



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**Day 10**

**17<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Wednesday, February 12, 2014**

Pages 3585 – 3618

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackie Jacobson**

(Nunakput)

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*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

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*Minister responsible for the*

*Public Utilities Board*

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Wednesday, February 12, 2014****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Orders of the day. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 19-17(5):  
PATHWAYS TO WELLNESS:  
AN UPDATED ACTION PLAN FOR  
ADDICTIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH**

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, a key priority of this government is to make sure that NWT residents have access to the right tools and supports that they can choose from to help overcome addiction issues and poor mental health. As a government, we are committed to ensuring that our residents have as many options as possible to help them move forward on their path towards wellness.

The updated action plan, Pathways to Wellness, which I will be tabling later today, combines the actions contained in the 2012 action plan, A Shared Path Towards Wellness, with the recommendations from Healing Voices, the report of the Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness. It reflects actions the Department of Health and Social Services has committed to undertaking over the next two years and describes our progress to date. It describes how we will better utilize our \$23 million budget that supports mental health and addictions programs.

Pathways to Wellness continues our commitment towards strengthening service delivery by focusing on the following four goals:

- promoting understanding, awareness and acceptance;
- focusing on the client;
- improving the availability of and access to services; and
- improving the effectiveness of services.

Mr. Speaker, a key element in the updated action plan is more addictions programs based in Aboriginal culture and spirituality. This reflects the top priority identified by the Minister's Forum, which recommended the establishment of on-the-land healing programs for both youth and adults. The department has partnered with Aboriginal governments for three different on-the-land pilot programs this year, and the lessons learned will be used to expand these programs to other regions of the NWT. The main estimates include additional funding of \$900,000 for this purpose.

Addictions and mental health issues impact not just individuals, their families and communities but also affect our justice system. The updated action plan identifies the need to establish wellness courts for individuals who are battling mental illness. Rather than sending them through the criminal justice system, where they don't receive the right support, these specialized courts will refer them to the appropriate services based in their community.

Mr. Speaker, over the past two years we have streamlined our services to cut down on wait times for residential treatment by establishing a more efficient referral process.

We are using not only traditional media but have also added social media to raise awareness and have an on-line dialogue with youth and families about substance abuse, addictions and treatment options. A great example of this is the new Feel Real radio show, which broadcasts across the NWT every Thursday night on CKLB Radio.

We still have a long way to go. It will take a collaborative effort from government departments, Aboriginal governments and agencies, and community groups to help realize our Assembly's vision of strong individuals, families and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 20-17(5):  
EDUCATION RENEWAL AND INNOVATION**

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, this continues to be a very exciting time for education in not only the North but the entire country. Through

our Education Renewal and Innovation work, we are recognizing how people learn, what supports are needed to help them learn and how we can improve education for all students.

We developed the Education Renewal and Innovation (ERI) Initiative to make that improvement happen. Our newly released framework, Directions for Change, highlights the potential initiatives we know can make a difference in the lives of our students. A world leader on self-regulation, Dr. Stuart Shanker, spoke to us in January about the framework. He stated that he felt it was a "vision for the future" that applies to all children in Canada. He said Directions for Change will not only shape the future of the NWT but, he hopes, will be read and embraced by the entire country. I think we are on the right track.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that our new framework is a reflection of northern students, teachers, Aboriginal and educational leaders and communities.

I want to acknowledge how much we have relied on our education partners, especially our school superintendents and education authority chairs. Throughout our whole development process starting in December 2012, we have collaborated with the NWT Teachers' Association, Aboriginal governments, superintendents, education authorities and boards. We are working together with our government, Aurora College, educators and students to gather feedback and make comments. We have asked parents for their feedback and their hopes for their children. I am grateful for their willingness to work with us and to ensure their own region's voices are included in this work. Without their commitment and dedication to help with this process, we would not be able to reach our critical audiences.

Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling a document that shows the extent of our engagement process leading up the finalization of the Education Renewal and Innovation Framework and respecting the current development of the draft action plan.

The feedback we received from the ASA regional forums in 2010-2011 continues to guide our work. The Aboriginal Student Achievement priorities of early childhood development and care, student and family support, Aboriginal language and culture curriculum and resource development, and literacy underpin many of the ERI building blocks.

Mr. Speaker, the next stages of our work involve the development of a multi-year action plan, supported by a sound accountability framework for the entire K to 12 system, and a public awareness campaign. The ERI action plan will recommend the initiatives that will move forward first, when they should begin, and their anticipated timelines and cost. There will likely not be many quick fixes,

which should not be seen as failures but rather a testament to the scope of the task at hand.

Critical to the success of our education system is the collective ownership of both problems and solutions by our education partners, which includes teachers, parents and communities. Development of the action plan is already involving those who will be implementing the work itself and those directly affected by the work done. Every district education council has been invited and has nominated participants to each of the action plan working groups. The NWTTA has done the same, and Aboriginal governments have been invited to participate in these working groups as well. We continue to encourage every person that has a stake in our northern education system to ask questions and become involved in this work.

Mr. Speaker, trust has been placed in each and every one of us to ensure we each do our part to help children succeed. The education of our youth is critical to the success of our territory. We must work together to provide a system that helps all students, regardless of where they live, how they learn or what struggles or barriers they may need to overcome. Together we can effect change that will shape the very future of our territory. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The honourable Minister of Justice, Mr. Ramsay.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 21-17(5):  
CORPORATE REGISTRIES  
NEW ON-LINE SERVICES**

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Finance highlighted the work being done on the Service Innovation Strategy. Our government is committed to providing better services to the public by taking advantage of technology.

Today I want to highlight a new way the Department of Justice will be streamlining service for business and the general public with the new Corporate Registries on-line system. We are connecting people with the information they need and making our government more effective and efficient.

The corporate registries office is responsible for registering partnerships and certain business names as well as incorporating businesses, societies and cooperatives. It also registers those conducting business in the NWT that are incorporated in other jurisdictions.

The new on-line system provides easy 24-hour-a-day access to basic information in English or French about registered businesses and not-for-profit societies. This includes legal name, status and the type of entity they are, such as a

partnership or society. This information is free of charge.

For a fee of \$4, the on-line user will be able to search deeper and view all information provided by the registered entity. These documents can be downloaded and printed immediately. Previously, this information was only available during office hours and sometimes required browsing files in person at the registry counter.

As I am sure you can imagine, searching on-line will save thousands of dollars in time for professionals and for people who previously had to physically search files. Residents of our smaller communities will have the same immediate access to the system. For those who still would prefer to work with the registry in person or by phone, fax, or e-mail, our staff are ready to serve.

We have heard from members of the public and professionals, many of whom had input into the development of this registry system. They have told us the new electronic system is a vast improvement. The corporate registries office is grateful to those who worked with staff during the testing period to refine and develop the system to meet users' needs.

Within the Department of Justice, we will be continuing to work with our staff and consult with clients to ensure we are providing the most efficient and effective service possible. These important initiatives will enable us to better serve the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE EDUCATION DISTRICT NO. 1 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday a banner was unfurled at Yellowknife Education District No. 1, a banner celebrating 2014 as the anniversary of 75 years of Educating for Life. Seventy-five years ago, on January 30, 1939, the original little log cabin schoolhouse now on Franklin Avenue in downtown YK was opened as the first school in Yellowknife. Eighteen students aged from six to 15 years attended classes under the guidance of Mr. Davies, their temporary teacher. A month later Ms. Mildred Hall arrived, the first permanent teacher for Yellowknife.

Life in Yellowknife was very basic in those days. There were about 1,000 non-Aboriginal residents in the area, no roads or airports, access was by ski or floatplane or water transport only.

Recognizing a need for education for the children in the communities, in November of 1938, a provisional school board raised over \$1,000 to get the first school program running that winter. The election of the first school board on August 26, 1939, marks the first elected and accountable body in the NWT.

That first little school was cramped quarters for teacher and students. Classes were split into morning and afternoon shifts. In Ms. Mildred Hall's own words, the first month on the job was utter chaos. "Eighteen pupils had to be crammed into a 16 foot square log building, 18 pupils whose ages ranged from six to 15, half of whom were juniors, who must be kept occupied despite a lack of desk materials, and the remainder seniors, most of whom, having been out of school for a year or two, had to be brought forward to their grades...without textbooks. Discipline, under such conditions, was almost unattainable and, in our cramped quarters, adequate heat meant no ventilation, and proper ventilation, with the thermometer registering from 40 to 50 below, meant shivering in bitter cold..."

Since then, YK education has evolved and grown. Now, in the three communities of Yellowknife, Ndilo and Detah, there are over 3,500 students and approximately 350 teachers working and learning in 13 schools administered by five school boards.

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 will celebrate their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary all year long. For the Heritage Fair in May, students are encouraged to do a project on the history of YK District No. 1. There will be a display in the community area at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre from August through to October. There will be a written history compiled by local historian Ryan Silke and the launching of a dedicated Facebook page to help share the stories. The year will culminate with an event to be held in October 2014.

I want to say congratulations to everyone at YK No. 1 past and present on your significant achievement. Have a great 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Member for Hay River South, Mrs. Groenewegen.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GNWT PROGRAMS AND SUPPORTS

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been around this Chamber for a long time and sometimes I think my purpose of being here is to sometimes bring a reality check to some of the goings-on around here, possibly.

It's budget season. Whether it's the territorial government or the federal government, it's budget season. Of course, you can well imagine that there have been some discussions behind the scenes here about whether our budget is enough, whether

it's allocated properly, and sometimes people say, well, if they don't get things the way that they want them, there's some unhappiness. That's to be expected, Mr. Speaker. We are humans.

But even though it's not Thanksgiving, I think every day is Thanksgiving. Prosperity is a relative thing. I guess no matter how much you have or you don't have, someone has less or someone has more than you.

I see every day as Thanksgiving because no matter what, if we take the time to think about it, we have very much to be thankful for. We are a territory of 42,000 people with a budget of \$1.6 billion. We have an approved capital budget of \$125 million, and I think you could compare our capital infrastructure of other small northern communities, and I'm sorry, but we have got the Cadillac of everything. We don't build junk. We build the best of everything when we build things.

We're looking at a social envelope budget with housing, health and social services, and education of millions and millions of dollars. We have the best post-secondary education support program in the country. Agreed? We have the best seniors support program in the country. We have the most generous Housing Program in the country.

Recently, our Social Programs committee visited the new medevac transfer site at the Edmonton International Airport. If you are sick and you live in the Northwest Territories, trust me, we're going to get you to where you're going to get help and we are not going to talk about the price. We are not going to ask how much it costs to get you there. We're going to take you to Edmonton, which has the highest rated Capital Health Authority in the country. There are two capital health authorities in all of Canada. One is in London, Ontario, the other one is Edmonton, Alberta, and that's where we're going to take you and our government will sign a contract with them and they will put you to the front of the list and they will look after you. Is that true?

In the Northwest Territories, if you want to start a business, we'll help you. If you want an education, we'll help you. If you need a place to live, are you homeless, we'll find a place for you. As I mentioned, if you're sick, we'll look after you. Are you trapped in addictions? We will help you.

We have got to say that there is a lot of opportunity here and we need only watch the news for a few minutes...

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, but I have to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** One only needs to turn on the news and you can see families fleeing war-torn countries. You can see people in refugee camps. Do you know how many people wake up in

the morning curled up in the fetal position because they don't have any food?

I guess what I'm trying to say is, yes, we're fighting amongst ourselves about our budget, but can we stop for a minute and just be very, very thankful for what we have, because a sense of entitlement and a spirit of ingratitude is a very dangerous and unhappy place to live. We are a land of opportunity.

We, the government, can we do better? Yes, we can do better. We can always do better. But if you want an opportunity, I'll tell you; this government is here to give it to you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON JEAN MARIE ACCESS ROAD

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to use that momentum and improve the Jean Marie access road. We can do more.

Residents of Jean Marie and the leadership have long wished to see the upgrade to a highway. Currently, it is listed as a seasonal access road in Jean Marie. It is truly a seasonal road. During the spring runoff and summer rain storms, the road gets soggy and muddy and almost impossible and impassable at times.

I urge the Department of Transportation to review funding and include the upgrading of this access road in the upcoming multi-model strategy that the department is planning, and also, indeed, a plan to upgrade all our access roads throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELDERS IN MOTION PROGRAM

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the great honour of attending a function last evening, organized by the NWT Recreation and Parks Association. The event's focus was to recognize the important work for community groups and individuals that offer support and training for our older population across the Northwest Territories.

Just as importantly, it recognized an active elder in one of our communities who serves to be a role model for his or her community residents. Although there was only one award recipient, there were many nominations for active elders throughout the Northwest Territories and I, too, would like to congratulate them on their nominations and continuing to be active role models for us all.

The NWTRPA has a mission to increase public awareness of recreation and parks, and to enhance the quality of life of the residents of the Northwest



Territories by promoting and supporting the development of recreation, parks services and leadership throughout the North. One way they do this is by continuing to provide the Elders in Motion program. This program aims to improve access to physical activity, opportunities to NWT elders which, as a result, increases their independence and functional mobility in their communities and throughout the Northwest Territories. It also helps enhance the training and support for communities, groups and individuals interested in developing and maintaining an elder fitness group in their hometowns. There is also a focus on traditional activities and I just wanted to make note that the theme for this year's training is on fall preventions.

The program itself could not be successful without the partnership of others and I would like to recognize the efforts, as well, from the Dene Nation, the NWT Seniors' Society, our own Department of Health and Social Services and the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging, which I will have to commend them on for handing out three awards at last night's event; one for a Community Leadership Award, a Community Capacity Award, which was our own NWT Rec and Parks Association, and the Community Service Award.

From a program that developed and grew from a small gymnasium in a northern community with a group of elders and the support from the NWT community health representatives association, I am very excited and enthused to hear about the 80 participants from all of the communities across the Northwest Territories that are participating in this week's training. I'd like all Members to also join me in welcoming them and congratulating them on their achievements. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
2014-2015 FEDERAL BUDGET:  
AN NWT PERSPECTIVE

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we were witness to the 2014-15 federal budget called, "Economic Action Plan 2014: The Road to Balance," creating jobs and opportunities. I'd like to take a minute to echo some of the NWT highlights and wish a very heartfelt thank you to the federal counterparts for investments in mine training, economic diversification, transportation, health services and reducing medical travel and Nutrition North, just to name a few.

By the federal government reconfirming and starting new initiatives in the NWT, it once again reaffirms their commitments to us at the success of a healthy and prosperous North. In fact, Prime Minister Stephen Harper echoed this sentiment in August of 2012 during a Whitehorse tour when he stated, "Those who want to see the future of this

country should look North," and it appears those promises continue.

Yesterday also marked a significant commitment of support in pledging \$305 million over five years to extend and enhance broadband high-speed Internet access to rural and northern communities. It is no surprise we are underdeveloped in this area in many of our smaller communities and this announcement will put a significant dent in our digital divide to the rest of Canada.

According to CRTC's 2013 Communications Monitoring Report, Canada's North received subpar broadband access. In fact, in 2012 less than 50 percent of Northerners had access to five megabytes per second broadband download speeds and at a very high cost I must add. In 2013 no satellite-served community offered consumers access to five megabytes per second broadband speeds, while 94 percent of Canadians had access in excess of that speed.

This announcement means great news for Northerners to have more affordable, more choice and better competitive local pricing when it comes to their broadband services. What needs to happen now will strongly be dependent on the Government of the Northwest Territories to realize opportunity, maximize these investments, work with all local providers of broadband services and prepare a bulletproof action plan for the North. Let's hope Cabinet is listening. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
FEDERAL BILL C-15: DEVOLUTION  
IMPLEMENTATION LEGISLATION

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently, I attended the only northern public hearing on Bill C-15 here in Yellowknife. Bill C-15 implements our devolution deal with Canada, but it also includes big changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. All our Aboriginal government partners and public interest groups said the same thing, "The changes to the MVRMA have nothing to do with devolution so remove them from this bill." They also said, "Do not collapse the regional land and water boards into one super-board." But not our Premier, who seemingly accepts losing our voice as an acceptable cost of devolution.

I have to ask, what is the point of devolution if our Premier will not stand up and support the people of the Northwest Territories whose concerns were crystal clear?

The changes to the MVRMA in Bill C-15 do matter, so let's acknowledge this and consider what we can do to help. Let's begin by sponsoring a public discussion with our Aboriginal partners to identify

what steps we can make to make a lousy situation better.

Perhaps, as a newly constituted authoritative government, we could offer to support the establishment of staffed regional offices that would maintain regional capacity and a basis for ensuring meaningful regional input into land and water management structures. With the federal election next year, let's prepare to lobby for re-establishing regional boards, should a new political party take power with a willingness to do so. Hopefully this time it could go forward on an evidence-based process as opposed to an ideological basis.

With this strategy, and given that Bill C-15 amendments will not be implemented for a year from this April, there would be less than a year with loss of the regional voices before we could repair this damage.

This government purports to seek authority put into the hands of Northerners. These suggested actions would show that the GNWT does, in fact, support our Aboriginal partners and our residents and ensures the capacity and real opportunity for meaningful input into decisions affecting their own land, water and resources. Our Premier can take leadership on this. Will he?

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SENIORS SUPPORTED LIVING FACILITY FOR FORT GOOD HOPE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member, Mrs. Groenewegen, talked about being thankful, and I also want to support her on that theme here. In the Sahtu communities, in Fort Good Hope, we're thankful for the elders. There are 64 elders that are 60 years and over. In Fort Good Hope there used to be an old folks home, they used to call it, an old seniors home, and that got condemned and now it's all boarded up.

People in Fort Good Hope have always asked for a seniors independent living facility when the government is going to look at continuing supporting them in that initiative, and my understanding is that in the community of Fort Good Hope there is a planned facility of independent living housing for seniors from the Housing Minister. Actually, there are other communities also involved with the plan here.

My question is that once we have these facilities in our communities, is there going to be some programming and services associated with these seniors facilities? I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. When we have these facilities that are being constructed in our communities, what type of support in terms of care

for the elders, programs for the elders, services that could be provided to the elders?

Mr. Moses talked about the initiative by MACA on the Elders in Motion to keep them active and keep them as well as possible, and that the community is appreciative and needs to be prepared to know what type of training and support will be needed for these facilities. I want to let the Minister know that we're ready, we're happy, and we're thankful that some of these initiatives are now back on the radar to help our elders in our small communities.

I will have further questions to the Minister on the programming for these elders facilities. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HIGHWAY SAFETY

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Travelling by vehicle on NWT highways is a common experience for most northern residents. Seasonal driving conditions on all NWT highways vary from excellent to treacherous. Driving safely and consciously with extra vigilance is a must for travellers on NWT highways.

Last week a constituent of mine experienced a near tragic situation. The vehicle in which they were driving hit a patch of black ice and went off the road and ended up in the ditch. Luckily for the driver, a Good Samaritan happened on the incident and stopped to check on the vehicle, then walked off the road and discovered the driver nearly frozen and trapped in the vehicle. The driver was stuck in the vehicle, covered with snow, as both sides of the vehicles' windows were busted open and snow packed inside the vehicle entrapping the driver. The single occupant of the vehicle, about that time, was stuck in the vehicle for about two and a half hours.

The Good Samaritan was Kelly Pierce of Hay River, who was driving to Yellowknife that day and discovered the driver and helped, a selfless act in saving a person's life. The driver that was stuck in the vehicle recalls hearing about a dozen vehicles pass her. When the driver was taken to the Fort Providence Health Centre, the nurses stated that if the driver stayed for about another hour or more, the driver's body temperature would have reached a critical point of hypothermia.

At this time, I remind all drivers to drive safely and I strongly encourage them to stop and help those that need help.

I would like to especially recognize Mr. Kelly Pierce, the Good Samaritan that stopped and helped the constituent; Dr. Martell of Fort Simpson; the nurse in charge, Carol Bergeron; Patty Bedard and Maame Ya, the nurses that assisted the constituent. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
GNWT POSITION VACANCIES AND  
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR NORTHERNERS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Northern job opportunities continue to be denied to the everyday Northerner. Hardworking Northerners want these opportunities, so again I'm saying this not because I am frustrated but I can tell you that they're frustrated. They're frustrated because they hear about this job fair in Ottawa, but they are saying to me, why didn't they do the whistle stops all throughout the Northwest Territories first? Does it mean we can't go to Ottawa to look for special skills, certain types of hard areas to hire? Absolutely not. It doesn't mean that. We should show Northerners we care about them first. What it does demonstrate is we think about them second or maybe even third.

In the Northwest Territories we're now at an 8.2 percent unemployment rate. That isn't just a 10-year high, that is a 13-year high. We have something to celebrate there I am sure.

I would like to point out the fact that yesterday we heard that there are 1,150 vacancies on the books with the Government of the Northwest Territories, yes, for various reasons, but that still represents 20 percent of our public service workforce. Am I worried? Yes. Is the public concerned? Absolutely. What it does is show people and certainly causes them to wonder: how does the government operate, missing 20 percent of their workforce?

We hear that the government is doing everything they can to fill the 571 vacancies. I can tell you the public is doing everything they can to find those 571 job postings. If you go to the website, as I said yesterday, all you see is about 100. So where are the rest, almost 470-some jobs? Are they being saved for the who's who, the friend's friends? Wink, wink, nudge, nudge. Nothing is telling me that these jobs are open for Northerners to apply on. One hundred sixty-one dormant jobs, as pointed out by the Minister. Dormant what? Where? When? How long? Where has this money been going?

We just know that approximately \$57 million of human resource money is sitting there, slushing around, waiting for opportunity. Not even the mention of the missing gap of the 400 jobs when you add all of these things together, and they say, well, don't worry, they are transfer assignments, they are holding, et cetera, et cetera.

Long story short is, is this confusing? Absolutely. Is the government doing anything to get to the bottom of this? Apparently very little. When we hear that departments leave certain jobs vacant to meet their

goals, what about the Legislative Assembly goals? They are being forgotten. Thank you very much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Yakeleya.

### Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 2-17(5):  
WILFRED JACKSON – 2014 ELDERS IN MOTION  
ACTIVE ELDER AWARD

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Wilfred Jackson from Fort Good Hope, who was presented the 2014 Elders in Motion Active Elder Award on February 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Elders in Motion seek to improve access to physical activity opportunities for NWT elders. Elders in Motion works to enhance independence and efficient mobility for older adults.

Mr. Jackson is well known for his endeavours and active lifestyle both in the community and out on the land. He is a master trapper.

Mr. Jackson is a positive role model for our elders and communities across the Sahtu and NWT.

Please join me in congratulating Mr. Jackson on his well-deserved award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 88-17(5):  
RE-ESTABLISHING REGIONAL  
LAND AND WATER BOARDS

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on my Member's statement with questions to the Premier today. I would like to start by noting that Bill C-15 is making its way through Parliament in Ottawa. Our Member of Parliament is working hard, but without our support he is having a hard time convincing the federal government to separate the changes to the MVRMA from the devolution part of the bill.

I'm sure the Premier has had some time to think about this. What steps does he propose that he could take to limit the damage that will be done by forcing the closure of the regional boards? Mahsi.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're working very closely with the Aboriginal governments. We have five out of seven Aboriginal governments that have signed on to devolution. We're just finalizing signing ceremonies with two more to sign on. We're working with the Dehcho

First Nations. We expect that we're making good progress on the discussion of land use. We expect that after a short period of consultation, there's every indication that the Dehcho First Nation will sign on, and we are entering into a similar process with Akaitcho First Nations.

It is our intention to work very closely with the Government of Canada and the Aboriginal governments to continue to work and improve our regulatory system. We have always said that we want an efficient and effective regulatory framework. We will also maintain a presence in regional centres and we will work very closely so that we are all working together to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Premier. The Premier has done a very good job of getting our Aboriginal groups to the table with devolution but, of course, that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about amendments to the MVRMA and they're speaking with one voice and the Premier has been silent on this.

Again, I mentioned the idea of meeting with our Aboriginal partners to discuss what can be done on this specific issue to get that regional voice in there, which has been silenced and not supported by our Premier so far.

Has the Premier had any discussions with our Aboriginal partners on how we can help maintain strong regional voices in the new system? I might point out that all studies have indicated that those systems are very effective and efficient. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We've had a number of discussions with all the Aboriginal governments that have signed on to devolution and the so-called Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative.

Our government stands by what we negotiated in land claims over 20 years ago. For example, the Gwich'in Agreement, which was signed and negotiated 20 years ago, reads that "Where, by legislation, any other land and water board is established having jurisdiction in an area which includes the settlement area, it shall assume the powers and responsibilities of the land and water board in 24.4.1 and shall become the land and water board for the purposes of this agreement. Legislation may provide for regional panels of the land and water board in (a)" and "The Gwich'in Tribal Council shall be consulted with respect to any such legislation."

Notwithstanding that, we will be working with the Gwich'in Tribal Council. We have an MOU that we signed with them. We also will be working with them in the Intergovernmental Council. That is in the process of getting signed this week. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Premier. Our Aboriginal partners are talking about a court challenge to Bill C-15. Clearly, we're not being

effective if that's the case. So, devolution is one thing and, again, what we're talking about here are amendments to the MVRMA which the federal government has included in Bill C-15. I'm sure the Premier agrees that this will bring uncertainty to the future of devolution, this legal action in the courts itself, as well to future mineral extraction applications.

Is there anything we, with our newly developed authority, can do to alleviate the concerns of our regional partners? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Aboriginal governments are governments in their own right and it's not up to me to take away that right for them to legislate as they see fit to do so. That's part and parcel of being a responsible government. We will continue to work with them and we have five years after devolution whereby we will be reviewing the MVRMA, at which time we can work together during that period to improve the system, and even as we go forward after five years, to develop a system that will work better after that. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Premier again. I don't question the right of the federal government to do their legislation, but our Aboriginal partners, the mass are speaking against this. So what I'm talking about here is mitigating the impacts of this. It's going to happen. The Devolution Agreement commits us to stick with the MVRMA for at least five years, but the current federal government only has a mandate until 2015.

Will the Premier show some leadership and begin working with our partners on a strategy for re-establishing regional boards when a new federal government is in place? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We will commit to working with our Aboriginal governments to improve in every area. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 89-17(5):  
SENIORS INDEPENDENT LIVING FACILITY  
IN FORT GOOD HOPE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Although I know that the Housing Corporation will be building independent living housing for seniors in Fort Good Hope in 2014-15 and that there's a schedule already set out by the Housing Corporation and they're working with the community of Fort Good Hope, I'm hoping that all plans are on target and that construction would begin, with elders moving into the facility in the spring of 2015. I wanted to ask the Minister of

Health and Social Services about the programs and services of that facility.

Will there be plans to train some additional staff members, maybe one or two that would support the facility in Fort Good Hope?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just confirmed with the Minister of Housing that that project is definitely going ahead. They're going to be starting during this fiscal year. I'll leave it to the Minister to confirm the actual opening date, but the Department of Health and Social Services, the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority and the Housing Corporation are collaborating on the development and programming for the new independent living units. A common area has been identified and incorporated into the design of the new housing units, and in the plans it is proposed that seniors day programs and health and personal care services will be delivered in that area through the new independent serviced seniors living unit. This will be assessed in 2014 by the department and the health and social services authority, and the department will work with the authority to determine the best range of services to the clients to be delivered in that area. At that time I'll be able to give the Member more detail. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** In our planning for our elders and our long-term care facility in Norman Wells, which is going to happen for a territorial long-term care facility, we also have this additional independent senior housing unit in Fort Good Hope.

Can the Minister inform me if it makes sense to look at the training or this training happens in the upcoming years, that the residents in Fort Good Hope will also have the opportunity if the training is assessed and that they can also be tagged on to the training program that is scheduled for the territorial long-term care facility that is going to be located in Norman Wells?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Until we do the analysis of that facility and the programs that will be delivered there, it's hard to give a definite yes. I can say that it may be possible for us to deliver personal care and coordination of the programs in the Fort Good Hope independent living unit using existing home care staff in the community. However, if additional staff are required through the analysis that's being done, we're happy to work with our training partners, such as Aurora College, in the community to coordinate training for future staff.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Looking at the schedule from the Housing Corporation, the seniors are expected to move into the independent seniors facility in Fort Good Hope in the spring of 2015, I believe.

I want to ask, do we have enough time, I guess, to say, yes, we can look at an additional one or two staff members, given that there is going to be a caretaker there, and that we also need to have some kind of medical personnel at that site also?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We will continue to work with the Sahtu health and social services in the community and identify the needs for the community with respect to the new independent living unit. Where additional resources are required, we will plan for them through the normal business cycle, which will give us time to have positions in place if necessary and required in the '15-16 fiscal year.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

QUESTION 90-17(5):  
IMPACT OF JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN PLAN  
ON PRIVATE DAYCARE FACILITIES

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the recent announcement by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on the future investment and rollout of the publicly funded junior kindergarten plan, it begs to ask what is to become of well-established private daycare facilities or, in some cases, societies such as Montessori that provide similar programming? Today my questions will be for the Minister of ECE.

Has the Minister or his staff entered into any formal dialogue with owners of private daycare facilities or providers of similar competing programs to the publicly funded junior kindergarten plans?

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. During the transition period, since we're talking about 2014-2015, we are making connections with the daycare operators and also those school boards that we have to work closely with. My department has been in development and also implementing actions to support the licenced programming that will be affected. Those are just some of the discussions that we have been having initially with ECE, the regional early childhood consultant that works with all the child care centres across the Northwest Territories. These are just some of the discussions that will be taking place from here until the start of the next school year, so the discussion is ongoing.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** It's comforting to know that the Minister is indicating that we're going to be talking to some of these partners in due course here, but has the Minister or his staff designed any formal programming and partnering with this junior kindergarten plan with these established daycares and providers of similar programs? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, my department, as I have stated, is developing an action plan to help support licenced programs that may be affected during the transition of bringing the junior kindergarten into our school system. Both Education, Culture and Employment early childhood consultants and also headquarters staff will be working very closely with all the daycare operators throughout the Northwest Territories and during the introduction of junior kindergarten will provide options for parents, and in particular for our communities that do not have licenced child care programming. Those are just some of the areas that we will be working and very closely monitoring and supporting those individuals and organizations as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, I was hoping to hear more about the partnering aspect, because I think that a lot of these facilities are a bit concerned here.

Has the Minister or his staff performed any risk assessment that may occur if such junior kindergarten initiatives create closures of private daycare or current program offerings in our communities? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, the daycare centres can convert four-year-old spaces to spaces for children zero to three. The Member is asking about a risk assessment. The program operators simply need to contact their regional early childhood consultant to work with them – all those daycare operators – to make necessary changes to convert the four-year-old space to accommodate younger children. So those are areas we are working closely with them.

We also provide additional funding of an additional \$780 to convert each four-year-old space to an under-24-month space. This investment should comfortably cover the costs of necessities such as cribs, infant tables and chairs and tables, toys and resources.

Those are some of the areas we continue to work on with the child care operators. Mahsi.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of my questions today are to create ladders of opportunity for our private daycare facilities and our private providers such as Montessori, and I'm hoping that the Minister can commit to when he will begin these formal discussions, these formal offerings with these private facilities so they can voice their concern. When will this start to occur? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, there has been preliminary discussion with the child care operators when we started talking about the early childhood development, the overall framework and the action plan. Part of that was introducing the

junior kindergarten. All regions have early childhood regional consultants that are available to answer any questions or ideas that they may have or any assistance for these operators.

Under the Early Childhood Development Action Plan, my department has come out with having a comprehensive communication dialogue and also a plan. Within the plan, we're developing a toll-free number that parents and operators and anyone interested can start conversing back and forth with our department, the specialists and consultants.

During the junior kindergarten implementation, we want to have a smooth transition, so we are providing those support mechanisms to these operators. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 91-17(5):  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within the next 46 days we will be implementing our Devolution Agreement, if all goes well.

I would like to ask the Premier, once this process has been completed, will this benefit the outstanding land claim groups in their negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I truly believe that will be the case. I think we're seeing evidence of that now, working with the Dehcho First Nation where we've been able to work together to resolve some very difficult, complex issues around land on a without prejudice basis. I think the incentive for both of us to do it was devolution. I think that by putting rigour to the process with oversight by myself and the grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations, I think we've been able to work together and find some very innovative solutions to long-standing problems, and I'm really looking forward to the next few months where we will see if it will stand the test of going through the due process of both the Dehcho First Nations process and our government process.

We are also looking at entering a similar process with the Akaitcho First Nation. In my mind, this has provided a positive impetus going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Interjection

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Hawkins, I didn't see your hand up.

QUESTION 92-17(5):  
INTERACTIVITY TRANSFER

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, this Legislature approves money to be directed specifically to human resources. In other words, we dedicate money specifically for jobs. The Northwest Territories as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, had an unemployment rate of 8.2 percent. We've heard that deputy ministers will move money that is intended for human resources over to projects because they want to fulfil their mandate within their department. My view is they are actually breaking direction laid out by the Legislature. In essence, it's tantamount, in my view, of breaking the law.

My question to the Minister of Finance is: Will he review the books over the last five years and find every deputy minister who has approved and signed these off and fire them?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'd like to ask what the Finance Minister is going to do if we know that deputy ministers are signing off human resources money that is designed, protected and passed in this Legislature by a duly elected body when they go behind the scenes and re-appropriate the money for their pet projects. What is the Finance Minister going to do?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The Member is making very harsh, unfounded allegations of criminal wrongdoing, which is what he said, and asking that people be fired on the basis of the fact that for the last three days we've been sorting through vacancy rate numbers and he's now convinced that there is a criminal wrongdoing, which would mean, since the deputies all report to Ministers, that there was some type of complicity or conspiracy.

Very clearly, this Legislature votes positions, when they are part of the budget process, to fulfil functions in government. Once those positions are in place and they are staffed or in the process of being staffed, then they become part of the working tools and process to meet the government's and Legislature's mandate.

Managing those vacancies is a legitimate government management tool that is used in every corporation, every business in the world. It is done properly. There are checks and balances in place.

There are questions about some of the numbers. The Member is throwing around big numbers and big accusations when the reality is we will be able to lay out adequately, I believe, where all the positions are and we are very cognizant of our responsibilities. We have accountabilities for

transfers of funds over \$250,000 between activities, interactivity transfers that we have to report to this House every session. We are accountable as Ministers every day that we are in this House and every day that we have the authority as Ministers for what's happening in our departments.

To accuse senior officials of such conduct and criminal wrongdoing with absolutely no evidence I think really doesn't add to the tenure of the debate in this House. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The department agencies can manage their vacancies and variances by meeting their goals, delivering their programs and services while staying within their budgets. So, what that's saying is departments can manage their money by turning around and moving human resource money over to program money. I can tell you, the Finance Minister has witnessed a claim made by senior management where they've chosen to use HR money for program needs.

What is the Finance Minister going to do, after I've just heard his last response from the last question when he sat and heard the proof, because he was there with me. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We have collectively approved in this House every budget that comes before it that runs the Government of the Northwest Territories. This is my 19<sup>th</sup> year, so I've been through the budget cycle 19 times. I believe my colleague has been through that cycle 10 times. This issue of vacancies has come up periodically about what's happening, what's the vacancy rate and what are we doing to fill them, all legitimate questions. The Member now has taken it to another level where he's implying that there's some kind of conspiracy and planned wrongdoing here, and there isn't, Mr. Speaker.

We have numbers here that we are going to be sharing with committee, that they've asked for, that provide the amount of detail that lay out the work that's been done. Let me say once again, as well that managing 5,000 employees is a big job, there are management issues and they are a key resource and we need to manage all those resources, full or vacant, to carry out the work that's necessary. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Speaker, it begs the question why do we even approve any budget if we know this? There are 571 vacancies the government is actively pursuing, but we can only find 100 on-line. We know, at the end of the day, no matter what we approved as the budget, the deputy ministers can go do an end run and move the money over to projects they want. So the reality is when the Legislature makes the decision, it just seems to be a waste of anyone's time, including Cabinet and

certainly the public. With jobs being denied to Northerners, this just doesn't sit well.

Explain why we're here if the deputy ministers can go change the budget at their will beyond the Legislature's approval. Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I would ask the Member to give one shred of evidence about pet projects, about the allegations he's making. He says, why are we even here? We're approving a \$1.6 billion budget that provides services to every man, woman and child in the Northwest Territories. That's why we're here. We're here to make laws that are going to benefit our people. We're here to provide direction and oversight of a very complex organization.

The Member has some questions and concerns about positions. We have over 5,000 jobs. He's talking about a few hundred vacancies, which we will lay out in detail as to where they are. I think his Hyperbolus statements, once again, don't add to the tenure of the debate and they cause confusion in the public, and his draconian request for human sacrifice based on his state of high dudgeon is not helpful. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 93-17(5):  
NURSING AND POLICING POSITIONS  
IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask this question to the Minister of Finance. With the discussion of all the vacancies and when they're going to be filled and the amount of money we approve each year, for the last 10 years I've been standing here and I'm still standing here asking when will the communities without RCMP or nurses have those positions filled. Each year I bring that forward and there's no money, there's no money. Just recently we find out there are vacant positions and still there's no money.

When will this government have the flexibility of letting this Cabinet say, listen, they're asking for this in Colville Lake as well as any other small community without RCMP or nurses for 10 years that I've been here.

Can the Minister explain to me why Colville Lake or any other small communities do not have nurses yet or an RCMP? At last count it was 10 or 11 communities without RCMP members. When?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll speak first, of course, to the fiscal reality that we face, which the Member is very conversant with and well aware of. I can also speak to the fact that there are health and safety issues

for employees now. It's no longer a case of one nurse or one RCMP, but it's going to be two or maybe even three to cover off all of these health and safety issues, which gets back to being a significant cost factor.

We are trying to profile our resources to make sure that we provide coverage for health and social services and for the RCMP to provide that security and comfort to all members in all of the communities. But the request of actually stationing members in every community regardless of size is one that we're not in a position to fulfill at this point. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The Minister and I haven't gone out for supper, but we've had a lot of discussions on this issue. I'm asking for a plan. In the last 10 years of being in this House and being a Member of the Legislative Assembly, when are we going to stop talking about a plan, given that we have a lot of vacancies? Let's do one community this year, let's do another community next year or the year after. We know from the previous Ministers and even this Cabinet, they tell us the amount of money to staff an RCMP officer or the nurse in the community.

I'm asking, when do we start the plan other than give reasons why we can't do this? When can we have that discussion?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** As it pertains to health and social services, I know that there has been, over the years, a lot of discussion, a lot of planning, a lot of creating of models of what would be an ideal staffing model in the communities for all health and social services programs and when we look at the actual numbers – and you've seen some of the requests that come through – they would bankrupt the government.

So every year we do business plans, every year we sit down with communities, we sit down with the departments and we go through the programs and services that are there, always within the fiscal context and we're going to be starting that cycle again, in 54 days I believe the Member said, and we'll be starting the work on our last budget of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Once again it will be an opportunity for us to gather around the table and look to the future as devolution will have been upon us and we will be looking forward, hopefully with a lot of hope for the future. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The Minister has mentioned in the House the number of years, 19 years he's been through this cycle and the number of years to get a project or to get something in in the regions or the communities. So, given that we're close to the end of our term in this Assembly, could we look at one of the communities that does not have a nursing station, for example, or RCMP members in that community?



Imagine some communities do not have a nursing station, a position for a nurse or RCMP members in that community, and we've gone too long without the members living in our communities and this is our 10<sup>th</sup> year. So, certainly we could look at some of the flexibilities, given that we know now a little more information on the vacancies.

Can he be creative to look at some of these positions along with the capital infrastructure required to go into communities so people can have some of the essential, basic services and requirements that other communities take for granted? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I can appreciate the Member's concern and his patience and his resolute pursuit of this issue along with his other colleagues from small communities. What I would suggest, since he's referred to and looking for hope potentially, in his mind, with the review of vacancies that the committee asked yesterday for some more detailed information and we are in the process of finalizing that information. But once that information is reviewed and we all have a common understanding of the breakdown of the numbers, which I think will meet the concern of the Members, then we can have a more informed discussion about those issues and the relationship to the issue that the Member has raised. I think we'll see that there is not a huge fund or pot of positions that are sitting there that could be moved. Filling them is a challenge as it is, but we'll be able to account for all of the different questions that the Members have raised when we review that information. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I appreciate the Minister's willingness to have some continued dialogue on this and see where we can go with it. This has been achieved in some of our vision and goals that we set out in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

So I'm going to ask the Minister, given this, can the Minister provide some of the basic economic dollars as to the communities that do not have health centres or communities who do not have RCMP officers? What are we looking at in terms of the dollars that would be required, and have some discussion to see if we could at least move towards that direction?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** As we sit here debating and considering the budget put forward by the government, the expenditures for the year are laid out. We've made an accommodation on the Heritage Fund. That will be included in this as we go forward. So we need to address that issue.

I would be happy to have further discussions with the Member in this venue or other venues of a more social nature where there may even be some food on the table to help promote discussion. But, very

clearly, I anticipate that we will be continuing this discussion once we conclude the debate on this current budget.

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

QUESTION 94-17(5):  
JEAN MARIE ACCESS ROAD

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I touched on the Jean Marie access road earlier in my Member's statement, so I'd like to ask the Minister of Transportation some questions about the access road at Jean Marie.

Are there any plans in this fiscal year in the maintenance budget to do some specific work on that access road to Jean Marie? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the years, after the Jean Marie access road was made passable through all seasons, an additional \$1.5 million has been spent on that road to try to upgrade it. The department is going to continue to work on that road and continue to try to improve the road so that it is passable 365 days a year. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** Thank you very much. I'm really glad to hear that and maybe the Minister can specifically tell me what strategy that's in, because it is a seasonal access road right now, meaning it does get soggy and people do get stuck. So the community would like assurance that they will get it upgraded to a highway status, passable year-round. Once again, would the Minister confirm that?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The money that will be used to continue to upgrade the road is from the regular maintenance budget. We could look specifically into the access road budget, as well, this coming year since that is all done by proposal. We would look at the Jean Marie road through the DOT Access Road Program as well. But there is no plan that I'm aware of in the immediate future to upgrade it to the regular highway standards that we have on Highway No. 1, for example.

**MR. MENICOCHE:** I think the Minister meant Yellowknife standards where it's chipsealed, as well, all their access roads. Just with that, it's a priority of the community. It's always been. I've been in this Legislature raising it time and time again.

Is the Minister aware of any other capital dollars aside from this operations and maintenance budget that is going towards the Jean Marie access road?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** No, I'm not aware of anything that has been approved through the capital budget, but the DOT Access Road Program, although it's an O and M budget, is used to do the

upgrades on open access roads and upgrades to access roads, so we will be targeting that program to improve this road. Then we can also have discussions with the Member over the longer term. If he sees this road becoming a highway standard, then it's something that we would have to bring back to the House because it would probably be a substantial cost.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps if the Minister can check firstly on the capital and then what specifically is in the O and M budget for the Jean Marie access road and get that back to me there.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I would be pleased to provide that information to the Member within the next couple of days.

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

QUESTION 95-17(5):  
FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR  
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN INITIATIVE

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education. I'd like to ask him a couple of questions with regard to his Response to Written Question 6-17(5), with regard to the explanation of funding and reallocation of funding for junior kindergarten.

In 2014-15, \$1.8 million will be reallocated from education authorities, and I take it from the Minister's response that this is from all authorities, even from those four authorities who will not get junior kindergarten in 2014-15.

I would like to ask the Minister if he would please confirm that my understanding is correct, that the four authorities who do not get JK in '14-15 will, in fact, be losing money.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The rolling out of the junior kindergarten starting this new school year, 2014-15, will cover 29 schools, and then the following year it would be the regional centres, and then the third year will be covering all of Yellowknife. It is a three-year approach, and it will cover all communities, all schools, the 49 schools that we've been talking about, the 33 communities. There's going to be some decrease and increase into our formula when we deal with the school boards, so it does reflect on that as well.

**MS. BISARO:** I didn't really hear an answer there so I will try again. My understanding is that, for instance, the two school districts in Yellowknife,

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 and Yellowknife Catholic Schools will lose funding to provide junior kindergarten in 29 communities and they will not get kindergarten in the '14-15 year.

My question to the Minister is: Does he consider it fair that the larger centres, four communities, will give up some funding with no return in '14-15?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We have to keep in mind that we're rolling out the junior kindergarten for all the children in the Northwest Territories. We talk about the larger centres and the smaller centres. We're here for the Northwest Territories, so we are providing those benefits to those communities and, more specifically, those 10 communities that do not have licenced child care programming, daycare programming, and the preschools and so forth. At the end of the day, we're serving the children of the Northwest Territories and it will benefit the whole Northwest Territories.

**MS. BISARO:** I find it interesting that the Minister twice in the last couple of days has referenced 10 communities without daycares and in the same breath that he's talking about junior kindergarten, so I'm wondering if he's equating daycare and junior kindergarten. I hope it's not so.

I'm trying to understand the numbers in the answer that the Minister gave me to my written question. There are two high schools in Yellowknife. One is Sir John Franklin and the other is St. Pats. Sir John in YK No. 1 is the bigger high school but Yellowknife Catholic Schools will see a much bigger reduction in their funding: \$214,000 for Catholic schools and only \$62,000 for YK No. 1.

Why is there this big discrepancy when the bigger school is losing less money?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** There is a breakdown for all the school boards, the 33 communities that we service. As I stated, some will be decreased, some will have a net increase in their formula funding, but the less minimal impact would be up to 1.5 percent, and I'm sure that's manageable within the administration of the school boards.

When it comes to, let's say, Yellowknife Catholic School Board, in 2014-15 there will be a decrease of \$434,000, projected '15-16 there will be a decrease of \$264,000, projected '16-17 will be \$484,000 that will be given to the school board. It does vary between the school boards. In the Yellowknife district education authority in 2014-15 there's a negative \$569,000, '15-16 projected \$322,000 negative. But at the same time, 2016-2017, there is going to be a plus of \$829,000, so \$62,000 out of a \$24 million budget. I'm sure that can be managed.

These are some of the areas that we've been talking about with the superintendents, so we are

having ongoing discussions with them and we are rolling out the program this fall.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for those numbers. The Minister said in his response that our education authorities are run by professional administrators, and I totally agree with the Minister, and I, too, have confidence in those authorities and in the trustees that run the boards, but my understanding is that it's been fairly late notice for these reductions to the superintendents and to the boards and gives them little time to adjust.

I would like to ask the Minister, for my information, when were the education authorities advised of these reductions, these changes in pupil-teacher ratio, and how were they advised? Was it to the board chairs? Was it to the superintendents? Was it by letter or by phone?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Throughout the Early Childhood Development Framework there has been a lot of engagement and the forum that we held in Yellowknife and surrounding communities. The superintendents have been involved, during the transition period of the discussion, about what kind of initiative should be undertaken by the department. One of them was junior kindergarten, the discussions that we've been having, and I presented to the board chairs of what our approach would be, part of the Early Childhood Development Framework, working along with Health and Social Services. The superintendents have been involved with my department, my department's been involved with the superintendents, so there's been conversing back and forth since last year, I believe late fall, and then the discussion of how they can be involved during the implementation stages. We have reached out to the superintendents and they provide feedback, suggestions and ideas. Instead of rolling out the PTR from Grade 10 to Grade 12, they suggested coming back to saying let's start with kindergarten to Grade 12. So we have initiated that. We have accepted their recommendations, so they have been involved. This is an area that we work closely with the school boards and we have taken their recommendations, made those changes, so it does reflect on the numbers that I highlighted earlier. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 96-17(5):  
SENIORS INDEPENDENT LIVING FACILITY  
IN FORT GOOD HOPE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My earlier oral questions to the Minister of Health and Social Services were on the independent unit in

Fort Good Hope. I want to ask, I guess, the Minister of Health and Social Services about the positions that are going to be funded in regards to this unit.

What types of positions are going to be aligned with this new seniors unit in Fort Good Hope in regards to the facility itself?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated previously, at this time we don't actually have any indication whether new positions are going to be required. The Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority is working with the department to figure out what programs to go in there. The NWT Housing Corp is designed to build it so it has a wonderful space where programs can be delivered out of and that would be where we deliver programs. Once we figure out what programs and services are going to be in there, we'll have a better idea if it's going to require positions.

We certainly have positions in the community that we hope will be able to work out of there to provide support to those independent living seniors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, I would clarify my question to the Minister. I know the building is going to be built; there is a schedule there. I want to know within... Maybe the Minister won't be able to answer this question here. Once the building is there, is there a position from the government that's going to go with the building in terms of how that building is going to be taken care of and the positions with that building? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, it's going to be an NWT Housing Corp building, so I don't know if there are any plans for them to have any staff in particular. But from a Health and Social Services point of view, there is a space dedicated in that building for programming and we will have our staff that are in the community now utilize that space to help deliver programs. Whether they are permanently located in there or not, that is still a question for consideration with the Sahtu Health and Social Services Authority and the department.

As I indicated, once they've done that analysis, we will be in a far better position to give the Member an update on that and if additional resources are required, we'll certainly come through the normal business planning process for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Yakeleya.

QUESTION 97-17(5):  
SENIORS INDEPENDENT LIVING FACILITY  
IN FORT GOOD HOPE

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions now to the Minister of the Housing Corporation on the seniors facility that is going to be built in Fort Good Hope. I would ask the Minister, for the purpose of this session here, to inform the public, people in Fort Good Hope, on the scheduling of this new facility that's going to be built in that community and opening for the spring of 2015.

Are we on schedule, where are we on schedule and how are the plans coming together to start the building of this facility? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of Housing, Mr. R.C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The building in Fort Good Hope is on schedule and we're hoping to have construction starting this summer. So as far as we know, the building is still on schedule and will be completed in a timely manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I appreciate that and the Minister's confidence that it will be on schedule and it will be built in Fort Good Hope and on schedule.

I want to ask the Minister if there are going to be any positions associated to that building in regards to the overall maintenance and care of that facility. Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the maintenance will be done by the local housing organization in Fort Good Hope. I believe there is a caretaker that may be required for it. Again, that would be a decision of the local housing authority in Fort Good Hope. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, will the local housing authority also receive additional funding for that position?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, we have a partnership agreement with the local housing authority and they will receive their funding. As far as the extra position goes, that will be a decision that they would make. However, I can tell the Member and Members of this House that we are reviewing how we are funding all our local housing organizations and we take all of these into consideration. That work is ongoing right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 98-17(5):  
FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR  
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN INITIATIVE

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with the Minister of Education and ask a few more questions with regards to the funding for junior kindergarten and the written response, or the response to the written question.

I asked the Minister when the boards, the board chairs, the superintendents had been advised of the reductions in their funding for the '14-15 year. I don't believe I heard an answer.

I would like to ask again, to the Minister, I appreciate that the boards and the chairs and the superintendents have been involved all along, but when were they advised of the reduction in their funding allotments for '14-15? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the specific detail of date that we met with the board chairs. I met with the board chairs to introduce the Early Childhood Development Framework and along with that was introducing junior kindergarten, but I can provide the Member with the exact dates of when that occurred, along with other engagements that we have initiated with the board chairs, the superintendents. Later on today I will be tabling the document of engagement. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I'm not so worried about the engagement. I know that the superintendents and the board chairs and the boards have been involved all along and that they have known about this initiative. My question is: When were they advised that their funding was going to be reduced for the '14-15 budget year? If the Minister doesn't have that information, that's fine, I can appreciate that, but it's my understanding that it wasn't very long ago; that they were not advised of the funding at the time the project was put forward.

The Minister mentioned that the superintendents had suggested that the pupil-teacher ratio be reduced and implemented through kindergarten to Grade 12. I wonder if he could explain to me what that means; I don't quite understand. I had understood that it was the high school PTR that was being changed. Are we changing the PTR for all grades? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, when we first introduced that the PTR be adjusted, the formula, to the superintendents, it came out with various numbers for the school boards during the three-year phases. The school boards, the superintendents did come back and recommended that we seriously consider having a PTR discussion pertaining to kindergarten through Grade 12, so

those are the discussions that we've had with them, taking those into consideration, to make some modifications to the actual numbers from the original intent to what we have with the numbers now. So I made some changes over time. So, based on their recommendations, we went forward. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. So I need to ask the Minister now then, what will be the pupil-teacher ratio for grades 10 to 12, what will be the PTR for elementary, what will be the PTR for primary in the budget year '14-15 coming up? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** I did highlight the actual numbers of the pupil-teacher ratio for year one, year two and year three. The PTR is still above the legislated mandate, so we are working towards that. We just have to be mindful that we are beyond the legislated mandate. I can also provide to the Members the breakdown with the actual numbers of the phase-in approach for year one, year two, year three, starting this fall. Mahsi.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I think I heard the Minister say we have those numbers. All I have in the written response is the current ratio is 13 to 1 and the legislated ratio is 16 to 1. I would like to know what we are moving to, and if that's what the Minister said that he will get for us, then I very much look forward to that information, if he could confirm, please. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Those are the discussions we've had with the superintendents. They were very mindful of our legislative mandate, the 13 versus the 16. So, I can provide Members with actual numbers that we have currently. Dealing with this \$7 million over a three-year period, working with the school boards, how is that going to reflect on PTR, I can provide those actual numbers to the Members. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The time for question period has expired.

Before we go on, colleagues, I would like to welcome back into the House today Mr. Ernie Bernhardt; his wife, Beatrice; his daughter Donna Bernhardt, my executive assistant; and his son O.J. Welcome back to the House.

---Applause

Item 8, written questions. Mr. Hawkins.

## Written Questions

### WRITTEN QUESTION 8-17(5): HUMAN RESOURCE FUNDING TRANSFERS AND REALLOCATIONS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance.

1. Please list all examples for the last 10 years in the departments of Municipal and Community Affairs, Public Works and Services, and Transportation where approved human resources dollars, typically listed under the main estimates category "Compensation and Benefits," appropriated by the Legislature of the day, where money or monies have been transferred from the intended human resources activity to an operations project, program, service or any other activity for which these funds were not originally approved nor intended.
2. Further, please list all detailed information by:
  - original job activity (by department);
  - original approved human resources financial allocation;
  - amount of dollars moved, transferred or spent;
  - where or to what activity these funds were transferred;
  - when the transfers occurred; and
  - who signed off or approved of these human resources funding transfer to initiatives other than those for which the funds were originally appropriated for and approved by the Legislative Assembly of the day.

That's the first question, Mr. Speaker. The second question is considerably shorter.

### QUESTION 9-17(5): DORMANT GNWT POSITIONS

My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources. Provide the following information:

1. Of the 161 GNWT positions that are categorized as dormant and inactive, please provide the following information:
  - a) what are included in this category, by department;
  - b) where are they located; and
  - c) a listing by position of the funding allocation committed to each position.
2. With regard to the 571 jobs, the Human Resources Minister has been quoted as saying "the GNWT is actively trying to fill," please provide the following information:

- a) What positions are included in this category and where are they located?
- b) How much funding is allocated for each position?
- c) Where have the job positions been advertised?
- d) How long have they been vacant?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Mr. Abernethy.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 34-17(5):  
PATHWAYS TO WELLNESS: AN UPDATED  
ACTION PLAN FOR ADDICTIONS  
AND MENTAL HEALTH 2014-2016

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, titled "Pathways to Wellness: An Updated Action Plan for Addictions and Mental Health 2014-2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Lafferty.

TABLED DOCUMENT 35-17(5):  
EDUCATION RENEWAL AND INNOVATION  
ENGAGEMENT UPDATE 2014

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, titled "Education Renewal and Innovation Engagement Update 2014." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 36-17(5):  
TAKE A KID TRAPPING AND  
HARVESTING REPORT 2012-2013

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, titled "Take a Kid Trapping and Harvesting Report 2012-2013." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

### Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We left off yesterday on general comments on the main estimates. What is the wish of committee today? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We wish to conclude general comments on the budget and start with opening comments on the Department of Human Resources. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed. We'll take a short break and resume.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are on general comments on the 2014-15 Main Estimates. Are there any general comments? If not, are we ready to move on to the Department of Human Resources?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Agreed, thank you. Page 3-7 we will stand down until the rest of the department has been considered. Oh, I forgot we have to have a Minister. I'd like to ask the Minister of Human Resources if he would like to make his opening comments. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Please proceed, Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am pleased to present the Department of Human Resources' main estimates for fiscal year 2014-15.

The department is proposing an operations expenditure budget of \$23.6 million. This is a reduction of \$18.5 million for 2013-14, a decrease of 44 percent. This reduction is largely the result of the transfer of employee-specific services such as pay and benefits, including regional roles, Helpdesk and human resources information systems to the Department of Finance. The transfer includes the compensation and benefits for 78 Department of Human Resources staff who are transferring to the Department of Finance, as well as GNWT-wide medical travel and dental plan benefits, and

information technology assets associated with PeopleSoft payroll and shift schedule operations.

The transfer of functions to Finance will increase efficiencies by aligning the GNWT's corporate finance and human resource information platform for SAM and PeopleSoft. It will frame payroll and benefits within official environment and it will enhance the Department of Human Resources expertise in providing quality GNWT-wide programs, services and strategic advice in human resource management.

The mandate of the Department of Human Resources continues to be to provide leadership and direction to the GNWT, its boards and agencies in areas of human resource management. The department's leadership on human resource management supports all departments and agencies in effectively recruiting, managing and retaining their staff.

The department ensures that the public service is managed as a corporate resource in a way that promotes human resource stability, employee retention and maximum effectiveness. In turn, this supports the interests of the government and the vision of believing in people and building on the strengths of Northerners.

In our role as a corporate service provider, \$4.7 million, or 20 percent of the department's 2014-15 funding, is allocated for direct support to departments and agencies through programs to address hiring, training and development for anticipated labour shortages in the GNWT. Investments and support of our Workforce Planning Strategy and regional recruitment programs and ongoing initiatives under maximizing northern employment ensure we connect with Northerners to fill our vacancies.

The department is reconstructing two major activities post transfer. First, the human resource strategy and policy division have been amalgamated into the directorate and will be called Corporate Affairs. This change is consistent with the structure of other GNWT departments. Second, the Corporate Human Resources Division has been renamed Strategic Human Resources and the Business Performance Unit and has been re-profiled to this division.

This restructuring strengthens the foundation of human resource management and reflects the government-wide strategic focus of HR programs and initiatives. The department continues to focus on its major renaming responsibility for devolution by ensuring a smooth welcome for federal employees into the GNWT public service. Human Resources will continue to support departments and agencies in their ongoing recruitment efforts to fill positions to ensure the GNWT has a knowledgeable and experienced public service,

able to provide service delivery responsibly as it acquires through devolution.

Our recent career fair in Ottawa, as well as our ongoing HR open houses in the NWT regional centres factor largely in our efforts to fill our vacant positions, particularly those related to devolution. Ongoing development of the public service through 2020, a Public Service Strategic Plan remains a key priority. The department continues to implement practical actions under 2020 through a four-year action plan for 2012 to 2016. Implementation of several initiatives intended to address anticipated labour shortages in the public service that focus on getting more Northerners into the public service and keeping them there is a priority in 2014-15.

The Workforce Planning Strategy, the Regional Recruitment Program and the Student and Youth Strategy are being incorporated into ongoing work for 2020 in support of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly's priority to increase employment opportunities where they are most needed. At the same time, we continue to look at ways to attract employees to the GNWT from elsewhere when the NWT labour market cannot provide the skill sets that we require.

As positions become vacant, the GNWT faces a significant challenge in stabilizing our existing workforce through retention initiatives and continual recruitment. The Workforce Planning Strategy provides recruitment and retention efforts, which result in the public service that is representative, effective and ensures organizational stability to achieve our corporate and operational goals. It includes an array of such strategies for students and youth, hard to recruit positions, inclusion, focus on Aboriginal persons and persons with disability, bilingual persons, career fairs, and of course, regional recruitment.

Under the umbrella of the Workforce Planning Strategy, the Regional Recruitment Program assists in increasing regional employment opportunities by using unique approaches to recruitment that will link community residents with on-the-job training in order to fill our regional vacancies in a way that prepares northern residents to be successful in these jobs. The Student and Youth Strategy improves on existing student and youth programming to link anticipated job opportunities in the public service with studies of Northerners.

In addition to devolution, the employment strategies in the department's 2014-15 main estimates supports the following key initiatives:

- Strategies that enhance our ability to attract, retain, advance Aboriginal employees at all levels of the public service. Good progress is being made in this area and there is more work to be done.

- Recruitment initiatives for persons with disability, youth, bilingual positions and hard to recruit positions to fill vacancies and promote GNWT as an employer of choice.
- Occupational health and safety training will continue to be a priority in order to minimize the risk of employees to be injured on the job.
- An array of corporate knowledge transfer initiatives will be rolled out to assist in the succession planning given that our public service demographic information projects a significant number of public servants who are eligible to retire.
- Implementation of a memorandum of agreement reached with the Union of Northern Workers for safe disclosure and rest periods.
- Continued support for our careers and Department of Health and Social Services websites, as well as social media sites both as a means of communication with current and potential employees and as a specialized tool for targeted recruitment strategies.
- Continued training for managers and employees to ensure their understanding of human resource management including filling vacancies, labour relations, occupational health and safety and the duty to accommodate.
- Aboriginal culture awareness and respectful workplaces.

As I announced earlier, for the second year in a row the Government of the Northwest Territories has been chosen as one of Canada's best diversity employers. The selection for 2014 recognizes our many initiatives to develop and encourage a diverse, inclusive workplace and the investment into the public service through 2020. We are proud of this achievement. Based on our vision of believing in people and building on the strengths of Northerners, we are making the right investment.

In closing, I am proud of the good work the Department of Human Resources does which serves the interests of the GNWT thus the people of the Northwest Territories overall; 2013-14 has been a productive year with significant milestones accomplished, and I am confident that we will continue this momentum in 2014-15 and ensure another excellent year. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. I would like to ask Minister Beaulieu if he would now like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, I do, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I will ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to please bring the witnesses to the table.

For the record, Minister Beaulieu, could you please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right, Sheila Bassi-Kellett, deputy minister, Department of Human Resources. To my left, Michelle Beard, director of HR, strategic and policy planning, Department of Human Resources.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to welcome the Department of HR, the Minister, DM and staff here today. I guess, first and foremost, I want to start off by congratulating the department for a well-deserved accolade for the second year in a row under the Canada's best diversity employers. Again, congratulations. It's always nice to read about that. I read it in the Globe and Mail the other day, so congratulations to you and your teams for continuing the good work.

I just want to do some general comments here, and some of them might be followed up in detail, but I think it's prudent for us to talk about some of the areas of opportunity and maybe even point to some of the areas of good work. I'm going to refrain from talking about vacancy positions and things of that nature until we get more into detail or I'll let my other colleagues dive into it more.

With that, I think, in no particular order, it's nice to see that recent announcement, due to the fact that our occupational health and safety record was a bit dismal for a number of years. Some of our fines and penalties were in the area of about three-quarters of a million dollars, so it's nice to see and hear earlier, I believe last fall, the introduction of a Safety Training Program. We didn't hear very much of it since that initiative, so I'm hoping that the Minister might be able to enlighten us as to where we're at in terms of the rollout, budget dollars and what priority this will have in this fiscal year in terms of prioritizing safety and minimizing risk to employees.

The other thing that has come up in our discussions a little bit and at least overview is, I guess, our overtime policy. I know committee was a bit concerned regarding the overtime policy, and more particularly, that we did see a substantial growth in overtime in this fiscal budget, albeit a small number, but one which does beg the question what are our policies, have they been reviewed, what are the interdepartmental agreements in place for banked hours, those types of things. I think the committee is asking for that information only to ask that we have some consistencies as we're going from department to department.



I know that we did have some questions and concerns regarding the service partnership agreements between the Department of Health and Social Services and, I believe, Finance because of the fact we are transferring a lot of duties with the medical travel. I understand in your opening comments the rationale for it, but I think it's important that people understand why and whether or not all the financial aspects have been taken care of with that transfer.

Now, you might want to correct me if I'm wrong through the Minister here, but I am going through the employee survey, and I believe the last survey results that we have tabled to the public was in 2012. I have to comment only because that's what I only have in front of me here, which I am using as a tool as we, I guess, get our palate wet in terms of what's happening in the Department of HR.

The 2012 GNWT Employee Satisfaction and Engagement Survey, for the most part, is a good survey. I want to say that for the record. However, as we are all aware that there are opportunities here they call the priority areas, and a lot of the priority areas where our employees have told us, as a government, they would like to see improvement. I have yet to see a substantial document or positioning statement or, I guess, action plan, per se, that would address some of the lower scores that we received in that survey, and again, if there's a new survey pending please advise the Members here of upcoming results possibly from 2013.

As I said, in no particular order here, and again maybe we can get some confirmation here, we know that the legislation pertaining to HR under the Safe Disclosure Policy is hopefully imminent. We know that committee members have spoken quite at length in terms of its support and the fact that there is a requirement for doing so.

There is equal argument for, I guess, the private sector, as well, to have something of equal value within the parameters of a safety act of that nature. Again, I would ask that maybe the Minister could comment as to where we are with the Safe Disclosure Policy and whether or not the private sector would be part of this whistleblowing protection that seems to be on the mind of many.

Other than that, I am going to have more specifics as we go into the details here, but again I wanted to reiterate some of the positive comments that we are seeing in here and maybe if we can get a little bit of an update to some of those inquiries not mentioned in the opening address and somewhat embedded in the pages of the main estimates here, that would be great if we could get some clarity on that. Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will attempt to respond to some of the information and then have the deputy fill in, the deputy or the director fill in with some of the areas that we may be able to provide more specific details.

I guess to the overtime issue, we don't have any overtime scheduled in any of our business planning or in the mains, and I guess that is sometimes part of the issue with some of the discussions that have been continuing in the House over the last few days. At some point there are individuals that are not able to come to work, especially in the 24/7 operations of the hospitals, the corrections facilities and so on, but the positions have to be there. So sometimes people are called back to work and do perform overtime and this has an impact on the positions, or relief workers are brought in that may actually have other jobs, so they are paid overtime, or employees are kept on after their regular shift to continue to fill the position of the individual that may not be there.

The more detail, I guess, on the employee survey 2012 and what we're doing to address the areas of concern, I am going to ask the deputy to respond to that and provide a little bit of an update on the Occupational Health and Safety Program that we have recently announced in the House and have contracted a private company here in the city.

The Safe Disclosure Policy, the safe disclosure is something that we have negotiated with the northern workers' union, the Union of Northern Workers, and that is something that will be going to the legislation. It is an act that will provide safe disclosure to public servants that work for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Anything outside of that, any whistleblower from outside the government, a person that is not employed here, we're not covering in this legislation. It's outside of our mandate for this particular issue.

With that, Madam Chair, I would ask either the director or deputy minister, maybe starting with the deputy, to provide some more detail on Member Dolynny's questions.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, Minister. I will follow up on some of the comments that the Minister has made on the issues that have been raised by the Member.

Starting off with occupational health and safety, we are very, very proud that we have launched our overall Occupational Health and Safety Program. It comes on the tail of the Occupational Health and Safety Policy, which was approved by the Executive Council about a year ago this time.

What we wanted to do was put some meaningful action behind the policy itself and so what we did

was we have worked extensively with the Northern Safety Association, and we have other contractors that we have engaged with, as well, to really provide a broad range of safety training to our employees, to ensure that we are upholding the safety of our employees, given the diversity of our workforce and the diversity of the kinds of work environments that we have.

I would like to note, as well, that we have made the offer available through our training calendar that if there are other Aboriginal and community governments that are interested in accessing this training, we welcome them to come and take part in this.

A lot of things that we're doing that we're really looking at on-line training to be as timely as we possibly can. We appreciate the pressures that are on our staff to deliver good programs and services, so we try to balance that with the amount of time that they're away from their office or workplace to be able to take training.

I'll go through some examples of the occupational health and safety training that we're offering up to employees now. We have an overall course, Employee Safety Awareness, a one-day training session we are offering in all the regions, which is really intended as a broad introduction to employees who may not be familiar with what they need to be aware of in the workplace, what their responsibilities are and what our responsibilities are as an employer. We really look to employees to be the first level of, you know, being aware of their work environment, flagging any issues that may come up and being very cognizant of the fact that they are in partnership with us to make sure that we are able to support and uphold safety in the workplace.

Another one that we're looking at implementing right away is supervisor safety training and we think that's a very, very important one. For managers to really be aware, again in the diversity of the kinds of work environments that we have, it is very important for supervisors to know that they have a responsibility to look out for and oversee their employees and make sure their employees are very aware of safety on the ground.

After that, we have a whole range of different kinds of training and I will just name some of them off very quickly. So, for example, WHMIS training, that's a very important one that many people want to take and we work very closely with the Northern Safety Association to make sure we're able to offer that on-line. We think that's a great advantage to our employees and to other people who may want to access it. So that e-learning is a great way to get on-line and be able to access that training at a time that really works for the employee himself.

We are looking at slips, trips and falls, hazard recognition control, driving safety, workplace

violence, winter driving safety, proactive safety attitudes, prime contractor training calendar, back injury prevention, Emergency Response Plan training, fall protection, scaffold awareness, confined space entry, asbestos, transportation of dangerous goods, loss prevention and control for executives and senior managers, and Occupational Health and Safety Committee training as well. So we have a really diverse angle of things. We have worked with departments very closely to make sure we are really providing training that is very relevant and very appropriate for departments.

I will move on to the issue around overtime that the Member raised. As the Minister mentioned, overtime is a fact of reality in our workplaces. We really want to make sure that we balance out a work-life balance for our employees, but there are times when overtime has to be a reality. The operational need will come up, for example, if there is a heavy snowfall and we have to get the roads cleared. We know in 24/7 operations, like hospitals and correctional centres, there is often a need to be able to work overtime, to balance off shifts and make sure that there is that continuity of service.

We know that there are other important deadlines that come up throughout the year. For example, meeting fiscal year-end is an example that we use quite a bit, where people will have to work some overtime to be able to make sure that we meet the deadlines that are set for making sure that we have met the terms and conditions of legislation and reporting that we're required to meet.

We really try to balance this though. We really exercise with managers a lot of process issues that we've implemented, using some of the systems that we have, and support for managers to make sure that as they work with their employees, the employees say overtime needs to be worked, it definitely needs to be approved by managers in advance. We have mechanisms and tools built into our PeopleSoft reporting system that allows for that. When time is entered into the system and when time is approved, managers and employees are able to really document what the overtime is for and why they're doing it.

Again, it is a fact of reality in life, but we really work very hard to manage it closely and make sure that we're not using it too much because, of course, that's a pressure point both on budgets and on employees themselves.

We're really recognizing, as well, through the rest periods MOU that we negotiated with the Union of Northern Workers, we're very mindful of not wanting our employees to be working extensively long hours. That's not in anybody's good interest. So that's something that we've been very mindful to make sure that as part of our rest periods, we are looking at the overtime factor in there as well.

The Member raised an issue around the service partnership agreements and we've been working very closely with the health system on really monitoring and implementing an approach to be able to support clarity around process when it comes to human resource management.

The Department of Human Resources, we provide the corporate supports and the tools and we add value. We really look to managers to be able to manage and we want to support them to the full extent that we can. We know that the Department of Health and the health authorities have taken that responsibility very seriously. They wanted to pilot with us the ability to be able to have a service partnership agreement that lays out roles and responsibilities, timelines for service levels that should be met and how we will track that information. So we've been working to do that and we're feeling quite good about that. The information that we're able to track right now, for example, we set targets for ourselves when it comes to staffing from the point in time that we have a job description ready to go where a departmental manager says I'm ready to start the staffing process through until we make a verbal offer. Our target is eight weeks, 56 days, and we've been coming in around 59 days on average around that. So, we have room for improvement but we are tracking and able to document that we know the timelines that are involved in being able to staff. So, we're continuing that good work and our intent is, of course, to be able to roll it out across the entire GNWT overall.

The Member made some excellent points around the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey. We are working to do this survey biannually, so the 2012 Employment Engagement and Satisfaction Survey is the last one that we have available. We made it available in 2013. We take that information very seriously. That is a very key data for us when it comes to indications around employee retention. We do a lot of good work around employee recruitment, but retention is very important to us, too, to keep the talent that we have, to really let people know they are valued in the public service and to really engage with them to say, what's going to make a difference, where are the areas that we can improve to really keep your interest, keep you feeling like you've got some good opportunities to do meaningful work, to be supported, to advance in the organization.

We're really proud of some of the top level scores that we have. I think we've got many of them in the high 80s that indicate that people have meaningful and challenging work, they have a good work environment and they get along really well with their colleagues and managers.

We track the other areas very closely where they are identified as room for improvement. A number of those we are looking at very closely and taking

action on. For example, I just happened to scan very quickly here on page 8 of the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey under the diversity and inclusion theme, employers responded in 2012 that they would like to see more information on cross-cultural awareness for employees. So we were very pleased to release in 2013 the Aboriginal cultural and awareness training on National Aboriginal Day. We were very pleased to have our disabilities awareness training that we're publicizing and we are ramping up a little bit more.

So we're taking each of these areas where we know they need to be a priority for action and looking if we do have tools in place to address some of those areas, do we need to be publicizing them more with our employees to make sure they are fully aware of them and make sure they can fully access them.

For other areas where it does need to be an improvement, we certainly look at trying our best to deep dive and see what was the root of the issue there and what are we going to do to tackle some of those issues to improve them.

If I can just finish off around safe disclosure, we were very, very pleased to work with our partners at the UNW to reach a memorandum of agreement on safe disclosure, which currently applies to all members of the UNW bargaining unit. So it came into effect last April 2013, and we have monitored very closely with the UNW. We are very eager, quite frankly, to see if there are any cases that come forward that are raised. To date, we haven't had any cases raised.

The interest we have in having cases raised is that gives us an opportunity to test the mechanisms that we put in place through the memorandum of agreement because we want that to inform the development of our legislative proposal, which would then open up and expand safe disclosure to all GNWT employees.

The Minister mentioned that at this point in time, we are mandated to look at GNWT employees, but certainly in the development of the legislative proposal we will be looking at the policy issues behind the point about safe disclosure and allegations of wrongdoing have been defined, that people can feel supported in being able to bring those forward in a way that's going to work within the public system that we have. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you very much. Next on the list for general comments on Human Resources, I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to start off, as well, by commending the department on their award for Canada's Best Diversity Employer for the second year in a row. Good job on that.

With that being said, there are a lot of initiatives that have been happening since the onset of this government and one I'm pretty interested in hearing more information about – maybe we can get into detail or have further briefing notes – on the initiative for the Regional Recruitment Plan. I refer to it as the 80/20 plan, 80 percent salary and 20 percent training for any of our residents of the Northwest Territories that want to get into the public service. I want to know how that's rolling out, how that's been brought forward to the general public of the Northwest Territories and whether or not that was something that was discussed at the career fair in Ottawa or discussed in the regional open houses with Human Resources.

Other things that the Minister and his staff are well aware of are some of the things that have been brought up in this House this past week and last week. One in particular was job descriptions. Time and time again I have heard from constituents who have applied on jobs and didn't get an interview, then seeing the job being posted again and wondering how come it wasn't filled. There is an employee who wants a job but seeing some of these job postings being time and again without any filling of those positions. They want to know what's the write-up in terms of standardized job descriptions, how they're written. Mainly when we talk to post-secondary students trying to get into the job system, a lot of these job descriptions are asking for years of experience when we know full well that our post-secondary students are making the commitment to go to school. When they're finished, they are caught in a catch-22 situation where they can't get a job because we're asking for years of experience in the field that they specialize in and got educated in. I think that needs to be addressed moving forward.

Getting into the vacant positions, news to me – and the Minister made comment to this yesterday in the House – that some jobs are deliberately left vacant. We can get into that in detail, but I want to put it down here for the record that that is concerning because if we have jobs that are averaging about \$100,000 a year, that is money that we approved in this House and those are being left vacant.

Another program I wanted to touch base on was the PeopleSoft program, a good program to work with all our public service employees within the government system. I would like an update on some of the trends, some of the things we are seeing with PeopleSoft and even though we did get the award, how can we still better the system, working with our employees throughout the Northwest Territories.

Some concerns that are very common within my region and the communities is the ROE, record of employment, that some people are seeking. In some cases, I've heard six months for something to

get done. I know there has been some concern from some constituents in our regional office that the staff in our regional office might be understaffed or overworked, one or the other. It does need to be fixed because people are having a hard time getting their records of employment when leaving their department. In that case, just leaving the department itself, there has to be a one point entry system when an employee from the GNWT wants to leave and get everything straightened out so they can move on to their next job or their next career. In some cases, whether it's moving from sick leave or just a leave of absence or a transfer of some type, sometimes the paperwork and the working between the headquarters and the regional offices can be confusing for the individual and actually can even lead to prolonged stress leave as well. There have been some cases that I've heard within Inuvik.

The direct appointments, as a GNWT employee in a previous career, I did see some shuffling of direct appointments within some departments that were a cause of concern not only with me but people that were in the departments throughout the NWT as well. So making sure that any direct appointments are communicated with the department, with committee members, with the individuals that are in the ridings so that people don't come to us, as MLAs, wanting explanations why a certain person got a direct appointment when there are other people that are qualified for the position in the community.

Also, I wanted to talk about the Safe Disclosure Policy. I think in our last update we heard that there weren't any updates in the Safe Disclosure Policy. So how that's rolling out and if we're continuing to move forward on how we're going to continue to implement that program and how we can get that information out a little bit more.

Those are just some general comments that I wanted to bring forth with the department, but I know it's a challenge trying to manage all the vacant jobs, trying to get individuals into the positions that we'd like them to have. I've seen it working in the departments that I've worked with in the past and seen that this level brings a whole new insight. I appreciate the hard work that's going on within the departments, but obviously there are still some concerns and, really, I do support the initiative of the and really want to see how that works out. I think that's a great opportunity to make some changes and look at job descriptions that will make it easier for our northern residents to enter the public service system if we want to put in this Regional Recruitment Plan, but we're still kind of not allowing our guys to get in there. So what's the use of having it when we're still writing job descriptions for years of experience when it's not there? It's kind of a holdback of trying to get our people into the system.

So just some general comments. I know these questions can be brought forth further through briefings or when we get into detail or brought into the House, but I'll leave it up to the Minister if he wants to answer now. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The regional recruitment was something that the people from the departments have been talking about at the open houses. We've had one open house; we're expanding to open houses in all the regional centres where we have service offices. We're going to have two days of open house here to cover the city of Yellowknife and because regional recruitment is the intent of that, the strategy is to fill the regional positions, positions out there in the regions that could be also in the communities. It was not discussed in Ottawa. The career fair in Ottawa was not specifically to look at individuals that may not have all of the qualifications necessary to do a job. We weren't looking for people down there that would be coming up here using 80 percent of their salary for the pay and 20 percent of their salary for training. So that wasn't discussed at that Ottawa career fair.

Job descriptions are written by the various departments. The employing departments write the job descriptions, and all job descriptions are evaluated in the same fashion. They're evaluated through the Hay system, then, based on that, the points and the qualifications that the departments think are needed for that to effectively perform 100 percent of those job functions are put in there and evaluated as such.

As far as experience goes, that is a bit of a dilemma where you have young people graduating from university and so on that don't have experience and some of them call for experience in these job descriptions. So, many times we put programs in place to provide experience to students, such as the Internship Program, the Summer Student Program and now we're looking at the Student and Youth Strategy. That's all designed to attract students and youth into the public service.

The vacancy rates are something that we are going to put in writing to committee. The comment of positions being left deliberately vacant is not a situation where the government comes to the Assembly and asks for positions in the mains or through the business planning process and then immediately keeps the positions vacant. Often what happens is, as a management tool for budgeting, there will be vacant positions, as we know, throughout the system and a deliberate attempt is made to manage the human resources by each of the departments in order to make sure that they are not over-expending their budgets in any area.

I'm going to let the deputy minister speak on the PeopleSoft. The record of employment is something that has come to my attention. As I have information, last fiscal year we had just slightly over 600 individuals leaving the public service, GNWT public service and for each of those there's a requirement to get their record of employment out to each of those staff members in the appropriate time. I guess I could also provide an additional number that up until 2014, I guess that would be the fiscal year '13-14, we've had 457 people leaving the government. So in situations where individuals need a record of employment to move on to other types of things where we are trying to meet the requirements on providing the record of employment to individuals, sometimes we understand it's being extended a lot longer than it should be, but for the most part one of our objectives here recently, and I guess always has been, is to try to get their record of employment to the individuals that have left the public service as quickly as we can within the legislation that indicates to us how long and we have to provide that information.

As far as direct appointments and what we do for direct appointments often used as a development tool for different departments, various departments that present a direct appointment to Cabinet. Their direct appointment is used that otherwise would not really achieve any other result. There is no other positive results that could be gained by putting the job out for public advertising that we have a candidate within the system or just that wants to come into the system that is looking for a job that a direct appointment would be the best and most efficient way to bring the person into the public service. We know that we had 216 direct appointments in the first two years of this government. Of that, 193 of those positions were priority candidates, either priority 2 or priority 1 candidates, and if we have just a priority 1 candidate, 119 of the 216 direct appointments were priority 1 candidates.

I think we did talk a bit about the safe disclosure, but in case I've missed anything, especially the area of PeopleSoft as a tool for human resources, I'll ask the deputy to provide some of that detail.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you very, Minister Beaulieu. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, have a number of comments, and answers can come later on. I may ask further questions when we get to detail, but I just have some observations and some comments that I'd like make comparing last year to this year and so on.

I'd like to comment, first of all, about the Workforce Planning Strategy. I'm really glad that we have that and that it's still being worked on. One of the things that we noticed, particularly in the last budget or the

budget before that, was the number of retirees. I shouldn't say number of retirees. The number of employees we have who are close to becoming retirees. We have a large number of very senior employees who are going to be retiring in the next 10 years. I believe that was two years ago. I'd like to know, at some point, from the department on how the Workforce Planning Strategy is dealing with that particular problem. Are we succeeding or do we still have a fairly large bulge of knowledgeable, competent and senior people that we're going to be losing in the next 10 to 15 or 5 to 15 years?

The accommodating people who are returning to work, I know that the department is working on that. I also know that there are difficulties sometimes with certain individuals when they wish to return to work and for whatever reason a particular department can't accommodate them or won't accommodate them. There's obviously differing opinions between the employee and the department in some cases. I'd like to know how the Department of Human Resources assists another department in accommodating somebody who is returning to work. I think we have an officer who's doing that, and I'd like to know whether or not that is successful at this point or if the department feels that there needs to be some change made there.

There's been some comment already about the career fair in Ottawa and the open houses that are being held here in the North, and I guess my question is more to what is the content of the open houses. What are we trying to accomplish with an open house that we maybe could better accomplish with a career fair? I stopped into the career fair because I happened to be in Ottawa and it was really well attended and I think it was an extremely well visited venue, but why are we doing open houses in the South? Should we not also be doing career fairs here? I'd appreciate hearing what the department thinks about that.

One of the things that struck me when I took a quick look at yesterday's federal budget address and some of the elements of that budget is that there's going to be a fairly large impact on federal employees' benefits and benefits of retirees. The public service, I've lost the name of the organization that provides us with our benefits, but retirees, for instance, are going to be paying double for their benefits than they are currently. NWT employees are under the same plan, so I would like to know if the department knows at this point or maybe they need to find out, but how are GNWT employees under the same plan as the federal employees and retirees under the same plan as federal employees, how are they going to be affected by these announcements in the federal budget.

WSSC costs were a really big issue a year ago when we discussed the budget, and I would be

interested in knowing whether or not we have seen a decrease in our WSSC costs. I know initially there was. We were advised by the previous Minister that there was some decrease in our WSSC costs, but has that continued to go down or have we gone down and we're now at a plateau.

I'm pleased that we have a Youth Strategy that the department is working on. I think this was raised in the House within the last few days, but one of the issues that young people have in trying to get hired is they have knowledge in a particular field. They graduate from school but they have no experience, and they're in a catch-22 because they don't get hired because they don't have experience, and if they don't get hired then they can't ever get the experience. My question to the department is whether or not you would consider hiring someone with no experience but with the qualifications that you're looking for and give them a year, six months, a year, two years under, say, a mentorship system or program to gain the experience that is necessary to move them from the very junior position that they're in up to where the position that we actually have advertised for and need them for.

When people leave our public service, I think we do exit interviews. I would appreciate that being confirmed if we do exit interviews, and if we do, do we have any data on why people are leaving the public service and how is that data used.

There has been a lot of talk about increasing the number of people in the NWT. It was certainly a part of the budget address and there is a plan which the government is going to put forward. I mentioned the other day that there seems to be a disconnect or something, but there seems to be a problem with us hiring some Northerners back. We have Northerners who want to come home, who have the education, who have the skills, and for whatever reason the hiring process seems to get delayed. They give up and they take a job in the south as opposed to coming back here. I don't know if it's something that the Department of HR can do something about or if it is something that HR can in some way educate other departments, because I realize generally these things are being done through other departments and HR doesn't actually do all the hiring. Whatever HR can do to make changes across our system to ensure that when we've got a Northerner who's coming back that we actually smooth the way to hire them as opposed to putting obstacles in place.

Lastly, I must comment on the change that we use in advertising our positions in GNWT. There's been quite a bit of comment about it in the media and so on, but I am concerned that we're not reaching the people we need to reach by only advertising on-line or only putting our jobs out on-line. We are advertising in the paper. I appreciate that. But when the ads are in the paper there are no jobs listed. It

simply says come and work for the GNWT and references you to a website. That's fine for people who are computer savvy who are in a jurisdiction where they've got easy access to the Internet and fast speeds, but I would think that it's probably going to affect our residents to a certain extent, certainly in the smaller communities, and some people in the larger centres who are living in a poverty situation and can't afford Internet. That's a concern for me. I am concerned that that strategy is going to have a negative impact on our hiring. I think it's going to affect a small number of people, but I think any time we negatively affect people who might want to come and work for us or we restrict the number of people who might apply for jobs, I think that's a bad thing.

That's it. I just have comments, and if answers can come later, I'm all for that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Workforce Planning Strategy does have several sub-strategies, a Regional Recruitment Strategy being one of them. The Inclusive Recruitment Strategy is another, the Student and Youth Strategy and also the Career Fair Strategy. The area where the Member speaks of where there's going to be lots of public servants retiring within the next five to 10 years, we have the Knowledge Retention Framework that we're going to employ to try to retain the knowledge, pass the knowledge on to individuals that would be staying with the GNWT, like perhaps developing some mentorship program guidelines that will allow individuals to work with these potential retirees. That is something that we need to do; it's something that we consider to be a very important part of individuals that are retiring.

We are also developing a harder to recruit framework and refocusing recruitment strategy, bilingual recruitment strategy as well. The question of the career fair in Ottawa versus the open houses that we're having in the various regional centres, is the career fair we really are targeting some positions that are very specialized and as a result of some devolution transfers over, so a lot of that was targeted at that. But at the same time, we did engage people from the North that do live down there and may be going away.

Addressing some of the other issues, the Member brought forward with difficulty for Northerners to come back. I have talked a bit about the idea of having more career fairs, actually, near where some of our students are going to university and so on, so that the students are aware that the GNWT is available as a potential employer.

The open houses were specifically targeted at bringing people from the Northwest Territories into the public service, so trying to fill the jobs that are

available in the GNWT and the jobs that can be filled by Northerners.

The numbers on the workers' compensation, I guess as we go through the business planning process here as we go through the mains, we can deal with the specific numbers.

In as far as exit surveys for public servants that are leaving the GNWT, the GNWT has stopped doing exit surveys. We would continue exit surveys if we thought that we were gaining a lot of value or some value from them, but as it turns out, most of the exit surveys only was an area for individuals to vent their grievances with the GNWT and tell us specifically what their issues were during their employment with GNWT in many of the cases. Other individuals said they were happy and were leaving the GNWT on a positive note and seemed less interested in doing the exit survey, or exit interviews.

The change in the way we advertise jobs was for a specific reason. When we hire a person into the public service, one of the questions we ask is: How did you know about the job, what made you apply for the job, what medium did you use when you were looking for employment? We found that a very, very low percentage, I think 3 percent of individuals that have come to work for the GNWT had got their ad out of the newspaper. Most people got their information on-line.

Recognizing the fact that some communities don't have real good Internet, most do, but some still don't, and also that some individuals don't have computers, what we've done is in areas in a community where there will be a job come out, a job advertisement, there is a fax sent to the community governments where that job could be physically posted, and also in communities where we have government service officers working for the Department of Executive, they are advised of the jobs that are going out in the communities that they represent. I think that's most of it. So with that, thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you very much. General comments. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My comments are going to be general and we'll go through them in the detail. I do want to acknowledge the hard work by the Department of Human Resources to achieve the level of recognition across Canada for the second year in a row. I know there is lots of creativity from the staff members at the department and their efforts are certainly demonstrated by being recognized as an employer to be reckoned with across Canada, even though it's a small jurisdiction. I want to offer my congratulations for the hard work of the people in that department.

Now, while I am saying that here, I am going to the budget. I have wanted to follow up with some of the comments of my colleagues on this side here in regards to the department.

The communities in the Sahtu, just doing some research here in all levels of education, because that is where this department needs to be somewhat focused on in our small communities. The Minister is making comment to having maximized our northern workforce and filling them with the choice of employer, which would be the government in our small communities. Just seeing the Aurora College 2013-2014 enrollments by campus, community and programs in the Sahtu from Adult Literacy Basic Education to Underground Mining to Observer Communication Training Programs, Heavy Equipment, Bachelor of Education, Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Community Health Representative, Personal Support Workers, a whole bunch. The point is, we have in this year 81 people who have enrolled in one of these programs at one of our three campuses. I wanted to state very clearly and strongly that the department not only go into the Thebacha Campus, the Aurora Campus, the Yellowknife Campus, our regional Aurora College learning centres and present a dynamic presentation to our students as a choice of an employer.

We need to look more strongly at pointing to our campuses and Aurora College and offering the same type of presentations that were done in Ottawa and bring them into our communities and encourage students to get their education, to look at the number of opportunities.

We spoke earlier about the number of vacancies that need to be filled within our government, but also to talk about the uniqueness of recruiting potential employees, recruiting our own people, giving them the first opportunity. That should be our priority: putting our people to work, number one, from our communities.

Earlier this week I talked about the potential graduations just in my region, not the Northwest Territories, just what I have here. Potentially we could be graduating 47 students this year. What are the department's plans to go into the high schools and look at long-term employment or career opportunities for our graduates? According to the numbers from Education, Culture and Employment, next year we will have 50 potential graduates and the year after, all things going well, we'll have 59 graduates. Even with a three-year plan, what are we doing – this is just the Sahtu, I'm not talking about other regions – to look at tracking these students? Looking at going into the schools, what vacancies that are hard to fill, give the students an opportunity to say I could become an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories. More

importantly, have the department work with them to improve their potential to get those jobs in the government, encourage them. Work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to start tracking them. Start tracking the Grade 12s right now. Are they going to the Norman Wells Learning Centre? Are they going to Inuvik? Are they going to Yellowknife? Start tracking them. There are a lot of kids in our small communities.

A few years ago in Colville Lake, I went with one of the board of governors and did a tour with Aurora College. Even in Colville Lake, there's a young person there in Grade 7 or 8 who wanted to be a nurse or a doctor. We've got to use this opportunity and the initiatives I have heard from the Minister. How do we give hope to a young person in Colville Lake and say, yes, you can be a nurse, here's your opportunity and this is what we can do for you. Start tracking them.

We must inspire and give support to the young people in our communities all across the North and believe in our students.

I need to make mention that there are some unique challenges in our small communities and our large centres that we need to be aware of. The advertisement about using the modern means of communication, sometimes that doesn't really work. Even in Tulita, the News/North comes out here on Monday. In Tulita, we get it on Thursday or Friday if we're lucky. So it doesn't quite jibe. For us, we're getting the message late.

In Fort Good Hope, only 38 percent of homes have Internet access. That was in 2008. I'm not too sure if that's been improved. Not everybody can afford Internet access. We have to be somewhat flexible in our communities.

Like my colleague Ms. Bisaro, there are some details I could go into but I will save that for another day. I do want to say that the opportunity for us is now in that the excitement I see around the Aboriginal recruitment senior managers in our regions and communities needs to be strengthened by seeing some results. What is the goal of the department?

In my region, we have the workforce represent the people it's working for. I want to see that increased. What's it now in the Sahtu region? What's the opportunity for some of our managers who now can be offered an opportunity to take on-the-job training to become directors, superintendents, even assistant and deputy ministers? We have to look at that.

There are students in Fort Smith right now who want to do more than just administrative work or fieldwork and we need to encourage our health boards and educational boards to start moving in that direction, provide the opportunities. I'd like to see what type of opportunities. Given the numbers



I've given you just on enrolment of students in these various post-secondary institutions and our high schools, we need to be very creative and forceful. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. With that we'll go to Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to speak on a couple of these items brought forward by the Member, then I'm going to ask the deputy to speak on some specific details. I will ask that she speak specific details on the Youth and Student Strategy and also more elaboration on the career fair.

We do attend other career fairs within the territory, but they are hosted by others. The Department of Education will host career fairs and often when those career fairs are occurring, then Human Resources would come in and piggyback onto their career fair and we would have people there from Human Resources. We've attended one in Inuvik and the next one is in Hay River that Education is putting on. We will be attending that as well.

The Member speaks about the group of kids that are in high school and looking at what they wish to do for their careers. I guess just overall the department wants to achieve the same type of things that the Member speaks of, that we're interested in having Aboriginal people in senior management positions as well.

We have the Aboriginal Management Development Program which was known for the last couple of years as the Superintendent/Associate Director Program. Now we're looking at the Aboriginal Management Development Program at the management level, so management level, director level, superintendent level. I would say that at some point moving forward, we would probably look at some development at the ADM level and even the DM level in the future.

So this is something that, as Minister, I will be pursuing and making sure that we stay on task to be able to bring Aboriginal senior managers into the fold.

In the Sahtu we have decent numbers for the positions in these communities. The GNWT has about 280 positions in the Sahtu, recognizing that 60 of them are vacant, not 60 of those ones but of the 280 filled positions and 60 vacant positions, about half of those, so about 30 of those positions we are recruiting for. About 15 of those positions, we will be activating. We consider them positions that are inactive and we will look at deleting those from the books so it doesn't look like there's a tremendous amount of vacancies sitting there.

In the Sahtu, the numbers look really good. We are really encouraged by the fact that when we fill the positions... Although it's very difficult. We can fill these positions and then there will be people

leaving, leaving the various departments in the Sahtu as they are right across the territory. This is a number that we work with but we are constantly in the mode of trying to fill positions as a department as we work with the other departments.

With that, Mr. Chairman, with your indulgence, I'd like to ask if the deputy minister could provide a little more detail to the Member.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. We'll go to Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

**MS. BASSI-KELLET:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. First of all I think I'd be remiss if I didn't express gratitude for the acknowledgement for the Top Diversity Employer. We've been very thrilled about that, as well, to be acknowledged overall as a government.

We're very, very aware that what we need to do is really do a lot more work to encourage students and youth into the public service. The public service has a lot of exciting work, despite what my kids may think, and there are a lot of really exciting things that are available and opportunities out there. What we know right now, through our Student and Youth Strategy, is that we need to be really encouraging students and youth, people who have their credentials who return home, to really look at opportunities in the public service.

We have internships right now and what we've found is that a one-year internship is a fantastic opportunity for a smart, young person to get in and learn some things, and they share their wisdom and enthusiasm with the departments they work for, but one year often isn't enough of an experience to put on a resume that will get you in the door for a subsequent interview. So what we're doing with the Student and Youth Strategy is aggressively looking at expanding internships so that when someone comes back home with their education and their credentials, that we can bring them on for a longer period of time and it's really going to pave the way for them to really see a lot of great experience about being in the public service, build up their resume and enable them. If they don't stay in that internship or in that particular area, they've built up some good credentials to be able to apply elsewhere, hopefully in the public service and we'll keep them north.

A big part of our Student and Youth Strategy, as well, includes getting in to young people who are in the high schools. Minister Beaulieu has worked with his colleague, the Minister of Education, around looking at ensuring that we can get in with ECE into schools, into high schools, so that we can show the students the interesting and diverse array of opportunities and job opportunities that exist within the public service, and lay the groundwork for students then to really be aware what courses they need to take to graduate high school, have those courses behind them to get into post-secondary to

be able to come back and take advantage of those job opportunities.

We think it's quite exciting to be able to get young people excited about the opportunities out there. Sometimes people aren't even aware of what goes on in government and to know that there's nursing and teaching and wildlife biologists and heavy equipment operators, a huge diversity of things, not just sitting in an office. I think that's a very important message that we need to deliver a lot more to the young people, so part of our Student and Youth Strategy is collaborating with ECE to make sure we get out and get into the schools to deliver that message about the exciting opportunities that can come.

We see a lot of importance, as well, as we look at not just recruiting into the public service but retaining people. The point that the Member raised about training and developing our existing workforce is something we hold very near and dear. We do know that we have a lot of talent in the GNWT right now. I think Members are quite familiar with our statistic that we do have 32 percent representation of Aboriginal employees within the public service. Frankly, given the competing interests that are out there that there are so many different opportunities for a lot of our smart young people right now, we're quite pleased to have kept that 32 percent, if I can be a little bit flippant about it. I'm sorry; I don't mean to be flip on that.

What we do find is there are ways to really want to retain and advance people into the public sector. We know that training and development is a very key part of that, so we're embarking right now on our leadership development training that we've done for a long time, which gives people the generic leadership skills that they need to develop, whether they are in the public sector or elsewhere.

We're also working on the management series, which is very GNWT-focused, the things that somebody needs to know to be a manager and a senior manager within our government. Really very, very fundamental tips and tools, including managing people, working with the financial system we have, our budgeting system, how to write policy papers, et cetera, et cetera, some very hands-on information that's very important for our people to have.

We know that right now we do have some good statistics in terms of where we've gone as a public service and our growth and our maintenance of a representative public service. We've made great strides. We clearly have much more work to do and we're really working on that.

We know that over the past decade, for example, if we've stayed at 32 percent Aboriginal employment overall, we're very proud to be able to note that the number of Aboriginal employees has increased. So the overall public service has gone up, but we're

employing, over the past 10 years, we can say an increase of almost 330 more Aboriginal people in the GNWT than there were 10 years ago.

We know, as well, that there have been six straight years of increases in the number and percent of senior managers who are Aboriginal in our government, to go from 15 percent six years ago to 20 percent now. That's the kind of momentum that we really want to try to continue. We know it's very important to do. As the Minister pointed out, issues and strategies like the Aboriginal Management Development Program are really key on that. As the Minister pointed out, we've expanded that beyond the director/superintendent level to also include managers now. We have a lot of work that we're doing with our Aboriginal Employee Advisory Committee in partnership with them. They give us great advice on things that we need to be doing to make sure that we are able to continue to strive in a number of different ways to ensure that we're a representative public service. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Moving on with general comments, I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. After the last response from Ms. Bassi-Kellett, actually she touched on almost everything that I was thinking about talking about. Hmm, I don't have any general comments anymore.

I wasn't aware of some of the work that she's referred to that was actually going on in the department. As an MLA, I guess on the front lines of dealing with constituents, you do get a lot of concerns raised by people who think that the system doesn't work for them in terms of getting into the public service. You get concerns from people who are priority 1 hires, who think that the Affirmative Action Policy did not serve their interests in getting hired for a job. You hear concerns from indigenous non-Aboriginal Northerners who feel like the hiring policies didn't serve their interests. It seems like what we hear, it sounds like kind of everybody is unhappy.

I think what we need to do is get really innovative, really creative and find ways to match the people who want to work in the public service to the jobs. Some of the things, like I said that Ms. Bassi-Kellett just referred to, like internships, I think those are amazing. If it makes them more effective to extend them from one year to two years, then let's do that. You know, job shadowing. I'm really interested in the Student and Youth. You know, some of the positions – we joked the other day in committee – that have been vacant in the government, we could have put somebody through university now to fill those positions. But it takes that contact, perhaps even at the high school level, in order to create the awareness of the kinds of careers that are available in the public and then help guide people through

the education process so they can ultimately end up where they want to be in a career in the public service at the end of their education. I think that getting into the high schools is a really good idea.

The leadership development, the management services, all of these things are what I classify as creative, innovative programs, ideas, initiatives that serve our purposes. We do have a lot of vacancies and it seems like there are people out there who would like to work, but I think it's a multi-pronged approach in the sense that I do think we need new people to come to the Northwest Territories. I do think we need to find ways to... It's a combination of everything. We need to find ways to get our own people from the Northwest Territories involved, as well, and, at the same time, with the backdrop of the representative workforce always as our goal.

I'm encouraged by what I hear. I hope it goes well. I don't know what to tell people when they say, you know, I've gone out, I've gone to university, I've got an education but I can't get a job with the government. I don't know what to say to them. It's almost like you need an ombudsman or something for those kinds of things, because it's really difficult.

I know, having been in Cabinet, it's very difficult for Ministers to get directly involved in personnel issues. A lot of people don't know that. They think you can go to the Minister and the Minister can just, you know, drill down into wherever the problem is and fix it. No, that's not the way it goes. Even as MLAs, our hands are kind of tied because we don't have the inside knowledge or the detailed knowledge of how to advise these people sometimes. Other MLAs must find that, too, that you do have constituents come to you and they say, oh, I've been blacklisted, or I can't get an interview, and they tell you these things and it really is sad, but it's very hard to ever clearly define these things because a lot of things are wrapped around personnel and interviews and those processes are confidential. Some of the positions are unionized and there's union involvement in them, as well, so it is kind of a complex field. HR in general is a complex field, especially nowadays, and I think it continues to get more complex.

Let me draw the comparison to what we have in the Department of Health and Social Services with the system navigator where we have issues with medical travel and different issues, and we can actually refer those to somebody. There's nothing wrong with going to the Minister's office, but ultimately, at the end of the day, we do know that the Minister, you know... I mean, there's a point where Cabinet can get involved and there can be direct appointments, and there are policies at a politician's disposal to deal with things like that, but ultimately, it's difficult. I don't know. This is just a suggestion to throw out there.

If there was some way that we could refer those kinds of concerns to a single desk somewhere where people could tell their story, I guess, because you do hear of situations, and it's impossible to be everywhere and on top of every hiring event. It's very, very difficult for the department to do that, and sometimes people's own agendas do probably come in to play. I mean, let's just say everybody's human. Maybe there are incidents where that does happen, but it is frustrating when we, as MLAs, hear of those cases and feel kind of like that our hands are tied because we don't really have access to, really, the detail or what the issue is.

I'll just leave it there. Those are my general comments, but just to underscore that we need to be creative. I guess, when I started off in this government, nepotism was a horrible word. You know, hiring friends and family, that was awful, but it is a small territory. I used the example in committee one day of a private company that I know of who were struggling with labour market challenges, and they looked at the children of their existing employees and said why don't we have a loyalty program and why don't we target that critical mass of people and why don't we have a loyalty hiring policy so that the children of our employees can work for our company too? Now, I know you can't do that in the government, but I'm just saying that there are ways to get creative about hiring Northerners and networking and people who know people who are qualified to do these jobs, and to get that population up where the Minister of Finance wants it and increase it by 2,000 people. We've got lots of challenges ahead of us, but I'll just leave it at that. Thank you. Those are my general comments.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. We'll go to Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member brings up a lot of really good ideas for us and to add to some of the initiatives that we continue to work on, some of the strategies, some of the frameworks that we put together to bring people, to recruit people and also to retain people. I think some of the ideas would be difficult to do in the GNWT, and I know that the Member only brings that up as an example, but many of these ideas of job shadowing, being creative and innovative and making sure that we have the right jobs out there that can be filled by the individuals out there. Going to high schools and stuff like that and working on career development opportunities is one of the things that we will be working on with the various departments.

I am going to ask for some other detail. If I could ask the deputy to provide a little more detail on some of the other stuff that we're working on.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I really appreciate where the Member is coming from, and I think that that's a really good observation that we need to be innovative and fresh and have a multi-pronged approach to attract as many people as we can to really continue that theme of diversity in our workforce. We're looking for a lot of different kinds of talent, and we're going to get that by looking at Northerners, looking at long-term Northerners, looking at people who are northern residents, looking at people from outside of the territory, and I think it's a really good observation.

That was really a big part of the career fair when we went to Ottawa, was focusing primarily on devolution but also making the point to a southern audience that, frankly, in Ottawa, understands government, that we are a great employer, and we heard that from a lot of the people that showed up there and are very interested in coming north. So we were very heartened by the over 650 people that came to talk to us about it.

At the same time, though, the career fairs or the open houses, we are deliberately calling them open houses in the North to make them as welcoming as we possibly can, because we do hear from a lot of Northerners, we hear from people that come through yourselves, forwarded on to the Minister, that sometimes the world of HR can be very intimidating. It can be a scary process to think about applying for a job. It's a little overwhelming. It's part of the reason why we put some tips and tools onto our careers website about how to apply to the GNWT system, how to do your resume up, some tips and tools to prepare for an interview. Those are great tools on-line, but part of having these open houses is to be very comfortable and casual, encourage people to come and talk about, you know, I have thought about applying but I have just felt like it was a little bit overwhelming, a little bit much. So to be able to come in and talk about the opportunities we have, the processes we have, things that may open up, summer student employment opportunities as they arise, for parents right now or, when the time comes, for young people as well. They are very deliberately called open houses so as to make them as welcoming as possible and to remove any of the feelings that people can have when applying for a job that it can be quite intimidating and quite a daunting process. We are trying to make it as friendly as possible and give as much support to our Northerners as we possibly can.

The point about getting into high schools, I couldn't agree more. We are very, very keen on that. We are starting that process now with our Student and Youth Strategy and really making sure that we are

able to support young people to be able to think about what choices they need to make now to be able to take advantage of good careers in the future.

The issue on the system navigator is very, very interesting. It's a very interesting one for us that we try to be very precise around giving the terms of employment that we have negotiated with our partners, with the UNW and the NWT Teachers' Association. We have some very clear rules for engagement that we have worked with them on. For example, if an applicant applies for a job and they are screened in and are interviewed and they end up getting a regret saying I'm really sorry, you did a good job but, unfortunately, we are not going to be offering the job to you. That can be an upsetting thing and we totally appreciate that that can be a difficult thing for many people. The process that is in place right now for people that have applied in a situation like that is to appeal the job. We really welcome appeals. It's an independent process that's outside of the Department of HR, it's outside of government and it's a process by which, when people feel that something didn't go right, something was overlooked, something didn't go right, there is an opportunity for this independent level of review.

At the same time, we're really trying to make sure that we are as welcoming as possible to any other potential applicant out there to pick up the phone and call us and say, if I went through the interview process and I didn't get the job, what happened, where was I, did I bomb the interview, did I get nervous, did something happen, did I not answer a question well. To be able to give that feedback, as well, we really welcome the opportunity to do that, to set someone up to be successful the next time around, because we feel that's a really important part when we do have talented Northerners here that are looking for work with the GNWT. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Moving on with general comments, I have Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Before we rise and report progress I would like to thank our guest today, Ms. Bassi-Kellett, for joining us today. If I could get the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort our witnesses out of the Chamber.

I will now rise and report progress. Thank you.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SPEAKER:** Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 22-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Do I have a seconder? Ms. Bisaro.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Abernethy.

### Third Reading of Bills

#### BILL 6: AN ACT TO AMEND THE MEDICAL CARE ACT

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Medical Care Act, be read for the third time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 6, An Act to Amend the Medical Care Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

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 Rural and Remote Communities committee at 7:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Orders of the day for Thursday, February 13, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

15. Tabling of Documents

16. Notices of Motion

17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

18. Motions

- Motion 8-17(5), Allocation of Resource Revenues to NWT Heritage Fund

- Motion 9-17(5), Extended Adjournment of the House to February 17, 2014

19. First Reading of Bills

20. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Tabled Document 4-17(5), Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2013 Final Report

- Tabled Document 22-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015

22. Report of Committee of the Whole

23. Third Reading of Bills

24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

