



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**Tuesday, February 19, 2013****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, Hon. David Ramsay, Mr. Yakeleya

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Abernethy.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 14-17(4):
CANADA'S BEST DIVERSITY EMPLOYERS**

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that the Government of the Northwest Territories has been chosen as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers for 2013. This recognition, by the Globe and Mail and Mediacorp Canada Incorporated, follows our recent recognition as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers for 2013.

Each year the editorial team at Canada's Top 100 Employers identifies organizations that exemplify exceptional inclusiveness and diversity practices. The editors highlighted a number of features of our working environment. We have a wide variety of inclusiveness training on topics like Aboriginal cultural awareness, disability awareness and gender-based analysis. We use a consultative approach for recruitment and staffing initiatives, working with the Government Advisory Group on Employability and the Aboriginal Employees Advisory Committee. We have also committed resources to assist with inclusion and workplace accommodation, such as the diversity officer and duty to accommodate advisor positions.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has long been committed to building a representative public service. During the development of 20/20, the NWT Public Service Strategic Plan, we recognized that diversity and inclusion are crucial aspects of a strong and stable public service, one staffed by innovative and engaged employees delivering relevant programs and services to the people of the North. In addition to traditional staffing measures such as the Affirmative Action Policy, over the past several years we have undertaken

many new initiatives to develop a diverse workforce. Some of these initiatives include:

- a soon-to-be launched Aboriginal cultural awareness training program aimed at enhancing and promoting Aboriginal cultural understanding;
- the Associate Director/Superintendent Program, which provides senior developmental positions to increase the number of Aboriginal employees in senior management;
- the Aboriginal Employee Advisory Committee, which recommends strategies and tools to enhance recruitment, retention and advancement of Aboriginal employees;
- the GNWT Advisory Committee on Employability, consisting of government, non-government and union representatives, which examines ways to increase the representation of persons with disabilities in the GNWT workforce;
- the creation of a diversity officer position responsible for developing a diversity and inclusion framework;
- the establishment of a Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy and the hiring of a duty to accommodate advisor to assist in workplace accommodation;
- a very successful disability awareness campaign that highlighted physical, social and invisible disabilities; and
- opportunities for employee feedback through the Inclusive Public Service Survey.

These initiatives are resulting in real progress. For example, during the lifetime of the 17th Legislative Assembly up to December 31, 2012, 10 new managers joined the ranks of GNWT senior management. Of these 10, five are indigenous Aboriginal persons. This is an indication of the significant progress that is being made in expanding the representation of Aboriginal persons in the public sector and, specifically, within senior management.

Being chosen as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers is a testament to the importance the GNWT places on a public service that reflects the diverse makeup of the North. I recognize that there

is still more work to do and we must remain committed to a diverse and representative workforce, but this award is a wonderful confirmation that our steps so far have been in the right direction and that we are a national leader and role model in advancing diversity in our workplace. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 15-17(4):
EDUCATION WEEK, HERITAGE WEEK
AND FRENCH WEEKS

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, February 18th to 22nd is Education Week and is also Heritage Week.

To celebrate Heritage Week, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre is hosting a number of heritage-themed free events in partnership with the City of Yellowknife, including Amazing Family Sundays, an art show and guided tours of the Back Bay Cemetery. Association Franco-Culturelle de Yellowknife is hosting a youth film night and school programs. The Norman Wells Historical Society is offering snowshoe-making workshops and Fort Smith's Northern Life Museum is holding behind-the-scenes tours of its facility and collections. These activities highlight our collective heritage and culture, and provide unique learning opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, technology is a powerful force in the lives of youth. Young people are immersed in this, moving beyond traditional boundaries as they access, absorb, communicate, create and repurpose media content. Youth need to develop critical thinking skills and awareness of how powerful the Internet can be and how it can impact their lives. They must be comfortable walking in two worlds, where they are proud ambassadors for their culture but also well versed in modern technology.

The theme for Education Week is Innovative Learning, which shines a light on the opportunities to use technology and culture inside the classroom. Our new video contest encourages second language learning. To enter, youth can submit a video clip of themselves learning to speak any of our territory's 11 official languages. As we move into Aboriginal Languages Month and French Week, we will use the video clips received from this contest to promote language speaking across the North. In our approach to northern education, it is essential that we integrate our culture and language into our learning environments.

Our French Weeks, or Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, will take place March 8th to 24th. It is an annual national initiative to promote and celebrate French language and culture. The theme for 2013 is Joie de vivre. This year, French

translators from the francophone affairs secretariat will facilitate hands-on workshops with students at both Ecole Allain St-Cyr in Yellowknife and Ecole Boreale in Hay River.

As the world continues to look north with increasing curiosity, these kinds of activities contribute to our larger body of work in language preservation, culture and education, helping our cultural communities create interesting perspectives on where and how we live. We have a tremendous opportunity to showcase this work for the upcoming Northern Scene Festival from April 25th to May 4th, 2013, in Ottawa. Northern Scene is part of a series of nationwide arts presentations providing opportunities for exposure, as well as marketing and economic opportunities. The department, along with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, has committed \$200,000 to Northern Scene from existing resources.

Mr. Speaker, education, cultural preservation and language revitalization in the Northwest Territories are priorities and opportunities for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and we employ many approaches to share these messages. With strategic and measured steps in all of our programming and initiatives, we are on a new path of discovery and economic opportunity, which will help us achieve our goals as an Assembly, with healthy, educated Northerners and proud cultural ambassadors. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BEAUFORT-DELTA E-LEARNING INITIATIVE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Education Minister has been talking about reforming our school system and we are sure it can be improved. We also need to fully support education councils that are making positive changes to help their students.

They have a very good example of this in the Beaufort-Delta. The education council has successfully grown and improved its e-learning program. The schools are using the...(inaudible)...on-line platform and the telehealth system to broadcast courses from Inuvik to three smaller schools. After sorting out the best systems, video and audio quality is now very clear. This should bring better and more varied courses to students in small communities.

Fifteen academic courses have been developed. This also makes very efficient use of our teachers. Even so, students in the smaller schools still need support to succeed.

We have a great opportunity to inspire students through new technology. We are showing our young people that their home community, no matter how small, is not isolated from the rest of the world.

I am told that 15 students in Fort MacPherson and Tuktoyaktuk are now taking e-learning academic courses at their local schools. It should be available to the rest of the schools in the Northwest Territories also.

E-learning is efficient, but there are still costs such as course development, teacher training, additional training classroom assistance, dedicated Internet connections, computer software and hardware. There are probably a couple of things that I've overlooked.

In the long run, e-learning is likely to save money. For example, high school students will be able to stay in their home communities longer instead of going to Inuvik. The Beaufort-Delta has four year-round fly-in communities with very high costs of living, and two more fly-in about half the time, but the Beaufort-Delta Education Council is actually cheaper to run than some other agencies.

On a per student basis, it costs about the same as it does in the French schools in Yellowknife and Hay River. In the Sahtu region, it costs about \$4,000 or more per student –

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

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BLAKE: The point is that Beaufort-Delta schools need better funding. We need to make sure they can expand and improve the courses available through e-learning.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AVALON RARE MINERALS THOR LAKE PROJECT

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week Avalon Rare Minerals is having hearings on their project, both in Yellowknife and in Fort Resolution, and I have an opportunity this evening to make a presentation at the hearing in support of the project at Thor Lake.

Hay River is looking forward to the opportunity that this project represents. There's a great deal of optimism for employment as well as the small business opportunities in Hay River, and all the Hay River entrepreneurs are looking forward to this project and the opportunities it brings.

The Avalon project will create a hydromat facility in the old Pine Point site area where there hasn't been any activity since the 1980s. This project will also bring jobs not only to the north side where the mine project is, but the hydromat. It not only brings job opportunities but it also brings training; training that some of our youth need for the future in the mining industry, they can bring forward to not only this project but other projects to come forward.

This project also brings opportunities in the Hay River area for pre-staging where we can actually build some of the infrastructure that's supposed to go into the mine site. The usage of our rail spurs in Hay River, the barging system, the marine system that's set up in Hay River. NTCL has been named one of the contractors to do the barging into the hydromat facility.

They will be establishing an office in Yellowknife and Hay River, so there is a great deal of opportunity for employment. There are projections of 80 personnel at the mine site and 87 personnel at the hydromat facility in the construction phase.

I will be speaking tonight at the hearing in support of this project and we're looking forward to that opportunity.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DELINE TRADITIONAL HAND GAMES TOURNAMENT

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This coming weekend the Sahtu will be rocking and rolling, shaking and baking. This weekend the Sahtu, along with other regions such as the Tlicho, South Slave, Deh Cho, Akaitcho, even as far as Sachs Harbour are starting to learn and participate in traditional hand games. The Sahtu is holding a \$60,000 men's hand games tournament. There are people from Alberta, Yukon and the Northwest Territories making their way through the Mackenzie Valley winter road to go to Deline.

Last year in the Sahtu, Deline held this event and it was a success. There were many people who came to the hand games. We see this opportunity as our Mardi Gras of the North. This is where people celebrate, they cook, they put people up for bedding, and they play, and the drums go on. There's excitement, excitement in the people for their culture and they're at their best when they're playing the hand games. People from all over come to these hand games to see the true spirit of the Dene and the northern people.

I want to say thank you very much to the people in Deline for the volunteers, the sponsors that make this possible. As I said, this event hosts the world's greatest and best hand games players. I am sad to say that the Government of the Northwest

Territories does not have a team yet to represent ourselves at the hand games. We have Premier McLeod, who I think is a good shooter. He could win lots of prizes for us at these hand games, and have fun, and enjoy, and eat with the people and dance with them. This is a good time to celebrate. Yes, we work hard, but we should be playing hard, too, and we should have a team one day representing the government at these hand games. It would truly be a northern experience, one we can take to the books and say yes, we're all in this together in the Northwest Territories.

Good luck to all the hand game players and good luck to everyone who's coming in. I also want to congratulate Tsiigehtchic who won the little league hand game tournament in Tulita. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HYDRAULIC FRACTURING (FRACKING)

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our EDI report on fracking provided a start to learn about fracking, but as we learn more, the management challenge grows. In fact, urgent action is needed to make good decisions. We need to adopt best practices, yes, but what are these, will we actually adopt them, and how will we do so and ensure that they are followed? Many jurisdictions profess a similar commitment but have failed miserably to protect their citizens, despite good intentions.

The need for environmental and geological baseline data essential for good management is clear, but are we committed to achieving this information before allowing full-scale development should reserves prove up? This data collection typically requires a full field program, partnered with local knowledge. It's expensive, takes time, and requires analysis and synthesis with existing information to be applied. Some of it requires a baseline before development is no longer possible.

The list of policy needs is long. Strong standards are required for all phases of the drilling process, including the placement and integrity of casings. Horizontal tracking and hydrocarbon production results in harmful emissions of toxic and carcinogenic compounds elsewhere and will here unless strictly regulated.

Given accelerating effects of climate change, greenhouse gas monitoring and mitigation measures aimed at ensuring no net increases are required. The impacts of contaminating billions of litres, perhaps trillions of surface water, removing them from the water cycle and storing them forever in the bowels of the earth, particularly given our low

precip and changing climate, must be clearly understood before we permit such activities.

The paramount importance of full and transparent communication and public engagement through all phases of the development has been demonstrated. Let's educate our public, support their fact-finding trips to actual fracking sites, and fully respond to their concerns with actions to address and resolve them.

Every one of these are a tough challenge. Many jurisdictions have concluded they are too tough. For example, Quebec suspended fracking pending review. Vermont, Ireland and France have banned it. New South Wales in Australia bans the use of some chemical additives. Some who haven't affected bans are now realizing steep costs.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. BROMLEY: Some who haven't affected bans are now realizing steep costs to people's health, drinking water, climate, livestock, wildlife, municipal systems and so on. All this to mine an energy source that is destroying our global climate and the ability of our natural system to support life and cultures as we know them.

Healthy and beneficial energy alternatives abound. I will have questions for the Minister. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL FUNDING FOR INUVIK CHILDREN'S FIRST CENTRE

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I had the opportunity to attend an announcement made by the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency. What she announced this morning is very joyous for the community of Inuvik in terms of community infrastructure, federal funding for the Children's First Centre that we've had a strong group working for over the years.

That was great news in terms of making this project become a reality. The community of Inuvik and the staff at the Children's First Society have been working very hard and have been very dedicated to get this off the ground, and I believe, this summer it should become a reality and be opening its doors. It will have about 120 spots available for the growing need of child care spaces. Not only that, it is going to create jobs in the construction of the building and ongoing jobs for running the centre itself.

At this time, with the great news that came out this morning, I'd just like to offer my congratulations and a heartfelt thank you to the people of Inuvik for their

ongoing support for the children's centre, for all the hard work that they do, the tireless efforts, the long hours, the volunteering hours that they put in day in and day out to get the funding to make this centre a reality.

I would also like to thank the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of CanNor, and the Government of Canada for their ongoing support on improving community infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. This is one project that I have seen, I've volunteered for, I've also helped at some of the events, and this is something that is truly needed in Inuvik. If we are going to look at decentralization, we're looking at bringing families into the community of Inuvik to become professionals and become part of the community, child care services are essential and it's great to see this type of infrastructure become reality.

Like I said again, I just want to congratulate all the hardworking people with the Children's First Society on the record, and all the leaders and lobbyists for getting this funding and ongoing funding that's going to make our children healthier, and our community healthier, and bring economic prosperity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FIXED FUEL RATES IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents tell me that they love the small town life. The petroleum products division provides fuel to a number of these small towns in my riding. Fuel is delivered in the winter; however, the fuel rates are set in July and sold at a fixed rate throughout the year. Rates can be very high and put a lot of pressure on people who rely on the traditional economy. Many people in small communities choose to live there because they can pursue traditional lifestyles. They choose to live this way and they have a right to do so.

Aboriginal governments and organizations, and even the Government of the Northwest Territories, have made a lot of effort to help people uphold traditional lifestyles and make it possible for people to live as they have for generations hunting, fishing and trapping. Some of the finest furs come from the Deh Cho region. But just because these people participate in traditional activities does not mean that they live like their ancestors. They rely on fuel to reach their traplines and to run outboard motors. They drive quads and other vehicles and use fuel in their homes just like other places.

The high cost of fuel is hard to manage, especially for an elder or someone who has seasonal employment, and unfair, especially when fuel prices

can go down in the regional centres but stay fixed in the remote communities. Yellowknife really collects the benefits when prices go down on fuel.

I urge this government to look at ways to make fuel prices fairer and more reasonable. One of the ways we could do that is through a freight subsidy that would help make up for the fixed costs. I urge our government to commit to a supplementary expenditure, like the Minister did yesterday. Assisting the cost of fuel through this kind of subsidy recognizes the difference in the economy between remote communities that are not on the road system and regional centres that are much more accessible, populated, and where people make a lot of money in the wage economy.

If we want to reduce the disparities between our communities, forcing everyone to work in a mine or in an office tower is not going to do it. We need to recognize the value of traditional lifestyle and community life. We need to make this lifestyle possible for people who choose to live that way. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION FOR CELL PHONE CONTRACTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many Northerners and Canadians generally have been raising concerns for years about the restrictive and confusing terms of their cell phone contracts. They complain about being locked into three-year contracts with unreasonably high penalties to get out of them, changes to fees and services without their consent, automatic renewals and the lack of clear information about their contracts.

In response to these complaints, the province of Manitoba has stepped in with legislation to protect consumers to ensure a degree of fairness. On May 1st, Nova Scotia will follow Manitoba's lead with new rules that cap cancellation fees at \$50 or 10 percent of the amount remaining on the contract, whichever is lower. Further, any cell service providers will not be able to make unilateral changes to important contract terms such as services, fees and locations where phones can be used unless those changes benefit the consumer. Automatic renewals will no longer be permitted. Cell phone companies will have to contact their customers to confirm whether they want to continue their service. The legislation also includes rules around advertising and information provided to customers before they sign on.

This is more than a boondoggle opportunity to create changes, this is a real opportunity for real protection. As we see the cell phone services are

finally rolling out and expanding across our northern regions, the time to act is now. There are some simple and fair changes that protect consumers and we can see them easily adopted here in the Northwest Territories.

Later today I will be asking the Minister as to what he will be doing about these changes to finally put real protection for Northerners, and show them our government stands with them and not against them. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DEH CHO QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE
MEDAL RECIPIENTS

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday it was, once again, my honour and privilege to present Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medals to two well-deserving recipients from the Deh Cho. The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medals are among the ways the Government of Canada is celebrating outstanding contributions that the subjects of Queen Elizabeth II have made to their country. The Commissioner, Premier, MP and Senator have been accepting nominations for the medal as part of a year-long celebration that ends on February 28th.

A former colleague, Mr. Sam Gargan, was among those who received this honour yesterday. For 16 years Mr. Gargan was a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Deh Cho and also Speaker of this House. He also served his people as chief of the Deh Ga Got'ie First Nation, grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations and mayor of Fort Providence. As founder and guiding member of Keepers of the Water, Mr. Gargan continues to raise the profile of northern water quality and environmental issues, and upholds traditional Dene values, culture and ways of life.

Johnny Landry was born and raised in Fort Providence. He started singing in South Slavey in the early 1980s, writing songs inspired by stories the elders told. He recorded his first album "We Are Standing" in 1986 and toured extensively throughout Denendeh, helping people heal and revitalize their Dene culture, heritage and language through music.

Mrs. Margaret Thom is a well-respected Fort Providence elder and role model. She has dedicated herself to counselling and education, facilitating, and volunteer work to benefit people of all ages, lending her skills to healing circles, parenting workshops and cultural camps, among many other endeavours. Mrs. Thom is the former Deputy Commissioner, as well, a title she held for six years.

The medal presentation ceremony was a wonderful celebration of the people of the Deh Cho and their great impact. Mr. Gargan, Mr. Landry and Mrs. Thom have made on our future. Once again, it was my honour to participate in recognizing the outstanding accomplishments of these individuals and how they continue to influence and inspire the people of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GNWT-
SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the advent, acceptance and increasing use of social media worldwide, governments are becoming involved using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media sites to promote information sharing and to communicate with residents.

Our government has also joined the social media trend. GNWT websites and government Facebook pages are popping up in more and more places. This is encouraging, but have we as a government ensured that there are consistent guidelines and policies for GNWT-sponsored social media. It doesn't seem that way. It's another case of us joining the crowd, moving too fast and not considering the effect and the implications of our actions.

Let me give you an example. Recently I discovered a GNWT sponsored and developed Facebook page with a number of likes on the page. For those of you Facebook luddites, a like indicates support for the person, business or organization. A like on a Facebook page is prominently displayed and can influence readers to support the person or the organization or to use the business. It can also be a selling tool. I've found private businesses liked on more than one GNWT-sponsored Facebook page. This is inappropriate, Mr. Speaker.

A government must not only be impartial, but must be seen to be objective and impartial. As a government, we should not be showing favouritism to any one business over another. Additionally, there's the issue of responding to and making comments within the social media sites. Any comments posted on a GNWT Facebook page or webpage reflect the government's view. Are the administrators of these pages given any guidelines on how to respond to comments, post comments and so on?

There seems to be a gap in policy development here. Facebook pages are initiated throughout the government and by many different departments, but do we as a government have any policies or guidelines to assist those people in their development of webpages and Facebook pages? It

appears not. We often use contractors to do things like develop Facebook pages and websites. Do they have any policies or guidelines to follow? It appears not.

We have a chief information officer and we have an information policy gap needing to be fixed. This is a job for his office. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Colleagues, before we go on, I'd like to welcome former Premier Floyd Roland back to the House today. Welcome back, Floyd.

---Applause

The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HELMET SAFETY LEGISLATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When a life is lost and a community must grieve, it begs the question of why does this have to happen.

The community of Yellowknife last summer lost a vibrant young man to a head injury while he was longboarding. Consequently, this tragedy has spurred a great debate on the personal responsibility of helmet use in road sports, the need for further education but, more importantly, the urging for legislative intervention.

Not that many years ago, our former Premier Stephen Kakfwi was quoted as saying, "We have to step up to the line and account for our inaction." He was referencing dealing with the owners of snowmobile legislation. As a result, territorial-wide measures were implemented.

There was a time in our generation that even hockey players didn't wear helmets, yet society today would not even fathom playing the sport without such protection. So why, Mr. Speaker, is society pitted against what would seem a logical move?

I believe the key to answer this question is always linked to enforcement. The debate about where such legislation should be implemented, as for in-house business, may be a bit premature for us now, but what we should be supporting is the ongoing involvement in the proper education programs that offer head and brain injury protection.

I must take a quick moment to thank the years of support by BHP Canada Limited, with Think First Canada and with our own in-house use of Use Your Head Program, which has provided children, youth, parents, schools, recreation providers, health care authorities and communities with information and resources such as helmets. Without such contributions, people impacted the most, due to cost, would have been affected.

I will be asking the Minister of Transportation today about our ongoing education and support on our future initiatives, and the protection and safety of head and brain injury prevention on our roadways. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INSTALLATION OF CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently in the media we've heard of an inquest that's taking place in the Yukon with respect to the loss of five of their residents' lives due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

This is a very real threat and it's something that I think the Yukon government is going to respond to. I'd like to, later today, ask questions on how our government is going to respond to this threat.

Most of us know our homes to have either hardwired or have plugged-in smoke detectors, and this has become a very, very common practice, but less thought is given to the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning.

When I was a child, I remember my parents had very close friends who both died in their home as a result of, I believe, squirrels had built a nest in their chimney over the summer months and when their furnace came back into operation in the fall, they were both found dead in the home. I remember that very vividly as a child.

About 20 years ago in Hay River, a very well-known couple in our community decided to put a mobile home on the outskirts of town and they were off the power grid. So they put a diesel generator under the mobile home to provide power to that unit. Many trips to the medical clinic with headaches and feeling of nausea did not help anybody find out what it was that was causing them to feel unwell until, unfortunately, the man succumbed to the carbon monoxide poisoning. His partner, who still lives in Hay River today, was able to be medevaced and survived this poisoning.

We as a government have put many measurements in place to support public safety, and I think that this is an area where we as a government also need to develop a policy. Perhaps all new construction of new homes require a carbon monoxide detector to be installed as part of the construction. Perhaps also a policy that would see the availability of carbon monoxide detectors for residential and commercial applications.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister responsible, and I'm not sure which one it will be, as to what our government's action is going to be to

curb this threat and any future loss of life for something that is so preventable. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BEHCHOKO
COMMUNITY SPORTSPLEX

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. [English translation not provided.]

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a big thank you, similar to Mr. Alfred Moses, on this CanNor announcement from this morning. Minister Aglukkaq announced new funding for our sportsplex, a sportsplex that's badly needed in the community of Behchoko.

I would just like to thank her for her contribution, ongoing contribution. Thanks to the chiefs and the grand chief in the region and the GNWT for all the support over the years. We are doing this for the youth, and I just want to highlight the generosity and ongoing commitment from the federal government, territorial government and Tlicho Government for making this a reality. I would just like to say mahsi cho.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize former Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Floyd Roland. With him is Mr. Grant Hood, SAO, Town of Inuvik and a constituent of Inuvik Twin Lakes. Welcome, gentlemen.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to welcome Mr. Grant Hood, the SAO for the Town of Inuvik; and the current mayor of Inuvik, Floyd Roland, also former Premier. Welcome to the House and enjoy the proceedings.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to recognize the president of the NWT Teachers' Association, Ms. Gayla Meredith, and thank Gayla for the reception meet and greet that was held this morning. It was very enjoyable. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to take the opportunity to recognize a

former colleague in the House today, as he mentioned last night at a gathering, he and I and Minister Miltenberger were all from the class of 1995 and there were four of us elected in 1995. So many memories of his presence and presentations in this House. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to recognize Gayla Meredith, president of the NWTTA for her ongoing support and partnership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Oral Questions

QUESTION 89-17(4):
FOSTERING CULTURAL AWARENESS
THROUGH HAND GAMES COMPETITIONS

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the Minister of Human Resources, Glen Abernethy, when he talked about the soon-to-be launched Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training Program aimed at enhancing and promoting the Aboriginal culture of understanding. I want to ask the Minister, in light of what I said in my Member's statement about Deline hosting a huge hand games tournament, with something like that, is the Minister looking at some type of cultural training program where we can fully immerse in the training and culture and understanding of Aboriginal people at their best. Is the Minister looking at something like that in terms of a training program for our employees?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Glen Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The program that we're designing is actually designed with the intent of helping new employees, as well as some existing employees, understand the cultures and reality of working in the Northwest Territories. It was designed in participation with a number of different Aboriginal groups in the Northwest Territories. As far as having it presented at something like the hand games, it's not really designed for that. It's designed for employees to help them understand the different cultures and the realities in the Northwest Territories.

MR. YAKELEYA: I wanted to ask the Minister to be open and flexible, because what better way to

learn about the Aboriginal people than to get into them, play the hand games with them, understand the culture. Even learn a few hand signals, which I really can't say in the House here. I think that's the most opportune time to have employees come and sit and eat, and dance and learn the hand games of the Aboriginal people. Would the Minister look at something like that to fully understand the Aboriginal people at their best?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I've had an opportunity to travel to a lot of the communities in the Northwest Territories with the Member, as well, and had an opportunity to participate in the hand games, which I thoroughly lost. I do understand the value of these types of activities and initiatives but, once again, this program is really designed to help the individual employees who happen to be in Yellowknife or other communities where maybe the hand games aren't taking place.

As a government, we do encourage our employees who live in smaller communities to engage and become part of the communities and I would hope to see members of the GNWT public service participating in the activities in Deline. The program is more designed for all communities, not one particular location.

MR. YAKELEYA: If young kids in Sachs Harbour can learn the Dene hand games, certainly we can look at some of our regions and the departments that we're responsible for in the Tlicho, the Deh Cho, the Sahtu, even the Gwich'in coming to Tulita and taking that prize. I want to ask again the Minister, it would be good if we had a GNWT representative look at and understand the Dene culture, and one aspect is to see these magnificent hand games and really understand, okay, this is how the people celebrate life. I know it's designed for some things, but I'm asking to leave some room for flexibility in the training program.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'd say that we're absolutely going to be flexible and open. We have some of the most generous leave policies here in the Government of the Northwest Territories and we encourage our employees to maybe take some time to go participate in these types of events.

As Cabinet members, I know we've all had an opportunity to travel to the Sahtu and many of us did participate in the hand games when we were there previously. We do see the value of these types of activities and we encourage involvement. We will continue to encourage our employees to take advantage of these opportunities as they present themselves.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On page 3 of 3 of the Minister's statement he said, "so far have been in the right direction and that we are

a national leader and role model in advancing diversity in our workplace." I'm with the Minister on that. I want to ask the Minister how I can support him. Can he write some kind of directive or initiative that would support cultural awareness, such as participating in regional hand games, when the opportunity is available to our workers.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We, obviously, want a public service that represents the population that we serve, and as such, we have put in a number of these programs to help us attain that. I'm interested in what the Member has to say and I'd be happy to sit down and have a conversation with the Member to see what we can do, and discuss it further with committee as well.

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

QUESTION 90-17(4):
INSTALLATION OF
CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement today, I have questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Back in November my colleague Mr. Dolynny made a very good statement on this very same topic. I believe that since then, the report of the unfortunate and tragic incident that took place in the Yukon has progressed further, and their government, the Yukon Government, is looking at putting in place measures to avoid this very preventable loss in the future.

I'd like to ask the Minister what our government has done to date to address the issue of carbon monoxide detectors in buildings in the Northwest Territories.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The National Building Code requires that all structures built from 2008 now have to have CO₂ detectors. Any structures built prior to then, it wasn't a requirement at the time. However, with the incidents that took place in the Yukon I think there are a lot of people who are starting to install CO₂ detectors.

The department, working with the NWT Fire Chiefs Association, had a very good awareness campaign and I believe they were even handing out free detectors to those who wanted them. We are trying to raise public awareness. There are some requirements for it in the National Building Code to have these installed after 2008.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: That is very good news, both the mandatory installation in public buildings, the public awareness campaign, and the handing

out of carbon monoxide detectors. The potential problem is all too prevalent in our residences.

I'd like to ask the Minister if there's anything that our government could do further to step up the efforts to ensure that people have access to these detectors in their homes. I understand that they are not that expensive, and in our communities they are probably not readily available in some of the small communities in stores. Is this government prepared to go further with this?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I can assure the Member, and all Members of the House, that we will do whatever it takes to try and ensure that all our residents across the Northwest Territories are covered. The National Building Code that I pointed out before does apply to residents also. That protection is there. We are monitoring the legislation that the Yukon is planning to enact and see if there's opportunity for us to enact the same type of legislation. We're monitoring that quite closely. Once that's all done, we will have discussions with committee and Members of the Assembly.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: That is very good to know. Is there anything that we as a government could do legislation-wise? New construction I understand. What about existing homes? Is there anything we can do, from a regulation and monitoring perspective, to ensure that people have carbon monoxide detectors in their homes?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Other than trying to wear public awareness and that, I suppose we would have to look at trying to work out some regulations. I do note that if they are renovating a home that was built prior to 2008, then the new requirements would take place where they need to install a CO₂ detector. If renovations are being done, then it would be mandatory to install CO₂ detectors.

Again, I can assure all Members that we will do whatever we can to ensure all members of the public are aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide and work with the public in any way that we can. If it means handing out CO₂ detectors, then we would have to explore that also.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I for one would strongly support handing out these. We take a lot of measures, as a government, to address public safety, everything from making sure we wear our seatbelts and our kids wear seatbelts. We do a lot of things by regulation and by law to ensure public safety. I would like to see us address this and would certainly support an allocation of funding to purchase carbon monoxide detectors and give them out to anybody who would be interested.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We appreciate the Member's support and look forward to working with all Members to try and raise awareness out there. I think the event that took place in Whitehorse, unfortunately, was a sad way to make the public aware of the danger to carbon monoxide detectors. I do know our NWT Fire Chiefs Association is working very hard on this issue because they recognize the importance of it too. I think, in partnership with all the stakeholders, we're doing all we can to make sure our public is well protected.

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

QUESTION 91-17(4):
POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR GNWT-
SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister of Finance. I would like to follow up on my statement and ask him questions about whether or not we have policies in regard to our use of social media. I know we have some policies that apply to individual employees. For instance, Facebook is blocked on employees' computers. Cell phone use, I know, is listed. There is a policy on cell phone use. I'd like to know from the Minister, in terms of the development of Facebook sites and websites, and in terms of the maintenance of Facebook sites and websites, do we have any policies or any guidelines that people follow?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Apparently none that I'm aware of.

MS. BISARO: I didn't hear the answer. Thank you very much, colleagues. To the Minister, I would like to know whether or not this is something that, as a government, I feel that we need to remain impartial and I would like to know from the Minister whether or not he thinks there's a policy gap here and, if so, is he willing to do something about developing some guidelines and some policies to handle Facebook sites and websites.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'll commit to review the matter with the appropriate officials in the departments and if there is deemed to be a policy gap, then we'll, of course, take the steps to close that gap.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. I appreciate that. In the absence of anything right now, if we have Facebook sites which have likes on them, a particular business that has been liked which indicates that the GNWT likes this business and not another one, for instance, what is the Minister going to do to try and monitor Facebook sites and website that we have that may

have particular preferences for a business or organization?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I'll commit to put this matter on the table for Cabinet strategy tomorrow, and where all the senior officials are, as well, and we'll discuss the best way to make sure that we are impartial in all the appropriate areas as it pertains to government policy.

MS. BISARO: I appreciate the commitment from the Minister. I guess I would just like to say I appreciate this is coming before senior management and Cabinet. I'd like to suggest to the Minister that we don't have to reinvent the wheel. There are lots of governments out there that, no doubt, have policies and guidelines, so I would suggest to the Minister that we copy them more than develop our own.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. No question there. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's sage advice and I will keep that in mind as we move forward.

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

QUESTION 92-17(4):
DELIVERY OF INCOME ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM IN INUVIK

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I guess basically it's in terms of planning and getting ready for a region when we go through an economic downturn. I just want to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment if he has seen an increased cost in our Income Assistance Program and, if so, does he know the figure of how many dollars we're putting in to the income assistance in the community of Inuvik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. With the Income Assistance Program, we made some changes in 2007 to reflect the cost of living in the North and also the remoteness of the communities and, of course, the high costs. So we made those changes in 2007 and we have continued to monitor that since then until today. I have instructed my department to re-evaluate the program itself and continue monitoring it. If there are changes in the cost factor in, let's say, the Beaufort-Delta, we need to take those into consideration. If we're going to make changes, we have to come back to this House to make those changes. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: Just along those lines, I'd like to ask the Minister if there has been an increase in the amount of applications and an increase in the amount of residents that are now collecting income assistance in the community of Inuvik, has there been an increase in the amount of dollars that are allocated to this particular program. I'm trying to get to a point here, because with the lack of jobs and the downturn in Inuvik right now, we're going to see more families, we're going to see more people, more residents who are becoming dependent on government and income assistance. I've seen it through my office. I'd like to ask the Minister if he has seen an increase in the applications and the number of people who are on income assistance and an increase in dollars. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, by all means I would like to see more people and a population increase in the Northwest Territories. Based on that, it does fluctuate. People leave, people come, depending on the opportunities. When there's an increase in the caseloads for, let's say, the Beaufort-Delta, then have a monetary mechanism. If it's higher than what is expected or budgeted, then we have to come back to this House. We've done that in the past, so we'll continue to work in that regard. We do have a budget for the Income Security Framework overall. Again in 2007 there was an increase. If there needs to be another increase, that's an area that we need to look at.

I have instructed my department to look seriously where we're at with income security overall. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, through my office I've had a lot of constituents come and express their concern about not being able to work or find contracts, and have to refer to looking at other social programs that can help them assist. I'm asking the Minister if he's seen an increase in the amount for my community. If he has seen an increase, he kind of alluded to it in his last statement, but is there an action plan to address the higher costs of income dollars going into Inuvik specifically, so that more residents are actually having to, not by choice but having to, because of the economic downturn. Is there an action plan to address the high rates of applications? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, there is additional or higher caseloads, then those areas are continually monitored through my department. It's not only Inuvik or the Beaufort-Delta, it's all 33 communities that we service.

As I stated, there is a fluctuation in the population in the communities and the caseload does go down as well. Of course, we'd like to see the caseload go down. There are opportunities and activities happening in other regions, whether it be the Sahtu

region, and in the Beaufort-Delta there's the road that's been discussed. So there are going to be opportunities there.

At the same time, we are working closely with the regional representatives. The number has increased a bit in the various areas, but I can share that information with the Members for their information. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess my final question – the Minister did mention that it's high throughout the Northwest Territories – what is the Minister doing to address it? I know they have the pro choices program, but what else is he doing to address this? He's also the Minister of training and education. What is he doing to address and reduce the number of applications to get our people back into the workforce and off income assistance? What is the Minister doing to address these high rates of incidences of applications and dollars that have been going into this program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Member for that particular question. Those are the key areas that we are focusing on. We want to have a trained workforce, whether it be from the Beaufort-Delta, Sahtu or other regions. If there are opportunities and activities that are happening, we need to be ready for them.

We are working closely with industries. We have the productive choices part of the program through income security. I've told my department to seriously look at the productive choices, how we can improve and have the programming we have now, so it's sort of like incentives where individuals can explore training and explore other opportunities out there. So those are areas that I will be talking to Members, as well, and standing committee. I want to bring that forward to the standing committee if there are going to be changes and options that we need to work with. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 93-17(4):

GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING (FRACKING)

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. We are in the earliest stages of learning about fracking. The policy development needs are huge and the time frame urgent. We know the drive for fracking is underway in the Sahtu. Funds and time are needed to determine the basis on which to make good management decisions.

Recognizing that the resource will not disappear, will the Minister of ENR commit to ensuring that we dedicate both the funds and the time required to develop a policy on fracking that will protect both our people and our land? Mahsi.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; this is an important issue. It's a practice that we need to look at carefully. We've already invested considerable time and effort. We intend to come forward by this coming spring, early fall at the latest, with some guidelines built on best practices. We've had some very interesting meetings with the National Energy Board, as well, who's going to be working in conjunction with us, especially at post-devolution, about the way to manage our way through this.

The Member raises a lot of issues that we are working to address and we will be sharing, of course, and involving committee in all the work that we do. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the comments from the Minister. It's good to know that we're on this.

Regulation of the exploration and production process is another critical matter. I mentioned the particular threat of failure of drill casings and contamination of massive amounts of water. We need a review of other jurisdictions' regimes and evaluation of their suitability for our needs, then action to develop and put in place our own regs. Perhaps that's part of what Mr. Minister was referring to.

Upon the release of the government response to our EDI report, will the Minister move quickly to contract and manage a review of regulatory options toward development of appropriate law for the Sahtu situation? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We are committed to working with committee. We are going to share the work, we are going to come up with best practices, we are going to do the regulatory review from across not only the country but we're going to look around the work to see how it's being dealt with in other jurisdictions that haven't had moratoriums but are actually engaged in managing this process as they look at resource development. We will come forward and we'll map out the next steps as we do that. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, thanks again to the Minister. Some jurisdictions have banned fracking. That isn't something they do lightly, so we need to understand the serious concerns that led to this.

As I mentioned, our so-called EDI fracking tour didn't include a visit to even one fracking site. As part of this information gathering, will the ENR

Minister work with the Industry Minister to ensure the promised southern tour of regional leaders includes a visit to a no-fracking jurisdiction and to meet with the Aboriginal leadership with extensive fracking experience in northeastern BC? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I will commit to work with the Minister of ITI. I can appreciate the Member's concern about meeting with the Aboriginal governments and going to an actual fracking site. I would think we could probably gather the information about those jurisdictions that have decided to go ahead with fracking, by looking at what is available and having those conversations. But we will do a full review of all those particular positions as it pertains to fracking. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister is committed to water quality preservation, so he will understand how little we know about the state of our surface waters and the potential impacts of fracking contamination. We can't permit fracking without knowing how it will eternally affect our waters.

Will the Minister commit to commissioning the research necessary to understand the threats and prepare for the need to act fast with supplementary budget requests if required? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We all have a common concern not only about not only surface water but groundwater baseline information and wildlife baseline information. We have funds put aside in the budget to put money on the table. We are working through the Environmental Studies Research Fund, as well, which is funded by industry. There's going to be dollars available to work on the groundwater mapping, the surface water and the wildlife baseline information as well.

All the wells that are being drilled and have been drilled have to do well monitoring sites, water monitoring sites. That information is going to be collated and pulled together so we can build a map of this central Mackenzie, the Sahtu region, as it pertains to the status of the groundwater and surface water. So that work is being done. It is a critical piece, as the Member has indicated, and we are fully involved in getting that work done. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 94-17(4):

BEAUFORT-DELTA E-LEARNING INITIATIVE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is Education Week. It's very important that we give

the Education councils the resources that they need to provide a quality education to our students.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment how much funding is currently provided to the Beaufort-Delta Education Council for the e-learning program and how much is projected over the next couple of years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The detailed information, which I can provide to the Member, I don't have in front of me. The breakdown of the funding that the Beaufort-Delta Education Council receives on an annual basis that pertains to e-learning, I can provide that to the Member and also the forecast, how much it will cost the organization. It's all based on the enrollment and also the programming. I can provide the breakdown to the Member. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Beaufort-Delta could actually lose positions in the next school year. Given that it already cuts costs per student in the Sahtu and Deh Cho regions, will the Minister ensure that no positions will be cut in the Beaufort-Delta next school year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, that's a tough question to answer, but at the same time, I as Minister responsible provide funding to the school boards based on enrollment. If enrollment goes down, unfortunately, the funding is less than the previous year.

However, e-learning is a very interesting program itself. My department has been working closely with BDEC and other organizations, how we can enhance in that area, where it can be a teleconference, having a discussion as opposed to having a teacher there. Those are discussions that we are currently having as a resource tool. I believe there is a plan for a meeting with BDEC. I'm very interested and curious to know where they're going with this, and other organizations as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that funding is based on enrollment, but we need to ensure that it's based on the needs of the communities.

Will the Minister commit to expand funding for the Beaufort-Delta Education Council for their e-learning program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, this is an area that we are at the present point exploring. We're seeking input from the general public, the stakeholders, on the renewal. Part of the renewal process is talking about the funding. Because it pertains to a small community, professionalism is

part of the pillars, and there are six of them. I just touched on two. It will be capturing the small, isolated communities. The opportunity is here before us for the next business planning cycle. That is part of the process that we want to tackle. We want to complete that by this fall so we can put that as part of the business planning cycle. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 95-17(4):
FIXED FUEL RATES
IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works and Services questions related to my Member's statement earlier about freight costs for the fuel hauled into the remote communities. How does the petroleum products division currently set its fuel rates in the remote communities? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The petroleum products division works on a cost-recovery calculation. We don't actually make profit on the fuel; we intend to actually cover the total cost. The price is determined by the product cost when we purchase it in the South, transportation costs to get it to whichever the 16 communities we provide fuel in, a sales commission that's provided to a local vendor who adds that. Those commissions are determined based on an RFP process where they submit their potential costs, some O and M expenses, some taxes and a little bit of evaporation loss. It's a complete cost recovery, no profit to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Can the Minister tell me how often these fuel prices are reviewed?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, we do fuel hauls into the different communities depending on their location. In the summertime we provide fuel by barge to some of the communities in the High Arctic. In some communities, we bring it in by ice road. Prices are reviewed every time we bring new fuel into the community.

Once again, it is a full cost-recovery program based on the cost of the fuel that we purchase and have provided to the communities. Mahsi.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: What happens to the money that is collected when fuel prices go down after the rate is fixed in the communities served by the petroleum products division?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. I'm not sure I understand the question completely. The fuel

in the tanks in the community was set on a fixed price in the community and we don't bring more fuel in for most of these communities other than once a year. So there is no variation of price. The price in the tank is what we paid for it. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make it as brief as I can. Does the Minister agree to look at ways to make fuel prices more fair and reasonable in small communities, such as a freight subsidy or another form of subsidy? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Obviously we're committed to try and get the lowest prices for fuel in the 16 communities that we provide fuel to and we're always looking for ways to decrease the cost. As far as subsidy on transportation, I'm not sure that that would actually lower the cost, because the GNWT would still have that cost on them, but I'm interested to have a further conversation with the Member and possibly with committee to get their thoughts on this. But we're always looking for ways to control the cost of fuel in our 16 communities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

QUESTION 96-17(4):
HELMET SAFETY LEGISLATION
AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I made reference to a tragedy in the Yellowknife community this past summer. Again, it's important to share our thoughts for the Hardy family as I continue with this conversation.

The community and the NWT have been debating about helmet legislation and who should spearhead such legislation. I agree, as I said in my Member's statement, it might be a bit premature to consider this legislation in the House, but I do encourage municipalities to further this process.

I believe this government could have more impact and effectiveness in the education and prevention by supporting the proper programs. So the rest of my questions today will be for the Minister of Transportation on this subject.

One of those programs, as I refer to it, is the Use Your Head Program. Can the Minister of Transportation indicate to this House his department's commitment on this program's continuance for the remainder of this calendar year? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, getting back to the head injuries, DOT does not regulate the use of helmets for uses like with

snowmobiles, bicycles, skateboards or ice skates, in-line skates or skis. That is left up to the municipalities to deal with and that's how that's completed.

On a going-forward basis, DOT has initiatives under the Healthy Choices Framework. I know the Member talked of the Use Your Head Campaign that was used last year with a commercial with an Aboriginal elder wearing a helmet, a public awareness campaign. We also help with giving out funding to communities outside of Yellowknife for bicycle helmets. There's seasonal safety messaging, including helmet use while operating and riding of ATVs and snowmobiles, annual helmet funding to the SideDoor Skateboarding Program in Yellowknife, safety advertisements, including those showing an Aboriginal elder, like I spoke of, wearing his helmet. We also collaborate with Parachute Canada, formerly Think First Canada, to promote helmet safety in schools, and we also support community helmet safety initiatives and communications with youth centres respecting helmet safety programs around the Northwest Territories and we will continue to do that. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. I do appreciate the Minister's recant of all the initiatives I believe the government is working on here and I applaud their actions.

Can the Minister elaborate as to what other initiatives that we're now doing currently as a result of this recent tragedy? Is there anything else that the department could consider doing in promotion and prevention of head and brain sports injuries on our NWT roadways? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. I certainly do believe the Department of Transportation has a role to play in educating the public, and especially young people on the use of helmets and the safe use of helmets.

As far as future activities go and initiatives go, we're looking at a release of an animated public service announcement on helmet use to be aired during Northbeat programming on CBC and also that would be available on demand on You Tube. We're looking at the organization of a Take Your Helmet to Work Day, and perhaps that's something that Members of the Legislative Assembly could in fact bring a helmet to work at some point in time. We're looking to increase involvement with Parachute Canada, as well as with the TD Think First for Kids and the Scotia Bank Think First Smart Hockey programs, also safety advertisements featuring some NWT politicians and leaders around the Northwest Territories promoting the use of helmets around the territory. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. I'm strongly encouraged with what I'm hearing today, and I applaud the department and the Minister for sharing

those great initiatives with everybody here. A lot of the initiatives may not have an educational overtone or an affect in our school system.

Can the Minister indicate if there has been collaboration with the ECE Minister to work on educational programs through the Department of Transportation, which we can touch the lives of more of our school children out there in the Northwest Territories?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. I'm sure our staff have talked to the staff at ECE and that dialogue will have to continue. I think getting the message into schools around the Northwest Territories is very important, and we will continue to work with ECE to make sure that any programs that we do have, any educational component reaches out to schools and young people across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again great news and thanks for sharing that information from the Minister.

We know that it's pretty hard to argue that a bicycle or a skateboard helmet will not save lives. We know they do. Unfortunately, as I indicated earlier in my statement, we might be a bit premature to bring in the legislation to debate into the House. But in order to assist municipalities prepare for their future agenda on this topic, would the Minister of Transportation provide municipal and territorial data on head and brain injuries due to road sports in the past five years and would he table such information in this House? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. We could certainly take a look at compiling those statistics for the Member and sharing with the Members of this House. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 97-17(4):
AVALON RARE MINERALS
THOR LAKE PROJECT

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, I'm making a presentation to Avalon public hearings today. My questions today are for the Minister of ITI related to that project. Has the Department of ITI begun to create a socio-economic agreement for this project and this company? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been discussing, with Avalon, their plans for the development of a mine at Thor Lake for a

number of years now. Last October Cabinet gave us the mandate at ITI to look at the establishment of a socio-economic agreement with Avalon. We are currently in negotiations with Avalon on a socio-economic agreement and we hope to see that agreement put in place within the next several months. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you. As I indicated in my Member's statement, we're excited to see this project in the South Slave and I'm just wondering what the Department of ITI is doing to support Avalon in their ventures to complete this project.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. We've done a number of things. In the South Slave ITI office, we've looked at a feasibility study for a limestone quarry in the south part of the Northwest Territories that would help in supplying limestone to the potential hydromet facility at the old Pine Point mine site. We continue negotiations, as I mentioned, on a socio-economic agreement. We're looking at the establishment of a special economic zone in the old Pine Point mine site. I know the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline preparedness office or petroleum planning office now in Hay River has also done a preliminary examination on the potential models and associated management of such a specialized economic zone at the old Pine Point site.

So we're doing a number of things, and just yesterday I appeared at the EA for Avalon here in Yellowknife and provided comments, and I'd be happy to share those comments with the Members, as well, on behalf of all the government. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: The Minister indicated the special economic zone for industrial areas set up for the old Pine Point site. I'm just wondering if the Minister can elaborate on when the department will be able to formalize the industrial area to take advantage of the potentially lower power in that area.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: As plans for the establishment of that mine move forward and it gets through the regulatory process, we will certainly be ramping up discussions on that specialized economic zone. We are also looking at the possibility of putting wholesale power into that area, as well, to make it more economical to have a hydro facility and the jobs coming to the South Slave region. So we continue those discussions. We want to see the regulatory process play itself out. Again, we do look forward to the jobs and the opportunities that such a development would bring.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the department doing to maximize the economic benefit impact for Northerners, workers and northern companies to take advantage of this project?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Avalon has gone out. I know they have an IBA in place with the community of Fort Resolution. For us, it's through the socio-economic agreements and, again, we are negotiating an agreement with Avalon that would see maximized benefits for local businesses and people on jobs and business opportunities associated with both the operation at Thor Lake, the mine itself, and the hydromet facility south of the lake. We're working on that and we will continue to try to get the best deal for Northerners. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 98-17(4):
CONSUMER PROTECTION LEGISLATION
FOR CELL PHONE CONTRACTS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I use the opportunity to ask questions to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. In my Member's statement I talked about consumer protection. My questions really come down to the moves that Manitoba and Nova Scotia have taken to cap cancellation fees, stop auto renewals and, certainly, build a communication line between cell phone service and their customers.

What is the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, who is also the Minister of consumer protection, aware of and what can he enlighten the House about? Thank you.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec currently legislate contract requirements for cellular phones and so we follow that quite closely. I do know that CRTC does regulate the telecommunications in the country and they have initiated a consultation process to see if the telecommunications sector is getting to the point where they may need some intervention from the commission. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Clearly, two if not three provinces have felt that the regulation that exists is not enough and they've taken appropriate steps to show that their citizens matter. I am asking the Minister of MACA what he's prepared to do to demonstrate that our northern citizens matter by providing them good, solid consumer protection. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Our citizens in the North matter all the time and we do whatever we can to protect their best interest. MACA is of the view that we will wait until CRTC completes their consultations to see if the next steps we take is any

introduction to any kind of legislation. I think before then would be premature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: The cell phone rates are clearly a problem to three large provinces. I'm surprised to think the Minister thinks it's premature that they took action by stating that the NWT will wait until CRTC responds.

Would the Minister be willing to seek some consultation from the consumers in the Northwest Territories to get some input from their point of view as to how they feel about cell phone rates and how it impacts them? As I pointed out, cancellation fees are high, contracts are troublesome and there are ways to solve these things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Absolutely, we would like to hear from consumers out there. We do know that some consumers have some issues with some of the services they are getting. I think we have to recognize, too, that with the cell phone service capabilities in the Northwest Territories expanding, then there is going to be a need to have a look at something. We're not quite sure what it is yet, but I can assure the Member that we are working on this issue and we will come up with something that protects consumers across the Northwest Territories.

MR. HAWKINS: It's really nice the Minister is assuring me they're going to do this and I'm really happy when he says they like to hear from consumers. I guess my question now is: What should consumers expect and what type of activity is the Minister going to take to demonstrate that they're going out and getting input from consumers? Because an office buried in a department doesn't advertise far and wide enough to draw this type of discussion. So if he says he cares about them and he wants to hear from them, how is this Minister going to rise to that challenge? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'm going to rise in this House and let them know we are going to look after their best interest. We are having a lot more concern with lots of consumer affairs issues out in the public. Our consumer affairs department, though it may be a small office, works very hard to ensure that the residents across the Northwest Territories are protected. So I can assure residents across the Northwest Territories that we will do what we can to protect their interest, and with the ever-expanding cell phone market in the Northwest Territories, I think that warrants serious consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister is sitting here saying, "I'm telling people in the House." Well, I hate to say it, not everybody

follows the House as closely as we do. My last question is: Would the Minister be willing to take an active campaign in the public trying to draw attention to consumer affairs issues, and how can the public get engaged on issues, especially such as this as I highlighted, cell phone usage and cost? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We will. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 99-17(4):
ADDRESSING THE HIGH COST OF LIVING
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Premier and it has to do with the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories. In Sachs Harbour, Trout Lake, Colville Lake, Lutselk'e or Gameti, these communities are in remote isolation of the Northwest Territories. The cost of living is astronomical.

I want to ask the Premier, in his discussions with their federal counterparts, is the Government of the Northwest Territories looking at how we can reduce the cost of living in those small communities where there are high unemployment rates.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a government, we are always looking at ways to reduce the cost of living in the Northwest Territories. We've taken a number of initiatives over the years. We realize and recognize that the best way to reduce the cost of living is to have improved infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. We've also looked at the northern resident income tax credit deduction. We've looked at that very closely. We've talked to our territorial counterparts to see if we could move in that direction. I think one of the best ways would be to look at our use of energy and to find ways to reduce those costs as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: About a week ago, I spoke about a coffee can I bought in Norman Wells. I bought one can there. Here, I can buy three cans of coffee, the same type. That's what I'm asking, the cost of living in that specific area in those communities that I named. Is that something that the government is looking at, where those prices would be comparable such as in larger centres like Yellowknife, where costs are pretty high up in the small communities at the store for food?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There are a number of programs that are tied to the cost of living in Yellowknife. For example, the employees' of the Government of the Northwest Territories northern allowance is compared to the cost of living in Yellowknife. As you move further and further away

from Yellowknife into the smaller communities, the amount of northern allowance that employees receive is increased. That's one way of doing it.

We also have a significant amount of subsidy programs. I think the last time I checked, this government was providing about \$180 million in subsidies and various programs throughout the Northwest Territories. So we are doing a lot in that area already. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, the cost of living, as the Premier has indicated, increases when you go further and further away from Yellowknife. Is that cost sufficient enough for people in Sachs Harbour or Colville Lake or Lutselk'e or Gameti or Trout Lake where you know that they will be able to provide their family of four, five or six in a good manner that is equivalent to living in Yellowknife?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, we did a survey where we looked at every community in the Northwest Territories to see how much money an individual or family would have to make in order to be able to afford to live in a community and I think Sachs Harbour was the most expensive. I think a family had to make at least \$93,000 to be able to afford to live there without a subsidy of any sort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: I thank the Premier for noting that it is very true that communities like Sachs Harbour where, my friend Mr. Beaulieu would say, the employment rate, not the unemployment rate, the employment, because only so many people can work in the small communities that would have a job that would provide for them.

I want to ask the Premier, is the government looking at the Social Assistance Program where it would up the cost to help them with the cost of living.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we review the cost of living on a regular basis. We have a food basket that we calculate the costing, and the income assistance rates are adjusted accordingly. We've also done a lot of work on the housing costs so that with the rental scale adjustments and so on, it's tied to the income that a family brings in. We adjusted our housing rental scale so that no matter how or what situation you are in, if you go to work you are always in a better situation than if you are not working at all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 100-17(4):
GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR
HYDRAULIC FRACTURING (FRACKING)

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up with my questions to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources on some of

the fracking regulations that we're doing. I expressed an interest in having people visit actual frack sites. I am wondering, first of all, has the Minister ever visited a frack site where, in fact, a horizontal frack was actually underway. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Minister. I haven't myself, either, and I know most of us haven't. Perhaps some have, and it would be good to hear from them.

I'm wondering, does the Minister agree that, based on what we have learned, the noise involved, the noise levels, the hundreds of thousands of large trucks and generators per frack, the indescribable amounts of water, cement and chemicals used, that based on this, an on-the-ground visit by those involved in regulating and those who are going to experience it on their homeland, an on-the-ground visit to an active fracking site would provide some necessary insight into what we are dealing with. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BROMLEY: Mr. Speaker, when you are on a roll, go for it. Will the Minister work with his colleague in Industry to, in fact, take our regional leadership to ensure they visit active frack sites as well as jurisdictions that have banned fracking, for whatever reason, to learn about those reasons and concerns and also to visit with Aboriginal people wherever they have experience with fracking, such as northeast BC? Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of ITI already has a trip scheduled to an active frack site where fracking is practiced. So, yes, we will do that. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 8, written questions. Mr. Bromley.

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 11-17(4):
FLARING AT PETROLEUM EXPLORATION
AND PRODUCTION SITES

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

1. What standards will be in place in the NWT to govern gas flaring at petroleum exploration and production sites of horizontal fracking operations?

2. Is the release of toxic emissions, including carcinogenic gases, allowed under regulations, and what will be the regulatory limits for toxic emissions, including volatile organic compounds, carcinogenic gases and other related fracking emissions at flaring sites?
3. What will be the minimum safe distances for location of homes or human activity from carcinogenic emission sites, and what regulatory measures are in place to cordon off safe distances from sites for humans and animals?
4. How are the greenhouse gas emissions of flaring being estimated?

Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Menicoche.

WRITTEN QUESTION 12-17(4):
COMMUNITY FUEL PRICES

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Public Works and Services.

1. Please provide the total cost of fuel delivery to NWT communities served by the petroleum products division of Public Works and Services.
2. Please provide the total cost of fuel delivery in Nahendeh communities served by the petroleum products division of Public Works and Services.
3. Please provide an estimate to offer a fuel subsidy to all communities served by the petroleum products division of Public Works and Services.

Thank you.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 24-17(4):
INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
ANNUAL REPORT, 2011-2012

Pursuant to Section 68 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, I wish to table the 2011-2012 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to draw your attention, Members, to the presence in our gallery here today of Ms. Elaine Keenan Bengts, the Information and Privacy

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Welcome to the House, Ms. Keenan Bengts.

---Applause

Item 15, notices of motion. 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 the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014; and Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. The Speaker has indicated what's on our agenda for Committee of the Whole today. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Menicoche.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. Committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, with continued deliberations of ITI and NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. We will resume with general comments on ITI after a brief break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Okay. I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We are on the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. I'd like to ask the Minister if he'd like to bring witnesses into the Chamber. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, please, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

Minister Ramsay, when you're ready, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. To my left is Mr. Peter Vician, deputy minister of ITI, and to my right is Ms. Nancy Magrum, director of shared services, finance and administration for ITI and Environment and Natural Resources. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. General comments. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to welcome the Minister and delegation here today. I do have some general comments, Madam Chair. I am going to try not to repeat too many things that were said by my colleagues. If I do, it's probably only to earmark that there is some general concern and I think it's important for the Minister and team to be aware of.

There is no doubt that business in general in the Northwest Territories is going through a transitional change. A lot of businesses are struggling out there, so I do always encourage the department and the Minister to find the right means in fairness and transparency as businesses start to evolve and develop. I see a bit of that in this budget, but the overall temperature is one in which I think we have to put a lens on that subject.

The last time we saw here and talked about ITI, we had a number of initiatives that were ongoing. In fact, I did a quick recap here. We had two mineral and petroleum resource initiatives, we had five energy initiatives, and we had two economic diversification supporting initiatives. I guess the question I have is: Do we have too many things on the go? Do we have too many strategies that are intertwined and competing for one another and clouding the water? Do we have competing priorities as a result of all these initiatives? I guess the big picture is: Who sorts all this out? Are we making the right investment with the right budget?

In essence, I find as a Member, trying to have a sobering eye on what's going on here, there's a bit of a mess and quite a bit of confusing information out there. When you add the element of what I call the gatekeeper, at least what we know as the gatekeeper of all these initiatives and strategies, we have the Ministers Energy Coordinating and Climate Change Committee, which is a mouthful in itself, but MECC for short for those of us in the House who were talking about MECC.

I can tell you that the coin phrase for this committee, because of what I said earlier, we like to sometimes refer to it as a confusion through diffusion committee. I say that with no disrespect, but with so many things on the go, again, we need clarity as we move forward with all these efforts here.

We had the long-awaited charrette and some of us were participants and stakeholders working with groups and we did read the report on it. What do we do now with the results of this charrette? Do we have an action plan? Is there an implementation plan? Is there a budget? There are still a lot of unanswered questions. The charrette was used as a means last time we did this as a panacea of change in the energy questions that this House

had, and now that we've got this charrette done, we've got the report done, there seems to be a lack of where do we go to the next level.

The federal budget pledged \$12.3 million over two years and this is the second of two years to continue the assessment of diamonds in the North, to the renewal of the Diamond Valuation and Royalty Assessment Program, and it's important to note that this initiative was not mentioned in this budget and I would probably ask later on to the Minister as to why.

On the subject of diamonds and diamond manufacturing, the Minister has well known – I brought this issue up quite often here in the House already – I'm gravely concerned that we do have a Diamond Framework Policy which talks about some of the basic tools or fundamentals for resurgence of this industry, but by and large my thoughts are that we are not doing enough to protect the brand, especially the polar bear brand in our certification process. The overall framework with how we deal with rough diamonds in the North so that we truly can be a world leader once again in the secondary diamond industry, and I do challenge the Minister and his department to consider, and I'm sure there will be further and future dialogue on this as the weeks progress.

This committee and some of my colleagues here have talked many times about resource taxation as a potential revenue for the NWT. Currently, we are not doing this. It's been talked about, but again, this is not mentioned in the budget or in the budget opening address or the Minister's opening comments. I think we need to ask those questions why. This is a viable opportunity for revenue generation, and not talking about it, I think, is a disservice to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Socio-economic agreements are in place to protect both mines and also businesses in the Northwest Territories it serves. My concern is what we've heard a lot lately about the compliance of these socio-economic agreements when a mine is noncompliant and the mechanisms within the framework of these socio-economic agreements. There are tools in there to help redirect when there is noncompliance, and again, there are still a lot of concerns out there in terms of making companies accountable to the people and to the companies and to the territories they serve. So again, not a lot of mention in any of the opening comments or address, and I think it should be duly noted.

The NWT Hydro Strategy, although if you read the charrette, ranked quite high in the committee's recommendation, but if you look at the current budget and the current opening address, this is the second year now, in being here 16 months, we still don't see any conclusive investment or strategy in this budget as a result of this so-called high

ranking. I really challenge the Minister to come up with ways as to address the hydro initiatives that seem to be quite prominent with all the experts that we have here that consults with the Territories as well as with the Minister's office.

Finally, I want to just focus a lens on tourism. If we look at the investments that we do in our tourism, the current budget of \$4.4 million, even though we looked at a \$600,000 increase in this year's budget – and I have to say thank you – pales in comparison with what any other jurisdiction in Canada is investing in tourism. Even our closest neighbour to the west, Yukon, is spending almost twice as much as we are, if not more. What's further boggling to the mind is the fact that these investments, there is a quantifiable return on our investment, and that quantifiable return is in the form of GDP. These are quantifiable statistics that are provided from the government themselves. What's very concerning is that we know, very well, that investment of \$4 million translates to over \$100 million of GDP. So again, simple math, there's a 20 to 1 relationship in our investment to profit, and I can tell you if I had that return on my own RRSP portfolio, that would be great.

I think we've got a huge opportunity here to look at all the means necessary that we need to put into tourism, and although we see a small increase, you may hear from many Members here about taking a look at that in the budget and we're hoping through supplementation and supps that we can look at increasing that amount for tourism, because it truly is one of the incredible revenue streams that this government has yet underutilized in many of our comments that you'll hear probably later today.

So, Madam Chair, those are just some of my high points. I do have more details as we get into this ITI budget. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm pleased to take the opportunity for some general comments on Industry, Tourism and Investment and some of the initiatives that we as Regular Members have been seeking in the department, especially being responsive enough to see that need of increasing our tourism budget up by \$600,000 for this fiscal year. I'd sure like to have the department utilize those dollars, because I know that some of the initiatives, not only in the department, but along with NWT Tourism and some of their budgeting, we can certainly double their budgets and thereby have more of an impact in getting tourists to the Northwest Territories. In fact, continue to provide international exposure to our spectacular North. I think all Members saw that and I'm glad that government agreed with that.

I think I did do a Member's statement, as well, on an initiative. One of the initiatives is to have

somebody like Martin Strel, the Big River Man, swim the whole of the Mackenzie River. I really believe that would garner us lots of international attention, and in particular because he is followed by international film crews on the National Geographic channel and a lot of his films end up at a lot of the major film festivals throughout the world. When that happens, then they can see the beauty of our North. He was famed, of course, for swimming the longest rivers only to show the pollution in those rivers, but here's an opportunity to show the pristineness of our great Dehcho, the Mackenzie River. I certainly can continue to press that.

In terms of providing ease of tourism to the North, I've been up here time and time again speaking about the Dehcho loop and, in particular, my favourite two words, Highway 7, only because it's those roads that provide a gateway to the Northwest Territories from BC and the loop extends over, exiting in High Level or vice versa. They could enter around Hay River, the Alberta border, and exit out by Fort Liard on the BC border. A lot of tourists do see the value in that, but they're well aware about Highway No. 7 so they're often phoning businesses in Enterprise, or businesses in Fort Simpson, or even the owners at Checkpoint Services that still remain there about the condition of Highway No. 7: Is it worth it taking my \$400,000 motorhome on this loop and around Highway No. 7?

Tourists don't want to do the same road twice. If they're driving all the way from Hay River to Fort Simpson, they don't want to return on the same route, they want to see something new and different. So that's why I continue to urge investment into Highway No. 7 and giving us the angle, of course, of only increasing tourism, which will benefit the North and there's return for our money that way, as well, as well as providing a gateway to Fort Simpson for the travelling public and tourists to see the Nahanni National Park Reserve and the beauty that's out there as well.

So we need continued support for that and continued support for our micro-industries in arts and crafts. There's lots of people in the smaller communities sewing and beading and we've got to provide access to their products. I think a lot of them do sell it to the Fort Liard Craft Centre. By far there's no big entry points like that in Fort Simpson. So it would be nice to capitalize on that micro-market and support that in Fort Simpson as well.

Recently, during my last visit to Fort Liard, I was speaking with Chief Harry Deneron and he spoke about his last visit to Fort Nelson. He was at the airport and saw three planeloads of workers from down south servicing the northern BC gas and oil fields there. He was saying, why aren't you using our northern workers. It's only because our base of

workers has been exhausted, or the last time we had a huge training program was in the '70s and most of those people are now retiring or already retired.

I urge the Minister to work with his counterparts in Education, Culture and Employment about coming up with a different kind of training plan to train a good workforce for the North so that even the people who work in northern BC and northern Alberta look to the North for those resources and skills that they need. As it is now, it's not fair and we really have to address that.

I'm working with my colleague from the Sahtu in making a case that the Sahtu development, the shale play there is a special economic zone and the benefit there for me is that we can finally see the development of the Mackenzie Highway north of Wrigley become a priority, not only of his department but of our government, in the next couple of years. I don't want to take away from other regions, but once we start making the case that yes, we should develop the road north, it will provide a gateway to the resources that are there and, yes, we can start investing in it and, hopefully, get some federal backing to and invest in finally completing that road north of Wrigley up to Norman Wells. Once again, we can also focus on long-term strategies of completing it all the way to the Dempster Highway and, once again, create another tourism loop throughout the North. I think it would be incredible if we try to focus on that and see that eventuality, where someone can drive up the Mackenzie Valley and then make another loop, this time through the Yukon. I would certainly like to see that as a long-term strategy.

I really appreciate the continued investment in hunting and trapping for our children and the current harvesters out there. I'll continue to support that investment.

That ends my general comments.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm just going to follow through the Minister's comments here to focus my remarks. One percent over 2012-2013 in the departmental budget, obviously some serious work has been done here and I appreciate that.

I notice there is a good recognition of the need to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions, but I think there is, overall, insufficient effort and expenditures at addressing that priority.

The one thing that I think is an opportunity is that we need to work with our business and industry partners towards renewable energy projects that serve both industry needs and communities. I think the resource extraction in this group, for example,

should be required to participate in this way through development conditions.

On the Business Incentive Policy monitoring office moving to Hay River, and this is in direct response to the Assembly wanting to see some decentralization, I would say this is moving generally in the right direction, but we're expecting that it be done in a sound way with analysis. Committee has done some analysis. I know Members have looked into this. The South Slave actually has the highest proportion of government jobs per capita of any of our regions, something around 13 percent. Next, not surprisingly, is the North Slave. In substantial contrast, the Tlicho are down 7 percent. The Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta are at 11 percent. I think we do generally support decentralization and who could fight decentralization in their own area or community? I wouldn't expect that. We are expecting that the government will do it in recognition of what the current situation is and strive for some equity. This Minister is obviously trying to respond and I'd ask that he start to broaden his considerations to actually achieve what we're, I think, all looking for.

The socio-economic agreements, there's been some comments on those already. Obviously the good ones that have teeth are the ones that are successful; the ones that don't are not. I'm happy to see the interest in the Prairie Creek SEA doing the surveys, but I'm perplexed as to why the communities are not being included in the surveys. They're focused on site. Typically our socio-economic agreements are meant to ensure benefits are grounded in our communities and distributed. Maybe that was just an oversight.

Obviously there's much activity in the Sahtu in relation to the oil play there, and I'm wondering how we're measuring greenhouse gases in all that activity.

Just some general comments. With respect to the BIP again, we've looked at this many times. It seems like every Assembly does. I still see challenges there. I'm hearing from constituents that there are still challenges there. Somehow these large companies that are based far away are getting BIP. It's not an even playing field. As much as we have looked at this and agonized, we're not there yet.

Some general comments on the economy. Often we tend to focus solely on the market economy. We have three economies and that's the smallest one of the three. We have a domestic economy, which is sort of beneath the dollars. It's not a monetary economy and it's much bigger than our market economy. Below that is the natural economy, the incredible services that nature provides in the way of providing clean resources for our benefit and so on, and the ability to take bad stuff and turn it back into good stuff. Those are invaluable services so it's

even better than our domestic economy. I think we need to, when we're coming up with a general plan, be recognizing all three of those and making sure that our actions serve all three.

I didn't see much on agriculture here. I know the Minister is on that file. I think Northerners are waking up to the incredible opportunities here, and I know Hay River is a real lead there, but many communities are getting involved and Hay River is playing a good leadership role.

Fisheries, certainly. I'm wondering if perhaps we'll get into details on how we can help with that situation at the fish processing plant in Hay River. Perhaps something in Yellowknife, some sort of support.

Of course, the arts. I think the arts we've generally increased support in that direction for the last four or five years, but I'm not sure we're there yet. The arts are demonstrated more and more to be a real opportunity and a real plus to economic development, and an often unrealized opportunity.

I spoke earlier today on fracking. I know the Minister was listening. There are lots of issues that are going to require expertise from this department in order to respond responsibly. That's always a concern.

That's all I have for general comments.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I won't spend too much time. I think most of my colleagues have spent a fair deal in going through things. The only areas I'd like to re-emphasize, of course, are a couple of them that did stand out.

I, too, am curious how much work was done on the removal of the BIP office to the South Slave. I am not against us devolving to other areas. I do continue to stand by taking people who are in working positions without better plans, so what I'd like to see here is, I'd like to hear some feedback as to how this analysis drew down to saying this office is the best one we should move out, how it was communicated, what analysis was considered. I'm not beyond reason whereas to say yes, I certainly believe the office could, and certainly will, work outside of the Yellowknife region. I'm well aware of that and I can certainly appreciate that circumstance, but I'd also like to know, in essence, the analysis done on that area, why that one was picked, and how we're going to do business differently and what will it cost.

I, like many other Members, are concerned that we feel that NWT Tourism is still underfunded and I would like to see an additional \$600,000 put into it. We pale in comparison to other regions. It is a good way to help diversify our economy in a meaningful way by helping tourism. As we all know, our GDP is

in a gross manner made up of largely the mining sector, which is the reality of this particular area, but for an additional \$600,000, I think we could really help the industry that draws in new cash into our region to help our small businesses and make a big difference.

The only other area is an issue I had brought a couple of years ago to the old ITI Minister and I thought there were some legs behind the idea or, I should say, the concept. I present a rebranding concept to the department. I did a fair bit of work on it. I hired a graphic artist to assist me in the matter. I provided it to the department, free of charge, as a vehicle for suggesting how we could develop all areas and help promote them. I called the program Made in the NWT. I felt, really, the legs behind it was it's supposed to be "in the NWT." So it could be Fished in the NWT, Played, Recorded, Grown, it could develop and help strengthen and lend support.

I don't miss an occasion to talk about the Fort McPherson tents. I often have told many people about the glazing work that gets done in Hay River where you can buy windows. I don't miss the opportunity to say, hey, you can get potatoes in the Wells area. It was a way to help bolster a little bit of community pride in these industries, and if we're able to in our own way, kind of like the Made in the USA program, we could put a little consumer pride into our products.

I know we have a strategy around art recognition, but this could expand into many areas very simply and it's one I presented to the department. It's like one of those things, it must have been my idea because it was so good they ignored it. That's kind of how I feel sometimes with some of these suggestions when they're presented to departments. To some degree I say that with some frustration, because I got a lot of feedback. I even set up a website in order to get some feedback and people enjoyed it. I circulated it around the community. The NWT Chamber thought it had a lot of legs and they tried to support it in their own mechanism. Like I said, it went into the abyss of government and I never heard again from it. As a matter of fact, if anyone is really curious, I still have the poster on my window by my office door and I'm more than happy to provide more details to anyone who would like it. That said, just on the last point I want to make, it was only a vehicle.

I wasn't suggesting I'm the graphic artist or it perfectly fit with our system, but what I felt was it could provide an example for our very smart staff to figure out new ways to help ensure our products matter.

When consumers look at them, it does draw attention. You could be looking, by way of example, at a window made who knows where and a window made in Hay River, and you'll know that at least if

you see that one that says this window was made in the NWT, you're going to ask, well, where was it made. Then you'll say to yourself, well, I could spend the money there, which I know helps those people, or I could buy it from who knows where they ship that window from, whether it's BC or Alberta or even beyond that. So consumer awareness is very important to me and I think it's important to a lot of territorial citizens who take great pride in the services they know that exists here. The problem is they become largely anonymous and that's a problem here. So for the sum total of not a whole lot of money for stickers to be supported, we could do a lot to help our industries. Again, small little businesses that could go a long way. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. There are no further general comments. I will ask the Minister if he would like to respond to some of the issues raised during the general comments.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank all of the Members for their general comments in regard to ITI's budget. I've made a number of notes. You'll have to bear with me as I go through a number of the points that the Members made.

A number of Members covered some of the same topics, so I'll try to get to everything. Hopefully I don't miss anything. If I do, it could certainly come up under detail if Members have specific questions.

The first issue that was brought up was the cost of electricity and what we're doing about it. I think we really need to look at bringing down costs system-wide. We're looking at hydro developments, biomass, LNG, and those costs have to come down. Through MECC, the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to invest in programs to help residents and businesses reduce their own energy use and I think that has to continue to happen.

On the subsidy program, what are we doing at the end of the subsidy and what is our plan? The Territorial Power Subsidy Program, administered by the Department of Finance, has been in place for years, and subsidizes community residents to the Yellowknife electricity rate for the first 1,000 kilowatt hours in the winter and 600 kilowatt hours in the summer. This program is an electricity subsidy and supports our principle of a comparable level of access to affordable power for all NWT communities. That's currently at \$9 million a year.

Through the Department of Finance, there's also a four-year subsidy to mitigate the impacts of the general rate application filed by NTPC. This subsidy is temporary. It was put in place to avoid rate shock to our residents and businesses and that totals \$34 million over four years. In general, mitigating energy costs will be a key issue that will need to be

addressed in the Energy Plan. Currently, this plan is under development. I'm looking forward to working with all Members and through MECC, Premier McLeod, as we develop the Energy Plan for release later this spring.

The next item that came up was the closing date for parks. This is an issue that was brought up by a number of Members last year. Certainly we've taken a look at this issue. ITI will make adjustments in park openings and closings to ensure that these do not fall on weekends, so I think that issue has been addressed. There is no plan to change the 2013 park season opening or closing as they fall on a Wednesday and Sunday, respectively, this coming season. I want to thank the Members for bringing that issue up.

On to the next issue, and that was the Aboriginal Pipeline Group. The question was, why are we giving money to the APG. Work on the project is continuing to maintain compliance with a certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the National Energy Board, including the requirement to fill updated capital cost estimates and report back on progress to a decision to construct by December 31st of this year. The partners are continuing to meet their funding obligations for existing access and benefit agreements and maintain their Inuvik office. As a result, the APG still has work and financial requirements to discharge during 2013-14. The GNWT provided an annual contribution of \$300,000 in 2012-13 to meet administrative requirements of this corporation. The GNWT has been in discussions with the APG regarding a reduced allocation for the upcoming fiscal year, pending receipt of the APG work plan for 2013-14. Any reductions will be redirected to support preparations for other petroleum resource development in the NWT and particularly the Sahtu and Beaufort-Delta regions.

On to SHOMP and the funding. The program was always intended to provide temporary relief for outfitters and allow them to develop options other than caribou hunting and restrictions on polar bear exports. To date, ITI has provided over \$1.8 million to this sector for relief. The budget proposed is \$300,000 of funding through this program for 2013-14. We will be reviewing its contribution programs to tourism industry operators to ensure that our programs best meet the needs of the tourism industry and support this government's goal of a strong and diversified economy. I certainly think we need to really take a look at the future of the Sport Hunt Outfitter Marketing Program as we move forward. I know questions have come up in the House that dialogue has to continue with the outfitters and with this government.

On to Come Make Your Mark Campaign, and if I could, I'll give a bit of a status update and info on success. There have been a number of questions

about the Make Your Mark Campaign. In the three years that the National Marketing Campaign has been in the marketplace, results have indicated that new skilled workers, families and taxpayers have already moved to the Northwest Territories. Key results to date attributed to the National Marketing Campaign. Activities include over 50,000 website hits and thousands of people inquiring and requesting further information about living in the Northwest Territories. While tracking the exact number of people who have relocated to the NWT because of the Come Make Your Mark Campaign is challenging, we do know over a dozen people have moved to the NWT as a direct result of the campaign.

As far as future investment, late August of 2012, a survey was sent to 1,000 of the people who have indicated an interest in possibly moving to the NWT. This survey was designed to determine the reasons people would or would not move to the Northwest Territories. The results show that jobs, money and career advancement were the main attractors to the NWT, while the perceived high cost of housing and food, as well as concerns about the availability of health services are the main detractors. Northern businesses were also surveyed in August of 2012. They indicated that filling a vacant job was their primary concern.

On to some future plans, building on the success of past campaigns and introducing some of the new research findings, the Come Make Your Mark Campaign will be launching a campaign targeting people living in the greater Toronto area and post-secondary institutions that have a high number of NWT students. This campaign will launch shortly and focus on an updated website that features skilled and professional jobs available in each NWT community. The site will also highlight the benefits of working and living in the NWT, including higher average salaries and tax benefits, real estate costs comparable to other areas in Canada, shorter commute times, opportunities for career advancement and modern recreation and medical facilities. The site will also respond to common questions about living in the NWT such as housing costs, access to fresh food, availability of health services, quality of education and transportation. Each NWT community will also be profiled. Any interested NWT business, NGO or governments would be welcomed as partners. As partners, they can post their job openings on the Come Make Your Mark Campaign and on campus promotions for students. This will help drive people to the website to view information about working, living or visiting the Northwest Territories.

The next subject matter was NTPC. The Government of the Northwest Territories is the sole shareholder of NTPC. As such, it can definitely issue direction to the corporation. Strategic direction was last formally issued to NTPC in 2002.

This issue was addressed in the electricity review undertaken during the last government, and the NWT has committed to implementing a formal accountability framework with respect to the corporation, and this includes letters of expectations and regular meetings with MLAs. This is another issue that will be reinforced through the Energy Plan.

On to the issue of the positions to Hay River, some of the questions were about when the jobs will be relocated to Hay River. The aim is to be operational in Hay River as of April 1st or as soon as possible in the new fiscal year. The vacant positions will be advertised for competition early in March. The positions will be staffed as soon as possible and training will commence immediately. Public Works and Services is managing the office space requirements in Hay River. I know some Members had talked about an analysis of why this was done. The department and the government were acting on the direction of this House that were looking for departments to look at their operations to see which components of the operation could be relocated outside of Yellowknife. After I'm done with my comments, Madam Chair, perhaps I will get Deputy Minister Vician just to go through some of the detailed analysis that was done on the relocation of these positions to Hay River.

Just an update on the Mackenzie Gas Project, work on the project is continuing to maintain compliance with the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity issued by the NEB, as I mentioned earlier. We are going to continue with our funding for the APG as we move forward.

An issue that was common to many Members was the increase in marketing money for NWT Tourism and I'm very happy to see that in the budget this year. I have been, and always will be, a big supporter of tourism. I have a big background in tourism and I do believe, going forward, we are going to find more funding for marketing tourism here in the Northwest Territories.

The \$600,000 is a start, Madam Chair. There's \$600,000 slated for next year, with that money getting to \$1.2 million the following year. So that is certainly in the right direction. I appreciate the support of Members looking to add to the marketing dollars that we have here in the territory to market and promote the tourism product we have here and the great scenery, events and everything else that makes us the Northwest Territories. Again, I thank Members for their support in that.

Just talking a little bit about tourism marketing, marketing is a part of a number of factors that attract tourists to a destination. Again, there are tourism products, accessibility, world events, people look at exchange rates, the weather, but you have to have marketing. If you don't have marketing, nobody is going to know about your

territory, what you have to offer. Promotion and marketing are key to all of this. We are conducting an ad tracking study of this season's Arctic Air commercials and print campaign and we should have the results of that survey sometime this fall. NWT Tourism also measures its success in terms of the number of people who request information, jump from their website to other operators' websites and other indicators that their marketing efforts have attracted the interest of potential visitors. All of these indicators show positive trends and I think the added marketing dollars are going to go a long way to increasing those trends.

There were some questions on the SEED program. The SEED budget for 2012-2013 was \$3.991 million. This includes funding specifically for arts and fine crafts, \$125,000; the film sector, \$100,000; and the Prospectors Grubstake Program, \$50,000. The SEED policy programs continue to be very well subscribed. In fact, in 2011-2013, fiscal SEED policy budget of \$3.991 million was oversubscribed to just over \$4 million.

I want to get into a subject that, again, a lot of Members touched on. It's something I feel has great promise here in the NWT for us, and that is agriculture and fisheries. We've had some real good success on the agricultural front. One of my proudest days as Minister was the day we opened the egg grading facility in Hay River and we got a tour of the facilities there with the chicken barns. It's amazing what can happen here in the Northwest Territories when you really think about having all these chickens producing 3.2 million eggs in the NWT. Going into a grocery store here in Yellowknife or other communities and being able to buy eggs produced here in the Northwest Territories off the shelf; that says a lot. We need to get more of that happening here in the NWT. I think we have a lot of promise. I've been up to Norman Wells and saw Doug Whiteman's potatoes there, and he's also branching out in other areas and we wish him well in his pursuits.

MLA Bromley talked the other day about composting. We have to have flexibility in our programming to allow for activities such as composting and even livestock, for that matter. Where there's a will, there's a way. It was mentioned previously in this House about the Growing Forward 2 funding that we signed off in Whitehorse at the agricultural FPT last fall. We are still negotiating the details of that agreement and, certainly, I think we've got lots to look forward to when it comes to getting money into people's hands here in the Northwest Territories that can do something with it and grow our agriculture sector.

On the fisheries front, I've mentioned this before and I'll say it again, over the next two and a half years one of my primary goals as Minister is to see the fishery on Great Slave Lake get turned around

and sent in a positive direction. I really want to put a lot of effort into seeing this happen. I know how important it is to the community of Hay River, and even here in Yellowknife, to see that happen and we are going to continue to meet with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. We've met with them previously. I do believe there are ways we can work together to ensure that the foundation is there for success for the fishery to come back to what it once was on Great Slave Lake. We have to get a lot closer to the quota that is available there, and I do believe that working with the fishermen, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and our government, if we put our effort into it, I really do believe that we can make some positive progress there for the fishery.

I know MLA Yakeleya talked about Great Bear Lake as well. That is some very good trout from Great Bear Lake. There certainly has to be a market for that trout somewhere. It is a fantastic fish.

The next question was on the permafrost scientist position. I just wanted to give a bit of an update on that, if I could. The position was included in the 2012-13 budget, as Members are aware, and I was pleased to provide committee with the review of the issues related to the staffing of that position and the stationing of the position in the geoscience office. The position has been filled and the incumbent will be starting at the beginning of April 2013. So we are very happy about that. I think it's a position that's going to serve us very well.

On energy, there was a question about water monitoring in Kakisa, why are we doing this. The purpose of this program is to understand the flow rates and volumes of the river and its hydro potential. The community has expressed an interest in understanding the potential of the Kakisa for electrical power generation and we haven't got a specific proposal that has been developed.

I think it was MLA Yakeleya who talked about the Canol and what are ITI's plans. We cannot put a full marketing effort behind promoting the trail until we can fully establish the Canol as a territorial park. I know the Member and I have had many discussions about this. We have to have appropriate park infrastructure such as river crossings, emergency shelters and remediation of hazardous waste. That work has to be completed and we have to continue the dialogue with the leaders in the Sahtu to continue to move that project forward. However, the trail still receives notice from extreme outdoor adventure types, and NWT Tourism recently supported an extreme mountain bike crossing of the trail, a sport that leaves virtually no environmental footprint. The experiences of these bikers were featured in Explorer magazine this fall and will bring attention to the Canol Trail in the future. So that was some good news.

I want to touch a little bit on the Inuvik gas situation. The GNWT continues to work very closely with the town and the joint venture companies on a solution for Inuvik. This is something that we've been discussing through MECC and through the community of Inuvik. In fact, there was a meeting just this morning with the mayor, the SAO and representatives of the companies. MECC is going to continue to provide the committee with updates on the progress of this critical issue.

Also, there was some talk about tourism promotion in other regions. I think that's certainly something that I support and I know Members of this House support. NWT Tourism promotes tourism throughout the Northwest Territories. ITI certainly supports those efforts as well. NWT Tourism supports travel, trade, and media visits to all regions of the Northwest Territories. They offer co-op advertising opportunities to all tourism operators throughout the NWT.

The 2013 Explorer's Guide promotes each region of the NWT. We expect that with increased funding, NWT Tourism will increase its regional marketing efforts.

As far as community operators, they continue to provide excellent products. For instance, this summer Deline will be hosting four trips of one-week duration that will provide visitors with a variety of experiences in the community and on Great Bear Lake. These trips will be booked in advance and sold to Europeans and southern Canadians who will be paying a lot of money for this experience. Grey Goose Lodge will be the coordinator and host for this experience, and it's marketed through NWT Tourism. That's just an example of how NWT Tourism helps regional operators like Grey Goose Lodge in the community of Deline.

There was some talk, also, about some film incentive options. ITI and ECE are committed to supporting the healthy growth of the NWT film and media arts industry and we will continue to work with industry to ensure its future development and growth. ITI is working closely with the Department of Finance and reviewed possible film incentive program options for the NWT with specific consideration of the following three options: implementation of film rebates, implementation of a film tax credit system, or increased dedicated funding through the SEED policy. We're going to be continuing to move that along. The purpose of the Film Tax Incentive Program or Film Rebate Program would be to assist the film industry in lowering the cost of productions, thereby making NWT a more attractive industry location. As a result of this analysis, it was concluded that the best approach is to provide funding to non-NWT film industry businesses to undertake production in the NWT would be a Film Rebate Program rather than a film tax credit system. ITI will be reviewing this

option further with the intention of pursuing a proposal through the GNWT business planning process, so Members can look forward to that coming through the business planning process later this year.

There have been a number of questions in the House with regard to BIP. In my almost 10 years here, there have always been questions in regard to the Business Incentive Policy. A significant review was undertaken just a few years ago and the most recent changes to the BIP were brought in back in the fall of last year in response to feedback received from business associations, other stakeholders and the public. I have indicated a willingness, and I will again say this today, to work with SCEDI and Members. If they feel a review is warranted of the current Business Incentive Policy, I'd be more than happy to sit down with Members and discuss how this review could be conducted and what exactly we would like to be targeting.

Everybody that is a Member of this Legislature wants to see any and every dollar we can stay here in the Northwest Territories. We have to try our best to ensure that happens. If we didn't have the current Business Incentive Policy today and tried to bring in something similar, we couldn't bring in policy like this today. It's there, we can fine tune it, we can review it again if that's what Members want to do, and from what I'm hearing, I think that's what the Members would like to see done. I'm, again, willing to listen and work with Members to see that happen.

With Mr. Dolynny, a number of things that he touched on, the first I just want to reiterate something and I've made a couple of statements just recently on the Economic Opportunities Strategy, the Mineral Development Strategy, and other Ministers have made statements as well. All of these have to come together. It's imperative that all the work that the government is doing is going to come together, it is going to be weaved together. We fully expect that to happen. There are a lot of balls in the air, there is, and we're doing a lot of work. We can't be doing work in isolation of one another. It all has to come together. I am very optimistic that we can arrive at an end product that is going to bring all this together and chart a course for the future of the territory.

Also, on to the diamond file, I agree with a lot of what Mr. Dolynny had to say. I think we had the title here in Yellowknife of Diamond Capital of North America. We produce 15 percent of the world's total production of diamonds. My goal as Minister is to get the secondary industry back here into the NWT, for it to be successful, for us to protect the brand like the polar bear. I think we've made a number of decisions recently that are going to lead us in that positive direction. We continue to have discussions with other companies, looking at setting up factories

here in Yellowknife. Our primary focus today, though, is to get the two factories on diamond row back up and running, and there are agreements, through the sale of those factories, that are going to put the polar bear back in the global marketplace and that's very exciting for the NWT. It's an iconic trademark and it's something that I think is going to do very well once it gets back out into the marketplace. We're very optimistic about how that's going to work for us.

On the SEAs, we continue to meet with the mines. There was an MOU that's expired. I believe that was from 2008. We continue to meet with the mines. I recently had a meeting with Minister Lafferty and Minister Beaulieu. It's not just ITI. We have the responsibility for the SEA itself, but this touches a lot of other government departments, especially Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment. We take those SEAs very seriously. We try to work with the mines. They have provided a tremendous amount of business opportunities here to the NWT. They are the backbone of our economy here in the NWT, they provide jobs. We need to work with them.

On the training and development side it is a two-way street. Government certainly has a responsibility to have the training and education, and on the social side of things trying to get that positive messaging out to communities so people can be employed at the mines. We continue to work with them. I think that's the best approach, is to continue to work with the mines so that they know what page we're on and we know what page they're on. It is certainly advantageous for the mining companies themselves to have employees that live here in the Northwest Territories. They fully acknowledge that. They need that workforce and our role as government is to help develop that workforce. That's something I think we can certainly make some strides on.

We continue, through Minister Lafferty, to have discussions with Nunavut and the Yukon Territory on a pan-territorial Mine Training Strategy that is going to, hopefully, soon deliver some sizable dollars to the three northern territories for mine training. If you look at what's happening in the Yukon and Nunavut and here in the NWT, those dollars are much needed, those training components are very necessary for us to get a workforce developed here in the NWT and the other two territories as well. We have to continue moving forward.

The Mine Training Society here in the NWT has been very successful. I was just on a trip last summer to Prairie Creek where there was a number of young Aboriginal folks from Mr. Menicoche's communities in Nahendeh that were employed at Prairie Creek who were getting those on-the-job training experiences. It was really nice to see the

smiles on their faces. That's what this is all about, is we have to train people, we have to get them those types of opportunities through mine training and other training initiatives. I know in the Sahtu with the oil and gas, the Norman Wells Land Corporation has been very out in front of it and taking the initiative to get out and get a training program put in place. Those things pay huge dividends for us as a territory.

Mr. Menicoche had some concerns with the tourism budget as well. I appreciate the support. I believe we just got a letter off to Mr. Menicoche on the Big River Man. We will certainly get Mr. Strel in touch with the ITI office in Fort Simpson and, with any luck, we'll see him swimming the Mackenzie River. Kevin will have to swim with him.

Mr. Menicoche also talked about the Deh Cho loop. I know there's a big connection with the state of Highway No. 7 and whether or not people actually go on that loop. That's not something that's lost on me or the government. We have committed \$1 million this year to Highway No. 7 and \$3 million ongoing. We are going to put some effort and capital dollars into Highway No. 7. Tourism is going to be a big part of that. I thank the Member, also, for his support and the Member's support of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

The next Member was Mr. Bromley. I guess I could start with fracking, as I haven't mentioned that one yet. I've covered a lot of other areas that the Member covered. On fracking, I appreciate the Member's views on this and my belief is we can arrive at the guidelines working with the Minister of ENR on a safe practice. We are going to get Members to an actual fracking site. We hope to do that in April. There are plans being put together as we speak to make that happen.

The other part of that, I think, is very important. I've talked to Mr. Yakeleya about this. We need to get the Aboriginal leaders from the Sahtu to see not only a well that's being fracked, but also in discussions with some of the Aboriginal leaders in southeast Saskatchewan and North Dakota that have had businesses start up and be very successful because of the economic activity in southeast Saskatchewan and into North Dakota. That's the type of dialogue I think we need to see happen. There are tremendous opportunities but the Member has concerns about the environment, and rightfully so. We have to make sure we get this right. We believe we can get it right and we will get guidelines. We have the report coming back from the SCEDI's report on fracking that was presented last year. We will have a report coming back to the House during this session, so the Members have got that to look forward to. That will all help lead us toward guidelines for the use of hydraulic fracturing here in the NWT.

I think a number of the other topics were covered. Oh, yes.

On the BIP office, I have talked about the BIP office but for the detailed analysis. When I'm concluded, I'll have Deputy Minister Vician talk about the analysis that went into relocating those positions to Hay River.

I, again, appreciate Mr. Hawkins's support for NWT Tourism and marketing the Northwest Territories. The branding continues on multiple fronts across the NWT with tourism itself, Spectacular NWT, we've got the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program, the NWT Arts brand, Made in the NWT with the chamber, certified diamonds, the polar bear diamond and the Come Make Your Mark Campaign. So we are branding, and I understand what the Member is talking about, but we continue to look at multiple fronts on the branding of our products and we will continue to do that.

Perhaps there I know I am a bit long-winded, but I wanted to make sure I try to touch on everybody's concerns and I probably missed some, but I'm going to go to Deputy Minister Vician. Maybe he can be a bit more concise on some of the analysis.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Just a bit long-winded, a bit over your 10 minutes, but that's quite alright. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be brief. The primary assessment in determining where to position the BIP office was on the basis of trying to ensure continuity of programs and services to our businesses in the North. Just for reference, in January of 2013, there were over 1,376 businesses registered under BIP. Of that, 79 percent of that number are located in Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik.

In order to ensure that the four positions that provide the oversight and assistance, often face-to-face assistance to NWT businesses, were as best as possible available to the businesses in the area where most of them existed. The recommendation was that Hay River was the most reasonable location at this time to locate the unit. The unit will continue to provide support to other departments, both here in headquarters and across the Northwest Territories, but its position and location is most effective in that manner. We have done everything in our utmost to ensure that the costs are minimized in terms of this transition of the office from Yellowknife to Hay River. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Committee, I believe that concludes general comments. Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, committee. We will move on to detail. If we could

look at page 12-7, the summary page. We will defer this page and move on to page 12-8, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions?

Thank you, committee. We will move on to page 12-9, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, revenue summary. Any questions? Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have just two quick questions on here. Actually, just one. I see the amortization of the capital contributions. This has been an ongoing line entry from 2011 to 2012, now 2013. With the straight line depreciation of capital and with the new debt definitions that we've had in the last year, I was surprised to see that debt number is the same number. Things fall off, assets fall off, and those numbers should be changing with every fiscal year. Can the Minister verify if indeed that number is accurate? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Ms. Magrum, please.

MS. MAGRUM: Thank you, Madam Chair. The amortization of capital contributions is for the current amortization portion for gifted assets. We have a gifted asset in Fort Simpson. It was a building that was gifted to us by the federal government. As well, we have some gifted assets through the federal stimulus projects in 2011 and 2012.

In straight line amortization, until an asset is fully amortized, the amount will be the same every year until the asset is fully amortized. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I thank Ms. Magrum for that. Can we get an indication as to when the anniversary date of that amortization will be falling off the books? Thank you.

MS. MAGRUM: I would have to get back to the Chair on that item.

MR. DOLYNNY: The other question I have is with respect to the egg marketing levy. Can we get an explanation as to what exactly this line entry is? It's a new one for this year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. MAGRUM: The egg marketing levy is a portion that is charged on our egg producer. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: I would assume that is a levy, but is it for packaging? Is it for marketing? Can we get a bit more of an explanation of why there is that levy? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. I'll go to the deputy minister, Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The egg marketing regulations that fall under the Agricultural Products Marketing Act require that egg producers pay an egg marketing levy to the Agricultural

Products Marketing Council. That ratio is .016 dollars per dozen. It is a requirement that was established at the beginning when the act and the regulations were put in place. Payments to levy are met each quarter, and they're shown as revenue, so it's essentially a fee as part of receiving the quota for the production of eggs in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Are there any other questions on page 12-9? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Madam Chair, just to follow up on that, is that something we then pass on to that council or is it a benefit to this government? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Vician, please.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's a revenue that accrues to the GNWT and is used for the purpose of agricultural expenditures. Again, it's revenue to the GNWT, so the appropriation would define an expenditure. As the committee knows, a significant investment is made in the agricultural branch, so we would attribute part of that revenue possibly being accounted for in the agricultural expense. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Any other comments or questions on page 12-9? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to pick up where Mr. Dolynny left off on a particular issue, the egg marketing levy. It actually draws a different type of question for me but on the same kind of idea.

There are a few people who raise chickens in the Yellowknife area and some of them actually sell eggs. What type of requirements are the cut-off where you can be in that business? What does the department know? Are you able to sell a hundred dozen eggs? Any more than a hundred dozen means you have to get in a business? Are there different types of health standard requirements around that? There are a couple of people in the city, as well, who have chickens running around in their yards. So I'm curious as to what type of influence, enforcement and regulation does the department have in that regard. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The act and the regulations define commercial production. At this point in time, if a party wishes to enter into commercial production for the purpose of sale, they are required to register under the Egg Marketing Regulations. That requires the party to deal with the council.

At this point in time, we have about 123,000 layers allocated and 100 percent of that quota less approximately about 6,000 layers has been allocated to parties across the Northwest Territories. There remain a small allocation of 6,000 layers for the purpose of interest of any other producers or new entrants that wish to get into the market.

At this point in time, on the specifics of a party here in Yellowknife, I'm not aware of the commercial operation, but those opportunities exist still in the Northwest Territories and the party would deal with the council to seek that authority. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Maybe I'll say it for the record, the layers are chickens that lay eggs, which sounds obvious, but that said, if anyone follows this closely as I do they may have wondered what that is.

If the deputy minister could elaborate a little more on the council, their role, who's on the council, explain where the council's authority comes from and what the relationship is with the general public. Thank you.

MR. VICIAN: Madam Chair, I should have referred to the board. The members of the Egg Producers Board as of 2012 are Jackie Milne, Roy Fabien, Michael Wallington, John Penner, Glenn Wallington and Bruce Ramage. They make up the Egg Producers Board, and they review the issue of allocation and responsibility for compliance with the regulations pursuant to the act. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: Are they all out of the Hay River area? What type of public relationship do they have in the sense of letting people know what they do, who they are, who will they meet? Are we really talking about a board that governs production just in Hay River and would they qualify as a territorial board in that regard, or are they just a Hay River board looking after a niche market?

MR. VICIAN: No, not all are residents of Hay River. Chief Fabien, of course, with the Katlodeeche band; Mr. Penner is an operator out of British Columbia who currently has operational authority for the barn in Hay River; Mr. Ramage is an Alberta resident but has previous ownership of the barn in Hay River; Mike Wallington and Glen Wallington, of course, out of Hay River; and Jack Milne, with the agriculture community in Hay River as well. Their responsibility, as I said, is to oversee adherence to the requirements for managing the quota in the Northwest Territories. The Minister makes those appointments, and in terms of process, they continue to provide reports to the department and an annual report is tabled in this Legislature under the Agricultural Products Act as required under legislation. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. HAWKINS: Just one last question in this regard. Are they seen as a territorial board for egg producing or are they seen as a local micro-board looking after a smaller region? I would just hate to think that somebody expressed interest from the Sahtu to start raising layers and the Hay River-stacked board says no to protect their interest in the market. I guess, to demonstrate public confidence and surety, how do you describe the board in its role at the territorial level? Are they a local microcosm board or are they a territorial board?

MR. VICIAN: They represent a Northwest Territories board overseeing the entire territorial egg production arrangements. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Before we leave this page of 12-9 on general revenue, I'm just looking for inconsistencies in reporting years and looking at patterns. I notice in the interest earned in the NWT Opportunities Fund in 2011-2012, there was nothing noted. Yet, in 2012-2013, \$1.043 million and again in 2013-14, nothing recorded. Can the Minister indicate why the pattern and maybe an explanation as to why we see only the one entry in the 2012-13 Main Estimates.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That would be as a result of a one-time exit of interest earned through the NWT Opportunities Fund, but for a more detailed response, we can go to the deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's shown as a one-time revenue to the Government of the Northwest Territories. As we spoke previously, revenue earned by the NWT Opportunities Fund is considered separately from the revenues from the GNWT. As part of the decision to invest part of the retained earnings of the NWT Opportunities Fund into economic investment programs for the GNWT, a payment was made by the NWT Opportunities Fund in 2012-13 and that payment is hereby reflected as \$1.043 million. That funding was received by the GNWT and shown as revenue in the Department of ITI's budget, but it's treated as revenue to the general revenue to the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: So just a point of clarification, this \$1.040 million here, would this not be considered interest charged to the proponent, let's say, who had access to these opportunity funds? Thank you.

MR. VICIAN: No, Madam Chair. This would be treated as strictly revenue for the GNWT. Interest earned by the NWT Opportunities Fund would be reflected in the income statements of the Opportunities Fund which are accounted for independently. They are recorded on the public accounts as a stand-alone entity and, in doing so, they would not show up at that point. The overall revenues would show up as interest earned on that particular financial statement. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: I'm still a bit unclear here exactly where the source of this interest, where it's coming from and why just the one-time insertion in the main estimates. Can you explain again so I can follow the deputy minister? Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. VICIAN: The NWT Opportunities Fund was established as an independent entity. Obviously under the direction and management of the Financial Management Board, but in doing so, a separate entity and accounting for as an independent entity on the public accounts in a separate account. Interest earned by that entity with its loan management and portfolio was reported in that income stated. Under the FMB's direction, any retained earnings would be invested in that fund but at some point in time would have to be remitted or returned to the GNWT under its economic plan. In the case of 2012-13, the \$1.040 million was paid to the GNWT from the NWT Opportunities Fund as part of the earnings it received over time from the interest on one particular loan and interest earned by the overall account by deposit. So it really is two different accounts and to reflect the accounting, you would have to refer to the stand-alone financial statements of the NWT Opportunities Fund. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: Much clearer, Madam Chair. The point I have under my assumption, there was only one proponent who had access to the Opportunities Fund during the life of this fund and the only way that I can see that that money was derived into this fund, in terms of earnings or revenue, was by means of interest. How can just one year have interest-bearing revenue when this loan was over a number of years? Would this not be reported as multi-year, very similar amounts of interest or straight line interest calculations on the amount borrowed or lent to that one proponent? If I can get clarification why we only see one entry in those three years and the explanation to what about other entries to the interest charges of that loan.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Interest was derived from the Opportunities Fund. Yes, there is the one big loan but there are a number of other investments through the Opportunities Fund that would have built up the

interest. This is a portion of that interest that was taken out to be used for the Economic Opportunities Strategy and the Mineral Development Strategy, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Mr. Dolynny, anything further?

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Would the Minister characterize this as a balloon payment that came and originated from the Opportunities Fund?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: It was a payment when the government decided to roll up the NWT Opportunities Fund. That loan came back and the interest that accrued on it was in the account. So, yes, the answer would be yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you. Mr. Bromley.

Mr. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just very quickly, would the Minister know off hand what amount was not transferred to ITI that was gained as interest? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thanks, Mr. Bromley. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, Madam Chair. There's approximately \$7 million that remains.

MR. BROMLEY: Was there an internal competition for these dollars? Obviously you had a couple of projects here, economic mineral development strategies. How did that work? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: There wasn't a competition, no. The stipulation for interest earned through the NWT Opportunities Fund was to be earmarked for economic opportunities and pursuits in the territory. We are currently putting together a proposal through FMB to look at what we do with the remaining balance that's there. As soon as we get that proposal complete, we'd certainly look at taking it to FMB and Members will also get to see that proposal.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Committee, page 12-9, any further questions? Page 12-10, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, active position summary. Page 12-11, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, active positions, Business Development Investment Corporation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 12-13, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$7.908 million. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. What we're seeing in a lot of departments, especially in the corporate management sector, I like to refer to as performance measures. I assume these would

be the same performance measures that could be possibly governed and used for bonuses or performance bonuses. Does the Department of ITI have any specific performance measures that it does use for its corporate management structure?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the current performance review process, executive managers, managers and staff have established performance objectives that are identified each year. Those performance objectives are evaluated on an annual basis and assessed in the responsibility area that the respective director, manager or staff person is responsible for. For example, an executive in the tourism area would be measured against the performance with regard to specific results regarding effort and results pertaining to attracting tourism visitation to the North and tourism spent in the North. In each case there are performance measures that would reflect the appropriate responsibility area.

MR. DOLYNNY: In the spirit of transparency and accountability, whether this question is asked here or asked in public accounts, how are these performance measures being able to be communicated to standing committee as a way of keeping track of the performance grading of the corporate management of this department?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I've never seen that level of detail at committee but the suggestion is one that it's the first time I've heard it. Maybe we could go to Deputy Minister Vician for a response.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point it's my understanding that the performance measurement process is internal to the department. So in the case of any given department, like ITI, the supervisor and the subordinate would go through the performance review process on an annual basis. That reporting would be referred to through the chain to the deputy minister, who reviews the reviews themselves and identifies and reviews the objectives for the period, then those become part of the personnel file. There's no further disclosure of that information outside of what I call the standard performance measures that the GNWT makes public in terms of expectations on performance management in financial and other managerial human resources areas.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Vician. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Just so we're perfectly clear, I don't think the Member here is asking for HR-related performance measures in general. I think I'm looking for overall performance measures as a means of department activity under the guise of corporate management. Can we get, maybe, some idea that if we can work towards looking at the transparency of some of those larger picture items for the performance of management so that we know, as Regular Members, are all the initiatives that were put forth to corporate management given the fact this is a fairly detailed department, that we too as Members can see and track the performance and evaluate the performance, not the individual HR performance of individuals but the overall performance of, let's say, ITI in general? That's my question.

MR. VICIAN: Of course we'll be more than pleased to provide additional details. We assess our results on an annual basis in a composite way as part of the business planning process. At the end of each fiscal year, a process is initiated with regard to reviewing how the objectives that were set out in the business plan on an annual basis were achieved. We report those reports to this Legislature through the business planning process and, of course, during the committee review of our business plans, are there to account for our results in the past year's performance. Obviously more than pleased to improve on that process if information is needed further and, of course, through the Minister providing committee updates on particular issues, there's more information to be had at that point too.

MR. DOLYNNY: No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. The issue that Mr. Dolyunny brings up is a good one. I think it's a discussion that all Members probably should have. From my perspective, we stand up as Ministers and if a department's falling down in an area or has questions in an area, we answer that on the floor of the House or through the business plans. That has been the process. It's been political, questions asked, issues addressed through the department and that goes down through the corporate management of the department to whatever manager or director is responsible for a certain area. If we want to delve a little bit deeper, that's an interesting aspect. It's the first I've heard of it. We could certainly discuss it a little bit further.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Page 12-13, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$7.908 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 12-14, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, corporate management, grants and contributions, nil. We have nothing to agree on. Page 12-15, Industry, Tourism and Investment, information item, corporate management, active positions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Page 12-17, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$5.725 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wanted to ask the Minister, regarding this, if he could do a very brief summary as to how his department has responded to this happening up in the Sahtu with regard to the oil and gas exploration, human resources capacity-wise and other socio-economic or straight economic plans for the upcoming years of the oil and gas exploration.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've had a number of initiatives that we've done in the Sahtu. Going back to last fall, we had the readiness session. When the Members asked me questions here in the House just recently about getting a post-mortem on this winter's operations in the spring, that's something I feel the department can certainly help out with, and I know Transportation's involved in that as well, so we can look forward to that. We've also got this business development officer that you see in the budget at ITI.

Our staff have done a great deal in trying to coordinate, as the Member knows, all the activity that is taking place in the Sahtu. It's been challenging for our staff there and they've been stretched pretty good over the winter months, especially with the activity that's going on there.

We've also completed a study to estimate the potential impact of shale oil and gas development in the Northwest Territories, and we're continuing to work with ENR and Health and Social Services to prepare an information package for the Executive Council on the impacts of shale oil and gas development in the NWT. We are also working with ENR on the response to the SCEDI's report on fracking.

I mentioned earlier, we are going to try and plan another coordinated visit to a multi-staged fracking well. Whether it's in southeastern Saskatchewan or in North Dakota remains to be seen, but we are going to make that happen sometime in April.

The Member can look forward to ITI's continued support in his region. We also are the conduit to the

other Ministers and we try to keep the other Ministers updated as to what's going on in the Sahtu. You can see throughout the budget that government, whether it's Education, Culture and Employment or other departments, are taking notice of what's happening in the Sahtu and we're going to need to make decisions relative to what is happening there. We continue to do that and I thank the Member for his question and his support.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister pinpointed an issue with me that I would certainly like to have some access to once it's vetted through the proper channels. That's the study of the potential impacts of the Canol Trail in our region. I'd like to have a look at that along with other leaders in the Sahtu and Members from this side. Would he be able to have something ready for us in a timely manner once the Executive Council takes a look at it and comes over to our side with it?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We'd be more than happy once this gets complete, hopefully sometime this spring, and that we'll get it to the Executive Council and share it with Members. I think it's going to be very, very telling. Some of the preliminary numbers I've seen – and I know the Member was there at the readiness session and when we met with the chamber of commerce and business leaders in the Sahtu after that session – if you had 10 wells there what it would translate into straight up economic opportunity and it's tremendous what would happen there.

What has to happen is the development has to be done in a sustainable manner and it's the type of development that is generational in nature. It could be there for generations to come if it's done in a sustainable, coordinated fashion.

MR. YAKELEYA: The Minister is very accurate in regard to the potential in the Sahtu and the Canol Trail play of the exploration of talking to people who have worked or are working in those areas, the oil companies, the Minister himself has talked to some pretty well-informed people who are looking at the Canol Trail play, and I think we started to realize that the potential that he's saying.

My point is that I appreciate it on behalf of the Sahtu for the readiness session, because that was very timely. That talks about leadership from the department, we look forward to those types of discussions and more concrete in terms of big picture and all the different fronts that we have to look at. We continue to support. That's what the Sahtu is meeting right now, actually tomorrow, they're going to Deline. They're all going to go over there tomorrow and they're going to have a look at these other issues here. They're going to be talking amongst themselves as to the impacts that are happening right now in the Sahtu.

I'm going to ask the Minister from here on in as to whether we start to coordinate in some of these

activities that are happening in our region. The whole Northwest Territories is going to benefit greatly on this, and if we do it properly, do it right, we can do well. We just need coordinating efforts from our land claims, our Minister, to other organizations.

I think I want to leave it at that. I do thank the Minister for responding to me in a timely manner to some of the issues I had to look at in the Sahtu region. I will talk more about the Department of Transportation with my colleague Mr. Menicoche on the...(inaudible)...that happened in our region. It just happened. The oil companies wait with the material at Wrigley and it cost them tens of thousands of dollars. We have to look at some of those things that are going to improve the safety but also ensure that we're prepared from ITI and DOT. So those are the things that are challenging.

I think that we are up for the challenge for ensuring that next year we could greatly improve our transportation, because we have industry just begging to get into the region and do their work. We have a lot of workers from Gwich'in down in that area and I met them in Norman Wells. When I met those ladies at the restaurant, they were smiling. They were happy they were working. That's what we want to see: people working. But we also have some good questions on the concerns of the environment, so we have to be careful.

I look forward to some more good information on this area here, because I have a lot of hope for the North and for the people. I think just like the diamond mines on this side of the territory, we have the Sahtu oil and gas exploration happening and we can benefit.

Those are my questions for the Minister on this front here. Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I thank the Member for the questions. I guess, first off, it just holds tremendous promise for the region and for the territory. Again, we can't afford to mess this up. It has to be done right. We're going to take our time, we're going to get those guidelines together, and we're going to work with the communities. There is so much opportunity there. If more wells are drilled and this resource is proven up and gets to a stage where it's going to be commercially sent somewhere, there's the existing pipeline south from Norman Wells. In discussions with experts and industry, if the volumes are there, it would necessitate another oil pipeline south from Norman Wells.

Also, there will be large volumes of natural gas and other gas liquids produced as a by-product from the extraction of the shale oil which could potentially lead to a gas pipeline, as well, and opportunities for communities down the Mackenzie Valley for natural gas. That also could potentially bring into sharper focus Mackenzie gas, a stranded resource that

we've been trying to get to market for the past 40 years that could certainly bode well for the future of the Mackenzie gas, getting that to market as well. So there are lots of opportunities.

The Member is correct; this is far-reaching. I know MLA Menicoche was talking about some of the impacts recently because of road closures in his communities, as well, and in a resource play like this, that is why all the governments are involved. It's going to impact the justice system. It's going to impact schools, health care, social services. All of these government functions are going to be impacted. That's why it's so important that everybody is working on the same page and in the same direction when it comes to developing the potential that exists in the Sahtu.

I do think we're going about it correctly. We need to see some more wells drilled there. It has to be proven up. Then I think the transportation infrastructure is going to follow closely behind that. You can look at Husky building a 40-kilometre all-weather road into one of their exploration leases, and that's a 40 to 45 million dollar hit to build a road on the other side of the Mackenzie River. We know what it costs to build roads here in the NWT. There is willingness by industry, I would believe in discussions with them, to try to get a road built from Norman Wells to Wrigley. Once that resource is proven up, I think you'll see that initiative move forward quickly. We're hopeful that if we keep doing everything correctly and taking the right steps that that, in fact, is going to happen. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Minister. Next on my list is Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to start off probably with more of a clarification. This has to do with the NWT or NT geoscience offices. There was a note I left to myself last time we did it. I missed it last year and I made a promise not to miss it this year.

The funding to the geosciences office was included in the budget of 2011-2012 and it wasn't included last year. The last known number that we had to reference this by was about \$3 million.

Can the Minister indicate, within the minerals and petroleum resources budget here, where does the geoscience office funding fall under and what is that specific number? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Ms. Magrum.

MS. MAGRUM: The NTGO funding falls under the minerals, oil and gas portion of the minerals and petroleum resources. I don't have the exact breakdown of what that amount is for 2013-14, but we do budget that amount every year. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: Just a suggestion, Madam Chair, in the future. My recommendation is that should be a broken down expense line. It is a separate entity in itself and to bring into a general funding pool with so many different arms, it's very hard to keep consistencies from year to year for budget requirements. So would the department consider including it as a separate budget line in the next budget cycle?

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, we could look at putting a separate line item for that. Thanks.

MR. DOLYNNY: Madam Chair, I appreciate it. The next question has to deal with the mining and oil and gas, or MOG, which is related on this section. This section deals with negotiating of the approved NWT diamond manufacturers. It deals with rough diamonds. It deals with the certification process. The last official certifications that this government has issued, in my humble opinion, was in 2009-2010, yet, as I think I mentioned in some of my earlier Members' statements, a bit of a concern that we have retailers' clubs out there that are still selling or allegedly selling certified NWT diamonds under the polar ice brand, which is another one of our diamond trademarks. Has the department done a clean sweep to make sure that companies aren't fraudulently using our trademarks without the direct written permission of this government? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Vician.

MR. VICIAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Under the arrangements with previous manufacturers who are authorized to manufacture and use the government-certified diamond brand or the polar bear brand, those operators were then permitted to sell that product to authorized retailers in North America and elsewhere. Those retailers, of course, would have accumulated inventory and had the right to sell that inventory over whatever period of time necessary.

As committee is aware, the operators that we previously had a licence to do this no longer exist and the products that they would have sold to retailers would still be in inventory, potentially, in North America. Those are still allowed to be sold as government-certified or polar bear brand diamonds.

We continue to monitor closely the advertising practices across the country. We've had many experiences of what we consider inappropriate advertising of brand that we followed up on, and we rely on the services of both brand specialists and, of course, department staff to monitor this and track down any other complaints that are brought to our attention.

Overall, the permission to sell existing inventory exists by retailers that may still have inventory, but no further manufacturing sales under those previous arrangements are authorized. Of course, we're working with our two currently approved northern-authorized manufacturers to deal with that for the going forward approach. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MR. DOLYNNY: It's encouraging to hear that we're, indeed, keeping a vigilant eye on it. I think there are a number of us who are still a bit concerned that we do have some people within that old Retailers Club that are potentially questionable practices. I'll leave it at that here.

The secondary industry of diamonds is one, and it's really important to myself not just because it makes up a large part of the Range Lake riding but also for Yellowknife and the Northwest Territories. It's an opportunity for us to have a rebirth in the industry. Not many times in the course of history one is able to get back into the game, so to speak, and not only just on a national level but on an international level.

Now, the Minister is fully aware that I've brought up in the House many times my concern of the 2010 Diamond Policy Framework, which falls into the guise of the mining oil and gas description in this area. My concern is the fact that the framework itself is a very, I call it, umbrella-type statement that deals with the approved diamond manufacturer status and it does not provide what I considered a detailed roadmap, a proper compass heading as to what we need to do to ensure that our rough diamonds do remain here in the North, that we do not have to start shipping up our rough diamonds or boxes out of the country and then to bring them back into our country and bring them back to the North for diamond polishing. It just seems like a very antiquated way of doing business, one in which probably caused the demise the first time of this industry.

So again, I do appreciate the hard work that's been put into it. I know recently the Minister has undertaken an international tour with one of the Members, Member Blake, and I applaud the hard work of going to places like Antwerp and Belgium and London, as well as Botswana and Gabarun. Does the Minister have the ability to look at this policy to see if there's improvement so he can reassure not only the people of Range Lake, the people of the Northwest Territories, that we indeed have a proper roadmap, that we indeed have a proper pathway to make sure that we're doing everything humanly possible to make this industry successful with our opportunity of a second chance? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for his concern and his

questions regarding the secondary industry. In my time as a Member of this House, I've always had the belief in the industry. The bottom fell out in 2008-2009. We went from having factories to having nothing, and certainly, with the sale of these two factories, we've got an agreement on the polar bear, we've got somebody who is very passionate about rebirth of the industry and reviving this industry in Deepak International. We are very excited about the future of the secondary industry here in the Northwest Territories, and through the framework it certainly supports a value-added sector. That's something that's key to all of this.

In my time, and I've been involved in the diamond file going back to 1997 when I was a city councillor with the City of Yellowknife on the Secondary Industry Task Force with the City of Yellowknife, when we got out and started marketing the city as the Diamond Capital of North America, one of the main things that, through my involvement in that, was it's all about access to rough. If you have access to rough, people will come here to get that rough. With some of the changing of the landscape on the mining side here in the Northwest Territories, we are continuing a dialogue with Harry Winston on perhaps getting rough being able to be supplied here in Yellowknife. That's a huge opportunity for us. We have to ensure that there's a supply to northern manufacturers and we've got agreements with existing producers to see that happen.

Part of the exercise in talking to De Beers and going on that tour was to talk about Gahcho Kue and what is going to happen with the diamonds from Gahcho Kue. We need to ensure that there's integrity in the system, there's control, and certainly, this is a highly valued product. Just the export of diamonds alone puts the Northwest Territories, out of the 13 jurisdictions in Canada, fifth on foreign export in this country and it's because of diamonds.

My belief is there's a lot more diamonds out there. We've got some companies that are going to be ramping up exploration efforts this coming summer to find more diamonds and there's a lot of potential on the existing properties, both at the former BHP and at Diavik, and we're very excited about the future of diamond mining here, and the secondary industry here in the Northwest Territories.

Just in this past year and a half we've come a long way. We're going to get these factories opened, we're going to get this done. We are going to have an industry here and we're also anxious to see what else we can do. I mentioned earlier, we are still in discussion with other companies that are interested in doing business here in the Northwest Territories, and it's getting out and promoting the opportunity that's here and seeking out that investment.

We hopefully will get some more investment here in Yellowknife and in the Northwest Territories when it comes to the secondary industry, and my goal as Minister is to ensure that there's a ready supply of rough diamonds here. That's what this is all about, is having the diamonds here so people can access them and we can have that secondary industry here and put 45 or 50 jobs in the Member's riding. That's what this is all about and I think we can do a lot more of that. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: That's great. Thank you very much. I appreciate the Minister's hard work and I don't think that's the question here. I appreciate everything that they have done to get us this far and all the hard work.

The question, Madam Chair, is pure and simple. If you don't have a plan, if you don't have a business plan, how do you communicate that to stakeholders? How do you bring investors? How do you bring the government in line with future funding or future growth, job prosperity and job security?

The current Diamond Policy Framework that was established in 2010 does not do that, it's too limited in design. So I'll just leave that one last question, I know my time is coming up here. What are we doing to secure the rough diamonds that stay in the North so we don't have to send them out to evaluation, out to Antwerp or Gabarun or places like London, England, or even Dubai? What are we doing to secure that that rough diamond goes from a mine to Yellowknife, and then manufactured and polished here in Yellowknife and evaluated and graded? What are we doing for that?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That is exactly what MLA Blake and I were doing on our recent trip, is trying to talk to producers to ensure that rough diamonds are available here in Yellowknife. Again, that's my goal as Minister, to get agreements in place that will see that happen. We're looking at Gahcho Kue and, again, the landscape has changed with Harry Winston purchasing BHP, it's going to be called Dominion Diamond Mining now, and the prospect, I know Rio is interested in looking at their operation when it comes to diamonds. There's a prospect there that one company could own both of those mines and that certainly changes a lot of things for us here in the Northwest Territories when it comes not only to mining and opportunities for residents and businesses here in the NWT and extending mine life, but it also bodes very well for the secondary industry here in the Northwest Territories. Again, we continue that dialogue and discussion and we hope to have an agreement with Dominion Diamond sometime in the very near future. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think this Mineral Development Strategy is something

that's underway. I know we've got a lot of happy industry out there. I'm not sure that that's totally in line with the public interest, but we seem to be handing the strategy over to them and saying go for it.

But I want to bounce off the Minister the statement that we don't need more mines as much as we need more residents working in the mines we have, and better economic rent or return from the extraction of our resources and then replacement of mines as they reach the end of production. A good way to do this would be to put an area up for bid when we need more development with the appropriate lead time, recognizing it takes five to 10 years. Then, of course, we'd have trained people ready for the jobs.

I know the Minister is familiar with the situation in Botswana where they own, I believe, 50 percent. The Minister is familiar with Norway, where the only resource and they contract out development with a guaranteed rate of return of about 9 percent for oil and gas. Obviously they're, according to the Minister of Finance, up around \$600 billion in their reserve fund now and investing it globally, because it's so big that it affects the local economy if they start spending it locally. These guys have an assured future. Can we go there?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I think I remember hearing somebody else say the exact same thing that Mr. Bromley mentioned, a certain MP from around here.

Getting back to Mr. Bromley's point, we have to use the devolution process. I think once devolution is upon us – the jurisdiction's currently with the federal government – this Legislature, at some point in time, is going to be able to make decisions like the ones that Mr. Bromley talks about.

When it comes to the Mineral Development Strategy, I think it's very important to realize that currently, when a deposit is discovered and it's deemed economically viable to pursue, it takes approximately 10 to 12 years for that deposit to eventually become a mine. When it comes to diamond mines, I know we're looking at opening a fourth mine at Gahcho Kue. We need to ensure that the exploration work is getting done, that the next Diavik or the next Ekati is going to be discovered, because, like I said, it's going to take 10 to 12 years to get that mine up and running. We've been talking about Gahcho Kue, I first heard about it probably about 10 years ago.

MR. BROMLEY: Of course, much of what I was saying here was picked up by the Minister himself during the 16th Assembly when I really agreed with him on this. I wonder what the situation... I don't hear these sorts of kerfuffles in Botswana or Norway. The process seems to be straightforward, the benefits to the public who own the resource are very straightforward, the standards are clear and

are met and, in fact, are standards held up globally. We don't hear about the sorts of things that we hear right here in the Northwest Territories, where we're left holding the bag and our people have been removed from their hunting and fishing area essentially forever.

I would like the Minister to consider how we can get there. Is this not something really valid? I might have been referring to Mr. Bevington, a Member of Parliament and the NDP. I'm not talking party politics here; I'm talking benefits for the Northwest Territories residents and this government that will help provide services.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I look at the Aboriginal Pipeline Group and its involvement in the construction and development of the Mackenzie Gas Project, and that is a good example of the Aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories potentially owning one-third of a major piece of resource development here in the Northwest Territories, a \$17 billion pipeline.

My belief – I know Mr. Bromley and I have worked together for a long time – is that we have to look at opportunities to invest in resource development. Whether it's the Aboriginal development corporations or governments or our government, in fact, that's how real benefits accrue to people.

I know Mr. Bromley highlighted Botswana with their role in Debswana, the 50 percent owned diamond mines there by the Government of Botswana. The benefits accrue directly to the residents of Botswana. One thing I learned when I was in Botswana was that every person that graduates from high school in that country can go to any university in the world and the government will pay for whatever program they want to take. Whether they want to become a rocket scientist or an engineer or whatever the case is, they pay the full shot for every student that graduates from high school in that country. That's a direct result of them being involved in resource development in their country.

The other example, and it's a good one, is Norway. Opportunities like that might sound far-fetched, but we're not that far away. The opportunities in the Beaufort are tremendous when it comes to oil and gas, and they could very potentially rival the Gulf of Mexico in terms of what is there. If the Government of the Northwest Territories of the day, when those resources are developed, want to get involved, we have every right to make decisions and get involved. Those decisions will have to be made.

The process to get us through devolution and get devolution, I think, is a big step on our way to future prosperity. To everyone, prosperity is a little bit different, but I think if we look at all the opportunities that are going to present themselves here, there's going to be some big decisions for governments in the future to be making here in the

NWT. The big benefactor is going to be the residents here in the NWT, and they should be the big benefactor when it comes to resource development here in the NWT however we arrive at that. We might have differing opinions on how we get there, but I think we will get there and the people here in the NWT are going to be the benefactors of that.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister giving some serious consideration to this and looking for opportunities in his role as Minister.

Can we expect a rigorous analysis on how to increase the benefits for the public and thereby buy some real credibility for the Mineral Development Strategy that would incorporate some of the things we've been discussing here?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: That's exactly what this exercise is about, is to hear those views and get people involved. We are going to get diverging views on this, but this is part of the process and I think we just have to let it play itself out, get out, talk to the stakeholders, talk to the public and see where we go from there. The fact of the matter remains that the Northwest Territories is very well-endowed when it comes to straight-up resource potential, whether it's minerals or oil and gas, and it's all in how we manage those resources. Having this Mineral Development Strategy is part of getting us where we need to go and we will continue on that path.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister again for those comments. Sounds good.

I also appreciated the comment earlier from the Minister that there needs to be integration between these various strategies like the Anti-Poverty Strategy and so on. A challenging job, but I will be looking forward to that. I did appreciate that comment. That's all I have on this page.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Page 12-17, Industry, Tourism and Investment, activity summary, minerals and petroleum resources, operations expenditure summary, \$5.725 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that committee reports progress.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Bisaro): I will rise and report progress. Thank you to the witnesses and the Minister for your attendance here today. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you would please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, please, Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. A motion is on the floor. Do we have a seconder? The seconder is Mr. Dolynny.

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Priorities and Planning committee at adjournment tonight and again at 7:30 tomorrow morning.

Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 20, 2013, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. 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
 - Bill 2, An Act to Amend the Territorial Parks Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Tabled Document 9-17(4), NWT Main Estimates, 2013-2014

- Bill 1, Tlicho Statutes Amendment Act

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 20th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

