something that we're going to use to make some arguments to the federal government? I understand from the Finance Minister that this is a process that's under review, and then I'm hearing from the Minister of MACA that the review is done. I just need some clarification, that's all.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I take responsibility for that. I should have passed the information on to the Finance Minister. The New Deal review was completed and it's a review that was taken on by Municipal and Community Affairs to assess how well these programs have been working in the community and some of the potential changes that might come about. The review of the New Deal is completed and was done by MACA.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thanks for the clarification, Mr. Minister. I appreciate that. Now with the emphasis maybe being looked at with the operations and maintenance funding, that is a real concern. I'm glad that the issue's been picked up on. I've seen and talked to many of the Sahtu communities and that seems to be an issue, now that these infrastructure assets are being transferred to the community. One of the things that they lack any type of support right off the bat is that the O and M is killing them, killing their budget. Talk to Tulita, to Colville Lake, Deline, even Norman Wells. Thank you, Mr. Dolynny, for raising the issue of the impacts of the possible potential of the Sahtu shale oil play and how that could explode into an increase into their operations and maintenance in the community of Norman Wells and even Tulita. Now we have Good Hope who has high interest from Shell Canada to put some exploration projects in that community with the amount of activity happening in the Sahtu.

Now I want to ask, the Minister of Finance talked about the monitoring of the upcoming years but we're already starting to see some of the activity increase in the winter months in Norman Wells and Tulita on the oil and gas exploration side of it. Has MACA been able to respond to even some of the short increase of the impacts that will happen either on the roads, dumps, contaminated waste sites, or any other area that the communities could be coming to this government saying this is causing an impact on our budget, our infrastructure is not enough and we need to look at this again? Do we have some support within this winter or the next winter seasons to look at some of these types of supports that we're giving them?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will work closely with the communities. We have our regional folks out there that will work closely with the communities. We do know that there could be a potential impact on the community of Norman Wells. They're funded based on what they have right now. In the future when the community expands – and I still think it will – then we would have to review the whole funding as far

as Norman Wells goes. If their population goes up, then adjustments will have to be made as to some of their funding. As far as the impact on some of their infrastructure, I mean, that's a decision that the community would make and we would be there to support the community.

We're well aware of some of the challenges that the community might be facing with the exploration and all the work that's going to be going on there. We monitor that very closely.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. I'd like to also ask if, once the review has been sort of put together by your department and packaged up, the review will be shared with the Ministers within the sitting of this House here that we could see the review of the report that's been completed.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'll have discussion with the officials and when we're able to, we'll be more than happy to sit down with committee and share some of the information, all of the information, not some of it, that we have gathered with committee and get some feedback from committee as to how we can best move forward.

MR. YAKELEYA: I'm glad the Minister said all of the report there. I'd also like to see if we know if it's possible before we leave. I'm not too sure what the officials would, but he's the Minister and he could make it happen. So I look forward to his leadership on having this report come to this side so we can see it in the near future. I want to thank the Minister on that process we're going to be going through.

I want to also ask the Minister, in regard to the infrastructure, I'm glad that we're talking about the \$28 million. The price of doing business in the communities further north and in the smaller, isolated communities has gone up, even in Yellowknife, where we still have the \$28 million that we had five years ago. The gas, the oil, infrastructure, maintenance and all that have gone up and \$28 million hasn't. We haven't seen an increase on a yearly basis. That's an area of concern that I'm not too sure what the Minister could do to seek support from the federal government or somehow that if this is an area that we could see an increase.

As I've said before, the operation and maintenance funding is a real concern for my communities, especially with the type of infrastructure on the water plants or even operations in the sewage area, the costs are going up. The costs are going up quite extensively and it's hitting their pocketbooks, so then the communities are left with some very challenging questions as five important projects, because of the funding and because of the maintenance, we can only do two or three projects and we can't do the other ones. That becomes a concern.

It's been raised by members in the Sahtu communities to me. Fort Good Hope is even looking at a new water treatment source because they do not trust the Mackenzie River. They have seen a lot of contamination in that water and they're very, very scared and they want some safety for themselves. Some of this very basic infrastructure such as water, contaminated areas need to be cleaned up. The communities are left with some very challenging decisions.

Mind you, they deal with what they have to work with and that's the money that's given to them by the communities by the Minister of MACA and they do their best. They're always looking at other areas where they could serve the people as much as possible.

I'm not too sure if there is a question in there, Madam Chair, but I just wanted him to know about this funding here and will we see some increase.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I didn't really hear a question there, but I'll go to Minister McLeod, if he wishes to comment.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. The number has been fairly consistent for a number of years. We have been fortunate that we've had huge federal government investment in our infrastructure and our O and M needs to catch up with that. We need to look at that. As well, every year they get the gas tax money which allows them to do water treatment plants. They have the ability to finance a lot of the projects. We've had some communities that have stepped up to the plate, showed some real leadership and went out, financed and managed their whole project, and they've come in probably a lot cheaper than we would have been able to do it.

As well, we've been having discussions with Canada in the last little while. We're not quite sure what kind of new program they might come out with. We've had some discussions with Minister Lebel and Minister Fletcher, and they've spoken to... They're looking at trying to find another funding source to replace some of the money they've been giving us over the last... We're looking forward to hearing what comes out of that, and maybe we'll have an indication in the upcoming budget. We don't know. But they went across country and we laid out some of our concerns as far as some of our challenges go and they took note of all that. We're looking forward to see what they roll out next.

But as far as our numbers go, \$28 million is the figure that we give to the communities from the Government of the Northwest Territories as well. They've had access to a number of federal government funding pots over the last number of years, which has really helped the communities go a long way as far as their infrastructure goes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister. Next on the list, Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to commend this government for continuing to operate through the formula funding agreement. Through my past experience, I know how fortunate the communities are to have this funding available to the communities to make their own decisions on how they want to spend this money and I hope we can continue to do this.

That said, a few concerns that I do have are along the lines of the water treatment plants. Over the next number of years we're going to see development up on the Peel River watershed possibly, and Aklavik is downstream on the Peel River from the Peel River watershed. I'm very concerned about some of the chemicals that may be used, if that is their way of taking the minerals out of the ground up there. I think we need to start planning ahead and possibly look at a water treatment plant from one of the lakes up in the mountains possibly near Willow River.

Also, the same thing in Inuvik. I'm very surprised for the size of a community like Inuvik that they're drawing water from Hidden Lake. I've seen that lake firsthand and that lake is very small in comparison to the community, and it really surprises me. They do draw their water from the river in the winter, and also during the spring, I believe, pump water into Hidden Lake. I think we need to start planning of drawing water from a lake like Campbell Lake. You know, that's very good drinking water with a gravel bottom.

The same thing in Fort McPherson. They are drawing water from a deep water lake, and I know a lot of residents are concerned the water level on that lake is dropping at a rapid pace. I think we may need to look at the other lakes that draw into the deep water lake to ensure that we have good water flow.

The other thing was our schools, as I mentioned.

With that said, I would just like the department to keep going with the formula funding. With that said, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Blake. I didn't really hear a question there, but I'll go to the Minister for comments.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the Member's comments. That's one of the things that we've been most pleased with, is the communities' ability to do good quality projects and put a good product on the ground.

As far as water treatment plants, I mean, the community, again, has that ability to decide where they want to draw water from if it fits within their fiscal framework and the monies that they're allocated. They're the best at knowing where their

water sources are from. I do know for a fact that while Inuvik has been using Hidden Lake pretty well since the beginning of Inuvik and they are looking at, I believe, a secondary water source a little further up, and they are planning on building a new water treatment plant using their own funds.

Again, I appreciate the Member's comments and I am a firm believer that the communities do make good quality decisions as far as their infrastructure needs and priorities are. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Blake, anything further?

MR. BLAKE: Nothing further, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Committee, nobody else on the list. Are we agreed we are concluded Municipal and Community Affairs, activity summary, regional operations, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$28.002 million?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. We'll return to page 4.2, Municipal and Community Affairs, department summary, infrastructure investment summary, total infrastructure investment summary, \$28.002 million. Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. Is committee agreed we have concluded the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Madam Chair, I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Item 21, report of Committee of the Whole. Ms. Bisaro.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 64-17(3), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2013-2014, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Do we have a seconder to the motion? Mr. Yakeleya.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Friday, October 19, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 64-17(3), NWT Capital Estimates 2013-2014
 - Bill 2, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012
 - Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Securities Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Friday, October 19, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

