



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**HANSARD**

**Monday, February 17, 2014**

Pages 3643 – 3682

**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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*Minister responsible for*

*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

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**Mr. Bob Bromley**

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**Mr. Daryl Dolynny**

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(Thebacha)

*Government House Leader*

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**Mr. Alfred Moses**

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

**Mr. Michael Nadli**

(Deh Cho)

**Hon. David Ramsay**

(Kam Lake)

*Minister of Justice*

*Minister of Industry, Tourism*

*and Investment*

*Minister responsible for the*

*Public Utilities Board*

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, February 17, 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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs. Jane Groenewegen):**

Welcome back, colleagues. Mr. Hawkins.

**POINT OF ORDER**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today on a point of order under Section 23(m), where a Member introduces any matter in debate that offends practice and precedents of the Assembly, and further, under Section 23(i), where a Member imputes false or hidden motives to another Member.

Madam Speaker, I waited until today to review Hansard to ensure that I brought this matter forward in a timely way, as I am doing now. On Thursday, February 13, 2014, during debate of the point of order, in Hansard on page 4, I quote Premier McLeod, who made the following remarks which were referring to me: "...the Member has acknowledged the breach and now he's trying to use process to not withdraw his remarks."

I will deal with this particular offence, in my view, in two parts. Firstly, I am personally offended by the Premier's comments were an attempt to put words into my mouth which I did not say. The Premier's characterization of me in his comments are not accurate and, in essence, are an attempt to persuade the argument under debate at that moment by reaffirming something that I never said, nor did I imply. I acknowledged no breach and, further, did not agree with Mr. Miltenberger's point of order. Rather, I used my time to remind the House of the necessity of process and certainly the freedom of speech, which Minister Miltenberger did not follow in his own stead by highlighting his concern through the grievance he raised to my comments. Instead of making note of them on the record five times, as originally pointed out in the initial discussion, he then chose to lay out his concerns further down the road, which is the following day.

I again remind the House of Beaulieu's, Section 319, and further reaffirmed by Speaker Delorey's

ruling on February 16, 2006, in short, they all must be brought forward in a timely way; secondly, Madam Speaker, for Premier McLeod to suggest, "...and now he's trying to use process to not withdraw his remarks."

These are not my rules. They belong to the Assembly, and if we are anything, we are certainly the pinnacle of process. If it is not followed here, why should it be followed anywhere?

I further affirm concern under Section 23(i) and find a characterization of these specific comments personally offensive to the work I'm trying to do here.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I'm requesting, through you, that the Premier immediately apologizes for the vexatious and frivolous comments he made towards me and that his remarks are struck from Hansard of that day, completely struck off the official Hansard, so they do not incorrectly reflect what I said and stand for days to go. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I will allow some further comment to the point of order. Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Member based his case on Thursday about the fact on how we did not raise it at the earliest opportunity. He just stated that he stands by his comments and that he waited until he read Hansard before he raised it, so I'm wondering what side of the argument he's taking.

He's also said that he stands by his remarks. So, I think I was justified in saying that for the Member to suggest that because in previous rulings the Speaker said he didn't raise it at the first opportunity, it was not a point of order. I think rather than addressing comments where he was calling other officials of the government criminals, he was trying to use process so that it wouldn't deal with those comments.

So, Madam Speaker, I think we will wait for the ruling by yourself, or the Speaker. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier McLeod. To the point of order, Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course, I will not talk about the imminent ruling that is still before the House. I want to speak specifically to what was brought here today and the point of

order. I want to focus on the words quoted by Mr. McLeod, and I had to go back to Hansard to review it myself. I quote, "The Member has acknowledged the breach," and I want to focus just on those words and those words alone.

Madam Speaker, I've looked back and I reviewed Hansard and I don't believe Member Hawkins talked about acknowledging any breach, so I believe those words are a bit misquoted by the Premier and I just wanted to share those thoughts on record. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Any further comments to the point of order? If not, we will review what was said, the point of order, and provide a ruling at a future date. Thank you, colleagues.

Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

### Ministers' Statements

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 25-17(5):

#### NWT TOURISM 2014-2015 MARKETING PLAN

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Tourism in the Northwest Territories plays a vital role in our economy. Each year the industry contributes over \$100 million in visitor revenue and attracts upwards of 70,000 visitors from across the world. Tourism is also one of the few industries capable of creating economic opportunities in every region.

Because of this importance, and the industry's potential, we must develop comprehensive and effective plans to market our spectacular tourism product to the world. I am very pleased with NWT Tourism's 2014-2015 Marketing Plan, which outlines what the GNWT's tourism marketing agency is undertaking to promote the NWT as a tourism destination of choice.

Partnerships are a cornerstone of our tourism marketing efforts and I would like to thank the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee for their guidance and leadership. This committee has representatives from the tourism industry, who have marketing expertise, as well as GNWT representatives. They provide strategic direction to NWT Tourism each year in the development of this plan.

I would also like to thank the board of directors of the NWT Tourism Association for their direction and advice in shaping this plan.

We have a lot to offer the world when it comes to unique tourism experiences. Just recently, NWT Tourism launched its new "Aurora Capital of the World" mark in support of its Spectacular NWT

brand. This title positions the NWT as the ultimate aurora viewing destination.

Of course, aurora is only a small piece of the tourism pie. We are known for our sport fishing, road touring, hunting and other outdoor activities, and this plan emphasizes these pursuits. We are also becoming a choice destination for hosting small and medium-sized meetings and conventions, like the highly successful Energy and Mines Ministers Conference held in Yellowknife last year.

Aboriginal tourism continues to grow, and the demand for cultural products and authentic experiences continues to increase. This is a demand that we can fully satisfy through the strong culture and natural hospitality of our people. Last year's marketing plan introduced funding of \$50,000 per region to develop regional marketing and promote local and cultural attractions. This program was so successful, it will continue in this year's marketing plan.

The tourism industry is incredibly competitive, and we need to continue to position ourselves to new and existing markets as a choice travel destination.

North America remains our main marketing focus. A new sport fishing brand and campaign will launch this year, targeting specific demographics in southern Canada and the United States.

The 2014-2015 Marketing Plan contains initiatives to broaden our global reach and targets China as a key new market. This interest was also bolstered by our trade mission to China last month, where we made and strengthened relationships with key contacts in the Chinese travel trade. Promotion of the NWT during this trip was well-received, with 100,000 potential Chinese visitors showing a great interest in the North, with aurora tourism and authentic cultural experiences being identified as the main draw.

In the past two years, NWT Tourism has become more active in the Chinese market. China is Canada's fastest-growing tourism market, and with the number of Chinese visitors to the country doubling since 2010, we need to capitalize on this. Over 1,000 Chinese visitors have been visiting the NWT annually, and that number continues to grow. Aurora tourism continues to be the strategic focus of our Asia-Pacific region promotional campaigns, with an emphasis on markets in Japan, China and South Korea. The Japanese market, in particular, continues to show incredible promise, with most of the over 15,000 aurora visitors we had last season arriving from Japan.

This year's plan also looks at expanding marketing efforts in other emerging markets such as Germany and Australia.

Due to support from this government, NWT Tourism has been able to enter new markets due to the doubling of its marketing budget to nearly \$2.4

million. With this funding, NWT Tourism will be able to reach out into uncharted territory and penetrate further into existing markets.

This will result in increased visitor numbers, more revenue for small businesses and new opportunities for the private sector to expand tourism products, or develop new products, to reach a wider market and to serve this growing industry.

Madam Speaker, the NWT has much to offer to potential visitors, and a prosperous tourism industry must build on these resources. The 2014-2015 Tourism Marketing Plan will give us continued focus on supporting developing tourism opportunities in the territory.

By marketing and showing off the spectacular range of tourism products and experiences, it will help us ensure a diversified and healthy economy that benefits all of our regions and communities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Abernethy.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT 26-17(5): COMMUNITY WELLNESS PLANS

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Madam Speaker, having healthy, vibrant and safe communities is a key priority for the Government of the Northwest Territories. This is why, over the past year, we have worked with communities as they developed wellness plans, to set priorities and guide how wellness funding should be directed.

I am pleased to announce that all of our communities are on track to complete their plans by March 31, 2014. These are living documents. They speak of the importance of supporting families and child development, celebrating culture, eating good food, being active, promoting mental wellness, building local capacity and building on community strengths. They identify priorities and will be the basis of work plans.

Madam Speaker, the department receives \$8 million from Health Canada to support health and wellness in Aboriginal communities. This year we will allocate \$5 million directly to Aboriginal communities on a multi-year block funding basis to support this important work. Funding can be used to support projects in three areas of vital importance to our communities. These priority areas include healthy children and families, mental health and addictions, and healthy living and prevention. Communities will determine their own priorities, based on their wellness plans.

The remainder of the funding is used to support the ongoing work of the new division of Aboriginal health and community wellness in the programs and services they provide to community and

Aboriginal organizations in their implementation of their plans. This work will also include the organization of territory-wide events.

Madam Speaker, people still struggle with issues like addictions and family violence, and continue to have concerns about cancer and high rates of school dropout. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to address these issues. Communities need to find solutions that are appropriate for them. The benefits of having a healthy population go beyond an individual's health status. Healthy people strengthen the community and the territory, increasing economic growth and social cohesion, and making our health care system more affordable and equitable.

Working with communities to implement their wellness plans will be a focus for the Department of Health and Social Services division of Aboriginal health and community wellness.

Building a strong and sustainable future for our territory can start by having a healthy population, Madam Speaker. Community wellness plans will provide a strong foundation for implementing government strategies that help support our residents and grow our economy. This includes work like the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Early Childhood Development Framework and the Economic Opportunities Strategy. By working jointly with other GNWT departments like Education, Culture and Employment, and Justice, along with all of our other partners, we will achieve this goal. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTIONS

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I would like to rise and speak about the recent NWT chief coroner report regarding a female resident having a number of prescription medications in her system when she died from an accidental overdose in December 2012.

For me to start today, I have to go back about two years ago to almost the very day when I brought this issue up in the House, where I talked about the quiet addiction. That addiction is about the addictions to opiates, benzodiazepines and to codeine. I don't believe it's quiet anymore and I believe the recent report from the coroner reaffirms what we have spoken up about, this sleeping giant of the drug addiction journey, and that we need to spend a little more attention on this emergent

addiction. From the words of our own NWT coroner, "From 2009 to 2012, we had over 1,700 overdose cases from prescription medication and over-the-counter medications."

These are the deaths that were investigated, but we have to ask ourselves how many more deaths out there did not see the light of day.

Speaking of light of day, I always say sunshine is the best disinfectant. We've heard this again in the House: you can't fix what you can't count. So, we need to put some sunshine on why we're not tracking prescription drug abuse and over-the-counter abuse in our system, and why it isn't part of our overall general addictions survey. This is quite shameful to continue to hear.

Without a dedicated baseline to the program that we're spending in areas of addiction, how does the department decide on which dollars go where and how they are spent? Without doing this baseline, which I am calling the quiet addiction, we do not know the end results of what can be done for the people who are suffering in this mode here.

With that, I will be asking the Minister of Health, later on today, about a lot of these unanswered questions in this quiet addiction prescription drug abuse, and hopefully we can get some of these questions answered and put a little sunshine on the situation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECENTRALIZATION OF GNWT POSITIONS

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. This Assembly, at the beginning of it, set some priorities to increase employment opportunities where they are needed most, by decentralizing more GNWT positions.

Last year's government budget indicated that they were going to do more for decentralization and set it as a priority. We did do some decentralization and I thought we were on the right track to making this an effective way of getting jobs out into the communities.

This year during the budget, though, very little was indicated on what we're going to do in the future. We talked about the 18 positions we did last year; we talked about the 52 positions from devolution. Where we know wasn't a decentralization, there are more jobs going into Yellowknife than anywhere else. It's actually anti-decentralization, and I know we're being controlled by the federal government on that.

The government is looking at putting capacity into the communities. They say that's why we're not decentralizing right now. We're doing office surveys; we're putting houses into the communities,

but that's being done over three years. In three years that will be the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, not this one, not this one that set the priority to put those jobs out in those communities.

Today I'm going to have questions for the Premier on what is our big plan. We are talking about putting houses into communities; we're talking about doing office space surveys, but where? What specific communities are we looking at? What are the examples? Are we putting three houses into Fort Res because we're going to put three new positions there? Are we going to lease 10,000 square feet in Hay River because we're going to move Transportation back into Hay River and make it a centralization in Hay River?

I'm going to be asking the Premier about what's our big plan for decentralization. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER RESERVE FIBRE OPTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. Hay River Reserve is moving ahead with its fibre optic infrastructure. Starting in 2007, funding from CanNor helped the K'atlodeeche First Nation to move forward on an initiative to bring broadband telecommunications to the community. Five local band members built the one-kilometre link that connects several municipal buildings. The community hopes to connect more public places, in particular the band office, arena and the store.

The First Nation hopes to lease the fibre optic link to NorthwesTel and Telus, who can provide improved telecommunications services to residents. In turn, it will help NorthwesTel avoid the cost of building this infrastructure itself.

The advantages of broadband infrastructure are obvious. Many of the benefits do not have a dollar value. We have already seen how existing fibre optic capabilities enhance personal and business communication and program and service delivery in key areas of health and education. As the NWT moves ahead with its ambitious Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link, we will see it transform and diversify the local economy of rural and remote communities and support Arctic sovereignty and security goals.

The K'atlodeeche First Nation wants to expand its fibre optic network by 14 kilometres to reach Highway No. 2 and existing telecommunications infrastructure. When many First Nations communities hear about fibre optics, they think it is out of reach, but the K'atlodeeche First Nation's information technologies manager says it's possible for any small community to create their own wireless infrastructure.



CanNor believes that investing in telecommunications is very important for rural and remote communities. Investment in broadband infrastructure is the highlight of the new federal budget. I support the Government of the Northwest Territories' efforts to advance the construction of the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link and I especially want to recognize the efforts of the K'atlodjeeche First Nation in taking the initiative to bring the Hay River Reserve into the digital age.

The First Nation has made a wise investment in the community's future and I applaud the leadership on a job well done. I wish them the best success to pursue their goals of expanding the network and in working with neighbouring companies to improve telecommunications in the North. Thank you, mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I recently received what I can describe as a brush-off letter – don't worry, we've got it under control – from Aurora College Board of Governors. Of course, if you look at the top of the letterhead, it says from the Office of the President for the board of governors.

This really kind of annoys me because this highlights further what I talked about the other week, which is about their independent thinking about being able to do things without having it go through the office of the president.

The letter highlights many concerns I raised here the other week about trying to get the board of governors to meet with the students and not treat them like they're some infectious who knows what. The letter tells me about, oh well, we have processes they can follow so we can meet with them, and while they may be misinformed from our discussion they had a few weeks ago, don't worry, we'll straighten out that thinking.

The college is vested into the success of the students. I'll be tabling the letter later today and I think the public will be both disturbed and disgusted by the response of this letter by the chair of the Aurora College board.

Quite frankly, I think the board of governors should be doing anything in their power raised by the students to ensure their success, but while it's quoted as we have some information that's misinformed and certainly we have to make sure that they receive the proper information on the topics which impact their lives, what's more important to the college than the essence of the students and their needs?

This is very frustrating when I see this. I asked the Minister, under Section 7, to use his authority to give the college direction, meet the students, find out what matters to them, but of course the letter tells me in their response, and again, I'll be tabling it later today. It says the Aurora College Board of Governors' manual specifically states that board members should be encouraged to continually talk to people like MLAs, Ministers, board members. My goodness, if you have to have a manual to tell people how to communicate, I mean, something there should be a red flag already saying it must be so off the rails that we have to tell them how to talk.

These students are humans. They have real concerns, whether it's child care, whether it's getting loans, whether it's class times, whether it's buses or whether it's a school facility, and the Aurora College Board of Governors needs to hear this. How do they hear this? They hear this through a meeting.

So, I will be having questions later today in question period. But let's be frank. They need to meet the students to know what matters to them. It's about time that gets done.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr. Hawkins, last week in this House we have had quite a bit of subsequent discussion, and may I characterize it as fallout, over the way that the performance of deputy ministers was characterized.

Here again today we have some motives or some thoughts being imputed to a very small group of people, the board of governors of the college and, I would say, some very disparaging remarks about the chair who has penned this letter you are referring to.

I just want to again remind Members that these are people that are well known in the Northwest Territories. They are not here in this Chamber to respond or to defend themselves, and I think that Members should be very cautious in... I refer specifically to Mr. Hawkins saying that someone considers the students to be an infectious something. I think that that may be putting words in someone's mouth, and again, this is a group, a fairly small group in the Territories that everyone knows, so please be very cautious about that, Mr. Hawkins.

The Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
IMPACTS OF JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN  
ON DAYCARE OPERATORS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have been hearing much lately about GNWT initiatives for early childhood development and early childhood education. I'm fully supportive of these initiatives. In fact, I think we should be putting more

money into improving programs and services for our children aged zero to three.

Today I want to highlight some of the implications of the government's early childhood development initiatives. The Department of Education will, in September 2014, start junior kindergarten in 29 of our 33 communities, and that will expand to all 33 communities by September 2016 when it will start in Yellowknife. Yellowknife is one of only a few NWT communities where there are several fairly large licenced daycares, and preschool or junior kindergarten programming is available at all Yellowknife school boards. But the implementation of junior kindergarten in 2016 will impact both the daycares and the schools.

My first concern: Junior kindergarten will provide an opportunity for parents to place their four-year-old into free classes instead of the fee-charging daycares, Montessori, or school-run junior kindergarten. For daycares, which are a for-profit business, who take children from a few months to four years of age, the four-year-olds provide the greatest chance for profit. The required ratio of caregiver to children is less than that for the zero to three-year-olds, and the business can register more four-year-olds than they can babies. Junior kindergarten will draw all those four-year-olds away from the daycares and into free junior kindergarten. In order to replace those four-year-olds with younger children, the daycare will have to hire more staff, thus losing out on their profit opportunity.

It's quite likely that at least one daycare will lose enough of their profitability that the business will have to close, and in the end all that will accomplish is a reduction in the number of available child care spaces when they're in short supply already. Yellowknife daycares have already seen a drop in their enrolments after the schools added their junior kindergarten fee-paying programs.

A second concern: Another initiative of ECE is to require certification of early childhood educators. That's all well and good, but better qualified instructors means higher remuneration for staff and higher costs for the business that employs them. Will the Department of Education amend the ECD funding formula to assist daycares with the extra staffing costs they will incur? Apparently not.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. BISARO:** I inquired of the Minister of Education a short while ago whether or not his department will make any adjustments to the funding formula for daycares as a result of the implementation of junior kindergarten. The response from his office indicated no funding changes are coming. According to reports in the news media, the Minister has said that daycares

will be provided with infrastructure money to change four-year-old spaces to spaces for babies or toddlers, but money for cribs and blankets doesn't address the problem of bigger wage costs.

Until we have publicly funded early childhood care/early childhood education, the GNWT must increase the funding assistance for licenced daycares or we will lose some of our present services. I urge the Minister of Education to reconsider his \$780 infrastructure funding announcement and provide more operational funding for licenced daycares to ensure we keep the daycare spaces we now have.

I will have some questions to the Minister of Education at the appropriate time.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last week I had a very interesting conversation with a staff member who does work with one of the organizations that does good work on behalf of government, and we started talking about mental health and other issues that are associated with mental health, but the conversation got into suicides and the high rate of suicides in the NWT. According to our 2011 Health Status Report, the Northwest Territories is 65 percent higher than the rest of Canada, which is alarming and should actually be an issue and a focus for this government moving forward.

As we talked, we talked about how many counsellors we have across the Northwest Territories. I think it's about 65 counsellors, but 65 counsellors in 19 communities. We have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories, which means that there are some people out there who are having some of these issues and concerns that are not getting addressed and rely either on telehealth or maybe through making phone calls, which is not always the best avenue. When you're dealing with an individual, it's always good to have that face-to-face so you can see expression, so you can see the stress that might be on these people.

As we talked a little bit more, we talked about suicide attempts, how we don't keep stats of suicide attempts in the Northwest Territories. We have stats on the numbers of suicides, but this government and the department, possibly the Department of Health, can actually take a role, even the Department of Justice through the RCMP, with anybody who ends up in the emergency ward with self-inflicting injuries, that we start taking these statistics now and start looking at how many real issues we have out there in our communities that we can address now. Actually, it's not taken at the

moment, and in some cases these people who have self-inflicting injuries who end up in our emergency wards are sometimes let back out into their communities, which is contravening our Mental Health Act, which is something I've brought up in this House many times.

Moving forward, there are a lot of ways we can do prevention in this area, save the lives of many of our residents in the Northwest Territories and start providing better services in the communities.

I will have questions later on today for the Minister of Health and Social Services on how do we affect change, how do we make change. How do we start putting these things in order now to protect the lives of our residents of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HERITAGE FUND ALLOCATION

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've talked about the bafflegab of our Minister of Finance with respect to our Heritage Fund contributions and I'm sorry to say it continues. Because of the confusion and obscure ways that he chooses to hide the facts, the Minister has once again left the public with the wrong impression about our planned contributions to the Heritage Fund.

In today's News/North a reporter noted the Minister's commitment to contributing 25 percent of our net fiscal benefit to the Heritage Fund. The reporter then quite logically does the calculations: an estimated \$60 million in net fiscal benefits; 25 percent, or \$15 million, to go to Aboriginal governments; 25 percent, or \$15 million, to go to the Heritage Fund. But alas, no. In the fine print of the Minister's bafflegab, he means 25 percent of the net fiscal benefit leftovers after the 25 percent to Aboriginal governments is deducted.

In plain speak, the Minister means 18.75 percent, or \$11 million of the net fiscal benefit will go into the Heritage Fund. This is a loss to our children's future of \$3.75 million per year from now going forward.

People may indeed ask why the Minister purposely ignores their desire for 25 percent of the net fiscal benefit to be contributed to the Heritage Fund. They may wonder why the Minister insists on using 25 percent when it is actually 18.75 percent of the net fiscal benefit. All I can say is that these are imminently reasonable questions for the public to ask. Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL MISDIAGNOSES AND ELDER HEALTH CARE STANDARDS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I stand before the House today dismayed and frustrated. The reason: yet another failing of our health system. A family in Fort Simpson wanted me to raise this issue so no one has to go through this, and I hope we can learn from our mistakes.

This most recent case happened on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, when a Fort Simpson elder slipped and fell in her home. She was taken by ambulance to the health centre, where two X-rays were taken. The first was blurry, so a second one was taken. Not seeing any obvious break, the doctor sent her home with a prescription of Tylenol 3.

On Thursday she was transported by her daughter in a single-cab pick-up truck for a follow-up appointment. Given my constituent's condition, she should have been transported by home care in a van designed for disabled clients. In any case, the health centre medical staff failed a second time to diagnose her fractured hip and sent her home once again.

On Friday home care staff made a visit, but no doctor or nurse requested a follow-up examination. She spent the day in pain and great discomfort. It interfered with her eating, sleeping and even going to the washroom.

On Saturday, still in extreme pain, she was brought to the health centre a third time. Finally the doctor diagnosed a fracture and had her medevaced to Yellowknife. There she was thoroughly examined and promptly sent for surgery.

I apologize to my elder constituent and wish her a speedy recovery. I'm also looking to the Minister for immediate action to get to the bottom of this.

Unfortunately, this isn't an isolated incident. Last October I complained in this House about elders being sent home with aspirins instead of being medevaced to Yellowknife for a full examination. My concerns were triggered by a similar case in which an elder's broken wrist went undiagnosed for months.

Among seniors, falls are the leading cause of injury. About one-quarter of falls result in moderate to severe injuries, and over 95 percent of hip fractures are caused by falls.

But it's not only elders being incorrectly diagnosed. A third recent case involved a child who suffered for weeks without receiving critical health care for a serious condition.

The Department of Health and Social Services needs to review its protocols. Errors like this are inexcusable. Mahsi cho.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
TRAFFIC SAFETY CONCERNS AT  
MOOSE KERR SCHOOL IN AKLAVIK

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is nothing more heartbreaking than a preventable accident in which a child is harmed or even killed. Wherever children gather, it is the responsibility of parents, teachers and government officials to keep them safe.

Students at Moose Kerr School in Aklavik are mixing with street traffic and it's a dangerous situation. The hamlet council in Aklavik has received concerns from parents and observers who fear an accident is waiting to happen.

Over the past couple of years, clientele at the local store near the school has increased. Patrons have nowhere to park except on the street that surrounds the school. The solution is to put up a parking lot. The Aklavik Hamlet Council is rightly concerned about incurring this cost and I'm calling on the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to see that a parking lot gets built.

In the meantime, school administrators and government officials have a clear obligation to enforce traffic safety protocols around the schoolyard. Crossing guards should be serving at the heaviest traffic areas during the busiest times of the day. Students should be regularly informed about traffic safety and advised to wear reflective gear so that they are visible to drivers.

As for the communications with drivers, there should be visible signs asking them to slow and exercise caution in the school zone. Drivers should be yielding the right-of-way of pedestrians at all the intersections, and reminded never to pass a school bus when it is stopping and the red lights are flashing, which isn't a case there because we don't have school buses. As well, RCMP officers should be proactive in their enforcement of traffic laws.

This dangerous situation in Aklavik raises a broader set of questions. Are we doing enough territory-wide to keep our children safe from traffic?

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BLAKE:** Are we doing enough territory-wide to keep our children safe from traffic? Is traffic safety being rigorously incorporated into safe school plans across the NWT?

Going forward, I call on the Minister and other officials to enhance traffic safety measures around Moose Kerr School and to promptly resolve this unsafe situation by building a parking lot. Thank you.

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

Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 110-17(5):  
PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE  
AND ADDICTIONS

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to rise and continue my discussions on prescription drug abuse here in the NWT. We do have serious addictions issues in the NWT and I know we are working toward solutions of dealing with them, and clearly I want to state for the record that we don't want to undermine the fact that alcohol is probably one of, by far, the most abused substance in the NWT, but we do have a number of untracked addictions issues out there. With the recent NWT chief coroner's report they echo those very same sentiments.

Prescription drug abuse of narcotics, benzodiazepines and certain over-the-counter medications are no longer the quiet addiction, and this addiction is real and now seeing the light of day.

My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As the issue of prescription drug abuse continues to surface, and again, when the NWT chief coroner reminds us of these 17 overdose cases from 2009 to 2012, what is the Minister or Department of Health and Social Services doing to track this addiction? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We don't actually have a mechanism to track prescription drug abuse at this point in time, but things are underway to try and address this particular concern, and it is a serious concern and we do need to address it.

Under the Pharmacy Act there is an ability to set up a prescription monitoring program, but due to privacy issues that we're all aware of, we currently cannot require health care providers to enter information into the program. Because we cannot require health care providers to enter the information, we have not yet set up a program to monitor prescriptions.

We are working on the Health Information Act, and the Health Information Act would require health care providers to enter in the information to a prescription monitoring program, should one be established under the Pharmacy Act. Once we have the Health Information Act, we would be able to set up a functioning prescription monitoring program to help tackle prescription drug abuse issues in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** It sounds like we're hearing a broken record here today from the Minister. I heard the very same results here going back almost two years ago in this House on February 14, 2012, from the previous Minister of Health, that there was to be work undertaken with the Bureau of Statistics to include prescription drug abuse with a general addictions survey.

Can the Minister of Health today indicate whether or not this actually happened? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** There are things happening with respect to the survey. I'll certainly get that information back to the Member.

Within individual health and social services authorities, or at the authority level, steps have been taken and put in place to limit access to prescription medications in situations where there is a concern about potential abuse of medications. Also, the federal government is currently working in partnership with all of the territories and provinces across the country and looking at ways to address prescription drug abuse. As a department, we will continue to work with the federal and provincial governments on preventing and providing appropriate treatment services, including surveillance data on prescription drug abuse. So there are a number of things we are working on already under this particular issue.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** It's hard for me to understand from the Minister, they're doing work in this area, but they're not tracking anything, and without statistics, how do you track this issue? The NWT coroner's service tables an annual report that makes countless recommendations to assist this government in making strategic decisions with related addictions and death management, but sadly, a large majority of these recommendations fall on deaf ears.

Can the Minister of Health reaffirm his department's commitment to deal with the recent seven recommendations from the office of the chief coroner on addressing prescription drug abuse in the NWT?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I, like everybody else, have just received the report and will carefully consider the seven recommendations outlined by the coroner; however, I am not prepared to speak to those details yet because we haven't concluded that review.

To the Member's first part of the question, we would love to track medications and whatnot in order to avoid these types of issues, but as I said, there really is no system to do that or to require professionals to put that information into a prescription monitoring system until we complete the Health Information Act. Once we have the Health Information Act done, we will be able to make amendments and put in a prescription

monitoring program which all people will be required to provide updates into. Once we have that, we will be able to provide detail and have the information in the future, but until we get the Health Information Act, we don't have the ability to do that. We are getting that done.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minister is in error; you can track that information. This government has long-standing adjudication agreements with third-party adjudicators. Aside from the fact from cash-paying customers, they can track this information quite readily if they choose to do so.

Can the Minister indicate specifically what his office will do to improve small community clinical support network and the management of opiate prescribing and opiate addiction?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We can require individuals to put information into a prescription monitoring program, or we can, rather, ask them to do, but we cannot force them to do it at this particular point in time. Once we have the Health Information Act, it will be a requirement and they will need to put it in there. The Member is actually, in fact, wrong.

With respect to what we are doing already, the individual health authorities, as I have already said, have put in place processes to limit access to prescription medications in situations where they have concern about a potential abuser. I will go a little further. The NWT Medical Directors' Forum is working on guidelines for controlled substances. These will be territory-wide and include the educational component. Guidelines and standards for the medical management of opiate dependence is part of the work the Medical Directors' Forum on guidelines for controlled substances. One of our physicians has taken training for methadone and Suboxone prescriptions and the management of chronic pain. We will be using the expertise of these physicians and outside experts to further develop controlled substance education throughout the Northwest Territories.

In fact, we are doing a number of things. We take this very seriously. Obviously, we can do more. The Health Information Act will be an important tool for us making progress in this area.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. The Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

QUESTION 111-17(5):

DECENTRALIZATION OF GNWT POSITIONS

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In my Member's statement I was talking about

decentralization. My questions today will be for the Premier.

With the government spending millions of dollars on housing and public works preparing for decentralization, does this government have a general overall plan of how this decentralization and these positions will go out to the regions?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course we have a plan. We have described it many times. We have a three-phase plan. Phase 1 was where we had departments identify positions to be decentralized. We decentralized 18 positions. Phase 2 was to decentralize through devolution. We are very close to completing that. With our new organizational design, we expect there will be approximately 90 positions that have been decentralized. Now we are entering phase 3. Once all the work on devolution is done, we have requested all of our deputy ministers to identify opportunities for decentralization. Through this budget, when it's passed, we will have monies to go forward so that we can put in place the infrastructure so that we can decentralize positions.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I have difficulties believing the Premier when he talks about decentralization and phase 2 of devolution, which put more than 200 positions into Yellowknife and only 90 out to the regions, so how is that decentralization? It sounds like centralization to me.

What is the government's plan going forward to decentralize positions and what is that plan specifically? We're currently planning to build houses in certain communities. We must have a plan that we're going to put specific positions into those communities. What is that plan?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Those positions were already in Yellowknife, so that's why they're here. The federal government, in negotiating the Devolution Agreement, required that those positions would have to stay where they are for at least two years, so that was the deal.

Now, as part of the business planning process going forward, we expect to have a plan within the next six months. Through the business planning process, we will identify what positions and where they will go. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Madam Speaker, I think the Premier has devolution and decentralization mixed up and tied into a knot.

I guess my questions would be: How does the Premier expect this Assembly to complete their goal to decentralize? We haven't accomplished that. We haven't gotten to that point where we actually have a plan. Is the Premier committing to

that six-month plan that we're going to see how decentralization is going to roll out into the communities in this Assembly?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I know what devolution is and I know what decentralization is. Decentralization is where we take jobs and move them out into the regions, into the communities, so that people most affected by decisions are the ones that make the decisions and they're closer to where they live. So, I know what decentralization is.

We are working on a plan. We have the Department of Finance, the Minister of Finance will be leading through the Refocusing Government Cabinet committee. He will be developing a plan. We will be building 30 houses a year in the communities. Along with increased services, we expect to have about 169 houses built over the next three years. We will have a plan so you'll know what positions will be moved, you'll know where they'll be moved and where the houses will be built and, of course, along with the required office space. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that there is a plan. My concern is that we're already committing to building 30 houses and we haven't completed the plan yet. Shouldn't we have that current plan in place before we implement those houses and some of those office studies?

How do those two link? How does the government go ahead and spend millions of dollars on housing and office studies when we don't even actually have the plan in place? How does the Premier explain that?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** That's all part of doing business. We have to get the money for houses first. In the past, every time we talked about decentralization, we said, well, we don't have housing in the communities, we don't have office space, so we can't have decentralization. What we're saying now is we're not going to hide behind those standards of lack of housing, lack of office space. We're going to have a plan that will tell you where we're going to build those houses, and we'll be able to tell you what positions and programs will be decentralized. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

QUESTION 112-17(5):  
HAY RIVER RESERVE  
FIBRE OPTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Recently I made a statement, obviously, about the broadband accomplishments on the reserve. I wanted to ask the Minister if he

could update this House in terms of the GNWT's involvement with the broadband initiative of the fibre optic link on the reserve. Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli, Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to congratulate the Hay River Reserve for the work that they've put into broadband and fibre on the reserve. I had the opportunity last year to go down and visit with community leaders there, and it's very encouraging to see the work and the effort that's been put into fibre optic in that community. I know they have some big plans, and certainly the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment were interested in helping them try to achieve those plans. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** This government promoted the idea of the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link. It will be possible at some point, if it's established, to link all communities across the NWT.

How is the GNWT, especially through ITI or all departments, working to ensure that communities at some point will be able to take advantage of these technologies? Mahsi.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** We're very encouraged by the signals from the federal government on the importance of growing broadband and connectivity in Canada's North. It looks like they're going to invest over \$300 million on that initiative over the next few years.

We certainly are moving forward with the fibre optic link down the Mackenzie Valley and any opportunity we have, as a government, to continue to look at opportunities to connect communities to that system is something we are certainly interested in. I know it's early days since the announcement by the federal government on the money for fibre in northern Canada, but certainly we will be putting our efforts into trying to get some of that funding for some of our communities here in the NWT. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** How would the department work on behalf of communities to ensure that some of those federal dollars that the federal government has committed will be available for communities in terms of establishing technology, whether broadband or fibre optics? Thank you.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** On a bigger scale, I think it comes down to planning. Certainly we have to work with communities around the Northwest Territories as a government to get a plan going forward. On a smaller scale such as perhaps what the Hay River Reserve is trying to achieve, we do have some funding that we could certainly look at in the South Slave to help the Hay River Reserve achieve what they're trying to do there with fibre

optics. That's certainly something we are interested in doing, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 113-17(5):  
AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
MEETINGS WITH STUDENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I begin I want to make note that I am certainly sorry that my passion and frustration got ahead of me earlier. I acknowledge that and I never intended to use "vexatious" as a particular word. I didn't plan that in any way.

What that does, though, is further stress my frustration about this whole problem. There's an apparent wall between the board of governors at Aurora College and the students, if I may describe it as a protective barrier. The letter clearly states about process, process, process.

I guess I will say this to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment: under Section 7(1), the Minister can give direction to a board such as the Aurora College governors, and further, the Minister shall, under 7(2), determine the policies respecting operations of the college.

I am asking, will the Minister, who represents us through Education, Culture and Employment, tell, instruct, or direct the board of governors at Aurora College to meet with the students to hear their concerns directly and not be afraid of them by instructing them to follow process, process, process? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I have already made a commitment in the House that I will be meeting with the board of governors' chair and also the president, both of them together, to highlight the Member's concern that the board of governors should be meeting with the students.

I don't want to be in a position to dictate to the board of governors or the district education councils or authorities to tell them what to do. We have to work hand in hand. We have to work closely together between the departments and agencies, so we continue to strengthen the relationship we have with the agencies and DEAs and DECAs and the board of governors as well.

I made a commitment and I will follow through with that commitment. Mahsi.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The Minister just said, "I don't want to be in a position...to tell them what to do." Let me remind the Minister, once again, that he's in

charge and if he doesn't want to be in charge, that's okay, because there's probably an opening over here if he doesn't want to tell them what to do.

Under Section 7, once again, the Minister has the authority to provide them direction. Under Section 7(2), they can provide direction through policy. So if he's not interested, I'm not sure what the problem is.

The letter he received was cc'd to him, went to me, and said basically they will get to it when they get to it through process. Here is an occasion to get down to the level of the students, meet with them, get involved with them and find out what's important to the students.

Will the Minister stop talking about this administrative, bureaucratic talk and say yes, I'm going out there today and telling the president and the chair of the board of governors that you will meet with the students and today we're going to do business differently? Thank you very much.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, I did make a commitment to sit down with the board of governors. Mahsi.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The Minister is in possession of the same letter I am that they wrote to me on February 6<sup>th</sup>. They basically say they're not going to meet with them. The only way they meet with them is when they bump into them at the store or on the street, if they run across them in another meeting. There is no formal commitment. If anything, there is a commitment saying we're not interested.

So, the Minister is saying he is going to meet with them. What exactly is he going to tell the college that they're going to do and how are they going to do it?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** This is an area that I need to have a discussion with the board of governors of the college, having a direct dialogue with the board of governors and the students. We have to have an open dialogue. That's a discussion we need to have with the board of governors, the board chairs and the president. You know I have the authority, but I need to sit down with them first to see what kind of discussions they've had in the past and how we can move forward. Those are discussions, and I've made a commitment in the House to proceed with that and I'm going to do it, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess I'm going to say, in short, if this board, be it the chairperson, the board of governors and the president refuse to meet with the students, is the Minister prepared to start with a new slate of governance to find a group of individuals that care

enough about their students to hold meetings with them? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr. Hawkins, that's technically a hypothetical question, if all these things happen what would the Minister be prepared to do. Could you think of some other way to reword your question? Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Madam Speaker, I don't think it's worth it.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 114-17(5):  
IMPACT OF JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN  
ON DAYCARE OPERATORS

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions today are also addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I would like to follow up on some of the concerns raised in my Member's statement.

On October 7<sup>th</sup> the Minister made a statement in this House and in that statement he announced a wage or subsidy program for early childhood practitioners. I recognize that our child care staff tend to be poorly paid. They are certainly on the low end of the wage scale, in my estimation.

I would like to ask the Minister, first of all, how this particular approach, how a wage subsidy approach was decided on. Were daycares or preschool operators consulted? If so, when were they consulted and how many operators did he consult with? Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Madam Speaker. I don't have the breakdown of how many times we met or how many agencies, but I can provide the breakdown to the Member.

With the proposed funding that's within the budget, we are allocating upwards of \$511,000 towards this wage subsidy. There were suggestions and ideas that came forward and, again, we have to backtrack to the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, Early Childhood Development Framework, the engagement we have had with the general public, the agencies, the child care workers. They've told us their wage is so low, minimum \$17,000 to \$22,000 a year, so we felt that we needed to follow up on that so that we can have those highly skilled individuals at a going rate today.

So we are following through on what we've been told by parents, by our communities and we're moving forward on that. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister, and I don't disagree that we need to do something for our early



childhood practitioners. They definitely are not paid what they're worth, but I'm struggling to understand. The Minister didn't really answer my question as to where this approach came from. I find it unlikely that the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative would have laid out this kind of an approach to increasing wages for early childhood practitioners.

My next question to the Minister has to do with how this program is going to work. I am struggling to understand just how this is going to roll out, so I'd like to ask the Minister for some details.

Will the funds go to individual teachers? Will they go to the daycare or the preschool operators? What's the plan? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** The money that's identified, once it's passed through this House in the budget we will then be working with licensed early childhood centre operators to ensure the funding is applied directly to increasing of staff wages. So those are the targeted individuals, individuals with low wages so we can at least subsidize them. In 2014, in April, that's when the \$2 addition will be added on. The following year in April will be another \$1 addition and the subsequent years will be based on certification, diplomas or degrees they've obtained will be waged at the top of this. Those are just the discussions that we've had.

When I mentioned the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, we spoke generally about the education of all of the Northwest Territories that covered early childhood as well. So that's why we refer back to the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, Early Childhood Development Framework and now we're going through education renewal. Those are some of the discussions we've been engaged in with the general public. Mahsi.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that detail. He's taking me to my next question, which has to do with certification.

The Minister, in his statement, said we're also putting in place a credentialing system, scholarships and incentives for early childhood development professionals. So I'd like to know from the Minister, I agree completely that we need to have our early childhood professionals certified and they need to be certified to a national standard, but I'd like to know from the Minister if, in 2016, certification is going to increase the wages of our professionals. So I'd like to know, again, how this system is going to work. I think it's a grand idea, I think it's needed, but I don't understand how it's going to work. What kind of credentialing system are we going to put in place? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. That's the information and the direction that we need to work with the child care centres and especially the daycare operators. They would have a handle on

how many are in the system, how many are getting their certification or diploma and the degree programs. So 2016-2017 onward we want to identify those individuals.

We have, I believe, if I'm not mistaken, approximately 30 individuals that are in the professional fields in post-secondary. Obviously, we want to attract them to the Northwest Territories in our centres across the Northwest Territories. So this will be an incentive for them to come back to our region, our communities to work for us. That's the overall plan to develop some attractiveness and also some incentive for those individuals to come back to our North. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm struggling to understand the system. I guess if I'm given two years in which to get my certification but I'm also working full-time, I'm really struggling to understand how I'm supposed to accomplish that.

I have heard that there will be an on-line system or an on-line program, I guess, but for me to take stuff on-line, I think it's going to take quite a long time. So, I'd like to know from the Minister if he has looked at the amount of time that's going to be required for any professional to get the certification that's required for them to get the greater wage that they deserve. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, it will take time in various areas, but we, as a department, will be working closely with the daycare operators because we want those individuals to achieve their goals and dreams of either certification, diploma or a degree program. We will be establishing up to 10 \$5,000 scholarships for these individuals to access. So we're doing what we can to send those individuals out while they're still working. So, obviously we want to create some incentives. That's what we're doing and this is a process where we are currently working with the operators at this point in time. Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

#### QUESTION 115-17(5): SUICIDE PREVENTION

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services in regard to my opening Member's statement about suicides.

The first question is: Do the health authorities keep track of self-inflicted visits to emergency rooms that can potentially lead to suicide? Does the department or authorities keep those kinds of statistics? Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. With regard to the statistics related to attempted suicides, data would actually be incredibly difficult to collect because there are multiple diagnoses that an individual coming in who has attempted suicide or believed to have attempted suicide might come in with. Client diagnosis codes would often be related to the method of attempted suicide, how somebody chooses to attempt to take their own life. So, there would be multiple different codes that would be used. So, as a result, it would be very difficult to provide that information. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** The reason I bring this up is we do have a Mental Health Act that does allow for physicians and practitioners to hold an individual for up to 24 hours, that's the first step, and in a lot of cases, should there be alcohol involved, sometimes the individuals are let out of the care and treatment of the health centre or the hospital, and that's why these kind of statistics would be good to help develop a better plan of action in terms of what steps can the authorities or the hospitals do or the health centres do to keep these people in care until they are ready to get a full assessment.

I'd like to ask the Minister, does the department have a suicide prevention plan currently that they can put into action here? Does the department have a suicide prevention plan?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** There are a number of different things that happen depending on the location you're at. The NWT Community Counselling Standards Manual has a standard on crisis intervention, which would respond to crisis situations similar to suicide or attempted suicide. The standard identifies suicide protocols and procedures for action to be taken, documentation and screening, such as the mental status examination and suicide risk assessments. So those happen in the community if somebody presents with an attempted suicide. The manual also includes suicide prevention resources that an individual may access.

When it comes to Stanton and/or the Inuvik Regional Hospital, there are some additional things that may happen. When a client presents to the hospital – Stanton, that is – having attempted suicide, medical stabilization and care is the first priority. We want to make sure the person is safe. Following stabilization, a referral to an appropriate psychiatric service is initiated and the psychiatric unit at Stanton Hospital have a suicide precaution policy, which includes suicide risk assessment.

Within the Inuvik Regional Hospital, a standardized assessment tool is used for conducting suicide risk assessment. Clients who have been medevaced

from an outlying community are often admitted to the hospital for 24 hours of observation and then risk assessments are conducted on the individual and the risk assessments also must include a plan of care. So, depending on where you are, different things will happen, but there are protocols and programs in place to support all those individuals.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you. You've heard in this House before there's been a call from some of the Members that represent small communities for an RCMP officer and nurse. As I stated, we have 65 councillors in 19 communities but we have 33 communities in the Northwest Territories, and in some of these communities we only have a nurse that can provide that type of care or services or even counselling.

Being this is such a big issue, and not looking at it this way when a person really needs that help for some intervention, how is the Minister going to address not having that nurse or that counsellor in a small community for the immediate responses that sometimes we don't always see because of the lack of resources that we have in some of these small communities?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I recognize from the Member's earlier statements that obviously face to face is preferable. That is not always the case, but we do have an ability to have individuals call certain professionals and receive services by telephone or by telehealth. But it's not just a matter of the professional provider. We are eager and interested in helping individuals within communities develop skills so that they can provide support to the individuals. One of the things that we are doing is Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, which we are offering across the Northwest Territories.

As you all know, ASIST is an internationally recognized, well-researched training program that is based on best practices in suicide prevention and intervention. It is a two-day workshop, and we are looking to have it delivered across the Territories for any individual who wishes to take it so that they can be aware of the signs of individuals who may be at risk, so we would continue to get that out there for all people.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. That training program, ASIST, I have heard nothing but good things about it.

Would the Minister, in terms of that training, look at possibly putting that program in the areas where we don't have a nurse or we don't have an RCMP officer as a priority of the first places that we get that training to? Would he do that, and also, if he can also maybe share with the House how many communities actually do have that ASIST training in place right now?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The ASIST program, we have put dollars in the budget so that every authority can deliver two ASIST programs or two training workshops. To date, in '12, '13, '14, 144 individuals across the Northwest Territories have taken that training, and we will continue to encourage the authorities to use the dollars they have received to deliver that program in as many communities as they can over time.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. The Minister for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

QUESTION 116-17(5):  
GNWT EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION  
IN PUBLIC DEBATE

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are for the Premier today. I'd like to start by noting that a democracy works best when all citizens are able to speak their minds.

Would the Premier not agree that we should welcome respectful input from everyone if we want to get the best result?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Madam Speaker, that depends on the question. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** We have roughly 10,000 households in the Northwest Territories and at least 4,000 GNWT employees at any one time given our 10 percent vacancy. This means that potentially almost 40 percent of households could include a person directly employed by GNWT.

Would the Premier agree that GNWT employees and their families make up a significant portion of informed citizens of the NWT?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I guess it depends if you figure that 50 percent makes up a significant portion.

**MR. BROMLEY:** In reflection, I have to be quite disappointed that the Premier is not willing to welcome any input from our citizens on the issues that our people face. That's shocking to me. It depends on what the question is on whether he is interested or not, so that's a bit shocking, but let's go with it.

With so many informed and caring citizens in our employment, and I assure the Premier, and although he sounds doubtful that we do have a significant number, there is some concern that GNWT may be tempted to silence public debate by preventing GNWT employees from expressing their opinions, even when the topic is not directly related to their job.

Can the Premier reassure us here in the House that the GNWT does, in fact, encourage its employees to participate in public debate on issues?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Finally, a question that I can answer. All GNWT employees sign a code of ethics when they enter into employment with this government, and as part of that code of ethics they have to adhere to certain principles and criteria, and I'm sure the honourable Member would be the first to cry out loud and clear if an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories would come out and directly criticize it.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Final supplementary, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hope the Premier doesn't think that he thinks for me, but I would like to ask our reluctant Premier my last question here.

There is currently a petition on the Legislative Assembly website. Could the Premier please reassure our employees that they will not face any recriminations if they wish to sign that petition? It's not criticizing the government; it's asking the government for action.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I'm not aware of any petition on any website.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier McLeod. The Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 117-17(5):  
MEDICAL MISDIAGNOSES AND  
ELDER HEALTH CARE STANDARDS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement earlier. Falls are the most common cause of injuries among senior citizens and our elders, and the top reason for admission for trauma. Falls account for 85 percent of all fractures among people aged 65 years and older and the top fracture being hips.

I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services, do we have any protocols or procedures for treating seniors who fall? I think, in particular, as well, in my Member's statement I also raised the concern of the family that only one X-ray was taken. Is this part of the procedure?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. There were two questions there, and I will try to answer both of them. The department works in partnership with the NWT Recreation and Parks Association to support training for community-based workers and activities that enhance independence and quality of life for elders. Research has identified several key areas to promote healthy aging, including physical activity and falls prevention, and falls prevention being of particular interest. In conjunction with Elders in

Motion training gathering, the department and regional staff are developing a territorial falls prevention program as part of promoting independence of our elders through prevention of injuries, so things are happening on that front.

With respect to standard protocols or clinical governance or clinical guidelines, this is an area that we obviously need to do significantly more work in the Northwest Territories. We have a number of authorities who have different protocols within their mandate. We have recently hired a chief clinical advisor who is going to be providing leadership on clinical governance throughout the system and trying to set some standards with respect to the exact type of thing the Member is talking about across all authorities.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** My constituency has all small and remote communities. The Minister is talking about a protocol. I would also like to raise the issue of getting medical attention through medevacs should be part of that protocol, because had my constituent been medevaced immediately for a proper and thorough examination, I don't feel that she would have gone through this pain.

Also, in fact, why aren't we doing proper medical examinations at our local health centres? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I certainly can't talk to any individual case, but I do know we have highly competent professionals throughout the system who are doing great work in all communities, all regions and all facilities within the Northwest Territories. I can't, obviously, speak to the individual case, but clinical guidelines would certainly be helpful across the Northwest Territories.

With respect to things like medevacs, we are doing things like Med-Response, which we hope to see roll out shortly, which are going to give communities a voice to a professional who is going to be able to streamline, coordinate and make medevacs more seamless and more timely. After all, what we are interested in is better health, better care and a better future for all of our residents. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I think by improving our system, we do that by creating statistics. In fact, does the department keep track of incorrect diagnoses in our individual centres? If not, why isn't this information being recorded? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I don't know if those types of statistics are kept. I will check with the department and get back to the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to get back to the first issue. Many, many of our seniors are falling and fracturing bones. I

think that our medical health system should pay attention to that.

So, I'd like to ask the Minister once again, how can the department do this? The family wants to be sure that people do not get hurt and misdiagnosed and lay at home for three days. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I agree. There are, as I've indicated, a number of things that are happening. I talked about the training that's available for elders across the Northwest Territories with respect to prevention and injury, especially from fall prevention. This year the department is supporting training in 28 communities as part of the Elders in Motion program, so there is education out there to help individuals attempt to avoid experiencing a fall.

I'm going to come back to my other response, Madam Speaker. We need consistent clinical guidelines across the system. We have a chief clinical advisor who is helping us with this. We'll work with all authorities to put together clinical guidelines that give the practitioners, whether it's nurses or physicians, the tools they need to properly diagnose and provide the best care possible to all our residents, which is what we want. We want better health, better care and better results. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 118-17(5):  
TRAFFIC SAFETY CONCERNS AT  
MOOSE KERR SCHOOL IN AKLAVIK

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, a follow-up from my Member's statement.

I'd like to ask the Minister, is the Minister in support of preventative safety measures to protect school children from dangerous situations? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Totally I am in support of students as first priority when it comes to safety. These are some of the discussions that have been brought to our attention from Moose Kerr School. My department is working very closely with Public Works and Services, the Beaufort-Delta Divisional Education Council and also Moose Kerr school administrators and staff to investigate the circulation of the problem, which has become an issue since the Stanton store has been open for business. Those are some of the areas in discussion with those

agencies and we will continue to find solutions for that. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** The Minister answered the first part of my two-part question. Will the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment commit to reviewing this unsafe situation at Moose Kerr School and will he ensure that a parking lot gets built? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** We are working diligently with various agencies like education councils, the school and Public Works and Services. Solutions to this problem are being considered and recommendations will be made to the Hamlet of Aklavik. The GNWT will participate in finding solutions that will be in the best interest of safety for the students and the public at large. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** Until a parking lot is in place for the school in Aklavik, will the Minister work with the stakeholders in the Beaufort-Delta Education Council and the Aklavik District Education Authority to enhance safety measures for students at Moose Kerr School as an interim measure? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Those are targeted discussions that we are currently having with the various agencies, as I highlighted earlier, to deal with the measures in the communities, especially with the Hamlet of Aklavik. Recommendations and solutions will be brought to the Hamlet of Aklavik and we'll work on those solutions. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final supplementary, Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My final question for the Minister is: When can the residents of Aklavik see a parking lot built for the school in Aklavik? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** These are the discussions that we need to have with the community of Aklavik and the Beaufort-Delta Education Council and Public Works and Services as we move forward. These are the discussions we need to have about the needs of the community and also the school, but number one will be the safety of our students and the public safety. So, I will be keeping the Member informed of our progress. Mahsi, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Lafferty. The Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 119-17(5):  
PRIVACY PROTOCOLS FOR  
ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On February 6<sup>th</sup> I asked a question and I didn't get a response, then I asked the same question on

February 13<sup>th</sup>. Now I'm going to try a third occasion to ask the same type of question. What question is that? I've asked about the protocols to protect people's privacy under our electronic medical records. Each time I've asked about what type of automatic protocol we have in place that informs the administrator of these programs that someone is cybersurfing or sometimes referred to as cyberstalking individuals.

Do we have any automatic protocols that notify the administrator that someone unauthorized to be reviewing these files, albeit they have authorization to work with these files, are peeking and sneaking through individual people's private information? Thank you. Yes or no?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I do recall that exact same question being asked before, but we will pose it to the Minister responsible again. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I said in the past when asked this question, we do have a number of protocols with respect to who has access to records, but we also do have a quality assurance professional that does review who is accessing files isn't looking specifically at the files themselves, but is looking at and monitoring access. That person looks to see how many people are accessing, how often an individual might be accessing a particular file, will check to see if somebody has the same surname as the file is accessing it to make sure people are only accessing files they should. If and when individuals have been identified as flagging a file more than is required, that is brought to the attention of the department so they can correct those actions. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** This is not the answer I've received on the two other occasions. Finally I'm getting a decent answer, I'll give it that.

I want to know how this administrator of this particular program is informed, and what type of timely way are they informed to ensure there is some type of quality assurance and certainly some protection for those people whose files may be snooped upon.

What type of automatic process is involved? Will the Minister inform this house what type of process there is? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** With the EMR, it's pretty much real time. The individual can access on a daily basis the records of how often, who and when individuals are accessing files. There are protocols that are flagged when an individual is accessing files. For example, someone who has the same surname, but also an individual accessing a related file time after time after time, as well as how long a particular file may be open to a particular user who has the authority to be there.

The quality assurance person makes those checks on a daily basis and monitors all files to make sure that people's privacy is protected. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I would like to now sort of package this under the concept of quality assurance. To understand quality assurance, how often has this happened and how is it particularly evaluated, maybe the Minister can enlighten us. I would like to know how often breaches happen, how often are files investigated, even if it's not a technical or formal breach. Sometimes they need to be evaluated. So let's put it on the record about quality assurance. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The individual that's doing that assessment is one of the quality assurance people making sure that EMR is being utilized appropriately.

With respect to individuals accessing or abusing the information, I'm not actually aware of any situations. I will talk to the department to see if we have any evidence or suggestions that someone has breached files confidentiality.

As I've said to the Member before, if the Member is aware of a situation, it sure would be nice if he would be willing to share that information so we can get into the system to make sure no breaches are happening. We take all breaches seriously and if the Member or any Member are aware of breaches, please let us know and we'll fix the system, but right now we're not aware of any breaches. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Final supplementary, Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minister said he's not aware of any breaches. That said, can the Minister confidently say it also means that he may not be aware of any breaches? Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I'm not aware of any breaches in the system. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. The honourable Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

### Replies to Budget Address

#### MR. MOSES' REPLY

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On this last day of replies to the budget address, I wanted to offer my insight into our current budgeting process on the operations budget.

As Members know, this is the third budget we are doing collectively as the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. There is some work in here, a lot of good work

that's gone over the years into this budget, starting from the very first one we started and focusing on taking different approaches on how we move things with this government.

I want to start today by referring to a line that was in the introduction during last week's budget address and that is the Minister said that he would like to thank the Members of the Legislative Assembly for their help in putting this budget together. Although we do like the acknowledgement, it begs to differ on how much input the Minister listened to Members on this side of the House when putting this budget together.

There are a lot of good things in this budget and there is a lot of other things that we feel could have been put in here. Obviously, there was a lot of debate around the Heritage Fund. Moving forward, it's good to see that this government is taking that initiative and that step and listening not only to committees on this side but also people of the Northwest Territories who went ahead and made the recommendations to get this money in for future generations.

There are a lot of good highlights as well as a lot of challenges we are facing. Cabinet and Members are all quite aware of that, but there's also something that I want to mention. The Minister also said if we are to stem this trend of declining populations and reducing our economic growth and our ability to fund programs and services, that we must do things differently. I think right from the beginning of this Assembly, we've done things differently. We've looked at investing in our people more than just doing the care and treatment that this government has always done.

Speaking with some of my constituents and people that do work on behalf of government, there were some really good discussions I had in terms of saying just because things have been done like five, 10, 15 or 20 years doesn't mean we are doing it right. This government is actually making a change by actually investing in our people and our communities. I'd like to see that continue moving forward and we have to do things differently. For instance, the e-learning up in the Beaufort-Delta, where kids in smaller communities are getting a better education now because of the initiatives that were put forth by the Beaufort-Delta Education Authority and getting the funding using their own funding to put this program in place so that all students have that opportunity for advancement in their education.

One other thing that caught my attention here was how we are going to increase our economic growth by increasing our population by 2,000 people. That's quite the goal and I'm really interested to see how that works out.

There was actually a good news article, as well, on how we are building houses in our small

communities. The Minister referred to having these houses in communities for people that we're trying to recruit from outside of the jurisdiction. I support that, but at the same time, we do have housing issues in our communities that need to be addressed, as well, and upgrades there. So we're definitely focusing on one type of clientele and totally forgetting about our residents in the small communities who live there.

I know we've talked about these job recruitment strategies, as well, and the 80/20 program, I like to call it, where individuals can apply on jobs and get paid 80 percent of the salary where 20 percent is actually given to them. We had questions for the Department of Human Resources the other day that when these job descriptions are brought forward, there is a part in there that says years of experience are needed. We aren't allowing our people to get these jobs because they don't have the experience to get those jobs. They are being overlooked.

I made reference to this on a couple of occasions and in meetings with the Minister, I don't feel comfortable rubberstamping this budget going forward. Obviously, Members have made a lot of recommendations in this budget. We've been pretty successful in the past. I know that some Ministers say it's not rubberstamping and that committee does have input into this. We had input into last year's budgets and, actually, we have two great Ministers' statements here on the Community Wellness Plan and one was on NWT tourism and parks. All the great stats that came out of the Ministers' statements, would they have been there if committee hadn't made those recommendations to get funding into NWT Tourism last year? There are a lot of good groups out there doing great work on behalf of government. They just need a little bit of support, a little bit more, sometimes, financial resources. We have the opportunity to give it to them.

We are doing investments now into early childhood development. We're moving on with the Anti-Poverty Strategy, education renewal, and we have a hardworking group of individuals on this side, and I know Cabinet works just as hard, but there are other people out there that do great work.

When we look at the budget, it's not about the numbers. When we look at the numbers in the budget, we are looking at GNWT employees, we're looking at organizations and not only looking at that but its families. We talk about economic growth, we've got to support these individuals, get them healthier and get them into the workforce as well.

In terms of this budget, the Minister went out and did a public dialogue, recommendations that came out of that. We don't always see them in the budget here, but something I haven't seen in here, in any of these budgets, is something from the Beaufort-

Delta leadership. I know all Members of Cabinet come and listen to the Beaufort-Delta leadership when they have their conference on a yearly basis. Whether those get addressed or not is not always the case.

We go through this main estimates process that has a lot of hours that go into this that keep our researchers and staff working. We listen to the departments, we listen to organizations and we make those recommendations based on what the departments are telling us or that need, and we on this side try to accommodate them by bringing these forward into the budget session. We're not perfect and there are a lot of challenges we have both with our economic growth but also within the people of the Northwest Territories.

I wouldn't say that I'm disappointed in this budget because over the last two years previous we have gotten that input in there, we've started moving on some of these action plans and at the end of the day, when this government is finished, the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly is going to be the government that says, you know, it was this government and this group of Members that invested in our people with our Early Childhood Development program, that invested in the mental health and addictions, that decided we're going to start changing things so that our people in the future have a better, healthier life but also healthier communities, and we don't see all these stats and they're not just becoming statistics but being part of society.

We've put a lot of money into income assistance, income programs and yet we have all these job vacancies. There's got to be an action plan there to get these people back into the workforce, back to becoming taxpayers in our communities rather than always relying on government to take care of them.

I don't have much more to say. I really wanted to wait to hear what the federal budget address was going to be before I made any comments on this. I guess one last thing I can leave the government with is that I know over the next three years the federal government has made a commitment to bringing \$70 million across the three territories in health initiatives. We've got some great opportunities here to address some of these health initiatives in our communities and as we move forward that we look at access to those dollars for some of committees' priorities, but it's not just committees' priorities, it's committees that speak on behalf of departments but also on behalf of organizations across the Northwest Territories that do need that little extra top-up and support for the work that they do.

Not much further to say and I just wanted to give my reflections on this year's budget. Hopefully, as we get started moving to the departments, we can start seeing some better partnerships and some

better and open discussion moving forward. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE'S REPLY**

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just have a few comments to our budget. Overall I think the budget is living up to the priorities that we set as the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. We're addressing our housing needs in our territory. Housing is one of the major hurdles, I believe, in living in this territory, whether it's in Yellowknife or our smaller communities. The price people pay for housing is really outrageous. Just from what I've seen in the capital here and also in the smaller communities, there are a lot of challenges that our residents face. I think that's one of the reasons that we've seen a big decline in our population. You know, 2,000 people, that doesn't sound like a lot, but with the size of this government I think we need to address that.

The cost of living in this territory, that's one of our priorities and I think that we need to seriously look at the cost of living to live in this territory compared to the provinces. It's really outrageous. I know our salaries do take that into consideration, but it's a major hurdle. Also, living in many of the smaller communities that are isolated, the cost of living there is even greater.

Some of the projects, I know we've looked at our economic position in this territory and we really need to increase our economic base and infrastructure. We're doing a lot of investments in our infrastructure, but we need to do more. We need to ensure that we're in a position, whether it's by the end of this Legislative Assembly or in the 18<sup>th</sup>, that the Mackenzie Highway is built. Create major projects like this for our residents. That also brings the cost of living down in those communities.

We're also looking to start on the Mackenzie Valley fibre optic link. Those are the infrastructure projects that we need in this territory. It's also a great opportunity for the Aboriginal groups to invest with this government. Partnerships like that, long-term investments that are going to see a lot of positive changes in the future. In this day and age everything is built around the technology and we're in a great position here in this 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly to ensure that we build on that.

We're also moving forward on the Inuvik-Tuk highway and I'm hopeful that in the next couple of years we see a big increase. I know there's going to be more jobs, but to also include a lot of the companies in the area I believe is very important because everybody needs to prosper after these major projects.

I'm very happy to see that we're also looking at a new diamond mine in this territory. There's a big demand out there for diamonds. There's such a big demand out there that any diamond mine that's put in place, there's no limit to what the demand is out there.

There's a number of great investments that this territory is investing in. I mentioned already the declining population, but that's something that we can encourage people to come here. As you know, there's going to be a lot more jobs in devolution and I'm glad to see that we are actually implementing devolution. We have in place I believe it's \$15 million for the Aboriginal groups. That's very encouraging, I believe, and we need to build on that moving forward.

We're putting ourselves in a position to also update the Stanton Territorial Hospital, which is in much need. A number of us took a tour of that facility and it's time to upgrade that facility. Many of our residents in the territory do travel here for medical situations and I believe it's time to move forward.

Also, as mentioned, that Building Canada Plan, we haven't really seen what the territory is going to get yet, but from what I've seen over the last couple of years, it's very encouraging. We have partnerships with the federal government on the Inuvik-Tuk highway. That's a great boost to our economy, I believe and moving forward I'm hopeful that we can have the same sort of partnership for the Mackenzie Valley Highway. As the Prime Minister stated that we must focus on one highway at a time and by the time the next one is done, we're hopeful that we can begin on the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

It was also mentioned by the Finance Minister for making an investment of \$27 million in new investments in healthy and educated people. That's great. I was hoping that we could have implemented some of the initiatives that the committees requested be addressed and moving forward I'm hopeful that we can come to those terms.

Just to point out a few things that I wanted to address. I think that we have a great future. I'd really like to stress to people that the priorities that this government has set, there's only one or two left that we haven't already completed and I think that we're on track. I really look forward to the next couple of years.

We do have to put a lot more focus on the poverty and addictions in the territory. With the closing of Nats'ejee K'eh, we should have had those programs in place for on-the-land healing. I know we are just in the stage now of developing those programs, but the people out there need assistance. A lot of traditional people know that, especially the older people. They know the benefits of having these programs on the land, and I'm very



hopeful that we're near the partnership with the Gwich'in to facilitate one up in the Beaufort-Delta. I know there are plans to put one in place near Fort Good Hope, and I'm sure that they're developing something here in the North Slave also.

Other than that, I just wanted to have a few comments on the budget. Moving forward, I think that we are on track and I look forward to the next time that we have this budget. With that, thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member Blake. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

#### MR. BROMLEY'S REPLY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Minister of Finance does indeed present a rosy picture in his budget address, but unfortunately, it does not reflect the realities we are dealing with in this House. I would like to review some of his budget address comments here.

He noted that we are taking on considerable new responsibilities in about six weeks now, a little less, but I have strong concerns that we are not prepared to take these on in the manner intended and needed, and I will be speaking to this over the course of this session to make clear some of the shortcomings and liabilities that we and our public will have to deal with.

The Minister claims we are restoring fiscal balance, but I would say this is hardly the case. I am hard put to find any improvements in our fiscal situation. We are continuing to take on large, extensive projects with aggressive schedules of completion and little demonstrated evidence of return on investment while allowing our current infrastructure to deteriorate. Both of these factors obviously have significant costs, some overt and clear, others lurking unseen but building to the point that they will become obvious and problematic.

The Minister's commitment of 5 percent of the net fiscal budget benefit to the Heritage Fund in this budget has now been dropped for this year to \$250,000, or one-quarter of a percent, slightly less of our net fiscal benefit, an indication of how tight the Minister is obviously feeling. Even his misconstrued comments on the future contributions of 25 percent of net fiscal benefit to the Heritage Fund we now know is actually less than 20 percent and, again, reflect the hard fiscal reality that this Minister is facing, at least behind the scenes, and that our public is about to find out about.

The Minister continues to obstinately push expenditures that meet Cabinet agenda that undermines our fiscal health while ignoring, as my colleagues have said, too many of the priorities and concerns raised in the House. He is indeed correct that economic recovery from the recession has been slow, and yet we continue to spend like drunken sailors. What are the underlying

assumptions that he is using and where is the evidence to provide confidence in that? Again, I think a theme we've already heard here today, and I do want to acknowledge in cases where we are throwing out those old assumptions and proceeding in new ways, we are in fact making improvements and building benefits for our people.

The Minister acknowledges that our population is declining though he doesn't acknowledge that this is in spite of significant effort and expenditures to reverse the trend. He says having a target of 2,000 more people in five years will make it happen. We know that our cost of living is increasing, painfully so in many areas. We know that our collection of personal and corporate income tax is declining and that we are not contemplating any new revenues. The Minister is proposing to achieve his goals by controlling our expenditure growth. How will the Minister achieve all this magic?

The solution he proposes is promoting economic development by spending almost a billion dollars on electrical transmission grids, by providing new jobs, conveniently ignoring that the greater proportion of new jobs accrue to non-residents who cannot afford to live here or who choose to move south, once they get a job, and commute. In essence, as we've heard, by doing the same old thing, harder, subsidized, act like a large, populated jurisdiction even if we are a vast, dispersed, low-density population with very high cost of living and energy, and with people tied to the land more than the underground, and a population with a different set of skills than required for the Minister's approach. I submit that this approach is outdated and the substantial evidence has accrued to indicate it no longer serves the needs of our people or our land. We do indeed need some non-renewable resource development, and we have it, and we are assured it will continue. But to invest in continually growing this segment when we know that benefits to our residents decline with these investments is highly questionable.

We want our residents to be happy here and we want to attract residents who will be happy here. One of the most fundamental relationships we now understand, but that this government seems to ignore, is that associated with income disparity. Wilkinson and colleagues have proven that the happiest people are those living in societies with the most equitability, regardless of whether it's a rich society or not. We are the most disparate jurisdiction in Canada. We have the 20 percent richest and the 20 percent poorest people in this nation. This provides an evidentiary basis rather than a hopeful basis for addressing the real issues of population, development and governments that also indicates the directions on how to go about it. How would we go about it?

We would strengthen and streamline supports, educate with this relationship in mind that we now know and understand and has been proven, strive to improve within our means while meeting the priorities of an equitable, diverse and inclusive society rather than a futile pursuit of mega-projects that do not benefit our people or our land, developed at a localized and regional scale with distributed benefits in mind. Again, benefits such as locally appropriate skill development, financial benefits, locally sourced and job intensive renewable energy that contributes to the local economies and helps restore the land are clearly answering these needs. Energy efficiency work alone could provide both the jobs we're looking for and address the cost of living issue in many of our communities.

Such an approach returns government investment through our tax structures, small business development, lowered social and environmental costs and strengthened social structures, much better job infusions per million dollars of investment, and improved resilience of our people, and these are demonstrated around the world.

Again, while claiming with one breath that we are on a fiscally sustainable path, the Minister calls for a 150 percent increase in our debt limit to \$1.8 billion. The Minister here is hoping. There is little to no evidence on which to base these hopes that many of these investments beyond our means will provide great economic return and people will swarm to live in the NWT, and in fact, our residents will stop leaving the NWT. In any other forum this would be called gambling, and we know that governments like ours have a notorious reputation at gambling success. Do you want your investment dollars spent this way?

The Minister once again dreamily refers to the Aa1 credit rating the GNWT maintains. Well, this is great, and we should aim for nothing less and celebrate it. My colleague Mr. Dolynny has highlighted the fact that many banks had the same rating the day before the crash of the housing market in the U.S. when many of them became immediately bankrupt.

Despite the Minister's painting of such a rosy fiscal picture, things ain't what they seem. As imminent adjustments to both this budget and next year's budget projections will reveal, we are actually on a search for places where we can cut, and I suspect we will be considering the need to cut back our infrastructure budgets, too, as we strive to meet the realities we know exist because of the spending practices to date.

There is one hope that the Minister clings to, to bail him out, and that's the extra \$1 billion he hopes to add to our debt limit. With that, we could dive deeply into debt to correct our situation and

continue to spend like drunken sailors and, oh, wouldn't the Harper government like that.

Because Cabinet will interpret this debt that we need to commit ourselves more and more to develop our resources at any cost, an easy transition from the current trend and huge subsidies this government lavishes on industry with desperate hopes for some wee return.

No new revenues, declining rates of increase from federal transfers, added responsibilities and liabilities from devolution with lagging development of the structures needed for management of these concerns, declining population and small community residents leaving their homes for regional centres or the Big Apple, all add up to serious concerns.

Finally, while the Premier was in a rush for devolution, the cost of expediting this by a year ahead of the federal schedule is steep and climbing. We are in for interesting times, Madam Speaker. The world is changing and, yes, we do indeed need to do things differently. We have such an opportunity. To miss it would be shameful and a poor treatment of our people, our land and their future. Let's get real. Let's do better. Mahsi.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has reviewed Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicle Act, and wishes to report that Bill 5 is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Madam Speaker, do you want me to do it over again?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Let's do it correctly for the record, please. Thank you.

### **Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills**

#### **BILL 5: AN ACT TO AMEND THE MOTOR VEHICLES ACT**

**MR. HAWKINS:** Sorry, Madam Speaker, I stood up on the wrong orders of the day item number. Once again, and even more importantly, for the record, Madam Speaker, I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has reviewed Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicle Act, and wishes to report that Bill 5 is ready for

consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 15, tabling of documents. The Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 37-17(5):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
MARKETING PLAN 2014-2015

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to table the following document, titled "Northwest Territories Marketing Plan 2014-2015." Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister Ramsay. Mr. Hawkins.

TABLED DOCUMENT 38-17(5):  
LETTER FROM AURORA COLLEGE  
BOARD OF GOVERNOR'S CHAIR  
REGARDING INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thanks for noticing, Madam Speaker. As I said in my Member's statement, and as I referred to in my oral questions, I will be tabling a letter sent to me by the board of governors, signed by Sydney O'Sullivan, who happens to be the chair of the board of governors of Aurora College. It was sent to me February 6, 2014, and the subject line item of the letter is Letter of Concern Received on January 30, 2014. Thank you.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 16, notices of motion. Mr. Moses.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 10-17(5):  
SETTING OF SITTING HOURS BY SPEAKER

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that the Speaker be authorized to set such sitting days and hours as the Speaker, after consultation, deems fit to assist with the business before the House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister Miltenberger.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 8:  
WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS ACT, 2013-2014

BILL 9:  
FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS ACT, 2013-2014

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Madam Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, I will move that Bill 8, Write-off of Debts Act, 2013-2014, be read for the first time.

I also give notice that on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, I will move that Bill 9, Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2013-2014, be read for the first time.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. 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 Mr. Dolynny in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order. We've got two documents here, Tabled Document 4-17(5) and Tabled Document 22-17(5). What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Committee would like to deal with Tabled Document 22-17(5). We'd like to continue with the Department of Human Resources and, time permitting, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations and the NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Great. We'll commence after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We have the Department of HR. I will go to the Minister of HR and see if he has any witnesses he'd like to bring into the House. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, I would, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

For the record, if you could please introduce your guests to the House again today. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right is the deputy minister of Human Resources, Sheila Bassi-Kellett; and to my left is the director of policy, Michelle Beard.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Ms. Bassi-Kellett and Ms. Beard, welcome back to the House. Committee, we are on general comments, Department of HR. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you recall, I was the last speaker on this matter, but I wanted to identify a concern that has been expressed to me on several occasions and that's in regard to summer students. I understand with the facts before us that we're trying to promote and advance opportunities for Northerners, and for First Nations in particular, to join the GNWT for jobs and career opportunities. It's always been, I think, the wish and the encouragement as parents and as people of the North to promote education that's of value in terms of bringing changes to the overall society.

So, given that, it's been quite discouraging to see jobs that are concentrated in regional centres, or else in larger communities other than the small communities. I mean, I could cite at least one example of students that returned back to small communities, and of course, in small communities there are limited opportunities for employment, and if you do get a job, there are challenges that get in your way in terms of whether you have to pay rent because you're living with your parents. That's one example.

As a comment, if there's anything that I could maybe leave the department with is if they are going to advance and make steps to ensure that we have opportunities for northern students and First Nations students to aspire to be GNWT employees, it's got to start at the community level. For this year if we could aim to change the system so that at least there are ample job opportunities given to the students at the community level. I know it's far away, now it's February, we're advancing pretty close to May when students return from their studies. I would like us to ensure that they take the steps of starting our career planning and providing opportunities for students so that eventually they become employees of the government. Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the summer of 2013 the GNWT hired 280 students. The hiring of students is the same as the hiring of all GNWT employees using the Affirmative Action Policy, except that for the summer students we have better numbers than we do across the board for the permanent jobs. Over 50 percent of

the students hired in the summertime were priority 1 candidates.

Currently the system works where the departments and agencies determined where they wish to place the summer students and, in fact, not in the hands of the Department of Human Resources, but each of the departments will be asked to hire as many students as possible, trying to get up and around 300 students for the summer, depending on how much room there would be in our PY budget to hire summer students. So, often the process is that they will try to match the summer student with the studies that they are in school for as close as possible or with actually in the relevant subject and relevant field that the student is studying in the South.

I recognize that the Member's issue has been brought up in the past and that we can, as a department, make contact with all of the departments, advising them that they should be looking equally at the jobs outside of the major centres as they do inside of the major centres and try to match some of these students in the smaller communities as well. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Committee, if I could just make recommendations if we could maybe shorten our responses and our questions today so we can move the agenda a little bit quicker. Committee, again, we are in HR, we're in general comments. Does committee agree that we can proceed with detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. We will skip section 3.7 in your main estimates book as we conclude items for consideration in the future. With that, I'll ask you to turn to page 3-8, information item, infrastructure investment summery. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Seeing none, 3-9, information item, active position summary. Any questions? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Just in light of our discussion about vacant positions, perhaps I'd just ask the Minister specifically the first section there under regional allocations. How many of those are real positions, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The active position summary here is what is funded through this process, the main estimates process. So these positions go into the main estimates as positions that the department would need to fill. So all of these would be funded and hopefully all filled and that's the intention today.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. So, just in terms of the 118 of the regional allocation, how many of them are currently filled?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. For that detail I would ask that the deputy minister provide the response.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The number of positions that are reflected in the 2014-15 Main Estimates demonstrate and indicate the number of active positions that we are seeking budgetary funding for through vote 1, compensation and benefits for 2014-15. Currently, at this point in time, we have been coordinating analysis of vacant positions across the GNWT as of October 31, 2013. At that point in time, the Department of Human Resources had 14 vacant positions that we were looking at being able to be staffed. At this point in time, eight of those 14 are filled either permanently or with casuals or transfer assignment employees that are in them. We have six positions that are vacant at this point in time and of those, one is in the regions and five are in Yellowknife. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. Okay, so out of the six positions, do they need to be filled and where exactly is the department, what jobs are they and does the department need those six or have they been flagged anywhere where they may be not needed? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I'll ask the deputy minister to respond to that.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Of the six vacant positions, we are actively seeking to staff at this point in time. They are very important for us in being able to maintain the levels of programs and services that we need to deliver across the NWT. The first position we're working to staff is our advisor on French language services. Very important for us to be able to uphold the role that we have to play under the French Language Strategic Plan in ensuring that we're able to provide French language services where we have an active offer as a government to people of the NWT to be able to receive services in French.

The second position we have is a benefits officer and medical travel in Behchoko, and that's one we've been struggling to fill for a while. We are providing some support from our headquarters office for that work at this time.

The third is a compensation analysis and design officer. It's very important for some of the preparatory work that we do around preparations for collective bargaining and for tracking our compensation analysis as part of our labour relations work.

The fourth is a help desk supervisor position. We're really working to support and enhance the level of support we're able to give to employees through our help desk, which is where employees are able to call when they have any questions on their specific pay, benefits or terms of employment.

The fifth one that we're working to staff is an intern of a benefits officer. We're big believers in internships to be able to give young Northerners who have graduated recently with work opportunities, and we do know there are number of interns that come with general administration and business degrees and diplomas where this would be, potentially, a very good fit.

The sixth position we're looking to staff imminently is a policy analyst position, which we've been working on for some time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I noticed the increase of seven positions over last year, and it looks like all seven went to Yellowknife. Can the Minister explain why Yellowknife got seven more positions this coming year?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Five of the positions were devolution positions being added to a department. Human Resources provides, as the House knows, a service to all of the departments, and the increase of the positions as a result of devolution meant that we hired in strategic human resources a manager, a labour relations advisor, and three people in management and recruitment services, client service and two human resource officers. Those were five positions. Also, one position was transferred from the Department of Finance, financial shared services, as a senior financial planning budget analyst also here in Yellowknife, and then one position was created through internal reallocation of resources of corporate affairs.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** There will definitely be an increase in the workload for Human Resources staff and headquarters, I guess. Why is there not an increase in the workload in the regions? Why are they all posted here? Also, because of increasing the workload for the need for devolution, are these positions being paid for from the devolution funds or are they all just new money from the government?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** For further detail, I'll ask the deputy minister.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Yes, the location of the new positions, we looked very hard and very long of where we locate the new positions, and what we are doing here is we are reflecting, as a service provider for other departments when it comes to hiring, when it comes to managing the terms of employment, and when it comes to ensuring a workable, functional organizational design. We needed to establish these five new positions as part of devolution. With a number of the positions coming to Yellowknife, because that's the commitment that was made in the Devolution Final Agreement, to keep positions where they were located, we then had to respond to be able to support positions with the staffing that will need to go on now and in the future where the new positions are located elsewhere in the public service.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Committee, we are on page 3-9, Human Resources, information item, active position summary. Any questions? Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to be sure, I'm not sure that this information was included, but in addition to these active positions, are there unreported inactive positions and if so and they're not funded, is the intent to delete those so that we're not having to continue to manage those empty and apparently nebulous positions?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As a government, we're going through the process of responding to the overall vacancy positions, dormant positions and the positions that have been identified in the House. What we're presenting here are the main estimates and the changes that we're going from one main estimate to the other main estimate and not which PYs are being reported through PeopleSoft. What we are providing to the Members as the overall from the government was to indicate and respond to the questions of the dormant positions, positions to be filled, and then a full report that we are going to be responding to. I did not come with the detailed report here. Essentially, coming here with the main estimates and what we are requesting, but this is separate from the information that has been requested that we will respond to, I think, within the next day or two.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you for that, Minister. If we have questions with the information that's been provided by the department, is this confidential information or are we allowed to ask questions to clarify what the situation is?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I think it would be my preference or the department's preference if we would. We have a meeting scheduled, I believe, for 7:30 tomorrow to talk about the report we have provided to the Members, and that we would answer the questions on that specific report that doesn't really correlate with the business plan that we are presenting here today.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Moving on with questions on activity 3-9, I have Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I'll follow along with some of the questions that my colleagues have asked. I'd like to ask a question about the devolution positions and, I guess, the number of positions that were out in the regions and, I guess, the lack of support for HR in the regions. I mean, all the positions have been added to the headquarters. Did we not deem that Inuvik was getting a good quantity of these positions and probably going to need some assistance with some of those positions as well as multiple communities in the South Slave. Would there not have been some sort of advantage to putting an additional position into the South Slave and potentially Inuvik to assist with some of the HR demands that those people are going to see from devolution?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask the deputy minister to respond to that specific question.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. When we started to look at the additional workload and file load for the Department of Human Resources front-line staff in supporting the additional positions that are included moving forward in the 2014-15 Main Estimates as a result of devolution and the organizational design that's gotten underway, we took a very conservative approach on this. We ideally would have liked to have requested more positions. We were very mindful, however, that this was not an exercise in trying to expand our scope or expand our footprint.

We're very mindful that the bulk of the new positions that are coming, a significant number are spread throughout the regions. I believe that there's about 50 directly related devolution positions in the regions, plus another 50 positions that are going into the regions, as well, which is very good. We will look at the support that we need to provide for any of the staffing actions around that, at least initially from our devolution team, which is made up of a client service manager and two human resource officers outside of Yellowknife.

Again, with so many of the positions that are vacant being in Yellowknife, that's where we ended up putting these positions to start with. It doesn't mean that we won't be looking, in the future, for opportunities as they arise, as we need to respond to supporting departments where they have the terms of most staffing and terms of employment work underway. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I guess I'm struggling with that issue, especially on a day like today when I made a Member's statement on decentralization and the plan that we have going forward. I guess there are quite a few jobs going out into the regions through devolution, and to add seven more to Yellowknife, I understand some of them were through devolution but a couple were actually through an option that we had. I guess this is a priority of the Assembly to do decentralization and I'd like us to consider that, I guess.

The other area of concern that I have, and it's more of a question, I think, we talked about the details of the vacancies that we've been asking more and more information on. We've been getting more of that and we're going to get more options to that.

The Minister indicated he didn't want to comment on that, but I think we need to get some of that information sooner than later, because this is a budget issue. I understand that the department is gathering that information with all the different departments. But for the Department of HR not wanting to discuss that at this budget time, which we know this is a priority, I think we need to look at all those options. We need to look at where those positions are filled, especially the ones that are funded. We have some vacant positions that are funded and inactive. There are quite a few that we need to look at in this budget process before I think we can move forward. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. I'll take that as more of a comment. I didn't quite hear a question in there. With that, committee, we are on page 3-9, Human Resources, information item, active position summary. Any questions? Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Page 3-11, Human Resources, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$3.817 million. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a question here with regards to the advertising strategy that the department has adopted within the last six months or so. I talked about this the other day and asked some questions of the Minister, but one of the things that concerns me particularly, and

I'd like to bring it up again, is this need for an e-mail address in order to apply for a job with the GNWT.

I'd like to know from the Minister, he's mentioned that they've made some adjustments; they've changed a few things so that basically people will be able to apply. So, I have no computer, I don't have access to a computer. How am I going to apply for a job with GNWT if I don't have an e-mail address? Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If an individual is seeking employment and finds a job on-line that they would be interested in and they don't have a computer and can't do the eRecruit, they are still welcome to take their resume in, a hard copy, to anyone in the regional service centres that we have or also into headquarters here in Yellowknife.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. I'll use an example, which may be a little exaggerated, but if I'm in Colville Lake and there is no regional centre in my community, what do I do then? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. With that, we'll go to Ms. Bassi-Kellett.

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We're very mindful right now and very proud of the eRecruit system that we have. We think it's a very good system; it's a very efficient system. We're also mindful that not everybody in the NWT does have access to the Internet. So, as the Minister mentioned, we still will continue to accept hard copy resumes and cover letters.

What we do in communities where we anticipate people may not have access to go on-line to eRecruit or to our careers website to see about job openings is that we ensure that if there are job openings coming up, for example that the Member used in Colville Lake, our regional office of human resources will send to the band office, to the hamlet office, to any other Aboriginal government office, the Northern Store, to government services officers, career development officers and the health centre, we will send out postings of jobs that are coming available in those communities. One-page advertisements that can be faxed out, put up on a bulletin board around the community so that people are able to see the jobs that are available coming open in that community.

Again, we will accept applications that come through resumes and cover letters that are provided to us in hard copy, so we would welcome people providing those to our offices or using the services of a government service officer or career development officer to get them to us. Thank you very much.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Just a comment, and I haven't studied the ads that have come out, but I don't know the option to do hard copy of resumes and apply that way is really out there as an option. I think the focus of the ads that I have seen is all on-line via computer.

I guess I would just ask the department to think about their advertising. I appreciate that they're doing what they can to try and get jobs around in communities where there is no access or where people likely don't have access to computers and so on, but I don't know that that's well publicized. I would just encourage the department to think about their strategy and maybe put a little bit more effort into telling those people that don't have access to on-line and computers that they can still apply for jobs and how they can do it. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. I'll treat that as a comment. Committee, we're on 3-11, activity summary, directorate, operations expenditure summary, \$3.817 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Committee, 3-12, information item, directorate, active positions. Any questions? Seeing none, I'd like to move to 3-15, activity summary, management and recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, \$4.337 million. Is committee agreed? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have a question here and I couldn't find a reference, but some time ago I wrote myself a note and I put "client service centre versus regional service centre." The two centres have been referenced, I don't know if it was in the Minister's opening remarks or elsewhere, but I'm struggling to understand what the difference is between a client service centre and a regional service centre. Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll just have the deputy minister explain the difference between the two quickly.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll be quick about that, and I'm sorry if there was any misunderstanding created by the use of our terms.

We see all of our client service centres in Yellowknife and the regions as being places where potential applicants are able to walk in and ask questions about a potential job or get some general advice from us. We see them as client service centres, really the ones that are located in Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Simpson, Norman Wells,

Inuvik and Behchoko are our regional service centres. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks for the clarification. Maybe the term should be regional client service centre, so one would understand that they're the same.

I wanted to just emphasize – I don't know if I've made this comment, but I know it has been made to the department – in terms of regional recruitment, I think it is the intent of the department to try to mentor some people in the regions and fill vacant positions, and also for people who are retiring, to make sure the role is filled when they do retire. My understanding is the department is looking at either long-service employees or senior level employees. I would suggest that the department also consider mid-service employees and/or maybe even people who are newly entered into the job or into the department or office and people who don't maybe necessarily have the amount of knowledge that is totally required but that they can work themselves into the job. I guess what I'm trying to suggest is we don't limit ourselves by saying we are going to use long-service employees. That totally eliminates anybody who isn't considered a long-service employee. I would encourage the department to look beyond maybe what the words say. If we're going to mentor people, that we look as wide as possible and ensure that we get somebody who is backing up the position of somebody who is going to retire or try to fill a position that is currently vacant. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Again, I'll treat that as a comment. Committee, we're on page 3-15, activity summary, management and recruit services, operations expenditure summary, \$4.337 million. Committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 3-16, information item, management and recruitment services, active positions. Any questions?

Seeing none, page 3-19, activity summary, strategic human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$9.943 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to follow up a little bit on succession planning, which I think this division is largely responsible for. This has been highlighted for a number of years now and our workforce has been aging, basically, as I understand it. I think we had a significant proportion of employees, something like 20 percent or maybe much more than that that were within five years of retiring. What is the current trend on that measure, whatever it is? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.



**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member refers to a knowledge transfer for succession. We have a strategy to do that. We work with all the departments. It is part of our Workplace Planning Strategy. The idea is to look at the individuals who are working for the government that are in the twilight of their career and we would ensure that their knowledge is being transferred to individuals that would be taking their positions. So, we are actively engaged with the Department of Human Resources to ensure that happens.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I was aware of that. I probably wasn't clear with the question I'm asking. I'm asking more specifically on where we are at in achieving our goals. What are the statistics that indicate the trend in our succession planning? It used to be X percent in five years are going to retire. What's the change? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** For more detail, I'll ask the deputy minister to provide that.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. This is something we are very mindful in the organization. We look at eligibility for retirement within the next five years as an indicator for us in terms of when we might envision that people leave the workforce. However, having said that, we know economic times change and that is often no longer the reality of what's happening. We are very mindful of that and try to pave the way for smooth succession planning when the time comes.

Incidentally, a part of our long service awards, we have just recently had to implement 40-year long service awards because many people decide they want to stay longer, which is a great thing. At the same time, we do plan to come from behind. We do plan, when we anticipate that those people will be looking at being able to retire and move away from the public service. We do a number of things under the Knowledge Management Strategy that the Minister mentioned, including mentorship arrangements, utilization of external volunteer organizations like CESO, departments will opt to double fill at times, will opt to hire a mentor from outside. There are a lot of different scenarios right now that departments are using based on their individual circumstances to be able to pave the way for a smooth transition when they anticipate that someone will be leaving soon or if they have someone very new coming into a senior position. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the deputy minister for that information. I didn't get my statistic again, but I think I heard that it's not a reliable statistic anymore. Perhaps we don't have

any statistics that indicate our succession with all these tools to deliver succession planning. Forty years is great in one way, but in another way people may not be able to retire, and I think we are hearing that across this great country, and there's a possibility that the types of policies we are putting in place are failing people and their interest in retiring early and moving on to other productive pursuits in their retirement. Obviously a big concern potentially. It would be nice to know what's happening there.

One of the things was double filling positions in the last six months when people indicate that they are going to retire. How much are we using that tool? How many instances? I believe it was proved as a tool or certainly emphasized in 2011-12. What's our experience to date? Mahsi.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have the numbers of the overall corporate numbers for the GNWT on the succession planning on who's matched up with individuals who are soon to retire. We will be able to provide that information to committee.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Minister's offer. I think we'll take him up on that.

My last question is, just looking at the budget, it's increased substantially, about 50 percent or more since 2012-13. I think we're putting a lot more emphasis on employee development and workforce planning.

What is the evaluation of these investments, this additional 50 percent? What is the evaluation of the effectiveness of those investments showing? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** That will require a bit of a detailed response. I will have the deputy minister provide that.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We track in a number of different ways how we look at the results, longitudinally over time with some of the programs we put in place. Very important to have the evaluation framework overall. Members may recall that each year the Minister tables a results report for 20/20, Public Service Strategic Plan, which describes the progress we've made in the past year in the five different thematic areas within the Public Service Strategic Plan overall, and that we table every spring and that gives an overall high level snapshot.

At the same time, the funding that's in this area is used to implement a lot of things that are corporate in nature. For example, some of the funding that's included in this budget, and part of the other O and

M, is the funding that supports interns across the organization. We have a pot of money that departments apply to us for to support up to \$40,000 per intern per department. Departments then top up the rest.

We have funding for progressive experience and relevant experience programs for summer students, as well, that's in this pot of funding, about \$500,000. We also, out of this area, do a lot of the work, support the work for occupational health and training. We do our Leadership Development Program, which we have done in partnership with the University of Alberta, where we put a lot of people through this program to be able to develop overall leadership skills that will be useful to them as they progress in their career either within the public service or elsewhere.

We also have our Associate Director/Superintendent Program as it was formerly referred to. We are now calling it our Aboriginal Management Development Program, which supports two year developmental positions for priority 1 indigenous Aboriginal candidates that departments apply to us for the funding. We provide that funding to the departments and they implement a very rigorous development plan for indigenous Aboriginal candidate to be able to step into management within the public service and into a permanent position after their two years.

We have other work underway like our Regional Recruitment Program and our competencies that are all covered through this and we are seeing long-term incremental development in each of these areas as we report out in the results report. Thank you very much.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are all the questions I had. I appreciate that information. I guess I would note some of these things are meant to be funded I think out of the vacant positions. Obviously, we have over 600 vacant positions to be staffed and inactive that are funded on any one day. That's a lot of moola. We know that those dollars are being used for many of these things, so if they are funded specifically on top of that, as well, I think there needs to be some real clarity in reporting and evaluation on those fronts. I will leave it at that comment. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Comment noted. Committee, we are on 3-19, activity summary, strategic human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$9.943 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, committee. Page 3-20, information item, strategic human resources, active positions. Any questions?

Seeing none, 3-23, activity summary, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.721 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, committee. Page 3-24, information item, regional operations, active positions. Any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, what page are we on? I think I might have got ahead of myself.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Page 3-24.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, there are no questions here.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** I will read it out again. Information item, regional operations, active positions. Any questions? Seeing none, 3-27, activity summary, labour relations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.818 million. Does committee agree? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple questions here. I'd like to know from the department, at one point we had a great number of grievances and the department was diligently working their way through the grievances and trying to bring them down to a reasonable number. Between last year and this year, projected budget year, can I get some kind of an idea of whether the number of grievances we have had has gone up or down or has it stayed steady? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have the deputy minister respond to that.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We have worked in collaboration with the Union of Northern Workers and the NWT Teachers' Association very closely through regular case management meetings to really try to tackle some of the issues that come up to us through grievance. We recognize it's in our mutual best interest to be able to work to resolve issues in a way that are going to make sense for both parties and for the employee involved.

Through the case management meetings, we've been able to bring the number of grievances down. I believe we have actually dipped under into two figures from three figures earlier this year. That was quite astonishing for us. A large part of that is due to having the regularity of the meetings and having the issues that are dealt with in a really relevant and timely way. Thank you very much.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to Ms. Bassi-Kellett for that. That's good to hear. I hope it stays down there.

My other question has to do with the duty to accommodate. I believe the department has put a bit of a focus on the accommodation of employees who have been off due to injury or some for disability, but I am referencing generally injury. There will be times when a department makes an offer to an employee who is returning to work to accommodate them in a certain way and the employee disagrees. When there is a problem like that and the two parties can't reach any kind of an agreement, is there any kind of an appeal mechanism for the employee to appeal somewhere, maybe to the Department of HR, I'm not sure, but is there an appeal mechanism for someone who feels that they have not been accommodated properly? If not, then what avenue is there for an employee who feels that they haven't been adequately accommodated? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We will go to Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mr. Chair, we have developed some positions specifically for this. We have two regional duty to accommodate advisors that we have hired to work with the existing advisor to manage the caseload. We have located those two positions in Hay River and Inuvik. There were over 150 active case files underway. As of the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2013, it was 64 cases here and with the Tlicho, 50 in the South Slave and 42 in the Beaufort-Delta. We are trying to move to where the greatest volume is.

**MS. BISARO:** I'm not sure I quite understood the Minister's answer. We have 150 people that we are trying to accommodate. I think that is what he told me. I appreciate confirmation to that if that is correct.

If there is someone who simply is not happy with the accommodation that has been offered and there have been negotiations back and forth and they simply cannot come to an agreement between the new department and the individual or the department where the individual is returning to work, I guess I should say, if that happens, is there an appeal mechanism for me as an employee? I don't like what I've been offered, or I have been offered several things and I don't like any of them, I have valid reasons for not accepting, what can I do at this point? The 150 that the Minister referred to, I hope those are not 150 positions or 150 people who are stuck. I hope these are just people that we're trying to accommodate. I hope these are not people that we cannot accommodate or where we have a fight on our hands. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Mr. Chairman, these are active files ongoing, so there would be various duties offered to accommodate individuals that wish

to be accommodated by modified duties, hours, looking at worksites and equipment, providing alternate positions and/or bundling existing duties, so trying to find suitable accommodation for individuals. If we have come to a complete impasse, the file at this time is remaining open and we are continuing to attempt to accommodate. I don't know what other alternatives would be, aside from what we can do to accommodate an individual. At some point we provide all of the accommodations that we can, and if we're unable to successfully accommodate the person to their satisfaction, then I suppose the only alternative would be for the individuals to maybe consider leaving the government. I really don't know what else to add other than trying every type of accommodation that we can to try to accommodate our staff.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister and I appreciate that the department does everything they can. I think that the department where the employee is returning to work probably also does everything they can, but what I thought I heard the Minister say was, when push comes to shove, if I as an employee can't be accommodated, then sort of the only thing that's left is for me to quit my job or to be pushed out of my job. I don't think that's the intention of the government, but that's kind of what I'm hearing.

There must be some avenue, and maybe if it's even if the Minister says that the person has to go to Human Rights to appeal, but there must be some avenue that the employee and/or the employer can take to try and solve this impasse, even if it's to go to mediation or arbitration of some sort. So is there something like that when things get really bad? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The duties to accommodate would be offers from government in an attempt to accommodate the employee. All of the things I've mentioned, such as duties, hours, worksite, other jobs, other positions, bundling existing duties to create a position in an attempt to accommodate. If after that the employee continues to refuse all of the accommodations, then I don't know what else we can do, but maybe I can ask the deputy minister to see if I have missed anything on anything further that we can do to try to accommodate an employee.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. As the Minister said, we go to great lengths when we do have an employee who we wish to accommodate and it's worth noting that accommodations can range quite extensively. It can be everything from a temporary accommodation for an employee who has broken their leg and they're in a cast and they need something for the duration

of time they're in a cast, to something that's quite a lot more substantive and it may indeed even be invisible to the eye, for example, addictions.

What we find, as well, is that we work to the point, as is outlined in our Duty to Accommodate Injury and Disability Policy, to the point of undue hardship and as an employer the size of the GNWT it's not easy, we go to great lengths before we say we've reached undue hardship when it comes to accommodating one employee. So we've done things as extensive as looking at opportunities to be able to take work that we were contracting out to see if we could bundle that for employees to make it very workable for them.

Ultimately, at the end of the day, what we want to do is get the employee back to work, get them feeling like they are able to work to the extent that they are physically and mentally able to do, we want them back in the workforce, we want that degree of normalcy for them. We work very hard to find an option that's going to work for them. If at the end of the day the options that we put forward for accommodation are things that the employee says no, I don't want that, I don't think that's going to work for me – and again, we're checking with their physician as appropriate, as well, and working with them very closely – if an employee says no, that's not workable, we do work to exhaust every one of the options that we've put before them. If they say no, then we recognize that we've done as much as we can and we do look to the employee then to determine what they would like to do for the next steps. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Committee, we're on 3-27, Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My first question is on the Safe Disclosure Policy. I know there was an intent to move that into some form of whistleblower legislation after sort of vetting it for a year or two. I'm not sure that it's actually had much experience in the vetting realm, but is the intent still to move that to legislation?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it is.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'm sure I'll find out soon when that will be happening.

In the process of reorganizing divisions or departments or sections or whatever, positions sometimes get deleted within the government, and I'm concerned about a situation where an employee in a position might be assured one day that they're secure and then with an about-face by the government their position is designated as affected shortly thereafter. Are there standards that must be met here, and what recourse does an employee

have when their employer goes back on their word such as in such a situation?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Just to let the Member know that we're planning on introducing safe disclosure legislation in October of 2014. With the Staff Retention Policy, I'll have the deputy minister provide more detail on the last comment by the Member.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The point the Member raises about the indeterminate nature of work, certainly departments go through exercises, if they must, to be able to look at being as streamlined and as refined and as efficient as possible in meeting the mandate of the department itself. At times that may require a reorganization, but we work very, very hard to minimize the impact on employees. We're not interested overall in really looking at having adverse effect on employees.

In the event that there is a reorganization that will impact an employee in the position that they're in, as the Minister mentioned, the Staff Retention Policy kicks in, which is really our commitment to making sure that we will look first of all in that employee's department and then, secondly, across government overall to find a suitable place for any employee who is impacted, whose position may be impacted and so that we can keep those people within the public service. We value the knowledge that they have, the experience they have, and it's not something we do as an employer to be looking around to be getting rid of people. When there are organizational design reasons for having to reorganize or re-describe how work is done, it's very important for us to be able to ensure that we have the Staff Retention Policy to give employees that sense of comfort that there is a transfer and process that will be followed that will really seek to place them elsewhere in the organization. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that response and the additional from the Minister. I'm aware of this Staff Retention Policy and the situation described by the deputy minister. There is, however, some communications that occur before officially deleting positions, and perhaps there needs to be a bit of a clarity with supervisory employees that they should not be saying things that they can't keep to if the government decides to get rid of positions. So I'll just leave that as a comment.

My last question, I see expense here is up 30-some percent over the last couple of years, up a little bit again this year from last year. I'm wondering: what

has engendered this increase in expenditures for this division? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll have the deputy minister respond to that.

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

**MS. BASSI-KELLETT:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. To be very brief about this, the difference between 2014-15 proposed estimates and '13-14 really is showing an increase in the compensation and benefits for the collective bargaining increases that are across the board for our entire public service. When we go back to the increase, when we look back to the 2012-13 actuals, we had done some internal reorganization at that point in time to move positions that support collective bargaining from our policy shop into labour relations when we established the division of labour relations at that time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bassi-Kellett. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. That certainly explains it. I recall now. Thanks for that reminder. I see we're nearing the end here. Was there a plan to move some of the department's staff and programs to the Department of Finance this year or am I thinking of another department? My memory is stretching. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Yes, financial shared services position of 78 positions were moved from Human Resources to Finance for the new financial shared services, and the main estimates here are reflected in a way that in 2013-14, 2012, even though those positions had actually sat there, it would show a tremendous drop in the positions, so those positions are taken off right across the board, and so this shows a true reflection of what we're discussing, but yes, 78 positions were moved to financial shared services.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for that explanation. That was my impression, and I was perplexed as to why I wasn't seeing that drop here, and I wonder whether I'll see an increase in Finance or whether they will just assume that it's always been there as well. As long as we have some clarity at some point here on the shifts that are happening, but perhaps that's a Department of Finance question. That's all I had.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Finance will be doing the same thing. To show a true reflection of what the shift is, they will be putting the positions in previous years, so it wouldn't show a sharp increase in positions there as well.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu, for clarifying. Committee, we are on 3-27, activity summary. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks for the Minister's clarification there. Again, I don't know, but it just seems like it would be a good thing to have that built in somewhere in here, and maybe it is at some point, but I think that sort of clarity would be good. Although we hear about it in other forums, it might be good even in a narrative sense at the beginning of the department in the budget document here just to have that clarity. Just a suggestion there.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I know the Minister has noted that comment. Committee, 3-27, activity summary, labour relations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.818 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Committee, 3-28, information item, labour relations, active positions. Any questions? Seeing none, I'd like to have you return to the department summary on 3-7. Human Resources, department summary. Ms. Bisaro.

COMMITTEE MOTION 5-17(5):  
DEFERRAL OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
DEPARTMENT SUMMARY,  
DEFEATED

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a motion. I move that this committee defer consideration of the Department of Human Resources at this time.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We will just allow a moment for the motion to circulate.

The motion I have before us here is in order and is not debatable. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Committee, 3-7, Human Resources, department summary, operations expenditure summary, \$23.636 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of HR has been concluded?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. I'd like to thank the Minister here today. I'd like to thank our witnesses, Ms. Bassi-Kellett and Ms. Beard, for joining us today. Sergeant-at-Arms, if I can get you to escort the witnesses out of the House. Thank you.

As agreed upon by committee, we are going to continue discussions today with Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. With that, I'll turn the floor over to Premier McLeod to see if he has any opening comments.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Please proceed, Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I am pleased to present the 2014-2015 Main Estimates for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations.

The department's main estimates propose an operations expenditures budget of \$9.195 million, an increase of 5 percent from the 2013-2014 Main Estimates. This increase is largely attributed to \$131,000 in forced growth for collective bargaining adjustments and \$277,000 in investments to support the increased workload that will result from devolution. This includes assuming a lead role in lands negotiations at all Aboriginal rights negotiations in the Northwest Territories and coordinating the activities of the Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resource Management.

The department's 2014-2015 Main Estimates also include the restatement of resources to reflect the transfer of the women's advisory unit from the Department of Executive and the Aboriginal consultation unit from the Department of Justice.

The decision was made to transfer the senior advisor for the Status of Women position to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, as this position liaises with both the Northwest Territories and national Native Women's Association and with the Northwest Territories and federal and provincial Status of Women councils. The senior advisor will also have the added benefit of working alongside experienced colleagues who are engaged in intergovernmental meeting preparation and planning.

The decision to transfer the Aboriginal consultation unit was made to better align with the department's expertise in the area of Aboriginal rights and to coordinate the Government of the Northwest Territories duty to consult efforts with its cooperation and partnership-building efforts with Aboriginal governments. Although undeniably rooted in law, fulfilling the duty to consult is a key tool for building relationships between Aboriginal governments and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

That concludes my opening remarks. I look forward to the committee's comments and questions.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Premier McLeod, do you have witnesses that you'd like to bring into the House today?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Premier. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Premier, if you could introduce your witnesses to the Chamber, please.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my right I have Martin Goldney, deputy minister of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations; and on my left I have Richard Robertson, director of policy, planning and management. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Robertson, Mr. Goldney, welcome back to the House. Committee, we're going to open up to general comments.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I'm hearing detail. Committee, 4.7 is the department summary. We'll skip over that and we'll return to that after consideration of the department's activities.

Turning your attention to 4-8, information item, infrastructure investment summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Seeing none, 4-10, information item, active position summary. Any questions? Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll just start off that I know all our departments are really re-evaluating positions because of the committee's concerns. I'd just like to know more about these 44 positions and exactly if there are any vacant ones there, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are five vacant positions as of October 31<sup>st</sup>. Since that time we have staffed all of them except for one, which there is a job offer in progress, and another that is staffed on an acting basis. So, we're pleased to say that we've staffed all five. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Also, seeing an increase of two positions to Yellowknife headquarters, maybe they can detail what those positions are.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The first is a lands negotiator, which is incremental resource resulting from devolution. With the Government of the Northwest Territories now taking on the responsibility for Crown lands, there's an increased requirement for this position as we are also the Aboriginal rights negotiators, including land. The

second position is the coordinator of the Intergovernmental Council. It's another incremental resource resulting from devolution. This will help us coordinate and support the activities of the Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resource Management and will be made up of all of the Aboriginal governments that have signed on to devolution and have land to manage, so we will be better able to have a coordinated management scheme for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Just in terms of decentralization, I guess, I would just like to ask the Minister a question about potential decentralization of these positions. Of course, I see them all in headquarters. As we move along, I know we're still in discussions about phase 2 of decentralization, so I was wondering if there was any inkling or if there's a need for having regional positions in this department. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As we are in the process of starting to proceed with phase 3 of decentralization, as part of that we can look at it. In the past it was deemed more effective and efficient to keep the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' positions here in Yellowknife because it's a very small department. We need to make sure we're well coordinated. We also have to share very limited resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Active position summary. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Agreed. Page 4-13, corporate management, operations expenditures, \$4.142 million. Mr. Menicoché.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I thought I had seen a larger number of increases over last year, but it's \$50,000. While I'm asking, maybe I can ask the Minister why there's an increase of \$50,000 over last year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Menicoché. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The main reason is because of forced growth, an increase of \$36,000 for collective bargaining increases; there are some other adjustments for financial shared services and for TSC chargeback for the Technical Service Centre, and also an increase of \$5,000 for devolution impacts. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Any other questions? Page 4-13, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$4.142 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is – really I don't know if this belongs in this section or division or not – the Premier

mentioned, in his opening remarks, coordinating the activities of the Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resource Management as part of the rationale for the increased budget.

I guess, to start off, would it be appropriate to ask questions here on that subject within this section or division? Is that the right division for this?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, I think there's another section coming up that provides for it, but as far as the position, it was already dealt with, but I will leave it to you, Mr. Chair, to make the determination.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Mr. Bromley, would you prefer to wait?

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'd be happy to wait, Mr. Chair. I didn't hear the Premier say which section, but I'd be happy to wait for the appropriate one. Of course, we haven't passed the whole department, so I'd also be happy to wait until we go to the final.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Premier, for the record.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I guess I could wait until we approve the whole thing, but it's when we get to intergovernmental relations, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. It's 4-25, Mr. Bromley, for you to note when we get there.

Corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$4.142 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Corporate management, grants and contributions, page 4-14, in the amount of \$1.145 million. Agreed? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just have a question here with regards to the contributions for the Native Women's Association and the Status of Women Council. I note that there was a small increase, certainly for the Status of Women Council, a very small increase in '13-14 from '12-13, and a bit of an increase in the same year for the Native Women's Association, but the contributions have remained flat since then.

I'd like to know from the Minister, is there any policy which gives a cost of living increase or some sort of forced growth increase to these organizations year over year? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is no provision for cost of living increases. It's approved on an annual basis.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, to the Minister, I would like to know how we expect these two organizations to maintain the services and the programs that they provide when we don't give them any kind of an increase. Every other department or every other aspect of this government deals with forced growth every year, but we're not giving any kind of an increase due to forced growth for these two organizations. Can I get an explanation as to why not? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** This funding is consistent with the government's policy on third-party accountability. There are different definitions of third party. I believe some portions or some groups are eligible for different increases, different categories. I will ask, through you, Richard to go into more detail, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Robertson.

**MR. ROBERTSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. These funding agreements are definitely core funding covering operational costs for the staff as well as running the offices. The current funding agreements are multi-year in nature and would include fixed amounts over the course of a three-year period and will be reviewed after each of those terms – I believe the next term is up at the end of the next fiscal year – and be part of our submission going forward for the future business planning process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Robertson. Committee, corporate management, grants and contributions, \$1.145 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you. Page 4-15, corporate management, active positions. Are there any questions? Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 4-17, negotiations, operations expenditures, \$2.640 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Premier stated in his opening remarks that the GNWT is now the lead in land negotiations. I'm wondering if I can get a little more explanation on this. I understand this is a result of devolution.

How has our role changed in negotiations and how is the federal role changed in terms of lands, or generally for the federal government, I suppose? Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess the main change is that the Government of the Northwest Territories is now responsible for

management of Crown lands, which formerly was under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. That will take effect on the transfer date of April 1, 2014, but through you, Mr. Chair, I will ask Mr. Goldney to go into more detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the key changes, as a result of devolution, is that it will be the Government of the Northwest Territories now that will be administering the lands and resources, as the Premier mentioned. That means that operationally the Government of the Northwest Territories, when we're in negotiations with Aboriginal governments, will be the government that has a lot of the information related to public lands and resources. We'll be the government that has and is administering all the third-party interests, for example. So, we do foresee the role changing and shifting from Canada in those discussions to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of the Northwest Territories taking more of a lead role in informing those negotiations. The interests, of course, will stay the same, but we are going to be the holders of all that additional information.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In my simplistic view of things, of course, I see quite a difference between the lead role in informing and the lead role in negotiations. The Premier said we are taking over the lead role from the federal government. I also asked how the federal government's role has changed. It could be simply the mirror image of what I've heard, but that doesn't seem to go very far to actually explain how the fiduciary role of the federal government has changed in relation to these questions. Thank you.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** The interest-owned change at the negotiation tables, Canada will still be there with the same objective of settling these questions around Aboriginal rights and Aboriginal title respecting lands, but fundamentally does change, though, as I mentioned, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be leading some of the discussions when it comes to land selection and negotiations because we are going to be the government that is administering those public lands and resources. It doesn't mean that the Government of Canada is completely out of the picture. We still expect and require the Government of Canada to engage fully in questions around Aboriginal rights and Aboriginal title and we will be working with Canada when it comes to making offers with respect to the land quantum. We just see more mechanical pieces for those negotiations when it comes to informing those discussions and those negotiations coming to the GNWT.



**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you very much for that response. Just on the negotiating tables that are active today, has there been a change, or are we still chugging along with roughly the same number? I don't know if that information is public. Thank you.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** We are currently with the same number, 15 negotiation processes underway. Some are more active than others. That's something that we have to manage, but it is still 15.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you for that information. Taking over lands, I imagine, and informing about lands, will be the Department of Lands. The Premier, again, has said the increase in budget here is due to our role of this department in meeting lands negotiations. I see there's one additional person in this budget for this division. Is that the lands person? Is that where our expense is there? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; it is a land negotiator position. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'll leave it at that. Obviously, the increase is more than a PY, but perhaps we will get the details as we go. Mahsi.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. There is no question there. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had the same question as Mr. Bromley and I'm really glad to hear it is clarified. When I heard the Premier make the remarks, it sounded as though we were taking over negotiations with Aboriginal governments for agreements and I'm glad to hear that that is not changed. I think that would be something which would be not very well thought of.

I did want to ask with regards to negotiations. Last year at one point, I think when we discussed the budget, there was concern expressed by both the department and by Members that the federal government's Fiscal Harmonization Initiative was going to create some difficulties for us in that we would probably end up with inadequate funding in order to implement agreements, land claims and self-government agreements that had been negotiated by the federal government with Aboriginal governments. I would like to know if that concern still exists. Is it something which we have, at this point, run into it in fact, or is it still something that we're concerned about down the road when agreements are in place and the federal government refuses to fund them adequately? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is still a concern. We have done modelling in the past to reinforce the fact that the negotiations would probably result in a shortfall in funding in the neighbourhood of about \$32 million a year, if you took all of the 15 negotiations that are going on and currently making some basic assumptions. We have brought this to the Aboriginal governments' attention that have been negotiating. We have raised it with the Government of Canada and we have had processes on a regular basis to try to find ways to deal with the problem or the issue, and there are obviously different perspectives of what self-government and how that works amongst different governments. But through you I'll ask Mr. Goldney to go through the more recent happenings. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. While this certainly still remains a live issue as self-government negotiations are underway and, as the Premier mentioned, we certainly support Aboriginal governments in advocating for funding arrangements that make sense and will enable the vision of Aboriginal governments to be fully implemented, that still remains our objective and our goal. Much of course depends on our federal negotiating partner, who is currently undertaking a fiscal harmonization review and policy approach. We don't have the final results of that review, but we are very, very mindful of that and still, of course, advocate quite strongly that whatever is negotiated should be capable of being implemented properly.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's good. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions. First and foremost is the sense of optimism that seems to be leading the talks in terms of the bilateral discussions with the groups that haven't come aboard on the Devolution Agreement. Particularly for the Dehcho First Nations there seems to be hope that perhaps there could be an agreement within sight. I'd like to ask the Minister for an update as to the progress of those talks. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I've indicated before, the Dehcho First Nation, the grand chief and I have had some discussions in the past about how we could try to find a way forward. We agreed on a terms of reference for a small group of senior officials to get together and without

prejudice, and to look at how we could find a way forward on some very difficult and complex land issues. I think that it appears, from all accounts, the outcome appears to have found a way. It's now going through a process with the Dehcho First Nations. I understand the grand chief has gone on the road to all his different communities. Our government, we're running it through our due diligence process. I guess at some point if there's agreement we'll bring it forward to our different parties, but I'll ask Mr. Goldney to tell us where we are right at this moment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Deputy Minister Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm happy to report that those discussions did bear some fruit and that there is a draft bridging document that might help address some of the complicated land issues in the Dehcho Process. So each party to those discussions, the Dehcho and the GNWT, have been reviewing that internally and taking it to their respective stakeholders and getting feedback. We do hope that the results are largely positive on that and what the negotiators have been able to put to paper, find endorsement and support in our respective systems. Assuming that's the case, it will be brought forward to the Dehcho table.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Premier and the deputy minister for giving me an update.

One of the very fundamental issues that has been perhaps the fundamental stumbling block is in terms of the land quantum of the Dehcho First Nations. Most recently some issue was taken in terms of interpretation of how it is that this government is dealing with the main table discussions and more particularly so in terms of the 45 percent ratio of whether indeed at the end of the day the land claims process that will be at least the disposition of land or lands that remain as 45 percent open for the public access. That came to, as I understand, a matter of interpretation and became an issue for both sides, and I just wanted to know if that's been resolved and whether that still remains outstanding, or has that been resolved.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We agreed to go through this bilateral process and there are a number of key markers for the Dehcho First Nation. Obviously, this 45 percent is still a big issue for them. On our part, we would like to see some movement on the devolution side, and I think that we will let the process run its course and I expect that if there is support from both parties that these matters will be dealt with.

**MR. NADLI:** My final question is there is a critical component to this process and that is the Dehcho Land Use Planning Process. I know the GNWT has been involved with it, the Dehcho First Nation, but for some time there was an absent member from the federal side. How is the GNWT helping out to ensure that the federal government remain at least, or appoint a member on the Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think, as a government, we see land use plans as the way of the future and we are certainly supportive and we would like to get the land use planning process in the Dehcho moving forward. On every occasion I have asked the federal minister to appoint a federal member to the land use planning process and also to identify a Minister's special representative to that negotiating process, and also I have facilitated, whenever it was possible, for the Minister and the grand chief to get together, although obviously, the grand chief has been able to make his own arrangements with the federal Minister, but wherever we can help facilitate, we have endeavoured to do so.

**MR. NADLI:** I just wanted to at least get a sense of... I know there have been some challenges in moving the negotiations forward, and I think there seems to be an interest in terms of trying to ensure that all parties remain committed to moving the process along. I wanted to come to an understanding if there is a specific timeline, as to I know there have been discussions of an agreement-in-principle. Recently, the Dehcho First Nations leadership met in Fort Providence. Of course, their annual assembly is going to happen this summer. I'm trying to get at least a sense from this government to see, from their perspective, at least to give an indication of a timeline as to whether a final agreement is in sight, or is right now the concentration or the efforts on the agreement-in-principle?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't have a fixed timeline for those negotiations but we are optimistic. We continue to put effort into those negotiations and there are some pretty fundamental issues that remain, and that's probably the reason why we're hopeful and optimistic around the bilateral discussions potentially offering some solutions to some of the long-standing differences that have been presented at that table. Hopefully that provides a bit of a break in a log-jam. But notwithstanding that, we have still continued to negotiate through the Dehcho Process and have made some progress on some of the other issues, so we are encouraged by that as well. In fact, Dehcho negotiations are underway this week.

Much depends on how quickly we can bridge some of those big, fundamental differences. If we can find

a way through some of those, we might see very rapid progress towards an agreement-in-principle, but unfortunately, I can't give a timeline.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Activity summary, negotiations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.640 million. Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Information item, negotiations, active positions. Are there any questions? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just am wondering, on the 2013-2014 numbers, how 18, 18, 18 becomes 19 at the bottom in the left-hand column.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Mr. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. There appears to be a printing error, so we'll advise the printers. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Any questions? Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Activity summary, implementation, operations expenditures, \$706,000. Agreed to that, too?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 4-22, information item, implementation, active positions. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 4-25, activity summary, intergovernmental relations, operations expenditure summary, \$1.707 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to pick up here where I started earlier on the questions with respect to the Intergovernmental Council on Land and Resource Management. The Minister indicated that the department will be coordinating the activities of this structure, and it notes here that the division will be providing support to this structure. This is still a somewhat obscure structure for Members, certainly for myself and members of the public, that needs to be developed. I am wondering if I can find out what will be the role of this new structure. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Goldney.

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The role of the new structure really is another intergovernmental forum where Aboriginal governments and the public government that have land management responsibilities can meet at least once a year and have those very important discussions about how we are undertaking our land and resource management responsibilities. We do

very much see this as an opportunity to work with our Aboriginal government partners, find ways to harmonize our approaches towards land and resource management, and make things more effective and efficient for all. It is also an opportunity for areas for potential capacity building and capacity sharing to be explored.

The way that we imagine this working, and plan for this to be working, is very much similar to our other intergovernmental forums, where you have elected leaders and representatives from the Government of the Northwest Territories and their counterparts in Aboriginal governments having those discussions. There is the potential for working groups to be established as a result of those discussions and specific projects to be advanced. This really is an intergovernmental forum and an intergovernmental council. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Recognizing the time, I will rise to report progress. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the guests. Thank you, Mr. Premier.

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, 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. Bouchard. Do I have a seconder? Mr. Beaulieu.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Langlois):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the day for Tuesday, February 18, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions

10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 4-17(5), Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission 2013 Final Report
  - Tabled Document 22-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2014-2015
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:04 p.m.