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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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(Nunakput)

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Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, November 5, 2014****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Colleagues, before we start today, one of the respected elders of my home community has passed.

Mrs. Ida Sarah Rueben was born in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, on March 20, 1945, to parents Johnny and Ruth Kayotuk.

Her parents raised her along with siblings Moses, Leland, Eva Kayotuk and sister Lena Paul.

Ida attended school in Aklavik in 1955. She then left to attend school in Inuvik at Stringer Hall, where she met many of her friends.

Ida met and married Marcus Martin Rueben, son of Angik and Sadie Rueben, on May 4, 1960. They raised 10 children together in Paulatuk. Ida dedicated her life as a homemaker for the well-being of her family.

Ida enjoyed travelling out on the land with her husband, Marcus. They hunted in the spring, summer and fall, then prepared food for the year while out on the land.

Mrs. Rueben was a caring and loving wife, mother, auntie, sister, sister-in-law, friend and nanuk. She was a soft and kind-hearted person and everyone knew her as Nan. Her kindness and thoughtfulness will be missed by everyone she knew.

Rest peacefully. You will be forever loved and missed dearly. To Marcus and family, our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time.

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 121-17(5):
EXCELLENCE IN THE
NWT BUSINESS COMMUNITY

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, NWT businesses keep our economy strong, employ local residents and supply us with goods and services.

Several NWT businesses have been recognized for their success lately and I would like to take this time to highlight some of them.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment partnered with the Inuvik Chamber of Commerce to host the Small Business Awards last month. I would like to congratulate Beaufort Beauty, Inukshuk Catering and the owners of Alestine's and Cloud 9 restaurants, who all received awards. These businesses continue to provide excellent products and services to their community.

The Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce recently hosted its Business Awards Gala and recognized 10 local businesses. Congratulations to Just Fitness, KBL Environmental Ltd., Corother's Home Hardware, Denendeh Investments, the Edge YK, Gaia Integrative Clinic, Williams Engineering, SSI Micro, Hovat Construction and Erasmus Apparel for their well-deserved wins.

The Business Development and Investment Corporation held an awards ceremony on October 27th. I was very pleased to be joined by Premier Bob McLeod at the awards ceremony to present petroleum retailer DL Services of Inuvik with the Outstanding Business Performance Award for 2013 and Deh Cho Suites in Fort Simpson the Outstanding Business Performance Award for 2014.

We are fortunate to have many more businesses and individuals in the North that demonstrate true entrepreneurial spirit.

One entrepreneur I would like to acknowledge is Mr. Eddy Paul, CEO of NEXtreme Incorporated. Mr. Paul just received the Advanced Technology Award from the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia. Mr. Paul, whose business is located in the thriving industrial community of Kam Lake, is making significant efforts to promote and advance steel manufacturing technology in the NWT, and we are very proud of his accomplishments in this industry. In fact, NEXtreme Steel Specialists was just added to the listing of approved northern manufactured products for steel plate girder bridges and bridge and span components.

A local tour company, Yellowknife Outdoor Adventures, also received recognition from the popular travel website Trip Advisor. After

consistently receiving positive traveller reviews, the company was awarded the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence.

Mr. Speaker, leading-edge corporations based in this territory are negotiating multi-million dollar contracts with governments and resource developers. Local entrepreneurs are providing products and services for their communities, and northern and Aboriginal owned and operated businesses are dramatically changing the economic landscape of the NWT.

Through the NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy and Implementation Plan, we aim to create the conditions and competitive business environment in which we can advance and grow businesses and economic opportunities across our territory. We will continue to work with local businesses and entrepreneurs to strengthen and diversify our economy, a priority of this government.

Mr. Speaker, today in the Northwest Territories, many entrepreneurs are thriving. They are bright, energetic and vibrant, and are willing to take risks, innovate and work hard. They are a critical part of our territory's successful economy, and I extend my thanks and congratulations to them today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. The honourable Minister of Housing, Mr. McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 122-17(5):
2014 NWT COMMUNITY SURVEY –
HOUSING RESULTS

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, later today I will be tabling information that provides a summary of housing results from the 2014 NWT Community Survey.

The NWT Community Survey is a household survey conducted by the NWT Bureau of Statistics every five years. While there is a variety of important information from the survey, most important to the NWT Housing Corporation is the measure of core housing need.

Core housing need tells us how many NWT households are having housing problems like affordability, overcrowding, or poor housing quality and not enough income to address these issues.

Mr. Speaker, results from the 2014 NWT Community Survey indicate that while overall core housing need has remained relatively stable compared to 2009, there has been considerable progress in improving housing conditions in smaller NWT communities. Core housing need has dropped by 24 percent in our non-market communities between 2009 and 2014, with 20 out of the 28 communities having improved housing conditions.

The NWT Housing Corporation has invested considerable resources over the past several years to improve the quality of their assets and to support homeowners in making the necessary repairs to their homes. The value of these investments is reflected in these results.

However, Mr. Speaker, while these results show progress in our non-market communities, the core housing need in most smaller NWT communities continues to be higher than in larger communities.

The majority of this core need is for homeowners, and the NWT Housing Corporation will continue to work with these residents in partnership as they complete the required repairs for their houses.

Among the market communities, the core housing need improved slightly in most communities. The exception is Yellowknife, where core housing need increased from 9.1 percent to 17.8 percent of households between 2009 and 2014. The majority of the core housing need in Yellowknife is for residents in private market rentals that are experiencing affordability problems.

Mr. Speaker, the housing results from the 2014 NWT Community Survey indicate that progress is being made but there is more work to be done. The 17th Legislative Assembly made addressing housing needs a priority. The NWT Housing Corporation will be examining the housing results from this survey in detail and the strategic priorities outlined in its strategic plan to determine potential actions to continue addressing the identified trends.

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank Members for their advice and support as the NWT Housing Corporation has introduced considerable changes over the past few years, and I look forward to continuing to work with them as we work towards the goal of all NWT residents having access to affordable, adequate and suitable housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 123-17(5):
EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT
RESULTS

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to share the Northwest Territories three-year baseline results of the Early Development Instrument referred to as the EDI results. The EDI is a population-level tool that measures children's ability to meet age-appropriate developmental expectations at school entry.

The EDI measures five areas of a child's development, including their physical health and well-being, their language and cognitive development, their communication skills and general knowledge, their social competence and the child's emotional maturity.

Mr. Speaker, the EDI focuses on the outcomes for five-year-old kindergarten children that, in the long term, affect their lifelong learning, health and overall well-being. It lets us measure whether children are coming to school rested, fed and ready to learn. It tells us if they are able to follow directions, to get along with classmates and to tell a story about their day.

The EDI results are telling us that 38 percent of all five-year-old children in the NWT are vulnerable in at least one area of their development as compared to 25 percent in the rest of Canada. In small communities as many as 50 percent of all five-year-olds are vulnerable in one area of their development.

We should be concerned about these statistics, Mr. Speaker, because long-term studies have shown that children who are vulnerable in only one area are more likely to struggle in later grades.

These same studies show that when kindergarten children are vulnerable in two or more areas of their development, their chances of struggling in school increase even more.

Mr. Speaker, right now 23 percent of all five-year-old children in the NWT are vulnerable in at least two areas of their development as compared to 12 percent in the rest of Canada. When we look at small communities separately, 37 percent of children are vulnerable in two areas of their development.

Over the past three years, the EDI has shown that 8 percent of all five-year-old NWT children are challenged in three or more areas of their development. Unaddressed, that could mean lifelong learning challenges for these children. So with all the other EDI stats, this is even worse in small communities, where 16 percent of all five-year-olds have been identified as having multiple challenges.

Mr. Speaker, this data demands that we act now. GNWT departments have started with the Right from the Start: Early Childhood Development Framework and Action Plan, but it cannot end there if we are to significantly impact the lives and futures of children in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, we should not tolerate the status quo in terms of child development, and to change the status quo means changing the way we do business. It means trying new things. In some cases it means shaking up our current system. It means working together, all of us, rather than working separately.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that with the combined efforts of all Members of this Assembly we can collectively make a positive difference in the lives of our families, our children and the people we serve. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 124-17(5):
IMPROVING OUR SYSTEM

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to improving the health and social services system in the Northwest Territories. Over the last year I have travelled to every region of the NWT to consult with residents, communities, Aboriginal governments and staff in the regional authorities. Everywhere I go I have heard from people that they don't care about bureaucratic boundaries and regional silos. They just want the best possible care for themselves and their loved ones. They want to be sure that we can afford to provide excellent care into the future.

Based on what we've heard from the people, and guided by experts in our system and the valuable insights of my colleagues in this House, the Department of Health and Social Services and the eight health and social services authorities have developed a proposed model for an integrated health and social services system. I have kept Members of the Standing Committee on Social Programs informed as the proposal has evolved and have received positive feedback and support from committee for this approach. We have also partnered on the development of a system-wide strategic plan that will help us to achieve our vision of best health, best care, for a better future.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed model addresses a major gap that exists in our system today. Right now communities and regions do not have a voice at the territorial level, and we want to change that. Our proposal is to move to one territorial health and social services authority with one territorial board of management, but regional advisory wellness councils will continue to provide advice on local and regional program delivery. By having the chairs of the regional wellness councils sit as members of the NWT Health and Social Services Leadership Council, we will ensure that community concerns and knowledge are brought forward and that every region of the NWT gains a voice in the design and delivery of territorial programs and services.

There is widespread concern about the health of NWT residents and particular concern about addictions, early childhood development and chronic diseases such as diabetes. We need to remove barriers for our system to work better and meet the needs of our residents. We have heard repeatedly that the key to success for our proposal is to ensure a meaningful role for communities and regions and to balance regional priorities with the need for clinical standards and improved access to service.

The proposed new system structure, vision, mission and goals were made available for public feedback in August of this year. The amount of interest from NWT residents was so strong that we extended the deadline for responses to October 31st, to ensure that we heard from as many people as possible. During that time, 360 online surveys were completed and we heard from many residents during public discussions. The public feedback indicates overwhelming support for the proposed model and strategic plan. We have more work to do, but we have heard that we are on the right track.

Work is underway to move this initiative forward. I plan to introduce amendments to the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act in the winter session. Based on the results of our consultation, the department will lead the development of the organizational design for the integrated system, with a goal of implementation in early 2016.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time the Government of the Northwest Territories has tried to advance structural improvements to the system, but it is the first time that the proposal is being met with a generally positive response. That speaks to the different approach we have taken this time around.

From the beginning I have insisted that our focus be on improving patient care and service to clients. In every region and community that I have visited, I've heard personal stories of frustration from people who have encountered barriers in our system. We can, and we must, do better.

We have also engaged Aboriginal governments and community leadership in a dialogue, rather than presenting a final model from the outset. We are committed to working in a government-to-government partnership with Aboriginal governments in the spirit of respect, recognition and responsibility, and we value their input into this process and their support for the changes we are proposing.

Finally, I have said from the beginning, and I reiterate today, that we are not talking about centralization. We do not propose to eliminate any positions, and we do not intend to move positions out of regions or communities. We have great people working throughout our system, and we need to keep them where they can make the biggest difference for our residents: on the front lines in our communities.

There is no reason that senior staff need to be in one location. This new structure will create exciting opportunities for the talented people within our system to assume leadership roles, working in virtual teams across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I am really excited about the potential to transform the system. There are so many benefits we can realize from moving towards operating as one system. We can ensure consistent standards of service for all of our residents. We can deploy resources, both financial and professional, more easily to areas of greatest need. We can move patients and clients seamlessly through the system without delays or duplication. We can ensure that resources are used to optimum advantage by eliminating duplication and overlap. I am grateful for the ongoing support from Regular Members for this initiative.

This is an exciting and challenging time for the NWT health and social services system, and we are rising to that challenge. Working in partnership, we will provide the highest quality of care and services, we will encourage our people to make healthy choices to keep individuals, families and communities healthy and strong, and we will achieve our vision of best health, best care, for a better future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON APPRENTICESHIP AWARDS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is Skilled Trade and Technology Week in the Northwest Territories. It's an opportunity to raise awareness about skilled trades and high-tech careers. In fact, this year marks the 50th anniversary of apprenticeship training and certification in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming years the entire country will face a shortage of skilled workers. We're witnessing a major transition to the so-called knowledge economy that relies on a well-trained and highly educated workforce to deliver value-added services.

Here in the Northwest Territories, new mining projects are projected and devolution will attract new investment. The economic outlook released by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment predicts that by the year 2020 our workforce will increase by more than 2,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, segments of our population are undereducated and under-skilled and just plain unprepared for these new job opportunities. If these young people don't have the necessary skills, they won't be employable. So it's vital that we support our homegrown talent and young people.

With this in mind, I'd like to congratulate the top 10 achieving apprentices from Hay River, and they are having a ceremony today at the Education, Culture

and Employment office in Hay River which, unfortunately, my colleague and I are unable to attend but wanted to congratulate them from us today.

- Austin Larocque, an automotive service technician working for De Beers Canada;
- Cameron Sapp, a heavy equipment technician within the GNWT's Department of Transportation;
- David Nolan, a carpenter working for Arctic Canada Construction;
- John Dahl, an electrician apprenticing for Zapped Electric;
- John Pidhirniak, a plumber and gasfitter working with Taylor and Company,
- Daniel Richards, power line technician with Northland Utilities NWT Limited;
- Michael Young, a gasfitter working for Stittco Energy Limited;
- Michael Giesbrecht, a welder with Concept Energy Services; and
- Tristan Campbell, an industrial mechanic and millwright working with the Diavik Diamond Mines.

So, Mr. Speaker, later today I'll have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on what our government is going to do to have more young people in the trades and receiving the kind of training that they need, and I'll be also bringing into that the fact that Hay River has a beautiful trades shop. Maybe we need a centre of excellence for trades training for our young high school students.

I'd just again like the House to join me in congratulating these accomplished young people in their success to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Member for Frame Lake, Ms. Bisaro.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON UNITED WAY NWT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Twelve years ago a small group of people came together in Yellowknife to create a new branch of the United Way, or Centraide. They were inspired by the good work the United Way does in other parts of Canada and they wanted to see this same good work happen here in the North, and so United Way Yellowknife was born.

The promise of the United Way came to fruition thanks to generous donors, and tens of thousands of dollars was invested in community projects. In 2012 the United Way Yellowknife board decided to extend its reach to the whole territory and it became United Way NWT.

Staff of the Government of the Northwest Territories right now are in the midst of an annual United Way fundraising campaign. GNWT employees are being invited to sign up to donate to the United Way through payroll deductions.

Mr. Speaker, I donate this way and it's an easy way to give. Staff's donations are recorded on their T4 for easy tax return preparation, and donors can designate their donations to specific registered charities or to the general fund of the United Way NWT.

The funding priorities for the United Way NWT are focused on healthy people, healthy communities, helping kids be all they can be, and moving people from poverty to possibility. Last year the United Way NWT gave over \$50,000 to 16 different projects impacting residents territory-wide.

Here's a couple of projects: funding from the United Way enabled the Foster Family Coalition to purchase two new propane stoves for their summer camp, Camp Connections, an outdoor camp for children who receive social services. Many of the children from across the NWT have said being able to go to camp is a highlight not only for the summer but for their whole year.

United Way NWT also supports the NWT Breast Health/Breast Cancer Action Group. This group of volunteers provides ongoing support for breast cancer survivors by offering them creative opportunities to connect and express themselves. Funding from the United Way NWT paid for facilitators to present two breast cancer survivor workshops earlier this year.

These projects are just two of 16 projects that were funded last year. Many of these projects wouldn't happen at all without the United Way NWT. Right now United Way NWT is working to sign up new donors via payroll deduction campaigns in their work places. The goal of the current United Way NWT campaign is to raise \$65,000 to give away for community projects in 2015.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. BISARO: I'm proud to say that I have been a long-time United Way donor and it's good to see that the Premier, also a committed donor, is the honorary campaign chair. Others in this House are also United Way donors, and good on you, I say. If you are not a United Way donor, I challenge you to start, and start this year. Get the form, sign up for payroll deductions. It's easily done. Ask me, I will fill it in for you. You will be donating to your constituents and to your communities, and as the slogan says, change starts here. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GNWT RESPONSE TO COURT-ORDERED
FRENCH SCHOOL EXPANSION

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The GNWT is a whale amongst its minnows. That's right, that is exactly how I would describe the current relationship the Department of Education has with its school boards, its DEC's and DEAs in the NWT.

If the recent botched funding model for Junior Kindergarten doesn't have you spinning your head by now, then brace for impact as things are going to get a whole lot worse. I am about to add another layer of bureaucratic bullying on how this department is cunningly avoiding its legal obligation to the court-ordered expansion of one of its francophone schools.

While we preach a Safe School Policy of protecting our students within our schools, maybe we should equally be drafting legislation to protect our school boards from being bullied by the department itself because there is no other way to describe these meaningless acts of intimidation and exploitation. Let me explain.

In September 2013, the GNWT approached YK1 and the Commission scolaire francophone, CSF, to seek an expedient and cost-effective alternative to the court-ordered expansion to Ecole Alain St. Cyr. These exploratory discussions involved the review of existing underutilized YK1 space and the needs for the CSF students to determine if alternatives to the court order for additional YK1 space could be found.

As many know, YK1 owns its schools and are operating on low occupancy rates on average. For the GNWT, this was a perfect out to consider constructing another school and they made the YK1 establish a facilities committee to do their dirty work and make YK1 decide a sacrificial lamb. Around here, Mr. Speaker, the code words for that are "school swap."

Throughout this process, the GNWT would categorically denounce any wrongdoing by washing its hands clean, citing it was relying on YK1 to determine its future changes and programming or to surplus a school.

The department will say that this was its obligation to explore a way to save taxpayer money, because according to the bureaucracy, this is no different than asking a government department to absorb reductions or get rid of unnecessary duplication. Wrong, Mr. Speaker. This is not a government department slash and burn exercise. These are neighbourhood schools we are talking about. This is about families. This is about children being treated like analytical statistics for an appropriation expenditure.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: I know personally many members of this YK1 Facilities Committee and wholeheartedly respect the professionalism that went into their final report. However, the current options before the schools and the parents offer little hope of consensus that is to be decided this Thursday at a town hall meeting.

These options greatly affect the fate of the one school in my riding of Range Lake, and I am gravely concerned. I have 178 signatures in my hand that support that very same concern.

What started as an issue of 116 francophone kids and their families and the findings of this YK1 Facilities Committee report has now affected half the city of Yellowknife, has pitted neighbourhood against neighbourhood, school versus school, parent versus parent and student versus student, and this is wrong.

In our eager and frugal mindset of duty, we have dehumanized our education system at the mere expense of trying to dodge a constitutional bullet and we should be embarrassed for those actions.

There is no argument that YK1 is dealing with aging infrastructure and enrolment issues, but what we are about to ask of them by this government is seen as nothing more than unfair treatment and misuse of power. They have their own challenges and we are definitely not helping.

I'll have questions later today for the Minister. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
HAY RIVER – HUB OF THE NORTH

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hay River, a great place to be. Hay River, the hub of the North. Hay River is the best place in the Northwest Territories to live. Hay River has the nicest golf course that turns into the nicest Nordic facility, the home of Brendan Green, the Olympian. Hay River has some of the most affordable options in the Northwest Territories. Check out Hay River's real estate company or Hay River properties to see that fact.

Hay River has a strong education system, including a French First school system. Hay River, a great place to be. Hay River has a new health centre coming on line, extended care facilities, independent living facilities and a strong Persons with Disabilities Council. Hay River is a very accessible community by road and it has several airline options to travel north and south. Hay River, the hub of the North.

If a person would like to keep busy in Hay River, there are many sports, recreational areas and organizations to get involved with. There are many things to keep busy with in Hay River. Several church groups, several community groups, January 1st there's fireworks, polar pond hockey, the lobster fest, NWT track and field, July 1st parade, Hay River Hay Days, fall fair tradeshow, fall fair, fireman's ball, Santa Claus parade and, obviously, the home of Buffalo Airways' Ice Pilots.

If you're moving north or finding it difficult in your community, look at Hay River, a great place to be. Please check out the Town of Hay River's website, Chamber of Commerce. Hay River is a great place to be.

If you don't want to move here, it's a great place to visit. Hay River has a strong business community. There are many third generation businesses in Hay River. Hay River, the hub of the North.

Hay River is a great place to be from. I'm born and raised. Proud to be the MLA. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ENTERPRISE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, that's a hard act to follow. The Hamlet of Enterprise has an idea to bring back its visitor information centre at the site of the old weigh scale along the Mackenzie Highway. Enterprise is one of the main transportation corridors. Anyone driving north from Alberta, whether they're heading to Hay River, Fort Simpson, Behchoko or Yellowknife, has to go through Enterprise. The old weigh scale would be an ideal location for a visitors centre and would offer something unique.

The visitors centre would generate economic activity, create local jobs and tap into the region's tourism potential. It would showcase the region's history and connect tourists to nearby attractions like the Twin Falls, the Deh Cho Bridge and, of course, Hay River as well. It would serve as a natural gathering point for groups or motorists.

The visitors centre in Enterprise could serve other purposes too. For many years there was a restaurant and a gift shop at the gas station in Enterprise, and these could reopen. With cooperation from Fort Providence, the centre could be used as a bison interpretive centre and the space would make an ideal venue for local and regional events, just like the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre in Yellowknife and other visitors centres across the NWT do now.

In any case, there's a wrinkle in the proposed plan. To put the old weigh scale to the proposed use, the land would have to be transferred to the hamlet, but

the Hamlet of Enterprise has an application out on these lands, including the land in which the old weigh scale is situated. The application has been stalled for a couple of years. Basically this means all new development is in limbo.

Of course, no final decisions have been made and the local hamlet council has agreed to hold a community meeting to discuss the future use of the building. If the hamlet council develops a visitors information centre, it would need mutual cooperation from local, regional and territorial governments.

Opportunities for road tourism abound and I'm requesting assistance from the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment to help Enterprise showcase the attractions of the Deh Cho region. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mental illness has had such a negative and unfair stigma. Those people facing these challenges are often facing burdens well beyond their individual ability to carry these struggles. They face illnesses of different types that many of us often shy away from. We must support them in their struggle. Many people who struggle with mental illness also face additional challenges such as the struggle with addictions as well as their challenges with the law.

Folks like this who struggle through this don't necessarily do it alone but they do it through the process of being ostracized sometimes by the public, their friends, and certainly their family members. That is why it's so important that we must find ways to help them through this burden, because it's an incredible opportunity to help them face these challenges and give them support where they can.

We can't do this alone and certainly they can't. This government must continue to find ways to support families who are struggling with a loved one who was given these challenges. I can assure you, I've never seen anyone ask for this particular challenge as they boldly try to face them down. Sadly, many of these challenges are not faced, and these burdens are often kept secret.

This government, as I said, must do anything it can do to help tear down these barriers. That would be the first thing. Secondly, it must do whatever it can to ensure that the resources are available to help when action and support are called upon, because facing some of these challenges is a daunting task by itself, and if you fear that no one will hear you, then the chances of coming forward are even more unlikely.

There are challenges sometimes with motivating someone who has mental illness because they just don't want to face the challenges and the further negative stigma. Sometimes I've heard from people that it's often easier to hide in the dark than it is to be front and centre.

We must find ways to ensure we support these people, as I've said already. Sadly, people would rather be tucked away and not face these challenges and be worried about what may happen to them. I know families trying to help their loved ones and they, too, are feeling helpless by the system because the Northwest Territories continues to use the 1988 Mental Health Act which keeps these families feeling powerless. Unless these loved ones were able to break through the process of being identified and seeking help, we continue to leave them at their own devices.

Medical services can't help sometimes. Families often feel their hands are tied. Even the police have said that and the justice system knows that people with mental illness, this isn't necessarily the right place for them.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. HAWKINS: The barriers of the current act must be overcome as quickly as possible, because access must be unobstructed in all regions of our territory. I've heard from people who've contacted me directly from Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Smith and I've even talked to families here in Yellowknife and they're all saying the same thing, that the families are struggling and they really want to help but they feel powerless. Professionals have told me that they feel handcuffed because their act is archaic. So many other things have been said as well.

Concerns such as lack of community treatment provisions in a timely way or even simple access, patient rights continue to be challenging. I've often heard from the medical staff about their inability to help. Even the redundant paperwork, one physician had told me that it says 19 and then blank, so it clearly shows that the paperwork alone is, minimum, 15 years old. It goes back to the last century.

The rights and safety of these patients must be paramount, and I know the department has the Mental Health Act on its agenda, but things, as we see ourselves, continue to burden these families and burden these people. When they do have the courage to come forward, they wonder if the help is really there.

The old act is kind of like being in the Dark Ages, and I'm sorry to use such a colourful metaphor, but at the end of the day, that's how the people feel.

In summary, any further delay in the development of the new NWT act, and we must do anything we can. I look forward to my questions and the clear answers about how we move this initiative forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'm going to remind the Members that when I say conclude your statement, you've got about, I guess, 30 seconds, not another two minutes. I'm trying to help the Members out here. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1964 the federal Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources built and opened up the scientific research laboratory in Inuvik. It was Canada's first permanent scientific research station in the Western Arctic or north of the Arctic Circle. The centre quickly became known locally as the Inuvik Research Laboratory or The Lab and, later, The Research Centre.

The lab was turned over to the Northwest Territories in 1984 and renamed the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories. A decade later, in 1995, it merged with Aurora College to become Aurora Research Institute.

After 46 years of continual operation and heavy use by the research community, the original building was replaced in 2011 with a beautiful state-of-the-art facility that was designed with researchers and specifically northern researchers in mind. The new facility was named the Western Arctic Research Centre.

For more than 50 years, local, national and international researchers have been coming to the Western Arctic to build a collective understanding of our region, the country and the world. This area has been the location for many important and significant contributions of knowledge, both scientific and traditional, to a variety of research areas. These have included investigations of the physical, biological and social environments of Inuvik and the Beaufort-Delta.

In addition to researchers, community members made the lab a community hub and an active part of town life. Prior to television and movie theatres arriving in Inuvik, the lab sponsored movie nights on Fridays. That tradition was revisited during October this year and proves to be still a very popular event.

The lab was also the venue for some of the first Inuvik town hall sessions, where the development of other town facilities, such as the library and arena, were proposed and discussed. In this tradition, the Aurora Research Institute continues to remain strong ties with Inuvik residents by hosting public research lectures and facilitating science

outreach activities for children and youth. It is hoped that these events both raise awareness of northern science and research taking place in our region and make science more accessible to members of the local community.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, to commemorate the anniversary of 50 years of research in Inuvik, a number of community events are being planned throughout the month of November. Fifty years of continuous research service in Inuvik shows how important the Beaufort-Delta region is to studying the big questions that impact everyone. Our territory is ever changing and will continue to be an important place to study many environmental, social and cultural issues.

The Aurora Research Institute is committed to serving the region and the NWT through supporting research needs of Northerners. I would just like all Members to join me in congratulating 50 years of research in the Northwest Territories that helped shape the North and helped shape how we make decisions in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LIVING WAGE MOVEMENT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Premier would consider decentralizing my position to Hay River.

Just kidding, Mr. Speaker. This week is... Don't answer that question.

---Interjection

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

MR. BROMLEY: This week is Living Wage Week in Canada. Many people in the Northwest Territories don't earn enough at their jobs to pull themselves and their families above the poverty line. The concept of a living wage is based on the understanding that a person working full time should be able to support themselves in their community.

This movement is gaining traction in many places throughout the world. It addresses income inequality, one of the biggest obstacles to economies everywhere. Paying employees a living wage can change that for millions of Canadians. In fact, employers in about 30 cities are set to do just that.

A living wage sets an evidence-based standard that calculates the cost of living in a community based on a basket of goods and services. In contrast,

minimum wage legislation does not come close to meeting these costs for individuals or families.

A recent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in all 10 provinces between 1983 and 2012 found that raising the minimum wage does not affect job numbers. A living wage can make a world of difference in health outcomes and quality of life, but the living wage amount varies from community to community due to differences in costs of living and government transfers as it is based on local costs for things like food, housing, transportation and child care.

A living wage is by no means extravagant. For instance, calculations do not include the cost of homeownership, debt repayment or savings. New Westminster, BC, became the first municipality in Canada to officially become a living wage employer in 2010. Since then, dozens of Canadian communities have become actively engaged in living wage discussions supported by national organizations such as Vibrant Communities Canada and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

In Yellowknife, Alternatives North, with the support of Anti-Poverty Strategy dollars, are engaged in exploring what a living wage would look like in the NWT's capital city.

The living wage movement is fairly recent to Canada, but where living wage policies have been implemented in the United States and the United Kingdom, employers and communities have realized significant benefits.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BROMLEY: The living wage movement is fairly recent to Canada, but where living wage policies have been implemented in the United States and the United Kingdom, employers and communities have realized significant benefits including increased productivity, lower employee turnover and, most importantly, less poverty and healthier families.

I urge this government to stay tuned on what is happening with communities adopting this standard, to pay attention to the Alternatives North study and to help the communities and people of the North through establishment of living wage communities in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT ABORIGINAL SPORT CIRCLE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be short with my Member's statement. But it's written too long, so I'll only use two pages here.

Mr. Speaker, it's a great moment that we shared in this House yesterday. We sent a message to women, young and old, and to also to Canada.

Today I want to talk about our youth and the safe and healthy alternatives our Aboriginal Sport Circle of the Northwest Territories is providing to them.

We want our youth to excel. We want them to turn their positive energy into a powerful beat of a drum. The year 2014 was successful for our Aboriginal athletes, coaches and parents. The North has and will continue to produce world-class athletes. For example, the Sahtu was well represented with drummers from Fort Good Hope, in Regina, Saskatchewan. Thirty-one people from the Sahtu were on Team NWT who competed, coached and volunteered at these Aboriginal Indigenous Games.

This was a culture-filled experience with our youth. Anyone who tuned into the coverage on APTN or CKLB Radio could see and hear the great time our youth had. Not only did they compete in the traditional Aboriginal sports, they competed in canoeing and archery, or modern sports like basketball or track. They also had the opportunity to meet fellow athletes and elders from other First Nations and Aboriginal communities across Canada and the United States.

At the Cultural Village, traditional teepees were in front of the University of Saskatchewan. Northern youth showcased some of the traditional Inuit and Dene games. They drew large crowds. Many First Nations and Metis coaches were asking Team NWT if they had any play books or rule books for our games. What a testament to a diverse northern culture.

Mahsi cho to Greg Hopf, Aaron Wells, Derek Squirrel, Carson Roche, Pauline Roche, Gloria Gaudette, Freda and Gordon Taneton, Eddie Cook and all the people who put this short piece together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FEDERAL HOUSING STOCK IN FORT SIMPSON

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Not everything federal got transferred to the GNWT with devolution. In Fort Simpson there are about eight to 10 housing units and land that remain with the federal government.

The federal government has always held on to these homes, many of them empty, stating that they're keeping them for future needs or federal staffing. Well, we now have many, if not all, federal responsibilities through devolution and these homes in Fort Simpson can alleviate a housing need to residents and for the future government jobs that will get devolved to Fort Simpson.

Given the newly released housing results tabled by the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation earlier today, I have a suggestion that will improve it even more.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will ask the Minister responsible for the Northwest Housing Corporation why was this not negotiated and transferred to our government and to the NWT Housing Corporation, so that our communities can increase their housing stock either through sales and/or through the local housing organizations.

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

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL ESCORT POLICY

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in 2012 there was a number of concerns for the need of medical escorts for the elderly. Over the past year the department has improved the delivery of medical escorts and I would like to commend the department and their delivery and support for those in need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to recognize my husband, Rick Groenewegen, in the visitors gallery. I just want to beg your indulgence for one moment and say that Rick is a really lucky guy.

---Laughter

He lives in Hay River. He has a great MLA, Mr. Bouchard. He has been married to me for almost 38 years, a mere two life sentences with good behaviour, and on Monday he will be 60 years old and just two weeks ago someone asked me if he was my son. Thank you.

---Applause

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to recognize a constituent of Yellowknife South, Gayla Thunstrom. Welcome to the Assembly.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is participating in bring your child to school today. The department hosted

students who have been involved in learning how the Department of Health and Social Services works on projects that help NWT residents access health care services and also learn about nutrition. They provided some great incite and ideas on how the department could focus some of their efforts, so I would like to recognize the two individuals here with us today, Grade 9 students from Ecole St. Patrick High School. That is Ethan Carey and Josh Deleff, and with them, as well, is Josh's mother, Yvette Deleff, who is the department senior nursing consultant of long-term care. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize one of my constituents, Rick Groenewegen, the brains behind Greenway Holdings. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would first off like to recognize one of the Pages from Range Lake North School, Diana Rockwell, who has been working here this week and last week. I would like to thank all the Pages who have been doing such a good job for us.

In addition, I would like to recognize Ms. Tracy St-Denis, who is the chair, at the moment, of the United Way NWT. Tracy has been on the board for four years; she has been chair for the last two years. With Tracy is Gayla Thunstrom, who is UNW first vice-president, soon to be a member of United Way NWT. So, good on you, Gayla. With them is Gayla's son, Lucas Wick, who is here also for Take Your Kid to Work Day, with his mom.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. If I was to take my kids to work, I would have about 10 of them up here.

---Laughter

Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it's Take Your Kid to Work Day, not take your kid to school day, but anyway, I just wanted to recognize Gayla Thunstrom and say that I appreciate all of her good, hard work and congratulate her on her recent re-election. Congratulations.

I also want to recognize Ms. Tracy St-Denis, who does so much good work not only for the department of ITI but also for the United Way. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize Tracy St-Denis, a Weledeh

constituent and very active in all kinds of areas, which I very much appreciate. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'd like to welcome everybody here in the public gallery. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings, and it's always good to see Ms. St-Denis back in the Assembly.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Mr. Moses.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 15-17(5):
MRS. BARB LENNIE – DL SERVICES LTD.,
2013 BDIC OUTSTANDING BUSINESS
PERFORMANCE AWARD

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge Mrs. Barb Lennie and her company, DL Services Ltd., on receiving the 2013 Business Development and Investment Corporation's Outstanding Business Performance Award.

DL Services Ltd. was incorporated in 1997 and was owned and operated by Barb and her late husband Dennie Lennie. When Dennie passed away in 2004, Barb became the sole owner and has been operating the business on her own.

Barb also works for the GNWT full time, for 37 years, as the nurse in charge for public health and home care and continues to find time to manage the business as well as make time for her five grandchildren.

DL Services Ltd. retails petroleum products under the Esso banner, has a car wash and sells tires. Barb wanted to mention that she has great employees that have helped her in receiving this award. She also wanted to acknowledge and say thank you to all those amazing and wonderful people who have helped her along the way.

I have personally worked with Barb in my first GNWT position as a community health representative and would like to acknowledge her professionalism and compassion that she has for her employees. She has been a mentor of mine and helped motivate me and empower me to do the work that I do.

Please join me in acknowledging a compassionate and strong community leader in Inuvik, Mrs. Barb Lennie. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 518-17(5): GNWT RESPONSE TO COURT RULING ON FRENCH SCHOOLS

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I referenced that the Yellowknife Education District No. 1 is deciding its fate this Thursday on the findings of a commissioned in-house facilities report cleverly orchestrated by the GNWT.

Fact 1: The department has clearly passed on its legal obligation to deal with a constitutional obligation on the back of YK1 board trustees to modify their school programs and/or decommission one of their schools.

Fact 2: Some say GNWT's actions border on exploitation. Bureaucracy defends this is merely good housekeeping.

My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. It is a fact the GNWT was to have alternative arrangements between itself and the Commission scolaire francophone be brought forward to the Court of Appeal for consideration by March of 2014, yet the GNWT directed the YK1 to establish the YK1 Facilities Committee after this date.

Can the Minister explain why did the GNWT continued full steam ahead with this sacrificial lamb program, knowing full well that the results had not satisfied the appeal process or deadline? Thank you

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, we did not direct the YK1 to establish a steering committee, or the committee that is looking into the infrastructure in Yellowknife. It was YK1 that decided on that.

When we met with them back in 2013, prior to March, March was the deadline that we needed to act on with the Commission scolaire legal action. So we passed beyond that. Now it's up to YK1 to decide what to do with their infrastructure. We're obviously concerned about the low enrollment and the best utilization of those facilities.

Those are discussions that we've been having since 2012, 2013 until today. Mahsi.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. There's a definite possibility that even with all the disruption and concern, YK1 could offer up the school and the Court of Appeal could still direct the GNWT to honour its original obligation. Can the Minister clearly articulate what steps will be taken should this occur?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: There is a proposed public meeting that's going to be happening tomorrow. Then I believe the decision comes down on December 9th. We are just waiting for the outcome of the parents' engagement pertaining to these areas that have been brought to our attention. I believe there are four options for the general public to consider, the general public of the schools. At this point in time, we are just awaiting the results of those meetings.

MR. DOLYNNY: We know that strained enrollment and aging infrastructure plagues YK1. That said, many feel we've failed the school board by not living up to the needed capital expenditures over the years. No matter how one views this, this utilization review comes at the beginning of what is the 2,000 population growth strategy from this same Cabinet.

Can the Minister inform the House, how can we be predicting growth and strategy yet somehow justify removing infrastructure for this anticipated population expansion?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Again, the infrastructure that we're discussing here today, it is the ownership of YK1. They own these schools, aside from Sir John Franklin High School. The decision lies with YK1 to decide what to do with that infrastructure based on the feedback they get from the parents. I realize that enrollment is down. We, as the GNWT, continue to contribute to their O and M costs on an annual basis. We continue to do that.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Range Lake North School has been a neighbourhood K to 8 school of utilization well over 80 percent for many years, and the options before the school and the parents are now significant, changes that I know are flat out not acceptable.

Can the Minister assure the people of Range Lake and the parents that send their kids to Range Lake North School that he will see that status quo remains?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I believe some of the options that I highlighted earlier will be discussed at the public forum and the parents will be raising their concerns to YK1, and then we will be hearing feedback from YK1 with the outcome. We are looking forward to those discussions as we move forward.

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

QUESTION 519-17(5): APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING NEEDS

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement today, my

questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I was pleased to hear the Minister's statement this week saying that his department is going to meet the training needs for high demand trades in the Northwest Territories.

I'd like to ask the Minister today if he could provide some concrete examples of how the department is going to do this. For example, are government departments of the GNWT that require tradespersons going to increase the number of positions so that they can serve apprentices there? I'd like some concrete examples.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yes, first and foremost, obviously, is to congratulate all those apprentices throughout the Northwest Territories. We are very proud of them, and obviously, we would like to see more of those individuals successfully completing apprenticeship certification and journeyman ticket holders. Part of specifically the training division, apprenticeship, is improving employment success through adult and post-secondary education and skills training. That area is being re-evaluated so we can capture four key areas of categories. That is to better understand the current and future labour markets needs and demands. Even throughout the Northwest Territories, we've heard over and over, even from the Sahtu region, the question in the House of the needs assessment. Those are some of the areas that we'll continue to push forward and ensure that support and incentives are relevant, effective, and also aligned with evolving labour market needs and demands, and ensuring that the NWT residents have access to adult and post-secondary education and skills training that is required even through the Pathways Program and strengthening economic diversification. Those are key objectives that my department is going forward with and engaging the major stakeholders. Mahsi.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. I was hoping the Minister was going to tell us that he was going to increase the funding for private sector employers to hire apprentices or that the government departments were going to make a whole lot more positions available for apprentices within their department, but that's not what I heard. I can only hope.

Can the Minister please explain or please tell us if there is going to be any emphasis on increasing and encouraging apprenticeship training in the Northwest Territories and if there will be any emphasis on attracting women to apprenticeship positions? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, that's a very valid question the Member is asking, and it is a very important question as well. If you look throughout the Northwest Territories – I can only

speak to my region, as well – we have a high number of females in high school and also post-secondary, upwards of 90 percent. Obviously, those individuals will enter either the skilled trades area or even the professional development area.

Yes, that is one of the prime focuses because we know the stats that are out there, that we have a majority of females in K to 12 and even in post-secondary, so we need to identify those individuals and push them forward in the system. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Yes, it would be interesting to actually get a statistic on how many apprenticeship positions in the Northwest Territories are currently filled by women.

With the high rate of unemployment in small communities, what is the Minister's department doing to ensure that there are students from these places that get a real footing in the skilled, high-demand trades? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, one of the areas, obviously, is the Small Community Employment Program that has been established by this Assembly. It has been very successful to date. They're providing funding to employers so they can hire those individuals who are interested in various skill set positions. Not only that but there is other programming, whether it be apprenticeship training programming.

I just signed off with the federal government, as well, on Canada's Job Fund. The funding is available to the employers through my department to identify those individuals. Once they're trained, they should have job availability. That is the overall mandate of the Government of Canada and that also reflects on the GNWT as a whole.

This is an area that we are closely monitoring and working very closely with the federal government as well. Mahsi.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have an idea for the Minister and I'll throw it out there. We talked about regional high schools; we talked about students in small communities that would like to get involved in the trades. When we did the renovation to the Diamond Jenness Secondary School, they built a beautiful big trade shop.

Is the use of that trade shop to bring in students from small communities into a regional centre, has that thought ever been contemplated by this department? Those who are interested in trades, come finish your high school in Hay River. Put that shop to use, get them into the trade. Has that been thought of? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, there have been several discussions pertaining to trades access in Hay River, but these were preliminary discussions that we had when we were renovating the school. I have to follow up on where the discussions have taken place. Obviously, if there's a high demand from DECAs or DEAs, it's an area that we need to look at as well. There was a request from the Sahtu region, as well, for a trades access program and a technical training centre.

Those are just some of the areas that the communities have showed interest, and we are following through with them. I'll get back to the Member for Hay River South on the status of the discussions that we've had. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 520-17(5):
HEALTH GOVERNANCE AND
SERVICE DELIVERY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health of Social Services in follow-up from his Minister's statement earlier today. I've been following the Minister of Health and Services' plans to improve our territorial health system through the amalgamation of our eight current regional health boards into one territorial health leadership council.

On the whole, I'm pleased with what I see, but I do have questions. One of the original reasons for regional boards was to ensure a system responsive to regional needs in health care delivery.

Can the Minister tell me, what plans are in place under this new board, or will be under this new board, to address the individual health care requirements of our different regions and be responsive to them? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the key differences to what we're doing in the Northwest Territories is coming to one authority. It's actually the creation of these regional wellness councils which are going to be advisory bodies made up of individuals from the community and the region in which they serve. So for example, in the Beaufort-Delta we have a board, it is being run by a public administrator now, but that board will cease to exist. We'll put in place a wellness council that will be made up of individuals from the regions, hopefully from every community, and they will have the ability to bring in community and individual perspectives, and then the chair of that regional wellness council will sit on the territorial board and be able to carry that information to a territorial level, which is something that has never existed in the North before. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: In the past I've been concerned about inefficiencies and inconsistencies relating to our delivery of health care services across the territory, as has, of course, the Auditor General of Canada. Lack of common procedures, duplication of resources are problem areas.

How will the proposed new health leadership council address concerns in the areas of inconsistency and inefficiency in the delivery of services? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As we move forward, we are taking into consideration all the recommendations from the Auditor General, because the Auditor General made the exact comments that the Member is talking about. When it comes to lack of clinical standards, right now, with eight authorities, we have eight different sets of clinical standards and they're not always the same, which actually makes it incredible difficult to have one system and guarantee that all of our residents have the same level and access to care. So, as one authority, the regional wellness council chairs will come together, form the board, and that board will provide direction to the development of territorial clinical standards to ensure that all of our residents are getting the same.

There's also huge opportunity here to get rid of some of the duplication of services or some of the areas we overlap, important functions such as purchasing, coordinate their purchasing so that we can purchase at a territorial level. It's giant economies of scale and allows us to re-profile dollars where we really need them, which is the front line.

So there's lots of opportunity here. We are still working on many of the details and I will be continuing to come to committee with those details as we move forward. First step is to get the legislation through the House. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. The Minister anticipated my next question. The department obviously has the largest O and M budget in our government, and most residents consider it the most important department when it comes to quality of life. So any savings that can be made in the efficient delivery of health programs will result, presumably, in increased health delivery.

Will the shift to the leadership council result in significant savings in the delivery of health care programs? I think the Minister has indicated probably. How much can we anticipate? Has the Minister identified any sorts of connotative estimates on the sorts of savings we can realize here?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I've been very careful not to say that this will save us a significant amount of money. This is about improving the services and the results for the people of the Northwest

Territories and removing the barriers to care that exist, which are obviously bad for the patients. We anticipate an opportunity to control future spending through shared services like working together on things like purchasing and other functions, but it's difficult to quantify what those savings will be. We are putting together a project team now to start working through some of these details, and as I've indicated, as these details work themselves out, I will be coming to committee with that information.

I just want to be clear; this isn't about saving a whole lot of money. This is about improving the results for our people, which will ultimately save money but it will allow us to focus in and provide the care that our people truly need and expect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said in my original question, I've been following the events leading to the creation of this council. It is, I believe, a very positive development, or will be when implemented, and the sooner the better. But recognizing the need to do this carefully and well, can the Minister give me an idea as to how much progress has been made and when he hopes to implement the health leadership council? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, this is a significant undertaking that's going to take some time. We could rush it but I would be worried that we wouldn't get it right, so we need to take the time in order to make sure we dot all of our i's and cross all of our t's and do all the work that is necessary.

Right now, as I have indicated, the first step is to bring forward the legislation that will allow us to create this entity. I plan to bring forward that legislation in the winter session. I hope it passes in the life of this Assembly. That's my expectation. As soon as that legislation passes, my next step is to re-establish the wellness councils on an interim basis, because we don't plan on having the legislation go live until April 1, 2016, which gives us between now and then, over a year to do much of the planning, much of the work to make sure that we roll this out as smoothly as possible. It's going to take changed management; it's going to take a lot of education; we are going to make sure that staff are aware and involved.

We want to do it right, so we want to make sure that we take the appropriate time, and the legislation will be in front of committee in the winter session. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Member for Nahendeh, Mr. Menicoche.

QUESTION 521-17(5):
FEDERAL HOUSING STOCK
IN FORT SIMPSON

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in the day I spoke about federal housing that was owned by the federal government that was not transferred to our territorial government.

I would like to ask the Minister of Housing, in his capacity does he know why we didn't have access to that available housing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Minister of Housing, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The initial discussions on devolution, the transfer of the federal houses over to the GNWT was not included in those initial discussions. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: It was brought to my attention that this is a huge opportunity to alleviate housing needs in Fort Simpson. I understand there are other communities that do have some federal housing that's still maintained by the federal government. I think it's Hay River, Inuvik, there might even be some in Yellowknife, but it's huge opportunities.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, what process would our government undertake to see if we can get these houses from the federal government? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The NWT Housing Corporation met with Public Works Canada officials in September to discuss their plans on disposing of these units in the regional centres. I'm not quite sure of the actual discussions yet or what the outcome of that was, but if there is opportunity for us to get those units and turn them into housing units or use them for homeownership in the communities, then I think it is one that we would have to look at. It would have to make sense from our point of view. They would have to meet all the proper codes that we require and they have to be ones that have to be pretty well move in ready. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Perhaps I can ask the Minister if he can initiate the next set of discussions with Public Works and Services of the federal government and see what can be done about these units in these communities, because they can help our residents I am sure.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, with our move toward more multi-unit type configurations, they have a lot of single units that we are not too interested in; however, we would support eligible clients if they were to want to purchase one of those units using one of our homeownership programs, the PATH program for example. If they qualified and the unit was up to standards, then we

would support them in their pursuit of trying to buy some of these former federal units. But we will continue to have those discussions and see if there are ways for opportunities for us to inherit those or get those into our inventory. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it begins at this point, I am not too sure if there will be another post-mortem with devolution with the federal government, but perhaps the Minister can raise this with his colleagues or else the Minister of Public Works and Services and say there is definitely a need. I know that in Fort Simpson, if we converted them over to the local housing organization, it would certainly alleviate a waiting list that is almost five years long. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I said, we will explore our options and if there are opportunities for us to do something with these units, if they meet the criteria that we have and if the deal is pretty good, then we will look at taking the next step.

I will have discussions with my colleagues, and the Housing Corporation will continue having discussions with Public Works and just see what opportunities are out there. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 522-17(5):
GOVERNANCE ISSUE
AFFECTING HAY RIVER

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Health and Social Services about his Member's statement today.

Obviously, my statement today was about Hay River and how special it is, but it is also special in this process of the one territorial board or one management board for health and social services. Hay River is an anomaly. The employees are not territorial employees.

Has the Minister come up with a solution to put these employees into the territorial system? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was in Hay River earlier this summer, talking about board reform and the governance changes that we are proposing, I did meet with the public and one of the things that came up on regular basis is recognizing that Hay River is outside the public service and how do we bring them in. We are working on that right now. We are quantifying what the cost might be to bring them over into the public service and what other

actions may be necessary. Once we have that information, we will be in a better position to figure out what our next steps will be and how and if we can bring those individuals into the public service.

There will certainly be a cost, so we are working on that, and once we have a little bit more information around that, I am absolutely happy to share that with the Member and committee. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: As the Minister indicated, he was in Hay River a few months ago talking about the same situation. At that time they were going to get us a cost of what it will cost to put these people into the public service.

When can we expect that cost and why is it taking so long? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We have to work with the authority; we have to work with their pension provider to figure out what the actual full cost of that is. We didn't start doing it immediately in the summer. We wanted to move along a couple more steps to make sure that there was any interest in us moving forward to the one authority. If there was no interest, obviously doing that work wouldn't have been necessary. So there is an interest; we are starting to move forward with the action and the steps necessary to make this happen and we are in the process of quantifying what those costs will be. As I indicated, as soon as we have that, we will be sharing that with the Member and Committee. Thank you.

MR. BOUCHARD: I know the Minister indicated to Mr. Bromley, talked to him about purchasing and some of the efficiencies there and I guess there was some real concern at the Hay River meeting that that meant Yellowknife purchasing of all goods. I am just wondering if the Minister can alleviate those concerns that Hay River had about a centralized purchasing and the fact that we do a lot of our own purchasing through our own authority right now and how that would work. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: When I was in Hay River, the concerns I heard were: is this centralization, what about bringing our people in from Hay River into the public service, and the other one was the board and how would we get back to a board or council for Hay River representation. Absolutely, this is not centralization. Even if we work together and partnership purchase to get economies of scale, we are still going to need the individual in the Hay River for Health and Social Services Authority or the regional hospital to coordinate the purchase of the supplies they need. We will still need those individuals at the front line, in the communities, identifying what is needed and ordering the specifics. How we order and who we order from will be done in cooperation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister just talked about the regional wellness councils and the advisory board.

Could the Minister give me a little bit of detail how that would work in the Hay River area and surrounding area, and will that board replace the public administrator that we currently have? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that has become incredibly clear as I travel around the Northwest Territories talking about these wellness councils, is that in each of the catchment areas, for lack of a better term, like the Beaufort-Delta or Inuvik or the Sahtu, the way that the particular council will be formed will be definitely tailored to the particular area. In Hay River, as an example, we will obviously have to work with the Hay River town council as well as the other areas that might use Hay River as a catchment area to come up with a reasonable approach to selecting the individuals. Once the individuals are put on the council, once the council is established, there will no longer be a need for a public administrator because the council will have that responsibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 523-17(5):
NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The North American Indigenous Games brought together some very strong and powerful athletes from the Northwest Territories. More importantly, it was done with a very small group of good people, volunteers. I'm very proud of every athlete that went down there, especially the Sahtu athletes, the coaches, the parents and, of course, our cultural drummers from Fort Good Hope. My questions are for the Minister of MACA.

Does he have a final report card on any type of commitments that can be given to the NWT team in three years' time for the next North American Indigenous Games?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Minister of sport, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were pleased with the results that we had in Regina and I think that's a good indication of investment that this Legislative Assembly has made to giving our youth in all the communities an opportunity to be active. I think we're seeing a direct result of that now. I have not received a final report yet. I'm looking forward to that to see if there's any recommendations on how we can

improve our gold medal haul for the next one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. YAKELEYA: When the Minister does receive the final report, that will be shared, obviously, on this side with the Members so we can improve our next participation.

With our athletes going down to the North American Indigenous Games, it was a great experience for the youth to have. It is events like these that have the cultural component that help our youth become leaders of tomorrow. We will need strong and powerful leaders to stand for us.

Can the Minister tell us how the department is helping the Aboriginal Sport Circle and Sport North in creating a coaching program for our smaller communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. As part of the plan they submit to the Sport and Rec Council in their funding, they identify some of the clinics that they want to put on in the communities. I know for a fact that through the Aboriginal Sport Circle, the Parks and Recreation Association and Sport North run a number of camps in the communities to get the youth there not only competing but just to be active, and it's through some of the programs that we partner with our colleagues, departments, the Active After School Program, the whole idea is to get our children active and we're seeing a result of some of this as they start competing in some of the more high-caliber games because they've had that opportunity.

So there are many sport systems in place and it's part of their plan when they submit their applications for funding to the Sport and Rec Council. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you. Yellowknife has some world-class facilities. It's great to see sport circles bringing workshops and clinics like snowshoeing into Fort Good Hope, but can the Minister look into hosting a traditional sports tournament in our small communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. That's something that we would rely on the Aboriginal Sport Circle to help us with. I do know that they have the Middle School Traditional Games Championships here in the capital and I've had the opportunity to attend a couple of them. They were well attended and the enthusiasm there was fantastic and the Aboriginal Sport Circle did a fantastic job putting those on. There are opportunities for some of the regional sporting organizations to have maybe a regional one, then they would work with the Aboriginal Sport Circle and our supporting partners to try to help bring that about. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 524-17(5):
ENTERPRISE VISITOR
INFORMATION CENTRE

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Is the department willing to work with Enterprise to develop a visitors information centre at the site of the old weigh scale? Mahsi.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The quick answer is yes. I really enjoyed the opportunity to travel with the Member to Enterprise earlier this summer and talk to some of the community leaders in Enterprise about the prospect of a visitors centre to be located at the former weigh scale site. We really do need to satisfy the land tenure issue with the weigh scale site, and I'd be happy to try to help the Member. I know there's an application that the hamlet has currently in play. I'm happy to help and try to get some answers on a time frame on the disposition of that land.

I will say that having a visitors centre located on the highway in Enterprise would be very beneficial not only for the community of Enterprise but also communities like Fort Resolution, Hay River and Fort Smith. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: The Minister has indicated that he's willing to help out the community in terms of the land tenure. What else can the community do in terms of trying to at least set the stage for a constructive dialogue between perhaps the community and the department? Is there something that perhaps could be a precondition that the community could consider just to help with the process of advancing the land tenure? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. I understand the community was and had made application for several large parcels of land in and around the community, and that is something, as I mentioned to the Member in my previous response, that I'd like to help the community and the Member out with in trying to understand better how that former site could go to the community of Enterprise if their intent is to have a visitors centre there. I've talked many times in this House about the Economic Opportunities Strategy and the role tourism plays here in the Northwest Territories.

At some point in time, I certainly would like to see a visitors centre in Enterprise. I know while we were there, we also had a look at a large statue of a trapper. Something like that on the highway near a visitors centre or adjacent to a visitors centre would certainly attract people to come and see another story about the Northwest Territories about the impact that trapping has had on our society here in the Northwest Territories. That's something – and I

know I've had that discussion with some of the Member's constituents about that, as well – I feel strongly about seeing happening at some point in time. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for his reply. Besides the timeliness of replying to the community, can the Minister enlighten this side of the House in terms of what is the issue in terms of the land transfer? Is it because of devolution, or is it just because all of the support mechanisms are not in place? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. My understanding is that because the application was for a number of large parcels, it's a complicated process. Of course, that's something that doesn't fall under the purview of ITI and my ministership. It would be a question best answered by the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

I will certainly talk to the Minister and we will try to get that land tenure issue sorted out for the community of Enterprise. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of trying to advance the visitors information centre forward and in preparation for the summer, could the Hamlet of Enterprise apply for funding through the department's Community Tourism Infrastructure Program?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you. We do have programs available on a regional basis, as well, and I'd encourage community leaders in Enterprise to contact our office in Hay River. We could have somebody in the community to discuss funding options for the community, but I think before we move too far down that road we really do need to satisfy the land tenure issue on the former weigh scale site. That's something, as I mentioned earlier, that will help the Member and the community to try to sort out in due course. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 525-17(5):
AURORA RESEARCH INSTITUTE –
50TH ANNIVERSARY

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be asking questions today on what kind of support the government is giving this year with the 50th anniversary of the Aurora Research Institute, which is a very big event in that it helps with the advancement of the NWT through another avenue, which is science and technology. My questions today are for the Premier.

I'd like to ask the Premier, being at the 50th anniversary, a very significant celebration in the Western Arctic, above the Arctic Circle, what is the

government doing in support of the 50th anniversary celebrations for the Aurora Research Institute and what types of supports are there?

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a very exciting year to be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik. Considering that they've been conducting research or helping facilitate research for 50 years in the Northwest Territories is quite an achievement.

I'm very pleased to say that through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment that Aurora College is allocating \$1,000 for every year of its existence, so they've allocated \$50,000 for the 50th anniversary celebrations.

I should add that Aurora College provides the institute with about \$1.7 million a year for its operations. The institute also accesses funding from a number of application-based programs. There are a number of events scheduled throughout October and November to celebrate.

MR. MOSES: That's great for the commitment for every year. Can we see that commitment in the 100 year celebrations?

I know the work that's been going on with the government in terms of investing in such things as the fibre optic link and we're developing the satellite farm.

What is the government's dialogue in supporting of the Aurora Research Institute in creating an office or some type of work station that will help with the fibre optic link and the data and all that information coming from the satellites? What type of investments, what type of support is the government doing in terms of this work that we've been investing in as a government?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I think it's a very exciting period as to what's happening in Inuvik, especially with the satellite tracking facilities that have been put in place. I think there are three satellite tracking facilities there now. When I attended the first one, we were told that with this fibre optic link that conceivably there could be 35 of these facilities, because Inuvik's got the best location in the world for tracking of satellites. The Aurora Research Institute has been a very active participant and promoting this, and as part of construction of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link, we see the research institute as playing a leading role.

There are very active discussions going on between the various departments involved, the various proponents and the international community. I think that you will see the Aurora Research Institute playing a very integral part to the future development in this area in Inuvik.

MR. MOSES: In that sense, in terms of international reputation, over 50 years the ARI has developed a strong network of researchers nationally, locally, regionally, territorially and, as the Premier stated, internationally.

What is our government doing in terms of supporting the researchers either through grants, through bursaries, through even scholarships for some of our young researchers, our students to look forward and going into to take some type of post-secondary education in the area of research, either biology, chemistry and those areas? Has the government created any of those types of monetary support?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have a number of international researchers that set up and operate right in the Aurora Research Institute. We also provide a lot of logistical and backup and equipment support. As I said, the Aurora Research Institute receives funding from the Department of Education for annual operations, and they also access funding on an application-based process. We do involve and utilize them to do research on behalf of the government, and certainly, with the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link, I understand that we will do further investing in that regard.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask the Premier, he mentions they do a lot of support and looking for the ARI doing work on behalf of the government. If the ARI is doing work on behalf of the government, how often does the Premier and Cabinet meet with the executives of ARI as well as with the board of governors specifically on research findings that come out of the Aurora Research Institute that can help us as decision-makers make our jobs a lot easier and more efficient when we're doing such work?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We receive results on a regular and ongoing basis. They are channelled through the Aurora College and through the Department of Education, and it finds our way to us. I myself, I think I've been to Inuvik about 10 times this year. On almost every visit I have the opportunity to drop in to the Aurora Research Institute for one reason or another, and at the risk of indicating how old I am, I negotiated devolution of the three arctic research centres from the federal government to the territorial government about 25 years ago. I think we have really benefitted from it.

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

QUESTION 526-17(5):
ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS
IN THE NWT

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are addressed to the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. I'm going to revisit a subject that I've spoken on a number of times, and that's homelessness and what the Housing Corporation is doing about homelessness. In this fiscal year, I believe it is, we now have a homelessness coordinator, and I think the coordinator has been in the position for a while. I would ask the Minister to confirm how long.

My first question has to do with a question that I asked quite some time ago, and that was I expressed the need for standards for our shelters, that we do not have standards anywhere in the territory for any of our shelters.

I'd like to ask the Minister whether or not the homelessness coordinator is working on that or if the corporation in general is working on developing shelter standards.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister of Housing, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The homelessness coordinator has been on board now for about a year and a half and has been visiting a lot of the agencies and gathering as much information as she can to assist her in her job. As far as the standards go, as the Housing Corporation, if we provide the infrastructure, we would ensure that infrastructure meets all the building standards. As far as the programming in there, I would have to have a discussion with my colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Services, because my understanding is that whoever the funding agency is to operate that shelter would have a set of standards that are built into the operating agreement. I will follow up with the Minister and see what type of standards that they have, but our part of it is usually just providing the infrastructure and having our own set of building standards.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that. It points out one of the problems that we have with homelessness and our government is that it crosses over departments, and I kind of thought with a homelessness coordinator that he/she would be responsible for all aspects of it, but perhaps not. So I appreciate the Minister looking into it for me.

The next point I wanted to bring up has to do with a resolution from the NWT Association of Communities 2014 annual general meeting. They passed a resolution there on homelessness and I want to read the operative clause: "Now therefore be it resolved that the GNWT fully fund homeless shelters within the boundaries of its communities

and that the GNWT direct and fund its departments to end homelessness in the NWT." So, you know, the resolution called for funding from the Housing Corporation.

I'd like to know first of all, how many homeless shelters do we have in the NWT, how many communities have a homeless shelter and what funding does the Housing Corporation provide to these shelters for their operations. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As for the exact number of homeless shelters, I'm not quite sure. I will gather that information. I do know that through one of our programs, the NWT Housing Corporation, we were looking at four pilot projects in the communities where we would provide the infrastructure, do some necessary repairs to it, and work with a local agency, be it the band office or one of the local government offices, to operate this on our behalf.

I think we have three communities that have taken us up on that. We have one that's in the works now. We're looking forward to see how this rolls out, and this is to get people in the smaller communities that don't have a place to stay, an opportunity to have somewhere to stay for a few days or...and supports that we have for housing, when we first got the portfolio, it was all rolled into this. There were different pots of money in different departments. We tried to bring all that money into the Homelessness Fund. We, I think, ended up with about \$250,000, close to \$300,000. This year we've added an additional \$100,000 in the Shelter Enhancement Fund. So those that have homeless shelters, there's an opportunity for them to put an application on this \$100,000 to make some improvements on their facility. So that's one of the many programs that we have in place. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. It's good to hear that we are increasing funding, and I hope that continues, that we are going to continue to increase funding because it's definitely an area where we have a definite lack. Emergency and transition housing is the other area where we really don't have enough housing in any of our communities. Sometimes it's non-existent or it's very hard to come by.

The Minister kind of spoke to the fact that he's trying to provide infrastructure in communities for emergency or homeless shelters. In those communities that have not taken up the Minister's offer to date, what sort of a priority or what kind of actions is the Housing Corp taking to make sure that every community takes advantage of this offer? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We had developed this as a pilot project with the hope that, well, with the four pilot projects, that the communities would put in the applications right away to take advantage of this. We were a little disappointed that we only had

three come forward right away, and we do have, I think, a fourth one that we're working on right now. We want to see how this works, and if this works well, this is a great opportunity for community organizations, too, because we will provide them with some funding to look after these homeless shelters on our behalf.

So, we'll evaluate the results of this and then if there's opportunity for us to expand this program into other communities, if they see how it's working in these four particular communities, if there are opportunities there, we will certainly take advantage of those opportunities and see if we can expand the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. Again, considering the interest expressed by the NWT Association of Communities, I would encourage the Minister and the Housing Corp very strongly to use NWTAC as a vehicle to get that information out and to get them to take advantage of the offer from the Housing Corp.

With the homeless coordinator in place now for a year and a half, in this 2014-15 budget year, can the Minister tell me what sorts of things the homelessness coordinator is working on? What are the priorities? What are the goals that this person is working on in this budget year? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The coordinator is working with a number of different groups and hearing a lot of concerns out there, then they will package that information and come forward to the Housing Corporation.

We have two or three different pots of money. We have the Homelessness Assistance Fund. I think that pot is about \$125,000. We have Small Community Homelessness Fund. We have \$190,000 allocated for 14 projects in 10 communities to date, and the homeless coordinator plays a huge role in helping us with that. We have the Shelter Enhancement Fund that I spoke about.

So, the homeless coordinator is very important in helping us determine where some of these investments could be made, helping us look over the applications, and we have had fairly good success in the number of applications that have come in. We look forward to, again, working with the communities to try and help alleviate the problem with homelessness across the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

QUESTION 527-17(5):
INCREASING THE COMMUNITY
HARVESTERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been five days now since the trapping season opened up on the Mackenzie Delta. Many trappers are being challenged right now with the price of gas. We are paying anywhere from \$1.79 to \$2.00 per litre. Many trappers need at least \$400 to \$800 just to get started, even more, depending on the distance you travel.

I would like to ask the Minister of ITI, are there plans to increase the Harvesters Assistance Program? Thank you.

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time there isn't. I know I have fielded questions from other Members earlier in this session in regard to support for trappers around the NWT. On the Community Harvesters Assistance Program, or CHAP as it is referred to, we have just over \$1 million. It's \$1.074 million. It goes to local wildlife committees to disburse the funds at the community level. If there are folks out there that feel that we should take another look at the funding, I know it was increased a few years back, but if, as I mentioned earlier, the pressures are there, that's something that I can and would like to discuss with Members and communities. Thank you.

MR. BLAKE: The pot of funding the Minister is talking about has a limit of \$500 and it limits whether you can buy gas or groceries. A lot of trappers need the essentials like gas and groceries and skidoo parts.

I would like to ask the Minister, when is the department going to review that and increase that funding? Thank you.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, there are other programs that trappers can avail themselves of. Of course, there is the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program and the Grubstake Program that gets folks out. Based on the amount of fur that they think they are going to get, we can advance them some money before they go out and get to the trapping.

We have programs, but if the Member is calling on us to have a look at those programs and the level of support, that's something that maybe, perhaps in next year's business plans we could have a look at this and the level of funding that we do provide. Of course, like anything, there are cost pressures on government and, of course, there is cost pressures on trappers, as well, so we have to understand that and if we need to review that, I think, as I mentioned earlier, we can work with Members and communities and see that happen.

MR. BLAKE: One thing I didn't mention was in the community, for example, of Fort McPherson, we have between 50 and 60 applicants that apply for this funding, which is roughly \$12,500 for the CHAP that the Minister is referring to.

Will the Minister work with those communities with high demand to work out something for next season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, of course, we have to continue to work with ENR on this with the delivery there and also with the local wildlife committees. As well, they are the ones that administer the funds at the community level and we wouldn't be able to do this alone, so again, we would have to have a discussion with ENR and the LWCs around the territory that do administer these funds. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 528-17(5):
MENTAL HEALTH ACT

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about some concerns with the Mental Health Act. As the Minister knows quite well, the Mental Health Act was originated back in 1988 and it has a lot of particular issues, but I know the department is certainly looking forward to updating the act in a current way.

So maybe let's start with that, because frankly, I have been dealing with families that have been struggling with the archaic act as it is written today and they are looking for some inspiration and certainly some hope as to what processes will be engaged and how soon we can see some development of the new Mental Health Act.

Let's start with that. Maybe the Minister can provide a bit of an update and overview of some action. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of Health, Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year we actually went out and started doing some consultations and getting input from the communities. We had a discussion paper that was put online and shared with committee. Both the department and the committee went out looking for additional input on that. We've used that data to develop an LP. The LP has gone to committee. On October 20th the committee returned the LP and I am now taking that forward to Cabinet. As soon as it is passed in Cabinet, we will be issuing drafting instructions from the Department of Health and Social Services to the Department of Justice and drafting will begin very shortly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I've been taking several calls from various families across the North, be it Inuvik, Yellowknife or even Hay River, and frankly, they are all expressing similar concerns about access to services on the ground and timely access to services on the ground that are relevant to the need.

Maybe the Minister can provide some update to that, because folks are feeling boxed in and powerless to be able to help under the present act. Maybe if the Minister could talk about those areas. What other areas can we do in that little space between today and when the new act becomes official, because it does feel like a long, relentless struggle that they are not making any headway. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I have been having very similar conversations with constituents and front-line professionals myself, and there is no question that the current Mental Health Act is outdated, is not meeting the needs of our people, but it is the act that we have in place so we have to continue to be vigilant with the act we have and individuals have to keep coming forward and identifying individuals who are in need and reporting them to the RCMP and/or the health authorities as appropriate.

The bottom line is that the act doesn't meet the needs of the people and we have to change the act so that we can actually start to make improvements for the residents of the Northwest Territories who are suffering from mental health or mental illness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: In dealing with one specific family, in fact it is not just about one family, many families struggle with the same problem, which is the justice system recognizes that people with mental illness, this really shouldn't be the first stop, but unfortunately it is one of the processes that just happens to happen. In cases – and this is the only example that I will give – where the family is helpless because the justice system says that unless they do something to themselves or others, they can't do anything. The Department of Health sits there and says unless they do something to themselves or others, they can't do anything. So everyone is struggling. I am asking the Minister what can be done, because these families are feeling exceptionally struggled.

My third question here, to really get to the bottom line on this one, is: What can be done for these families to help them, because the update of the new act, which I welcome and they welcome, may take maybe two, maybe three years before it is fully implemented, although I know hard work is going on behind the scenes. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I've had a lot of conversations with our director of territorial services as well as social workers on this particular

issue. We know there are significant limitations in the legislation itself and we have to make those changes. I actually anticipate that the legislation is going to take less than two to three years to be rolled out. We are hoping to have legislation available in this government, in this Assembly, but it likely will be in the next Assembly. But we are moving on it because it's that important.

As far as dealing with the individuals, we are continuing to make social services available. We are continuing to talk to Stanton, as an example, to encourage them to take individuals when front-line people call them. But there are some significant limitations to the legislation and we all have to continue to work together to find ways to be creative, to assist these people until such time as we bring in that new legislation. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Often families tell me the difference between voluntary and involuntary commitment to these programs causes great fear and anxiety, but they continue to struggle with this. I'll simply just describe it as they feel like they're treading water in an ocean all by themselves and no one is in sight to help them and they worry.

The Minister says creative. Any ideas on how we can be creative on this problem? He knows some of the examples. We don't have the time to go through them all here today. I'm looking for ideas to inspire hope. When these families call me, I have to be able to give them some answer that we're doing something, and saying the act is being worked on, although it helps, it just doesn't make them feel warm inside in the sense that they can see it in their lifetime.

So can the Minister give us some examples of how we can be creative and make sure that we're helping those loved ones that really struggle and when they face these challenges they're not alone?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. I hear the Member and I agree with the Member, but we are still limited by the existing act. We have to be careful on what we do because we may be in a position where we breach the legislation, which we don't want to do. We have to change the legislation. The changes are coming. I'm looking forward to working with the Member and all the rest of the Members to improve this legislation.

In the meantime, one of the things that we're trying to do, as a government and as a department, is break down some of the stigma that exists around mental health and mental illness and provide people with the tools that they need. So they can encourage people to talk to the people who can provide services and can help, whether it's

counsellors or doctors or psychiatrists and psychologists.

We need to continue to break down that stigma and we're trying to do a number of things, including public awareness, education to help people understand and break down that stigma. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8 written questions. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the agenda, recognition of visitors in the gallery.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. It gives me great pleasure to recognize a couple of the elders here who have done fantastic work here in Yellowknife, and I believe one, if not both of them, is leaving very shortly. I'd like to recognize Elder Ames, and I know he's leaving here either today or tomorrow, and Elder Anderson, who's come to Yellowknife to provide service, missionary work to the people of Yellowknife, and the work they do incredibly helps people. I want to thank them dearly for their contribution to our society. Thank you very much.

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

MR. DOLYUNNY: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item 7 on the Order Paper, oral questions. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Oral Questions (Reversion)

QUESTION 529-17(5):

WSCC SAFE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. A key component in evaluating our Ledge Safety Policy is the Safe Advantage program administered by WSCC. The GNWT is no different than any other organization or company in the Northwest Territories. That is it must abide by the same rules and laws. On October 27, 2014, I spoke about this government lacking a safety culture. So I'd like to pick up where I left off to the Minister of Human Resources for some follow-up questions.

As we are aware, this government in the last couple of years faced some very stiff fines in failing a WSCC Safe Advantage evaluation. These fines and double fines exceeded well over \$750,000 to which the taxpayers have to pick up the tab.

Sadly, the GNWT appears to have failed once again a questionnaire portion of the WSCC Safe Advantage program.

Can the Minister confirm this failing grade and inform the House what will be our fine this time for the taxpayers? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. The Member has better intel than me. I have been advised by the department that a questionnaire submitted for October 31st has not received a score from the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission at this time. The 2013-14 claims, if there was any penalty calculated in that questionnaire, we will be advised by Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission in June 2015. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. Clearly, WSCC fines and the court fines all point to a lack of proper occupational health and safety programs. We clearly demonstrate a pattern of failure to provide a culture of safety for employees.

Can the Minister again inform the House how many safety officer positions do we have on payroll for our 5,000 employee base? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The departments have developed occupational health and safety committees in the various departments and headquarters and also in some of the regions in the departments that are the main contracting departments, such as Public Works and Transportation. However, I don't have the information on how many safety officers, which are titled safety officers and are employed as safety officers, but rather people that work in the departments and scheduled as occupational health and safety officers and work with the committees. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. I can provide that to the Minister if he'd like. The Minister, on October 27th, indicated that contractors that work with the GNWT have a safety program when on site, yet we do not have a contractor management system to support this. In fact, when I asked around, it appears that the main contractor questionnaire we most often use refers that if one is in good standing with WSCC. To be honest, this really only means that you don't owe any money to the WSCC.

So again, can the Minister inform the House, is being in good standing with WSCC the default safety requirement to work for the GNWT under contract? Thank you

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. Having paid WSCC premiums is one of the mandatory things that contractors have to have. My understanding, from and discussing this with the departments that

are doing a lot of contracting with industry, is that they have to have a safety plan when they bid on jobs. I'm not sure that the safety plans are filed with anyone except with the department and the departments questioning whether or not the contractor has a safety plan in place when they contract with us. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question for the Minister should be a very easy and simple one.

Can the Minister produce and table a copy of the GNWT Safety Manual? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. The GNWT employs lots of contractors. Many contractors, even to people who do our janitorial services and so on. We have, like the Member indicates, 5,000 employees doing various types of work. We have people that do nursing, 24/7 operations such as correctional facilities. I'm not sure that one safety plan could ever encompass all of the GNWT, so I don't think I can actually table a safety plan for the GNWT per say. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 530-17(5): FINANCIAL SECURITIES INSTRUMENTS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Lands today in follow-up on an earlier set of questions about financial security. We last talked about surety bonds being a promise to pay, a form of security, and I asked the Minister if he would agree that that's not acceptable. He said we will ensure that we have security that's, as the Member said, something other than a promise to pay.

Now, surety bonds, the point of discussion, Wikipedia defines surety bonds as a promise to pay. Is the Minister still sticking with this or is the media right that in fact we are taking security bonds for the Ekati Mine, \$170 million of liabilities and accepting something less than irrevocable letter of credit? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Lands, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A security bond is an instrument that is typically issued by an insurance company to pay one party a specified amount if another party fails to meet their obligations. So under the Waters Act, that is a sufficient instrument to use.

MR. BROMLEY: The Minister sounds like he's changing direction here, and I would ask him to do some research in this area and provide to committee exactly what is going on here, without

any input from committee, I might add, other than what we've had in the House, and obviously, that doesn't seem to be holding any water.

I've heard officials from the Minister's department and division that deals with securities indicating that the promise to pay will be accepted, so maybe I could just get a commitment from the Minister to start with, that he will come to committee with this before any final decisions and talk to us about what is acceptable and why we are not demanding, as in all the other ones on the list, the tabled document, an irrevocable letter of credit as the bankable instrument standard we want to meet.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The boards usually set the securities that are required, the amount. We negotiate with the proponent as to the instrument that we are going to use. A surety bond is an insurance bond that's carried by major multinational insurance companies, which is an acceptable form under the Waters Act. I can update or I can give committee a bit of a briefing on the direction that we're going so they can have some assurance that we are protecting, as we said we're going to, the opportunities for cleanup and so we need to make sure that we're protected, and I stand by that.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for that. I also heard the department's official saying that they have to balance protection from environmental liabilities with a supportive economic development as some sort of justification, I suppose, for accepting a lesser form of security. I think the Minister is well aware that that approach by the federal government has resulted in \$8 billion in liabilities that the taxpayers of Canada will be paying, mostly from northern mining companies that have failed to clean up their messes. These are real things that we are talking about.

Is it the purpose of the Department of Lands to support the balance in favour of economic development, as the federal government has done to the tune of \$8 billion in liabilities to the taxpayer, or is it to protect our land for everybody?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I can't speak for what the federal government does. That's their decision to make. However, we are now responsible for decision-making in the Northwest Territories and, of course, we want to protect the environment. That goes without saying. I mean, anybody in here can realize that. But what we want to do is, we want to have some sustainable economic development so our people can actually go work, get a job. But I can assure the Member, and again, it goes without saying, that of course we want to protect the environment and we do what we have to, to do that.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for that commitment, I think. Just my last question

here. The tabled document, the letter from the Environment and Natural Resources to the Wek'eezhii board. The Wek'eezhii board is saying they want to put some teeth into the legislation and require that securities for liability assessed be provided within 90 days, and the department is fighting this, and of course, the result is that it might take six months or a year. I don't know. It's probably been more than a year. It's probably been years, in fact, for the Ekati Mine without providing this security. This leaves the public vulnerable. That's a concern.

What will the Minister do to support the Wek'eezhii board and the representatives, the people that the Minister has put in place to do their work, to support them in getting this work done and not let the bureaucratic processes make the public vulnerable?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As I stated before, the security amount is set by the boards that review the applications. We then negotiate with the proponents as to the instrument. The Member says that it's a lesser form. I would like to personally brief the Member on the surety bond that is covered. It's basic insurance that's carried by multinational insurance companies, world-renowned insurance companies, that we can call on demand. I'd be pleased to give the Member a briefing on that, and as I committed before, I would be pleased to brief committee.

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

QUESTION 531-17(5): PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Greatly appreciated. I have a question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Some time ago there were some pre-employment programs funded through SFA, and this is where it's unfortunate to say this, but we know that all school education programs are not created equal and some kids graduate without the skills to get into trades programming. There was a pre-trades program available for youth so we could help them move forward on their career to be part of society in a very productive way.

Can I ask the Minister, what happened to that program and how was it replaced, because we have many youth that want to continue on in their education to be solid providers and contributors to society but they need that little upgrading provided through these pre-trades programs, so it's very important that they don't fall through the cracks and miss out on these opportunities. I look forward to the answer from the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The Minister of Education, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The pre-employment program and other programs have been very successful to date. There have been some changes in programming. Right now we are looking at the employment success through adult and post-secondary education and skills training. Those types of programs that existed before will definitely be captured in part of our review process, because we are engaging the key partners and also the stakeholders in the Northwest Territories on how best to deliver this particular program. We are re-evaluating our position on these skills and training programs.

MR. HAWKINS: Although I don't know the exact phrase, but it's something to the face of duty bound or obligation when we provide a program and it becomes ineffective, but yet we're responsible because we do provide it. If we provide an education to people and they're unable to get into programming afterwards, it begs the question are we not duty bound to ensure that they're qualified to go forward in the future?

It's been cancelled over three years, if I understand it. So I'm curious if the Minister has described, as he's said in his words, very successful to date, what is he talking about that's actually successful, and furthermore, has it been replaced with another program so I can point these young people into the right direction so we can give them careers so they can be responsible contributors to the future and certainly for their families?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When I speak to success, we refer to the 50th year anniversary. There are all these apprentices who have been very successful to date. We have journeymen ticket holders in the Northwest Territories, and we continue to push that forward and seeing the positive results. Those are the successes in the Northwest Territories. This particular program that may not be with us today, we will be discussing. Not only that, but other programming that potentially will come into play as we review this overall apprenticeship through adult and post-secondary education and skills training. It is under review at this point.

MR. HAWKINS: I'd hate to think the program was successful and that was why we cancelled it. Maybe the Minister can talk about the interim solutions we can offer these families who have young people who want to start their careers. They like the ideas of trades. I mean, the Minister is so focused in on the end portion where they've gone through the trades program and they've graduated and moved on. I'm trying to get people into the program who want a fresh start at life, and it's our job to ensure that we give them a great start.

What exists for these folks who need these pre-employment programs, these pre-trade programs? We must be able to do something. That's what I

want to hear the Minister say today, is this is how we can get them moving.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I stated earlier, there are a variety of programs, subsidy programs that we provide to, whether it be training or small community employment programming. Not only that, there is a substantial amount of funding that we work with through the federal government, and that is Canada's Job Fund. Those individuals that do not qualify for EI, those individuals, as the Member indicated, are in desperate need of sort of like a training that fall through the cracks. This particular program is geared towards that. Part of the focus of the federal government, obviously, is to train those individuals and fill those individuals with job opportunities upon the completion of the training program.

There is also the Labour Market Development Agreement that we are currently negotiating with the federal government. We want to improve every program as much as we can with the feds. Right now we are negotiating that as well. Mahsi.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to be able to be very clear on the record. When I ask this question, I want to be able to go back to these families who are struggling and trying to provide options for their children, and certainly these young people want to be productive.

My question is: If I ask the Minister, what is the name of the one program that is up and running today, what would that program be and how can I point them in the right direction so they can access it so they can get started on their career? By golly, they really want to be involved in something and the Minister can make that choice today by making sure they can be involved.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I stated, there are a variety of programs within my department and it's also on our website as well. I can provide that detailed information to the Members on what is available for those individuals that want to be trained. I stated there is a Canada... (inaudible)... Labour Market Development Agreement, there is the Apprenticeship Training Program and small community programming that we provide to the communities, the employers. We will continue to push that forward, but I will be providing those to the Members. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 8, written questions. Oral questions, Mr. Hawkins? Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Yes, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Hawkins.

QUESTION 532-17(5):
FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday MLA Dolynny talked about the resources of the firefighting season that we have just gone through. I've been speaking to a number of people about the recent fire season and I think what it really boils down to, a really good question that came over the weekend was: What type of public discussion will ENR be providing the public to come and talk to them?

A good public discussion could provide both education and understanding about the challenges that ENR had this summer and, as such, could go a long ways to going forward in the future.

Would the Minister be interested in facilitating a public discussion over this last fire season? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've received the text from the Member who got this suggestion from a constituent. I have sent it to the department. I know that they do meetings in the communities as a matter of course. As well, they look at the staff. I just want to get a better understanding; I am not clear what the Member is talking about. Is he talking about in Yellowknife, some major public gathering? Is he talking about gatherings in every community? The question needs to be refined. But we will definitely be sharing the results of the wrap-up and the debrief and what we see as areas that worked and things that we probably need to look at again. We will be sharing that information with MLAs as well as making it public. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: All very good questions by the Minister and I'm happy to answer them. Trappers and folks who own cabins are very concerned about the fire season. They are trying to understand why things, for example, resources weren't used certain ways, why sprinklers weren't accessed, why information wasn't timely. The long and short of it is simply this: I think the suggestion is great, which is if ENR, for example, hosted a public meeting at the Legislature here, maybe in a couple of the communities where it is relevant, and welcomed input from the people who were impacted by the fires. The only thing that I will say is it is a very emotional issue and it's very important that it is well moderated because, of course, emotion can sometimes take over. I don't think people are mad; I just think it's a very emotional issue and they would like to share their thoughts and express some of their opinions over this last season in hopes that it would be beneficial to the Department of ENR. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: We at ENR, as a matter of course, touch base in the communities where there is a need to and they will continue to do that. I have been Minister now for a while, of ENR, and we haven't quite got to the stage of public sessions that the Member is talking about. I will check and confirm with the department what in fact is being done or being contemplated in Yellowknife if anything out of the ordinary. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: Would the Minister be willing to entertain this type of discussion that we could have our deputy minister, who is very well liked and very well respected in our community... That is Deputy Minister Ernie Campbell. He is a great guy, he communicates well with people and people like him. He could host an evening here with the Minister and ask people what they thought on these types of services, how did it work and what was their vantage point. We have lots of trappers, cabin owners and other people who use the land regularly and they saw different things that all could be a benefit of the Minister. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: ENR has a presence in almost every community and we represent and have an interest in working with all the communities and I believe we do that in an effective way. I am not, at this point, prepared to just have a special session because a Member got a suggestion to set up something in Yellowknife, accessible only to the people of Yellowknife. There's going to be opportunities to look at that in probably in other venues, and I will just confirm that I will go back to the department, but we do have a process already in place that I think covers that issue. Thank you.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. I think he at least did the proviso at the very end and I just want to be very clear on that. Would the Minister make sure that there is an access point so that the public can provide their perspectives on the fire season and if they have whatever type of info that they can provide, that is made available to the public? There are a lot of people who would like to provide suggestions, and it's not just that they're angry or anything, they just want to help. We have people wanting to do stuff. Let's give them the chance to provide that opportunity because it is very meaningful. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I note the Member's suggestion and will talk about it with the department. I just want to restate that I believe we have a fairly effective system right now. We will be putting a product on the table that will be the result of that work and it will be there and available, and we do make that contact at the community level. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance, Mr. Miltenberger.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 174-17(5):
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS
EXCEEDING \$250,000,
APRIL 1 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Inter-activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000, April 1 to September 30, 2014." Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 175-17(5):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES CONTRACTS OVER \$5,000
REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING
MARCH 31, 2014

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Government of the Northwest Territories Contracts over \$5,000 Report for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2014." Thank you.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 176-17(5):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES 2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT
ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

TABLED DOCUMENT 177-17(5):
LETTER TO MR. BOB BROMLEY DATED
NOVEMBER 4, 2014, REGARDING
STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE ON
SAFETY IN JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

TABLED DOCUMENT 178-17(5):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION
COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2013

TABLED DOCUMENT 179-17(5):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AND NUNAVUT
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS
TRIBUNAL ANNUAL REPORT 2013

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents, entitled

"Government of the Northwest Territories 2013-2014 Annual Report on Official Languages," and a letter to Mr. Bob Bromley, dated November 4, 2014 regarding a statement in the House on the safety in junior kindergarten.

I wish to table the following two documents, entitled "Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Annual Report 2013" and "Northwest Territories and Nunavut Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report 2013." Mahsi.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 180-17(5):
2014 NWT COMMUNITY SURVEY –
SUMMARY OF HOUSING RESULTS

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "2014 NWT Community Survey – Summary of Housing Results." Thank you.

TABLED DOCUMENT 181-17(5):
OFFICE OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER
ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Pursuant to Section 23 of the Official Languages Act, I wish to table the "Office of the Northwest Territories Official Languages Commissioner Annual Report for 2013-2014."

Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Ramsay.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 41:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
PARTNERSHIP ACT

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act, has had first reading

---Carried

First reading of bills. Mr. Ramsay.

BILL 42:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 42, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, be read for the first time.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. To the motion, Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly I want to speak to the principle of the bill. The Residential Tenancies Act, sorry, my apologies.

MR. SPEAKER: It's first reading, Mr. Hawkins. Bill 42, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 7-17(5), Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I call Committee of the Whole to order. We have one item before us today. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We wish to consider that one item, Committee Report 7-17(5), Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. We will take a brief break and come back with that matter. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We are dealing with Committee Report 7-17(5), Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies. I would first like to go to the chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure for some comments on behalf of the committee. Mr. Hawkins.

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Madam Chair. This Assembly's very loyal and dedicated committee has some opening remarks, and I'd like to now read them officially in the record.

The Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure sees the development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies as major initiatives of the 17th Legislative Assembly. The policy direction of these strategies and their implementation and action plans will have

significant barriers on the work of the government departments and the economic direction of the Northwest Territories over the next 10 to 20 years.

From the outset, the committee expressed considerable interest as well as criticism with the development of both strategies. The committee's major concerns were highlighted in its Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies tabled in June of this year. These issues included the short time frame for the development of both strategies, limited public input into the development of the Mineral Development Strategy, and the lack of a thorough response to recommendations submitted by committee.

In tabling this report, it was the committee's intention to share its experience with the House so that future strategy initiatives may be developed efficiently, collaboratively, and in keeping with the spirit and the principles of consensus government resulting in the delivery of meaningful policies and tangible benefits to all residents of the Northwest Territories.

That concludes my remarks regarding the tabled report, and I am under the understanding other Members may have comments as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Further general comments to the committee report? Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think my colleague Mr. Hawkins, chair of the EDI, I agree with all the points that were made. Basically, the concerns in particular were emphasized on the development of the Mineral Development Strategy and I think were well laid out in the report.

Just to do a quick review, basically there was a stakeholder engagement panel made up of industrial representatives put together by the Minister. They went out and did consultation. We had serious concerns that the public interest was not represented on that panel and that a lousy job – speaking straightforwardly here – was done on consultation compared to the economic opportunities panel, which spent their full budget doing participation and the panel was made up, of course, of people with expertise in public interest policy. It was an extraordinary situation, I would say, for committee, and on that basis, we contracted the Pembina Institute, selected the Pembina Institute after looking at a number of possibilities based on their record, and they developed a report, entitled "Responsible Extraction and Analysis of the NWT Mineral Development Strategy Panel Report," which was tabled last October, a year ago October.

Again, that report started off by mentioning first of all...and it was an important time. It was just before devolution, so this is going back a little bit now, and

they recognized that that was an important time to be getting it right and making sure that consultation was very thorough and that public interest was well represented.

When this report was presented to the Minister repeatedly, there was a refusal to consider the points raised in this report, and that was also of significant concern to the committee. The report, as well as noting that it was sort of a pregnant time with devolution just around the corner, they also reviewed the draft mineral development report, in recognizing the 17th Assembly's vision of a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable Northwest Territories, and they supported that in their review.

I think the Pembina report presented some very important perspectives including in the area of industry subsidies, need to review economic rent – that's the capture of appropriate value from the exploitation of public resources by industry; the role of communities, for example, in helping identify the right pace and scale of the exploitation; providing mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing that pace and scale of exploitation; allocation of resources and inspection and monitoring – areas we know are very critical; implications of the NWT Heritage Fund Act; requirements to address reclamation – we know there are serious gaps there; follow-up to environmental audits which are required under the MVRMA every five years and now our responsibility; reviewing alternatives to the free entry system, something we've talked about for quite a long time; and completion of the Protected Areas Strategy.

The report, the Mineral Development Strategy, is essentially silent or completely industry directed in almost all of these topics, I would say. We need a critical look when we seek to develop strategies, and especially to be aware of our responsibilities for the public good. I'm not at all convinced we did achieve that with the Mineral Development Strategy, but going forward, committee has thoughtfully presented those concerns and some recommendations to guide future efforts and avoid these pitfalls.

What I'd like to do today is propose committee motions to formalize reports, which are on page 3, and they've been formalized with some help from our staff. I'll just move right into that, if I may, Madam Chair, the first motion?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Bromley, I think what we'll do is just canvass the Members here and see if there are any more general comments, and we'll conclude those and then we'll move to the motions. Are there any further general comments to the committee report? Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Looking at the report, it's a three-page report, and

I'm very interested in this report because the economic and infrastructure report sees the development of the economic opportunities and the mineral development strategies as the 17th Assembly's major initiative, and more so the implementation of these plans. If you look at it, the report says the next 10 to 20 years. One of the biggest red flaggers that come out of me when I see this report is 20 years is 2035 and that's close to the year that the federal government is bringing the Northwest Territories housing funding down to a dwindle. Somehow we have to continue with that type of level of funding or we are going to move into more of a homeownership type of programs. We have all these public housing units, public housing that has been almost enshrined into an institution unto itself in the Northwest Territories. We have to pay for it somehow. The programs and services, we have got to pay for it.

We have a wealth of resources here that, I have heard over time, there has got to be a balance. There are some regions that are still in the process of settling or coming to the conclusion to a land claim of jurisdictions, institutions and certainty, and there are other regions that have that already. There are already systems and mechanisms and institutions in place and is enshrined into the Constitution as a constitutional document. From the economic opportunities, we welcome it, we welcome the Mineral Development Strategy and we have some mineral opportunities. There are certainly some of the past remnants that are coming up now in the Northwest Territories, such as the Canol Heritage Trail, where the US government basically said to Canada, are you going to help us or not? But we are going in there, because we have to get that oil from Norman Wells to Whitehorse and further to the United States. When the war was over, they just got up and walked away. Now we are dealing with that through a process, the liability.

Norman Wells also was one of the first significant oil discoveries in Canada, Northwest Territories, and that was done through Imperial and the federal government as to how they put that deal together. Those days are gone now because our region has the mechanism and the means to look at situations that economic opportunities bring to us. So that is one of the complexities.

My whole thing behind the economic opportunities and report is the relationship with the Aboriginal governments. They are major stakeholders in ownership of surface and subsurface lands. That's our government-to-government-to-government relationship, given that they have a Constitution document, they have institutions such as land and water boards as independent, we have land use plans and we have provisions within a prescribed document such as the land claim to deal with issues. We welcome other opinions, but they are

just opinions for us and not to have a government such as the territorial government override. We want them to work with us.

The region claim has already been set. Let the people within the region that negotiated set their direction. I wanted to say this, that the people that were in these discussions are highly respected, know what's going on, and that we ask that, through this government, they respect the jurisdiction, the certainty and the boards that we set up to negotiate. There are some very, very capable people and if you ask them to come to the table with us to give us their opinions, then that's fine, but not for another party to tell us how to live and where to live and how we should live. Those days are gone, all gone. We will work with you.

As I was stating, the economic opportunities are really, really significant in the Sahtu and we have some people that are looking to it as a way to create some economic freedom in our region. We have some people in our region who sit on these co-management decision boards.

Right now we are in a state of doom and gloom. Go to our region right now. Just this past week one part of the hotel shut down November 1st. The owner packed up and walked away. You know, that's not good.

We do not want to remain in the poor house. It's like having a cow but you are buying your milk from somewhere else. That's not right and that's what we always stated in our land claim agreement. We know what we're doing. We know what we are doing. At least allow us the dignity to work towards what we want in the Sahtu. There are provisions; there are things in the report. They should respect that.

There are lots of issues out there and so I want to say that these Economic and Mineral Development strategies, within our land claim we can work with it as long as the Government of the Northwest Territories respects what was fought for, what was negotiated, what was settled, and not to alter, change or to do anything that is going to create hardship within our region.

We have the oil and we can use it, and that I would like the members of this committee to understand. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. I have several other Members here for general comments. Prior to that, I will use the prerogative of the Chair to recognize Marc Miltenberger, a constituent of Hay River South, in the gallery today and, of course, the brother of our Finance Minister. Welcome, Marc.

---Applause

Next for general comments I have Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. There are kind of two strategies that are here. Obviously, there is the Economic Opportunities Strategy and I am pleased with this strategy. Seeing this strategy and seeing some of the implementation, I see it as very conducive to some of the business that is done in the South Slave. I know that they had some public consultation there. In this report, some of the comments are tying the two of them together and I have some difficulties with that because I am obviously supportive of the Economic Opportunities Strategy and a lot of the initiatives that are in there.

The Mineral Development Strategy, on the other hand, my colleagues have expressed concerns with the consultation with the general public. I was there for the launch of the strategy, which was done at a major mining conference. Some people questioned why it wouldn't have been launched in the Northwest Territories, but when you have the opportunity to launch it in a national light I thought that was a good opportunity to get it out that the Government of the Northwest Territories is looking at doing a Mineral Development Strategy. Should we have done more consultation? Sure. Our committee had a report done by Pembina and we should have had more answers and concerns that were in that report given to us, but we weren't. That's the downside of the Mineral Development Strategy.

Going forward, implementation-wise, we'll have to see what the future brings on that strategy. I know the Minister is committed to some reviews in a short period of time. My comments, Madam Chair, are just the fact that we tied both of these strategies together because they basically rolled out at the same time. I guess I definitely see some of the concerns with the Mineral Development Strategy and where we go to relieve that or make that better the next time definitely needs to be taken into consideration.

Those are where my concerns are. Most of my concerns in this report are directed at the Mineral Development Strategy, not so much at the Economic Opportunities Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Continuing on with general comments, I have Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Economic Opportunities Strategy and the Mineral Development Strategy are documents that this committee had time for at least playing a hand in forming the documents. As my colleague Mr. Bouchard had indicated, he feels good about it and my sense is that I am fairly confident this is a go-forward document and I'm looking forward to the rollout ensuring communities and regions and

territories and the whole NWT as a landscape. We become involved with this whole document.

What I do want to highlight is that there needs to be at least a clear reporting mechanism. The Minister has indicated there could be possible periodic reviews of the timeline of the strategies, both the Economic Opportunities Strategy and the Mineral Development Strategy. I think it's essential that we have, at least in the mid-term, some status reports in terms of the major sectors that have been highlighted or at least been part of the strategy. At the same time, there needs to be a final analysis of how the strategies work.

The strategy, essentially, is not identifying the goals and how we are going to employ economic initiatives across the NWT. For the most part, I feel that this is a good constructive document. At the same time, we need to remind ourselves that some communities are have-not communities. It's just the way that geographically where we're located, some of the smaller communities, and we need to ensure that we don't forget about the traditional local economies and that's the hunting, fishing and trapping. Arising out of that, if we could maybe develop opportunities.

The whole area of tourism, we have to remind ourselves, too, that there are some local initiatives that are happening. Like in my riding, we have Dene Fur Clouds and we have the service sectors that operate at least a service for the travelling public, and we need to remind ourselves of those important mechanisms and pillars need to remain so that we have a vibrant economy in all of our ridings. At the same time, we have to look into the future in terms of being optimistic. I'm very hopeful that at some point we'll realize our wood pellet initiative in the riding that I represent, that all communities will be able to be involved and benefit from the project.

Last, but not least, because in the North where we're at there's a strong propensity for natural resource development. It's a matter of fact that we need development to happen so that we can invigorate the economy, create businesses and jobs. At the same time, we need to be reminded that it has to be done in a balanced way. Recently this government came up with the Land Use Framework in terms of how it is that we're going to engage the land and water of the NWT. So we play it fairly safe and, at the same time, we have a balanced perspective. The big thing in that too, and one of my colleagues raised it, is there has to be proper engagement with the Aboriginal governments. We can't roll out these initiatives in a silo. There has to be multiple partners ensuring that we have maximum involvement for maximum success. Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Before we continue, committee, I'd like to draw your

attention to the gallery. With us we have the Languages Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Ms. Snookie Catholique. Thank you for joining us today. General comments. Minister Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity and I wanted to start off by thanking the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure for their time, their input and their efforts in providing us with valuable feedback on the development and implementation of the Economic Opportunities Strategy and the Mineral Development Strategy.

I'll start off talking a little bit about the EOS first and then get into the MDS. The timing of our work on the implementation plan for the EOS was intended to respect SCEDI's considerable workload and the recognized priority of matters arising from devolution and the review of the main estimates for the GNWT. Committee members can be assured that all investments identified in the EOS Implementation Plan were previously addressed and approved in the 17th Assembly's consideration of individual departmental main estimates.

The implementation plan was a formalization of the department's plan for the purpose of public presentation. The EOS engagement process that Members were a part of was extensive and far-reaching. The strategy itself was very much a partnered approach, and themes and recommendations of the NWT EOS are a reflection of that collective process.

Again, I want to thank SCEDI for the input and their assistance in defining a more pragmatic approach to illustrating our multi-layered, multi-faceted approach to implementation. A number of changes in the proposed implementation plan were made directly in response to SCEDI's feedback. Recommendations for implementation by the Department of ITI were separated from those identified for implementation by other strategies and/or departments.

In both cases recommended actions were presented according to the four pillars of economic development targeted by the EOS. They are improving supports to the NWT's small business community, growing a stable and attractive entrepreneurial environment, pursuing major investment projects and preparing and positioning NWT residents to benefit from future opportunities, while attracting and retaining residents with key skill sets.

Recommendations to be addressed in the short term were distinguished. Related recommendations were noted. Recommendations for which incremental funding has already been approved by the Legislative Assembly in the business planning process were identified.

I just want to talk about communications, if I could. Through public media announcements, news releases, advisories and interviews, all of the EOS partners are committed and have been committed to highlighting investments, actions and initiatives related to the implementation of the EOS. Members of the EOS Governance Committee will continue to seek opportunities to champion, inform and highlight their individual participation and partnered goals and principles of the NWT EOS process.

The NWTOpportunities.com website is being maintained as a portal to all EOS-related communications. Content from this website is also being highlighted on the EOS Facebook page which is experiencing a steady gain of likes and views. A monthly newsletter will be delivered to a publicly subscribed list and distributed by EOS partners to their members and stakeholders. A working group comprised of communications representatives will work to maximize communications opportunities including speaking engagements, discussions and presentations advertising and media features. Alongside the work that we are doing to implement this strategy, the department is taking inventory of its communications tools and products with a view to communicating better or more efficiently in areas that the EOS has pointed out to us.

I heard some Members speak of the economy and the resource development, and really the EOS was intended for us to diversify the economy. We believe it's a valuable product and is going to set the stage for us growing the economy in all regions in the territory for the future. We're happy with the input SCEDI has provided.

If I could, I just wanted to touch base on mining and the MDS. The mining industry in the Northwest Territories is the backbone of our economy and provides thousands of Northwest Territories residents and businesses with jobs, training opportunities and business advantages. The creation of an environmentally sustainable NWT Mineral Development Strategy was a key priority of the 17th Legislative Assembly, and it establishes a comprehensive plan to ensure the long-term growth of the sustainable mining industry that will create jobs and economic opportunities for the people of the NWT.

The MDS and the implementation plan was a partnership effort and were developed in conjunction with the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines. In 2013 NWT's mining industry contributed nearly \$1.7 billion in production value. Diamonds presently account for about 90 percent of the total estimated value of mineral and non-mineral production in the NWT.

The development of the MDS and the subsequent implementation plan was a consultative process. From the very beginning, we worked with our

partner, the Chamber of Mines, to hold targeted representative meetings. Meeting attendees were actively engaged and I'll point out that more than 40 meetings were held across the Northwest Territories. Attendees represented 65 different organizations including municipal governments, Aboriginal governments, organizations, industry, regulatory boards, chambers of commerce, development corporations, education and training institutions and non-government organizations. Guiding these engagement sessions and the creation of the MDS was a three-person external expert advisory panel which included Mr. Rod Brown, a Yellowknife resident who spent his entire career as a leader in the mineral development service industry; Mr. Murray Duke, who worked with the Geological Survey of Canada for 18 years and since retirement has worked with the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada on major review of public policy as well as consulting on projects for Natural Resources Canada, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Energy and Resources and the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador; and also Mr. Angus Robertson, who has an extensive background in the public service at both the federal and provincial/territorial level as well as a devolution expert with his time with the Yukon government and also in land claim negotiations.

We've had an ongoing correspondence with the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure and provided them with updates and various opportunities to review and provide input. The committee's input was extremely valuable and we considered each suggestion that they presented.

The investment climate has been declining in the NWT for several years. It is essential to encourage grassroots exploration to ensure the long-term health of mining and mineral development and have a flourishing industry here. The MDS and several of the short-term launches, such as the Mining Incentive Program, are an important first step in achieving this.

The implementation plan to put the Mineral Development Strategy into action was released just last month. Many of the implementation activities are ongoing across GNWT departments. Two activities recommended in the MDS have already been put in place: the hiring of two specialists at the NTGO and the development and implementation of a Mining Incentive Program. The Mining Incentive Program was very successful and launched in July of 2014. This grant program is tailored to the unique NWT operating environment and attempts to maximize return on investment through innovative and effective exploration. The Mining Incentive Program was modeled on similar successful programs operated by other jurisdictions. The 2014 budget of \$440,000 was

fully subscribed and, in fact, we had over \$1 million in requested funding.

We continue to work closely with other organizations, including Aurora College, the Mine Training Society, Aboriginal governments and the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines, to put the recommendations in place. To ensure the implementation plan stays on track, I want to assure Members that we have a performance management plan and results reporting document that will be developed through report tracking on the GNWT's performance. In 2015-16 an updated implementation plan will be released that highlights early achievements of the MDS and objectives for the continued implementation of this strategy.

With that, I just want to thank the standing committee, as I believe others highlighted. We are moving forward with other strategies. It's important that we get feedback from Members on how best to go about getting public consultation in place following the steps we need in order to get the strategies that we want. Certainly, we've learned a lot. These were two big pieces of work. I do want to thank my department at ITI and the staff that I have there and the help that we've had in putting these plans in place. We really do believe that they will certainly help us grow the economy here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. General comments. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's obvious the Minister hasn't heard a word that we said, the ongoing record of committee bringing concerns to the Minister and getting no joy.

I appreciate that committee's done a good job laying the issue out here in this report. I hope the Minister will, at some point in his life, read it over and really take it to heart.

The motions that I have are the motions that are in the paragraphs on the last page. There are no changes to those. We thought, let's formalize them and just see if the Minister might eventually acknowledge that a lousy job was done on the consultation, that the public interest side was under-represented and so on, all the things that are talked about in the report.

We've moved on. We're not attempting to change the Mineral Development Strategy. I know Mr. Yakeleya was worried about that. The committee has moved on from this. We're moving ahead. It would be great if the Minister would look to the future to improve his performance and the department's performance in this regard.

Certainly, the mining is the backbone. There's no question about it. It is a priority. I don't think committee has any problem with that. What committee wants to do is maximize the public benefits given that this is such a fundamental part

of our economic activity. The Minister clearly didn't hear a word we said on that front now. That's not true for the economic opportunities panel as profiled in the report. That was well consulted and so on. It wasn't a third party there. We actually had input and made decisions on what would be included in our strategy as opposed to mineral development which was adopting the industry perspective without input despite how valued our zero input was to the Minister.

I would like to move... First of all, committee recommends that when departments adopt third-party recommendations, such as the stakeholder panel... Let me start over again.

**COMMITTEE MOTION 98-17(5):
COMMITTEE FEEDBACK ON
THIRD-PARTY RECOMMENDATIONS,
CARRIED**

I move that the committee recommends that when departments adopt third-party recommendations as the basis for public expenditure and policy direction, that the responsible Ministers be prepared to respond to feedback referred to them by committees. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. There's a motion on the floor that is just being distributed now. Committee, the motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: I think I'll just leave it at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Bromley.

**COMMITTEE MOTION 99-17(5):
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS,
CARRIED**

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that committee recommends that when developing future strategies, that government departments undertake public consultation in a thorough, transparent, meaningful public engagement process, free of perceived biases, with ample opportunity for public response and a reasonable time frame for dialogue between government departments and all Members of the House;

And further, that expertise in public interest policy be an integral part of such strategy development exercises.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The motion is on the floor and it just being distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Does committee agree that consideration of Committee Report 7-17(5) is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Consideration of Committee Report 7-17(5) is now concluded. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I will now rise and report progress.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: Good evening. I will call the House back to order. Can I have the report of Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolynny?

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Committee Report 7-17(5), Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies, and I would like to report progress with two motions being adopted and that Committee Report 7-17(5) is concluded. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Do I have a seconder to the motion? Mr. Blake.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Beaulieu.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 29: HUMAN TISSUE DONATION ACT

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 29, Human Tissue Donation Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 29, Human Tissue Donation Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Beaulieu.

BILL 32: AN ACT TO AMEND THE PHARMACY ACT

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Monfwi, that Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Board of Management at adjournment today.

Orders of the day for Thursday, November 6, 2014, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
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
 - Motion 31, Establishment of an Ombudsman Office
 - Motion 32, Extended Adjournment of the House to February 4, 2015
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act

- Bill 42, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 6th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:05 p.m.