



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**5<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Day 56**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2015**

Pages 5409 – 5450

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Nunakput)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 10, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 137-17(5):  
INTRODUCTION OF THE FRESH FISH  
FROM GREAT SLAVE LAKE BRAND**

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, Great Slave Lake is the everyday workplace of a proud community of northern fishers who work tirelessly to harvest some of the best tasting fish in Canada and deliver it year round to the marketplace.

Great Slave Lake represents a huge and sustainable resource. The product offerings are excellent and the stock is healthy and well managed. Yet, most of the fish available to NWT residents in grocery stores and on restaurant menus is imported from southern Canada or elsewhere.

The government's NWT Economic Opportunities Strategy highlighted the importance of both revitalizing our territory's fishing industry and encouraging and growing domestic and export markets for NWT products.

In January the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment took a step towards addressing both of these elements of our grassroots economy with the introduction of a marketing and awareness campaign aimed at promoting domestic sales of fresh fish from Great Slave Lake.

The Fresh Fish from Great Slave Lake logo and brand was officially launched at a highly successful simultaneous media event held at the Hay River Super A and Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op.

In addition to supporting direct sales by industry fishers and NWT storeowners, the new logo and marketing campaign will be used by restaurant owners to promote fresh Great Slave Lake fish on menus.

Mr. Speaker, to further improve opportunities in commercial fishing, we are working with NWT

fishers to find ways to establish effective product distribution systems and ensure security of supply.

Under the Northern Food Development Program, we are working to advance capital, freight subsidies and additional market supports to Great Slave Lake fishers that will allow them to better and more effectively distribute their product to consumers.

It is important to highlight that this program also applies to other fisheries in the territory. For example, one of the crown jewels of the NWT fishery is the pickerel fishery in Kakisa. This fish is highly sought after in both domestic and export markets. We will soon be meeting with producers in the community to determine how to adapt our marketing program to meet their needs and generate greater returns for the community.

We are also developing an entrant strategy to attract new fishers from inside and outside of the NWT to our industry, and we are looking to make key investments to construct a new export grade plant and to help our current fishers modernize their operations.

Mr. Speaker, growing the economy is an important part of creating a prosperous territory that gives NWT residents the opportunity to support themselves and their families. We believe that our fishery is an area in which we can realize significant economic growth and we are acting to stimulate a new era of self-sufficiency for the NWT's fishery, rebuilding it with new markets, new fishers and new infrastructure to return it to the leading economic contributor it once was. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 138-17(5):  
PROGRESS STATEMENT –  
YEAR ONE MILESTONES  
AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE  
DEPARTMENT OF LANDS**

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Lands has made significant progress since taking over the management of public land in the Northwest Territories as part of devolution last April.

Much of the department's progress to date has been due to the hard work of its employees. While

about 75 percent of our positions were filled by existing federal and GNWT staff when devolution came into effect, the remainder of the department's positions had to be staffed.

Mr. Speaker, April 1<sup>st</sup> was just the beginning. Since its creation, the Department of Lands is setting priorities, planning and managing new issues as they arise. As a new department, Lands is responsible for developing or revising policies and frameworks that will guide how we manage and administer land in the NWT. Extensive work has been undertaken to develop policy frameworks for recreational land management, land use planning as well as environmental liabilities and financial assurances. These are not short-term projects, Mr. Speaker, and involve a considerable amount of research, consultation and analysis.

The Department of Lands has engaged with Aboriginal governments, stakeholders and the general public in all regions of the NWT to gather input on a variety of initiatives, and will continue to do so in the future.

One of the first organizational changes to be made in the Department of Lands was the establishment of the liabilities and financial assurances division. I announced the creation of this office last fall. Since that time, the division, with the support of ITI, ENR and the Department of Finance, has been working on a comprehensive policy framework for making decisions related to the nearly \$600 million we have in posted securities. As well, work was done to conclude a surety bond for \$253 million for the Ekati water licence. All this while job descriptions were being finalized, staffing actions started and work on an informatics system to manage securities for the entire GNWT was being commenced.

This division has also provided expert advice, support to government-wide decision-making and departmental coordination for significant resource development security reviews.

The transfer of responsibility from the federal to the territorial government for setting up the Surface Rights Board was a major milestone for the GNWT. I expect to announce the appointments to this board by the end of March, with members assuming their substantive functions on April 1, 2016.

At the core of the Department of Lands is the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, and its implementation and monitoring represents one of our key responsibilities. A component of this work includes promoting and supporting effective land use planning in all regions of our territory and developing a land use planning policy framework. A critical step in doing this is engagement. Earlier this month the department hosted an interdepartmental workshop to develop best practices for reviewing and implementing land use plans. In March, external engagement will begin with a forum for

Aboriginal planning partners to allow open dialogue and to develop relationships with our partners.

Mr. Speaker, the department is the home department for the Informatics Shared Service Centre. This division supports Lands; Industry, Tourism and Investment; and Environment and Natural Resources. We are working towards the establishment of the Western Arctic Centre for Geomatics. The centre is an opportunity to improve strategic partnerships between our stakeholders, including Aboriginal governments, federal departments and academic institutions by providing better information, coordinating remote sensing projects and developing operational monitoring programs. The establishment of this new office in Inuvik will build regional capacity to use remote sensing tools and technology for baseline monitoring that supports economic decision-making and enables ongoing environmental management. This is also a great opportunity to encourage our youth to pursue this type of career path.

All of these major accomplishments occurred while the department was busy doing its "day job" of managing and administering land and resources in the NWT. Lands is managing hundreds of leases and other land dispositions and has conducted over 600 inspections as of December 31, 2014. We have created five regional superintendent positions and set up their associated offices, developed plans for new garage and equipment storage facilities for two regions, conducted a full inventory review and developed a Movable Assets Management Plan for our equipment. As well, our superintendents and senior inspectors have developed a comprehensive entry level recruitment and training program for our new resource management officer 1 inspector positions. I will have more to say on this later in the session.

Finally, led by our project assessment branch, Lands has also coordinated our government's input into several large-scale project preliminary screenings and concluded our first decision as the Minister responsible for environmental assessments. This demonstrates our government's commitment to supporting balanced, responsible development of NWT resources and timely decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, we have a strong and hard working group of employees and I am confident that we will continue to make significant progress on the priorities that have been outlined for Lands. The department is committed to working with all landowners to responsibly and sustainably manage the lands, waters and natural resources of the Northwest Territories for the benefit of current and future generations. That is our mission, because land is life. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SOUTH SLAVE 2018 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES BID

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague Mr. Bouchard has already spoken about the Arctic Winter Games bid for the South Slave and has done a very good job in describing that, but I thought I would add my voice to that again here in the House today.

Hay River and Fort Smith are in competition for a bid to bring the 2018 Arctic Winter Games to the Northwest Territories South Slave region. One of the hardest working volunteers, Greg Rowe, is the chair of the bid committee, along with a number of Hay River residents who put their heart and soul into impressing the Arctic Winter Games Committee who visited Hay River a few weeks ago.

The fun started with a huge pep rally at the Don Stewart Arena where Steve Campbell and Eddie Smith were again Hay River's gracious hosts for the evening. The arena was filled with volunteers, business people, family and sports fans all cheering for Hay River and Fort Smith as the committee entered the arena and walked the red carpet to the stage. It was a night of cheering, entertaining and showing off what Hay River and Fort Smith have to offer.

With music blasting and lights flashing, Hay River volunteers entertained the committee, showing a video of sports in Hay River, a video of a skidoo stunt by Curtis King and a personal video message from our very own Brendan Green.

Following the pep rally, many people attended the dinner at the Ptarmigan Inn in honour of the Arctic Winter Games Selection Committee. This was another opportunity to impress the judges with videos describing infrastructure in both communities and a message from Chief Roy Fabian, who offered the use of the nice facilities on the Hay River Reserve, as well, during the Games. His Worship Andrew Cassidy, mayor of Hay River, and His Worship Brad Brake, mayor of Fort Smith, were both eager to spread the good word that we are ready for the Games to be held in the South Slave.

Hay River has hosted the Games before when the town joined then Pine Point in 1978. The 2018 Games would mark 40 years since Hay River last held the event, and we are ready, willing and able to do it again.

I was there 40 years ago when we had the Games and the emblem was the inuksuk. I remember I built

this really awful inuksuk in my front yard out of concrete blocks. But anyway, it wasn't very artistic.

Mr. Speaker, there were countless volunteers who dedicated many hours preparing the bid proposal as well as entertaining the Arctic Winter Games Committee and organizing the events. I'd like to thank all of those people for their time and enthusiasm, and thank you to the emcees and the volunteers who worked on the pep rally. Also, a special thanks to the Arctic Winter Games Bid Committee and all their volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, we are now awaiting, with our fingers crossed, to hear that we have been the bid that has been accepted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEW DEH CHO BRIDGE REGULATIONS

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Late in December 2014, the Department of Transportation issued a notice regarding the proposed amendments to the Deh Cho Bridge Regulations. These regulations established a legal administrative framework for the tolling system of the Deh Cho Bridge, and with any amendments, they must first undergo a public review.

Registered owners of northbound commercial vehicles over 4,500 kilograms crossing the Deh Cho Bridge are required to pay a toll. Thankfully, private vehicles are not required to pay this toll.

The Minister and department know exactly where I'm going with this today because I believe we are tolling one classification of vehicles wrongly and penalizing a small but influential group in the Northwest Territories. This group is the hardworking small business owners.

Many small business owners, for the purposes of business, buy two-wheel and four-wheel drive trucks. In fact, just drive around the North and spot all the half-ton trucks and three-quarter-ton trucks on the roads with commercial plates. Keep in mind these commercial vehicle trucks travelling northbound on the Deh Cho Bridge in themselves are under the 4,500 kilogram threshold for a toll. However, the moment you attach a trailer, a holiday camper or a boat, you almost immediately cross this threshold. According to even the basic Ford F-150 regular cab, when equipped properly has a maximum conventional towing capacity of 5,500 kilograms, well above the 4,500 kilogram load for the Deh Cho Bridge toll limit.

So what does this mean, Mr. Speaker? Simple. This is a cash grab from the hardworking small business owners who might be just using their fully legal small business truck to promote tourism, go fishing, go hunting, or maybe help a friend move. So, to the question, what business is it of the

GNWT to single out this one classification of small business owners and expect a \$95 toll? What does this accomplish? My suspicion is very little in terms of revenue, but a huge inconvenience for small business owners.

Instead, I challenge the Department of Transportation to use an honour system that small business owners with half-ton and three-quarter-ton commercial trucks. The policy could be simple. They pay a toll when they are indeed crossing the bridge for business purposes and be allowed to use this bridge freely when pulling a boat or trailer or an RV.

Mr. Speaker, you want to lower the cost of living? It starts with tolls that make sense for Northerners. Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DREDGING IN THE HAY RIVER AREA

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to speak about dredging in the Hay River area. I think this is, at a minimum, the tenth statement I've made on dredging and the requirements of dredging to be done in the Northwest Territories. I've made this statement to two different Ministers and to several different departments.

There is no progress in this activity, and it's frustrating for me and for my colleagues in the area who know that there's an interest that dredging be done in the Northwest Territories.

This government has indicated that there's lots of infrastructure money going towards all kinds of roads but very little, if any, going to marine and especially going to dredging.

I've had numerous excuses given to me that it's a federal responsibility, but it's our government that needs to step up and put a plan together to get dredging done. We have committed and taken our task of building roads. That used to be a federal responsibility alone; now we're doing two-thirds/one-third. Where is the government's one-third on dredging to get the federal government to do dredging?

I will have questions for the Minister of Transportation again. Where is the dredging for the Hay River area? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NUTRITION NORTH PROGRAM

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. This government needs to do more to tackle the high cost of living. In the remote communities the cost of food and

household essentials are double or even triple what you pay in Yellowknife. Nutrition North, which is run by the federal government's department of Aboriginal and northern affairs, has replaced the old Food Mail Program.

In theory, Nutrition North makes healthy food more accessible and affordable. Its key mechanism is a transportation subsidy given to retailers.

A litany of complaints from northern residents and legislators about the program's effectiveness was the driving force behind the Auditor General's investigation, which was completed last fall. As many Northerners predicted, the federal government doesn't know whether northern retailers are passing savings on to consumers. Merchants aren't required to report their profit margins. The Auditor General advises that this information is essential to determine whether the full subsidy is actually being passed on.

Another question about a component of Nutrition North is that subsidies are applied to foods like bacon and processed cheese spread. These aren't healthy foods, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General isn't the one confirming suspicions of northern residents. An article in the Canadian Journal of Public Health says that Nutrition North has a flawed reporting structure, which means there's no meaningful way to gauge its effectiveness.

The federal program isn't doing an adequate job of offsetting exorbitant food costs. More than that, our own territorial government has a responsibility to tackle food insecurity in our remote northern communities.

I'll have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EXPANSION OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the Christmas season I was helping a constituent with their Energy Efficiency Incentive Program and they were filling out the paperwork and asked me for some advice. I started to look at the Energy Efficiency Incentive Program that was created years ago and, of course, some great work had been done. Included are things such as rebates on washers, refrigerators, freezer chests, wood stoves, lightbulbs, and the list goes on. But what I happened to quickly notice was there was a glaring gap between the fact that there wasn't any efficiency program design around insulation, windows and doors. I even wonder why alternative energy isn't being considered at this particular time.

Most people will tell you, who are familiar with this industry, that the largest part of energy going into

your house is, of course, heating it. Now, we could be talking about power bills here today, but let's focus in on the efficiency of how you run your house.

If your house isn't protected from the elements, and that's certainly the exchange between hot and cold and we certainly live in an area that gets a lot of cold, you have energy seeped out of the windows, through the roof, through the walls, underneath the door. We spend a lot of time worrying about trying to make wood stoves efficient or our furnaces efficient, but why aren't we making the walls and the roof and the windows and the doors as efficient as possible?

I guess I'm saying this: It has finally come to the realization that instead of worrying about saving pennies – which are very important, by the way – on getting better faucets and toilets, we should be looking at the fact that we could help Northerners save dollars and hundreds of dollars by better insulating their homes.

Many homes will cost thousands of dollars to increase the insulation on their house to improve the envelope to ensure that they're using their energy more efficiently and wisely. I think it's time that this government starts to realize that we could be helping Northerners through insulation programs, window programs, door programs and certainly alternative energy programs such as solar.

Just to wrap this up, we do have people in the Northwest Territories that make a big commitment. I was in Hay River not that long ago and I was speaking to somebody who makes windows, and I was speaking to someone here in Yellowknife who does doors, and they do local products in Yellowknife even such as insulation. We have northern people coming forward with northern solutions in our northern climate that can help every Northerner across our territory. Let's now take a review of this particular program and add the biggest bang for our buck. Help Northerners save where it matters most.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DECENTRALIZATION POLICY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to spend some time today talking about decentralization. I've been pretty much silent on the subject to date, but I can no longer be silent. I have grave misgivings about this policy and its implementation.

We have only to look eastward to Nunavut where they are reversing their previous actions and bringing positions back to Iqaluit. Why? Because decentralization is not working. I appreciate the intent of the policy, but, and it's a very large but, I

cannot condone the current mindset around the implementation of the Decentralization Policy.

The Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment proudly announced last week that three more positions had been decentralized. Two of those three positions have incumbents. Premier McLeod stated yesterday in relation to this policy that, and I quote from Hansard from yesterday, "It's a program decision." He went on to say, and I quote again from page 63 of unedited Hansard, "It's what's in the best interests of fulfilling this decentralization priority of this government."

That tells me that decentralization is nothing more than a numbers game for the government and that it is decentralization at any cost. But there are costs associated, both financial and personal.

It seems to be quite acceptable to make a position more expensive through decentralization. Yet, in the same breath the government states that our financial situation is not sustainable. There's more than a bit of controversy in that. The Minister of Finance has said that our fiscal situation demands action, that we must leave no stone unturned. Well, this is a stone we must turn over and look beneath.

There's also a personal cost, one which apparently is not a factor, considering the Premier's comments yesterday. How many families have been uprooted since we started this initiative? How many are still in the public service? How many have left the NWT? Does the government know? Does the government care?

For the sake of adhering to a policy, we are willing to lose experienced, competent, long-term employees, willing to lose their corporate knowledge, willing to throw away the investment and training that we have in them. The government's population strategy looks to increase our population. The current callous application of the Decentralization Policy will see people leaving the North.

We say we value our employees, but recent actions completely refute that.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. BISARO:** It's a completely different situation if the position being moved is vacant or a new position. In that case, there are no people to be uprooted, no families thrown into turmoil. That should be the government's thinking. It can be like reducing staff costs through attrition. The only positions that should be considered for decentralization should be those which are vacant or new positions.

I will have questions for the Premier at the appropriate time.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
DECENTRALIZATION POLICY

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As much as I'd like to do a rebuttal to the Member's statement, and the importance... Actually, I will.

This government is focused on increasing the health and the wellness of people across the Northwest Territories. As a fact, increasing our economy, increasing our skill force, increasing our education and our health care systems in the regions through the Northwest Territories, and I believe this government's been doing a great job in decentralizing the jobs in the communities, bringing families to communities. In Inuvik alone I know that the opening of a couple offices has helped the small businesses, the local businesses, helped the daycares, which I was going to talk about today actually, but under this statement I know that the importance of decentralizing, looking at places throughout the Northwest Territories whether it's the Beaufort-Delta with the Inuvik-Tuk highway, the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link, up and down the valley corridor in terms of investing in our people and investing in the projects, the road and other issues along those lines, looking at our schools, looking at our health centres that people in the small communities speak up so much about, our health care system, our nurses that we don't have in eight of our communities.

So I think what the government is doing in trying to create a Decentralization Policy, that is not only going to help people across the Northwest Territories, it's going to help people here in Yellowknife as well. It's going to open up better communications in how things are working in the small communities and in the regions.

So, like I said, I was going to speak on licenced daycares today, but I honestly couldn't bite my tongue on this one and I do have to speak up for the people in the regions, speak up for the people in the small communities and speak up for people that need the programs, need the services, need the jobs so that they too can have a lifestyle. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
MINING ADVISORY BOARD

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A mining advisory board to "provide advice to government to ensure mining regulation is in place that encourages economic growth while maintaining high regulatory, environmental and social standards." To quote the Minister of ITI's press

release seems a worthwhile exercise. However, digging deeper, I find that the board will be comprised of only ministerially appointed people with "direct experience in the NWT minerals industry."

The Mineral Development Strategy itself was developed by an industry panel. The Minister three times chose to ignore public interest policy input, despite committee insistence that it be considered. The Minister is now extending this lack of respect for public interest to the appointment of an industry panel to further guide public government action, which to date seems to consist of ever more subsidies for the industry.

A similarly misguided approach to mineral development in the past has left us with a depleted environment, billions of dollars in transferred cleanup costs to the public, uncompensated cultural costs to Aboriginal residents and unmeasured impacts in health costs to residents. Clearly, having a mining advisory board comprised exclusively of industry representatives will continue this business-centred path and ignores even industry's basic understanding of the requirement to meet the public interest in their exploitation of public resources.

We need a broader base of public voices on this board. If the board is to meet the Minister's goals of representing regulatory environmental and social standards, these perspectives need to be represented along with the mining industry at the table.

Multi-stakeholder boards that truly represent a broad range of interests are valuable tools. Case in point is the NWT Protected Areas Strategy Steering Committee, which includes the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. Without representation from environmental and social representatives, the advice of the mining board will not reflect the broad public interest necessary to re-establish the social licence and performance standards the public rightly expects of industry. In fact, the NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines already provides this lobbying service to the Minister and does not need to be duplicated.

Is it too much to ask that this government think in terms of lessons learned in today's modern understanding of responsible, sustainable development?

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BROMLEY:** Is it too much to ask that this government think in terms of lessons learned in today's modern understanding of responsible, sustainable development? A mining advisory board that doesn't include members that bring Aboriginal government, social and environmental perspectives

to the table will fail to meet public interest yet again. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Colleagues, before we continue I'd like to welcome back to the House former Member, former Premier, Mr. Jim Antoine in the House today.

---Applause

The Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I was looking at some of the stats that I've been compiling, and one of the most frightening stats that I picked up and started to read had to deal with the shocking report that the Department of Education had compiled. It has to do with our future of the Northwest Territories and our small communities, and it's startling and it's frightening. I was wondering: how do we work on this and get this to be something that we can celebrate? It has to deal with the results that the consultants found in our children in our small communities.

The results were showing that 50 percent of our kids who are now, today, at this time, in our schools, in our small communities in the Northwest Territories operating 50 percent lower than what they should be at. That is doing an injustice to our kids who are... We are sending them to school knowing that this is the fact, that as politicians, as leaders, this is what we're allowing.

We are telling them, out of the goodness of our heart, to go to school, get the grades, because there's going to be jobs out there when you're done. The job may not be in your community. If you look at the unemployment rates in all our small communities, it is not a very good picture, unless you're living in Norman Wells or you're living in Simpson, Hay River or Yellowknife because you've got a better chance at working.

Yellowknife's employment rate is 79 percent. It's 75 percent in Norman Wells. But if you go to Deline or to Fort Good Hope, it's less than 50 percent. So there's a 50/50 chance that you'll get a job there. If you don't, well, the government will take care of you through the Income Assistance program, unless you go to university or college, and then you have to get maybe a Master's program to get into your required program. So, we're in trouble, Mr. Speaker.

I'll have questions for the Minister later on.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TROUT LAKE SCHOOL

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to advocate for the new stand-alone school for the community of Trout Lake. Currently, the department is assessing the facilities and even leaning towards renovations. This is not acceptable to the community.

I'm pleased that during the Nahendeh tour in December of 2014, our Premier and the Minister of Transportation were able to see that one room schoolhouse in the current community centre. A little partition was put up last year, but I'm sure that the Ministers will concur that this is still like the one room schoolhouses that some of our parents went to, instead of a modern school.

The chief and leadership of Trout Lake always advocated strongly that to develop and prepare our youth for the future, they need a strong educational foundation. That can only be done with a new stand-alone school that has adequate teaching space and modern teaching aids for the many grade levels that are taught there. The elders even noticed this, and they tell me it is distracting when they have to teach multi grades when you have kindergarten to Grade 9 in the same room.

Our Statistics Bureau tells us that Trout Lake's growth rate, therefore more students, is more than 6 percent a year for the past 10 years. I believe by the next school year the school will be at maximum capacity, so the Department of Education must act now that the future of the educational needs of Trout Lake will be addressed.

Our government has spent a lot of money building superschools and expensive improvements in larger centres. It is time we start focusing on small communities. They need stand-alone schools with all the modern teaching aids. These schools are too small for their student populations. I have pointed out time and time again of how this affects the ability of the students to learn and the ability of the teachers to teach effectively.

I call on the Education Minister to adjust the capital plan. The last one I saw calls for a new school in Trout Lake to begin in 2018-19. We simply must move this project up on our priority list.

I look to the support of this Cabinet to address the need for a new school for Trout Lake in this year's capital planning process. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WILLOW RIVER BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is on the Willow River in Aklavik.

Last year at this time, our Department of Transportation gave a contribution to the community to purchase a bridge that's needed for this project, and I really thank the department for that. But the job is not done yet.

We still need funding to put that bridge in place by the end of this season. We have just over two months to have that bridge in place, and I'm hoping that the department will continue to work with the community to ensure we have the proper funding in place to make sure that that project is completed.

I will have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. NADLI:** Mr. Speaker... [Translation] Today we have a few people here. I want to say in my language, thank you for being here. We have to work with them for several years. Some of them are chiefs; some of them are still young and there are new people, young people are with them. So, I want to say thank you for being here with us. They're here for a meeting. So, thank you for being here. [Translation ends]

...the leaders, led by Grand Chief Herb Norwegian, plus all the leaders and the elders who are here as well. My colleague, MLA for Nahendeh, is going to share the responsibility of trying to recognize all of our delegates from the Dehcho First Nations. The delegates are meeting here for a couple days, so they're meeting at the Ski Club and their hope is to have their meeting in town and also, at the same time, meet with the Premier as well.

I'd just like to recognize the delegation: Grand Chief Herb Norwegian, Chief Tim Lennie, Chief Lloyd Chicot, Fort Providence Metis president James Christie, Fort Simpson Metis president Marie Lafferty, Chief Michael Matou, Chief Joachim Bonnetrouge, and also Chief Gladys Norwegian. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My colleague Mr. Menicoche will also recognize a few people. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Menicoche.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome the Dehcho First Nations along with Grand Chief Herb Norwegian. I wish them every success in their meetings this week. Also to the chiefs that my colleague did mention, but I'll recognize the other delegation that we have travelling with the Dehcho First Nations this week: elder Gabe Hardisty; elder Sarah Chicot; councillors Ted Cayenne and James Cayenne; from Fort Providence, John McLeod; elder Jonas Lafferty from Fort Simpson; elder Leon Konisenta

from Nahanni Butte; elder Samuel Elleze from Providence; elder Yvonne Norwegian from Jean Marie River; and a special welcome to Chief Steven Jose, councillor Cheryl Cli and councillor Jonathan Tsetso of Liidlii Kue First Nations. Also travelling with them are various staff: Alison dePelham, Sarah McLeod, Greg Nuyli, Violet Jumbo, Mary Jane Cazon, Chris Reid, Patrick Scott and also the acting band manager of Wrigley, Ms. Ria Letcher. I would also welcome the former MLA of Nahendeh and Premier, Jim Antoine, to the gallery here today.

When I was coming over here yesterday, I was speaking with Jonas Lafferty and I said, when I welcome you here, your name is forever going to be in Hansard, even 100 years from now. So, that's the same for everybody. Welcome.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome and recognize Ms. Crystal Fraser. She is a PhD candidate. She is undertaking her PhD in Canadian history at the University of Alberta, and actually, she was just recently up in Inuvik where she presented her research on the history of education and residential schools in the Mackenzie Delta region. I believe she also visited Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic and Aklavik. I just want to welcome her to the House and congratulate her on her research and wish her the best of luck in her studies.

I'd also like to welcome all of the Dehcho leadership and their staff as well. Welcome.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to recognize my oldest brother, John McLeod, as well as Grand Chief Herb Norwegian and all of the Dehcho First Nations delegation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize two constituents: Ted and James Cayenne from West Point, as well as Grand Chief Norwegian. Obviously, good to see him. We'll probably see him this summer at some auctions, and some others. Lloyd Chicot, a good friend. Good to see them, and all the leaders from the Deh Cho.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the great things about getting older is I realize how enriched my life is by knowing so many wonderful people and Northerners, but one of the perils are my eyes aren't so good looking into the gallery. I'm going to try to recognize some of the folks I do see, so I apologize to anyone I miss. Certainly, Grand

Chief Herb Norwegian, Chief Tim Lennie, Chief Lloyd Chicot, I believe James Christie, president, Chief Michael Matou, Chief Joachim Bonnetrouge, Chief Gladys Norwegian, Acting Chief Steve Jose, Violet Jumbo, Ria Letcher, Patrick Scott, and certainly Jim Antoine. I'd like to say, of course, hello to councillor Cheryl Cli, as well, at large, everyone up there I may have missed. Thank you for coming today.

The last thing I'll say as I close is I don't quite agree with everything my Yellowknife colleague said about decentralization, and I'll leave it at that.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, along with my colleagues Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Menicoche and also the Premier, would like to recognize people in the gallery. I want to first recognize Ms. Crystal Fraser on her achievement of working towards her PhD and her studies. I had a good discussion with her on the residential schools in the North, so good luck with that, Crystal. Good to see young northern Aboriginal people go this far in their academics to get a doctorate degree, so good luck.

At the same time, I'd like to recognize Grand Chief Herb Norwegian with his delegation, the Dehcho government, coming to look at our government here. Maybe one day we would return the favour and listen to your proceedings. Also, at the same time, there are family members in the Dehcho leadership that are close to me, Mr. Lennie, Mr. Bonnetrouge and Mr. Chicot. I want to say welcome to the proceedings. Also, to the staff members from the Dehcho leadership. Good to see people in the gallery today and watching over us.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I'd like to welcome here today Mr. David Jones, our Conflict of Interest Commissioner, in the House today with us.

Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to the presence in the gallery of 10 young men and women who are visiting us this week. They are participants in the Ontario Legislature Internship Program. I know you will join me in welcoming Clare Devereux, Christine Eamer, Justin Khorana-Medeiros, Emily Hewitt, Kristy May, Kristen Neagle, Patrick Sackville, Jakup Sikora, Mathew Stanton and Aaron Van Tassel. Welcome to the Northwest Territories, and I hope you enjoy your visit to our Legislature.

Also, I'd like to welcome everybody here in the Legislative Assembly. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings here today. Thank you for coming.

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

## Oral Questions

### QUESTION 586-17(5): EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In my Member's statement I talked about the quality of education in our small communities, especially with the fact of finding that our students are not at the same level as our southern students on their education.

I want to ask the Minister what he is doing to bring these numbers up so that we know that our students are getting a quality education and that they can bring the level up to a number that we can be proud of.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Member is raising an excellent point where we need to do something about our quality of education across the Northwest Territories. That's part of the reason why we're developing various initiatives such as the Early Childhood Development Framework, not only that but the whole Education Renewal and Innovation. So those are the two big key factors that we're implementing within our department. It's going to take some time. There is a short-term, a mid-term and also long-term arrangements as well. There are quite a few activities that will be happening and we're engaging the communities, as well, on this particular, very important initiative. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. We certainly look forward to it. I've been wanting to ask the Minister of Education... The chief from Tulita, Chief Frank Andrew, talked about the quality of education in our communities and then he noted that at one time when the students finished Grade 12, they finished with a Grade 12. Today we question the Grade 12s who are finishing school.

I want to ask the Minister, is there a way that we are looking at today that when our students finish they do not have to go to Aurora College to upgrade to get into a post-secondary institution. Will our students really complete with a Grade 12, truly a Grade 12 that we can say yes, that's a quality education we want to give them?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. When I first got elected in 2007, the Member invited me to his riding in the Sahtu region. We did visit the communities and we listened to the elders and the community members about this particular subject where individuals completing Grade 12 still had to upgrade and I've listened carefully. Based on that feedback we've done a lot of research across the

Northwest Territories. Yes, it's true that the smaller communities are somewhat disadvantaged compared to larger regional centres. So those are the very reasons why we're establishing a very heavy workload within the Education Renewal and Innovation that will certainly capture those small communities that may be lagging behind on these particular subject areas. So, we're serious about this initiative. Mahsi.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Yesterday I had an exchange with Mr. Premier about the different things we can do in our small communities. This morning I was talking to a resident in Tulita who said I finished Grade 7 but today I have a successful business in Tulita. That's what I'm looking for in our schools. More of that type of leadership education in our schools where kids today can just do what they have to do to be successful, successful thinking in the schools. That's where I'm looking.

Is that something the Minister is looking at in regard to education in the North?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. Yes, most definitely those are a mix of the discussions that we are currently having as part of our Education Renewal and Innovation. Certainly, individuals may not be ready for entering the college avenue. We want to give them the tools to enter into workforce development or other opportunities that may arise as well. So, those are discussions that we've had with the regional representatives. When we did our forum across the Northwest Territories, we did listen and we are making drastic changes within our Education Renewal and also the Early Childhood Development Framework that will capture those key areas that the Member is referring to as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, this has been our last operations and maintenance budget, given that we have just under 300 days for the election to be called.

Will we see anything in the life of this government to know that we're making some measurable strides to achieve what we want to achieve with our young people in our communities that are attending our education institutions?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Yes, the quickest answer will be most certainly. There will be some things that will happen within the three-year timespan starting immediately. We've touched base on improving academic achievement of all Northwest Territories students, increased the number and quality of NWT graduates – that's what the Member is referring to – improved literacy and numeracy skills of all students, helped prepare them for employment, as well, or further their education after high school.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the areas that we've tackled. We'll continue to work with the First Nations, the community governments, because it all takes partnership, working with the college, as well, as high schools. So, all these parties are involved as well. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### QUESTION 587-17(5): LICENCED DAYCARE FUNDING

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to follow up with questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment as well. When we talk about educating and getting our residents out into the real world with a quality education, it's all got to start somewhere and where that starts is with early childhood development. Specifically with licenced daycare organizations that we work with, this government funds licenced daycares.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, when was the funding policy on how we fund licenced daycares last reviewed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The last overall review that we've undertaken was in 2007. With these different policies that are in place, we've talked about conducting a thorough review, and that's been identified as part of the Early Childhood Development Framework and Action Plan that's been presented to us by the selected groups as well.

Through the educational childhood programming, we've also talked about allocation of funding, and those are some of the discussions we are currently having. But the last changes in the review have taken place in 2007. Mahsi

**MR. MOSES:** That brings up concerns. So, over the last eight years we've been following a policy for the way we fund our daycares the same way, and in that time, whether the funding pot that we've had, we've also had an increase in daycare operators throughout the Northwest Territories. I see that in the budget address there's \$1.12 million that's being allocated to early childhood to improve childhood outcomes. A lot of that money is going into wages and training.

I'd like to ask the Minister, when he's looking at putting those out into the communities, can he take a look at where we have the highest cost of living or where there's the greatest need to put these dollars, whether it's here in Yellowknife, whether it's in Fort Smith or in Inuvik, where there's the highest need for the increases and the distribution of these funds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we will be doing. There are funds that have been identified as part of a child and family resource centre that we're fully aware of. Not only that but there's also a public awareness of the overall importance of early childhood development throughout the Northwest Territories. We've allocated some funds towards that as well. There are also iPads for new parents. There is the early learning framework. The framework that we've been working on for a number of years now, now it's ready to roll out. Also, the ECD symposium. It would involve all the stakeholders across the Northwest Territories. Also, there are scholarships for students that are pursuing early childhood development programming. We are providing funding to those individuals as well.

**MR. MOSES:** The reason I ask if they look at priority regions and communities is if we put this back in this formula funding that we've been using since 2007, that means all regions would get a share of the pie, I guess, and it's based on enrolments. You might have a region or a community that might not have high enrolments in daycares when this Junior Kindergarten came into effect, because now we're getting more people out of the daycares, so it's definitely affecting enrolments, so I'm glad that he's doing that.

One area that I want to touch on with the daycares is these inspections. There was a news report that was given out not too long ago and why these inspections are not made public. If you or I or anybody that wants to put a child in daycare, we want to make sure that daycare is safe, it is healthy and it is adequate for our residents.

Can the Minister let us know why these inspections aren't made public?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** With any inspection, it is done on an annual basis. My department is also currently developing a way to share the inspection reports with the public with respect to accessing information. We still have to work with the process with the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. We are currently working at that level within the department. We're making improvements along the way and this is one of the areas as part of our communication dialogue.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last two years our population has decreased, and if it wasn't for births and some of the people moving in, it would have a drastic effect on us. In the small communities it's having a drastic effect on licenced daycare facilities.

I'd like to ask the Minister, are there any other subsidies that some of our daycares can access

that will help them keep the doors open, keep the lights on and provide a service for our families, our parents in the communities?

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** In addition to a direct subsidy that the Member is referring to, we also provide daycare operators and also residents. Residents may also be eligible to helping out with the offset of the costs of daycare. It's just part of the options that we work with across the Northwest Territories. There's also income assistance child care allowance that is provided as financial support to parents so that they can participate in the labour force and pursue education or training opportunities. Those are just some of the areas that we continue to push forward as part of our subsidy towards the daycare operators. We'll do what we can to offset the costs as well.

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

#### QUESTION 588-17(5): DECENTRALIZATION POLICY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Premier today. At the outset I would like to clarify, I never in my statement indicated that I was against decentralization. I am against how we are implementing the policy, and I challenge Members to read Hansard tomorrow and tell me where I said that I am against the Decentralization Policy.

My first question to the Premier is to ask the Premier what criteria are used to determine a position to be decentralized.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The criteria that we use are to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and services that are delivered by this government.

**MS. BISARO:** I challenge the Premier to prove to me that we are improving the efficiency of programs and services when we remove long-standing employees from the position where they have become quite proficient.

To the Premier, I'd like to know what analysis has been done of the actions taken with regard to decentralization to date. What are the results from, I think it's phase one and phase two that we've completed at this point of the decentralization plan? How many positions were vacant? How many were vacant or new positions? How many employees did we lose? How many employees left the NWT taking our \$25,000 per person federal grant with them?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I'm pleased to say that we have decentralized 150 jobs to the regions and to the communities. We have a retention policy so that any employees that are affected were incumbents

of decentralized positions that would prefer to remain in their existing position are given priority hire so that they can stay in their community of choice. They have the benefit of getting priority hire, so I don't believe we've lost any employees that have moved to the South because of decentralization.

**MS. BISARO:** I would presume we haven't done any analysis since there was no reference to that, and I would encourage the Premier to do that.

It's one thing to ask somebody to take another job, but when they are happy in their job and they're good in their job, why are we forcing them to move into a job that they maybe don't enjoy?

I'd like to ask the Premier, considering our current fiscal situation and the need to reconcile our expenses and our revenues, how can the Premier and Cabinet justify increasing the cost of some person years just to decentralize?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** When we look at the benefits from decentralization, we have to take other elements into consideration such as diversifying the economy, sharing the wealth and also the fact that we are investing in the Northwest Territories. We have committed to spending \$21 million over three years to build additional housing in remote communities so that we can have houses and office space for positions in the smaller communities.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Premier for that, and I think those are all good things. Providing housing and providing office space is definitely a good thing.

I'd like to ask the Premier if he has considered the recent actions of Nunavut, that they are reverting from decentralization back to centralizing some of their programs and services and people in Iqaluit. Have we as a government taken a look at why their decentralization did not work or are we blindly going down the same path?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As a government, we have taken a very strategic approach to decentralization. We have taken a very measured and conservative approach as opposed to we're not moving whole departments holus-bolus from Yellowknife to a small, isolated community. We are taking a very strategic, measured approach so that at the end of the day when we have completed decentralization, decentralization will continue into the near future, at least the next two or three years, that we'll see that decentralization has been very successful in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 589-17(5):  
DREDGING IN THE HAY RIVER

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions, again, will be to the Minister of Transportation on the dredging issue. Can the Minister indicate to me what communications have been done with the federal government to get dredging done in the Northwest Territories and the Hay River area?

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our officials have had a meeting with the Canadian Coast Guard and encouraged them to meet with the CMAC and the AMAB, they are two organizations, I guess, known as the Canadian Marine Advisory Council and the Arctic Marine Advisory Board, to see if there can be some dredging done on the Hay River and along the route up the Mackenzie. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Can the Minister elaborate on these meetings and how many meetings have happened and when do we expect results to say that this is what we expect to happen over the next little while, over the next two years, 10 years, whatever the expectations are? We'd like to know at least an action plan going forward about the Hay River dredging.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** This was our officials in a telephone conference call talking to the Canadian Coast Guard, asking them to meet with the Arctic and Canadian Marine Advisory boards since they had responsibility for that. It's not something where our officials are meeting directly with individuals that would be responsible for dredging, but rather encouraging one of the key users of the river to meet with these organizations to try to get some money put into the budget. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you. Talking about money, I indicated in my Member's statement that we have built a major highway and we've put money into it. We know that's a federal responsibility, but we know that in order to get some of this stuff going we need to have the leverage.

So, has the Minister talked about us looking at putting some money in to leverage the federal government to get this dredging done?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** No, we haven't offered up any money to our share of any dredging. What we do know is that the federal government is not dredging the harbour in Hay River. They haven't had a dredging program since the early '90s, late '80s. Since then we've had a little bit of money at one point. I think in 2012 there was \$60,000 allocated to remove some of the silt from a key area. But aside from that, essentially the dredging

program has been non-operational for the years. It would take some money, for sure, to get the dredging operational again. The dredging equipment that was being used previously at the Hay River Harbour was sold to the municipality. We've never been able to get that equipment operational again for the work that was needed on that harbour in Hay River. Thank you.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are answers I've heard before. I want to know what the Minister, just recently in Ottawa, did to have a conversation with the federal government to get dredging done.

What meetings did he hold in Ottawa to get this dredging issue dealt with?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. The responsible Minister is the Minister responsible for Fisheries and Oceans that would have completed the dredging if there was dredging to be done. I didn't meet with Fisheries and Oceans. I met with the Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation, Minister responsible for Northern Development. In one discussion I had with the Minister of Transportation I mentioned that dredging in Hay River is needed as part of the transportation out of there, but it's not her responsibility. We need to engage the Minister responsible for Fisheries and Oceans. If they were to look at dredging, it would be coming from that department. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 590-17(5):  
TROUT LAKE SCHOOL

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in the day I spoke about the need to replace the school in Trout Lake. I know that the Department of Education is currently assessing the facility and I also spoke about the Premier and Minister of Transportation going to Trout Lake, but the Minister himself has been to Trout Lake and indeed seen the school for himself. I know that they're doing an assessment as we speak.

So I would like to ask the Minister if there's a current report completed for the assessment of the school in Trout Lake. Thank you.

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

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Since we visited the community with Member Menicoche, also the district education council, we've toured the school facility and we know the condition of it. So we've been talking about how we can proceed with the planning study. The planning study is underway, 2014-15 year, and

it will provide us with a needs analysis, operational plan and also recommend the scope of work.

At the same time, an education plan began in May 2014 and the report is now complete as of June 2014. That provides us more data on the particular analysis and operation plan as well. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. The Minister spoke about the completion of the planning study. Just for clarification, does he mean that will be completed by the end of March of this year? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. That is part of the plan. If we can get it done sooner than that, that will be our priority as well as the department, working with Member Menicoche, how we can expedite this process as well. Mahsi.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. I certainly look forward to the results of that study and sharing it with the community. I know that the community of Trout Lake and I have always advocated for a replacement stand-alone school.

I'd like to ask the Minister what his department can do to move forward with a new replacement school. Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** That is in the works. I've touched on the planning study and also the educational plan. That will give us the data analysis that we need to move forward as part of the capital planning process. There is a capital planning process that every department is entitled to go through that, so we're doing what we can to push the Trout Lake school as part of the capital planning process. This will give us more ammunition to move that forward as part of the process. Mahsi.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. There were some repairs needed for that building that the school is currently in.

Are there any plans to ship any repair material up the winter road currently? Thank you.

**HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY:** Mahsi. Within the capital plan, '15-16, obviously there's \$423,000 that's earmarked as part of the proposal for Charles Tetcho School as part of the renovation to existing building space to provide adequate instructional space. I've been working with the Member on this. So we're moving forward on that.

Yes, we're fully aware that the community wants a stand-alone school. So that is the overall long-term plan and I need to work with the community as well. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Final, short supplementary, Mr. Menicoche. The Member for Weledeh, Mr. Bromley.

## QUESTION 591-17(5):

## TERRITORIAL MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services today. During the last session I asked questions about the rollout of the Midwifery Program. At that time the Minister indicated that two positions in Hay River were filled and going live in early 2015, which I understand has happened, and the department was actively recruiting to refill a midwife position in Fort Smith. So my first question is about Fort Smith.

Can we get an update on whether that long-vacant position in Fort Smith has been filled? Mahsi.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, the position in Fort Smith is still not filled. We've attempted to go out and recruit that position a number of times and every recruitment activity has proved unsuccessful. We are intending to fill the position and we continue to go out and recruit and we hope that we do find somebody to fill that position in short order.

At the same time, we have filled the two positions in Hay River. That program has started. They've already started meeting with clients and we anticipate that the midwives in Hay River could be facilitating a birth in the community as soon as this month. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Minister. The Minister also indicated last session that the Department of Health and Social Services was consulting with the people in the Inuvik/Beaufort-Delta region, gathering their thoughts about the Midwifery Program. The Minister related that there were a number of challenges and concerns, but he was working through those with the Beau-Del authority.

Can he explain or tell the House when the Midwifery Program in the Beau-Del will be implemented? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We have had some preliminary meetings with staff in the Beaufort-Delta who have been involved in this type of program or who might be involved in birthing services at this time. As the Member has indicated, there have been some challenges raised with the delivery of midwifery services in the Beaufort-Delta. To that end, we are looking at envisioning how we are approaching midwifery services in the Beaufort-Delta.

Originally when we came forward, there was a multi-part plan which included set up midwifery services in Hay River, move midwifery services to Beaufort-Delta and then move forward with a territorial program here in Yellowknife. We're

looking at re-envisioning that model and tweaking it a little bit. I had sent the Standing Committee on Social Programs some details about moving forward with a modified plan so we could get a greater degree of midwifery services in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks again to the Minister. On May 6, 2011, the Minister temporarily suspended the successful but understaffed Midwifery Program in Yellowknife, Ndilo and Detah. Rather than choosing to staff the program appropriately, the Minister of the day simply suspended the program, leaving half of our residents in the Northwest Territories with no Midwifery Program at all. After four years, this suspension seems to have become a permanent cancellation.

When will the Minister fulfill the promise and reinstate, in an improved format, the highly valued and much missed Midwifery Program for Yellowknife, Ndilo and Detah? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Just for clarity, the Midwifery Program that was in Yellowknife was never funded. It actually never had core dollars to fund that program. It was funding the authority had taken out of other programs in order to create midwifery services.

I'm still committed to midwifery services, I always have been, which is one of the reasons we are looking at re-envisioning how we roll out midwifery services over the next couple of years.

As I indicated, we had planned to move forward with Beaufort-Delta. Things look like they might be changing. There have been some alternate proposals submitted to us on how to deliver services to the Beaufort-Delta, including one position that could be a nurse practitioner to be an educator, mentor for community health nurses and support them as well as support the physicians who happen to be located in the community.

What we would like to do is move forward with a territorial model based out of Yellowknife beginning planning in 2015-16 so we could have a full rollout in 2016-17 and midwifery services. We envision it as being a multi-part program, the territorial program, and it would be reasonable to locate that program out of Yellowknife in order to enable a broader scope of services to the women who may utilize those services.

It would also be a program that could support all communities throughout the Northwest Territories by providing expertise, guidance to community health nurses who happen to be involved with the pre- and postnatal services throughout the Northwest Territories.

The second part would actually be supporting birthing in Yellowknife for individuals who wish to have midwifery support in Yellowknife. So, a multi-part program. I have sent a letter outlining this

opportunity to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and before we move in that direction I am looking forward to their feedback and support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I appreciate that. I look forward to that getting in place with the timing you've given us. Over the years, while this has been going on actual Midwifery Program positions have languished unfulfilled, as the Minister knows.

My final question is: What did we do with the hundreds of thousands of unspent midwifery salary dollars approved by this Assembly for the introduction and staffing of midwifery programs across the NWT? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We did actually create a midwifery coordinator position in the department that unfortunately has gone through the revolving door as well, been filled, then vacant, then filled, then vacant. That position is a key position and a lot of the funds have gone to support the planning and operational design as well as consultation in communities and whatnot. So a significant number of things were done.

There aren't hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of dollars that have lapsed, but we are in a position, changing direction and moving forward with this new model, we may have an opportunity to utilize funds in a different way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 592-17(5):  
TERRITORIAL MIDWIFERY PROGRAM

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on Mr. Bromley's questions about midwifery. There are communities in the Northwest Territories outside Yellowknife that have had no birthing options for parents. As a result of that, people have to leave their community at their own expense, or distance themselves from their spouse, from perhaps their other children to depart the communities, the regional centres at least three weeks in advance of having a child.

The midwifery services in Hay River, which now the chief positions are staffed which is wonderful news for Hay River because other than midwifery the only other option is to go to Yellowknife or go someplace down south to have a child or baby.

Would midwifery in those communities where there are no other options to have a baby born in the community, would those not be a priority for midwifery services before places like Yellowknife

where there are actually existing options? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the challenges we face around midwifery and providing birthing services in communities outside of Fort Smith, Hay River, Yellowknife and Beaufort-Delta, Inuvik in particular, is that we need to make sure the facilities are appropriate, that individuals can receive the proper diagnostic and specialist obstetric or services such as C-section. Most of our communities don't have the capacity to provide that type of service. So we need to make sure we focus our attention where we can actually provide birthing services.

What we're talking about now is pushing midwifery services out and supporting community health nurses in the communities so they can provide many aspects of what midwives do, which is a lot of the postnatal and prenatal services, which will actually lead to healthier babies, healthier births and healthier pregnancies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** The Minister indicated that the support and supervision and administration for the Midwifery Program across the Northwest Territories would be operated out of Yellowknife.

I'd like to ask the Minister what is the rationalization for having that located in Yellowknife and why could that not also be located in a regional centre where there are already midwifery services which that administrative position would be overseeing. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** No final decision has been made. We are open to any discussion, but I would say at this time it is envisioned that a territorial program will be based in Yellowknife as this will enable a broader scope of women with certain risk factors to assess midwifery care for at least a portion of their care through the easy access to diagnostic services, specialist obstetrics, as well as for ability for immediate access to C-sections and other emergency procedures if needed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MRS. GROENEWEGEN:** Again I have to ask the question, if all of those services are already available in the territorial capital, the support of other physicians, the ability for emergency surgery, if those are already services available here in Yellowknife to women who are giving birth, does it not make sense and can there be, please, a rationalization for why the focus for midwifery as well needs to be in Yellowknife? Why could that not be outside of Yellowknife, the oversight for that program, where there are no options but to come to the capital?

You've already got it all concentrated here in the capital. I still haven't heard what the rationalization is for having the oversight for this in the capital. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** As I indicated previously, the territorial model's primary goal is to support the knowledge and skill capacity of community health nurses through continued interaction and direct clinical support with midwives. This will benefit all NWT communities by raising the standard of community maternity care. This is one of the primary goals of a territorial program. There's also the secondary benefit of being able to provide some midwifery support to residents of Yellowknife who choose to access those types of services.

The fact is, at the end of the day, if a patient is at risk, if there are any severe concerns about the birth, they will be coming into a community like Yellowknife or Inuvik anyway, even if midwifery services are provided in a community like Fort Smith or Hay River. High-risk patients still come to those two centres. So we need to focus out of where these high-end services exist just in case we do have to bring individuals in. We also want to push out to communities and support community health nurses.

As a territorial program, I think there's some value for it to be in Yellowknife. It does provide us the opportunity to provide some midwifery services to a large population in Yellowknife as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 593-17(5):  
EXPANSION OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY  
INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today, I talked about the present Energy Efficiency Incentive Program and it doesn't have a rebate option for insulation, doors or windows, and many of these products can be made here in the North and certainly those types of things make a big difference in heating your home through the efficiencies that they bring.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources about looking at expanding the program to include things such as windows, exterior insulation and certainly doors. Would he be willing to do that, and how can we look at it being addressed? Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We will soon be before the House with our budget for the year, and we'd be happy to have that discussion in that forum if the Member would

apply his fingers to the keyboard and lay out with clarity and detail the specifics of what he's proposing. We will, of course, seriously take a look at it in that regard, as well, or through the appropriate committee of MLAs, special committees that are in place to deal with issues such as that. Either one of those forums, either or all would be where we'd be prepared to have that discussion with the Member. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I think most of us can agree here that with the operation of a house, a lot of money is devoted to heating it. Heat loss is a major contributor to poor energy efficiency if a house isn't well insulated, the doors aren't good and the windows don't withstand the needs for cold weather here.

Is there a reason why doors, windows and exterior insulation aren't part of the energy efficiency rebate program, which could go a long way to help Northerners heat their houses in a more efficient way? We spend a lot of time worrying about wood stoves, boilers, furnaces, toilets and lightbulbs, but these would certainly give Northerners a bigger bang for their pocketbook in the sense of better quality and certainly help them along the way to do these types of things that are necessary.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The involvement of the territorial government in energy efficiency conservation, all the areas of retrofitting houses, making sure we're using proper appliances, hot water heaters, wood stoves, LED lightbulbs, those types of things, are part of a process. We'd have to look at the money. If we're going to be providing rebates or incentives, is it to renovations, is it going to be if you're building a half-million dollar house? We'd have to put in a certain percentage to encourage you to go to R-40 in the walls, R-60 or 65 in the roof. There's some discussion to be had, there's costs to be looked at, is it needs based? So, there are a lot of things.

It's a fairly potentially big-ticket item, but we've been working our way there because we've been spending a lot of money on developing biomass strategies, solar strategies, we've invested considerably in converting our own buildings and those types of things and putting in a significant amount of money to help people convert to biomass. So, capacity is one issue, the Member's raised it now in this House, and maybe the time is now to have that discussion. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Would the Minister be willing to take this initiative back to the department for a review on what would it take to establish this type of program to include the energy efficiency element of doors, windows and insulation? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We look at and listen carefully to the debate in this House, and of course, we will be having discussions about the Member's questions. We'll also be here, as I

indicated in the House, before the House with our budgets. There are committee processes that we could talk about, as well, and we're going to have to make choices to see what resources are available and other discussions related to this. As soon as we conclude this budget, of course, we will be putting the pieces in place for the next business planning process in anticipation of the transition to the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly where, as well, this issue may be targeted as one that needs attention. Thank you.

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

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly well within the authority and the powers that the Minister can direct the department to start evaluating this rather than maybe pushing it off to a new Assembly and to sometimes get the decision by committee by saying, well, we'll wait for committee to provide direction could take quite a bit of time. In short, the Minister is well within his ability to say this is something we could review and perhaps provide some input back to committee, and that's what I'm looking for.

Northerners need an opportunity to help heat their houses more efficiently. This can help drive those results. This is the best way we can get people using our program in a way that makes the most sense. You can only buy so many toilets to be efficient. You can only buy so many freezer chests, et cetera. Let's do something that has real meaningful results for people struggling to heat their houses. This makes a difference.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I as well am of the mind that when I built my own house that you can never have too much insulation. I've got R-45 in the walls, R-60-some in the roof. I never regretted it for a minute and it's over 30 years. I don't disagree with the Member. It's an issue of capacity and timing, so we will have the discussions about it as the Member has asked us to. Will we be able to launch a full-blown program in the next number of weeks or days? I would suggest that there is going to be work needed to be done, resources found, and looking at our priority list to see where this would possibly fit.

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

QUESTION 594-17(5):  
WILLOW RIVER BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a couple questions for the Minister of Transportation. As I mentioned, we have purchased a bridge in Aklavik that's now sitting in Inuvik awaiting enough ice to transport to Aklavik. But in order to have this bridge in place, we do need funds.

I'd like to ask the Minister, will the Minister work with the community to ensure we have enough to have this bridge in place by the end of this season?

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will be working with the community to install the bridge. The bridge is in Inuvik, as the Member indicated. There are also piles that have to be ordered and installed in order to place the bridge on, and that's also going to be happening on this winter road.

**MR. BLAKE:** We're not talking about a lot of money here. It's just a couple hundred thousand. It's not \$200 million like the Deh Cho Bridge. It's only a couple hundred thousand. I look forward to this project being completed, and I will be willing to work with the Minister on this.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Blake. That's more of a comment. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

QUESTION 595-17(5):  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE  
PUBLIC AIRPORTS ACT

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to know that there has been some recent work looking at the amendments to our current Public Airports Act to harmonize it with other acts. Another area which has been grey for some time is the clarity and the authority around the disposal of assets on airport land that has plagued the Department of Transportation for many years. Finally, the issue of Yellowknife Airport governance has been mulled over many times in the past 20 years, yet it appears we are no further ahead in trying to maximize our economic benefits for Northerners.

My question today for the Minister of Transportation: Can the Minister give us a brief update as to what might be in store with the upcoming changes to the Public Airports Act and when can we expect to see it be brought before the House?

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Transportation is proposing amendments to the Public Airports Act to make the act more efficient and effective. We are finalizing a legislative proposal to amend the act and we're hoping that a review for that will be before committee within the next month or so. Early 2015 is our schedule. We are looking at things like harmonization with the Motor Vehicles Act, giving people at the airport the same authority that lie within the Motor Vehicles Act. We're looking to extend leases at the airport. There are a few things

that are laid out in the legislative proposal, like I indicated, that we would be discussing with committee soon.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** What we've heard from the Minister today is very encouraging, but the disposal of assets on airport lands is about as confusing as it comes. There are blurred lines of confusion on the role of the department and that of its Minister.

That said, can the Minister share with Members what changes may be forthcoming that could clarify the level of authority and responsibility of both the department and the Minister with respect to such asset disposal?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** I suppose there would be two different categories of assets. Assets that are left by a lessee on the property site, the disposal of those assets is laid out in the lease how the disposal of assets is determined. If assets are left behind, it's laid out in the lease so that it falls under that responsibility. The disposal of assets that are owned by the government and how we dispose of that, we go through the regular process of providing the asset to Public Works for disposal and Public Works will determine if no other government department would be using that asset or need that asset, then it would go to the next process of going through the disposition of that asset.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Historically, lease arrangements and the length of terms of airport lands have been nothing short of a dog's breakfast in design. Can the Minister indicate to the House what is his department prepared to do to encourage tenant growth and meet the growing needs of current leaseholders on all our airport lands?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Within that review of the Public Airports Act, we're extending the leases to a maximum of 30 years. That gives them a longer period, so something more definite. We also lay out in the lease that there would always be a market value for the lease. So every five years we do a market assessment on the lease and then the individuals are advised. If there is to be an increase on the lease payment, then the lessee is advised eight months in advance of any increases. We're hoping that this will build more certainty for the individuals that are leasing at the airport.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department has attempted numerous times to investigate opportunities to improve management efficiencies at the Yellowknife Airport. However, during this administration there have been no real investment opportunities pursued, resulting in limited impact on the economic benefits for Yellowknife and Northerners.

Can the Minister inform the House how much emphasis the Department of Transportation is

placing on making governance at the Yellowknife Airport Authority a priority?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The Department of Transportation has identified the Yellowknife governance as a project that we should be reviewing. This review of the governance at the Yellowknife Airport is going to be done under the Refocusing Government Initiative by this government. We're going to look at the management options at the airport so that we'll review all the options. The Department of Transportation is working with Finance to look at these. We've also hired a consultant to specifically look at all of these for consideration, probably by the next government.

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

#### QUESTION 596-17(5): NUTRITION NORTH PROGRAM

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Premier. This government needs to show stronger leadership in taxing the high costs of basic goods. In my Member's statement I highlighted the Nutrition North Program.

Has the Premier and his Cabinet reviewed the findings of the Auditor General's report and public health experts who have clearly demonstrated deficiencies in the Nutrition North Program? As an obvious next step, is this government putting pressure on the federal government to fix fundamental problems with Nutrition North or even bringing the old Food Mail back? Mahsi.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I myself have not specifically reviewed the audit, but I am aware of some of the findings and I think that the fact that the Government of Canada has seen fit to put more money into the program gives me some comfort that they will be able to benefit those that are most in need. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** At the territorial level, what specific actions does this government take to track, report, compare and offset the costs of basic goods in remote Northwest Territories communities? Communities such as Tuktoyaktuk, Deline. Sometimes our communities that are located off the road system have to fly their goods in.

Is this government keeping track of how goods are distributed in those communities? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** As a government we subsidize the cost of living in the Northwest Territories to the tune of approximately \$200 million annually and the food subsidy program goes directly to food retailers in 11 communities, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Ulukhaktok, Tuktoyaktuk,

Aklavik, Norman Wells, Fort Good Hope, Tulita, Deline, Colville Lake and Trout Lake and a partial subsidy goes to Whati, Lutselk'e and Gameti. Our government provides approximately \$1 million towards nutritional education programs. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** I'd like to thank the Premier for basically stating that this government is taking this matter very seriously and doing all it can to assist communities and Northerners with the high cost of living.

Several MLAs in Nunavut have made damning statements against Nutrition North. In places like Gjoa Haven, two small bags of groceries cost residents well over \$100.

What is this government doing to collaborate with our territorial neighbours in Nunavut to tackle food insecurity across the entire North? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. As three northern neighbours, we get together on a regular basis, and as a matter of fact, we just met recently in Ottawa as the Northern Forum. Obviously, the cost of living is a big topic for all three territories. We've worked together to try to find ways to reduce the cost of living and we've looked at approaching the federal government to increase the Northern Resident Tax Deduction and what we've found is it wouldn't benefit the lower income levels. It would benefit primarily the middle class and middle-income earners. So we are endeavoring to work together.

When I discussed this with the Prime Minister, he felt that we should find a way to address this problem. So I think together, if we put our innovation hats on, I think that we can identify some solutions that we can take forward and seek support at the highest level. Thank you.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's encouraging that the three northern regions, the NWT, Yukon and Nunavut, are working together to try to tackle and meet the needs of our Northerners in terms of trying to curb the high cost of living.

In the interim, as the three governments are trying to work together, would the Premier agree to bring back the old Food Mail Program? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We're not in the business of taking over programs that are legitimately with the federal government. I think the fact we've always said the best way to show our Arctic sovereignty in the Northwest Territories is to have healthy, sustainable communities and the best way to do that is to have food that's available and to have food security. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item

10, replies to opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address, day four of seven. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 190-17(5):  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PENSION  
ADMINISTRATION REPORT – RETIRING  
ALLOWANCES ACT AND SUPPLEMENTARY  
RETIRING ALLOWANCES ACT, MARCH 31, 2014

In accordance with Section 21(1) of the Retiring Allowances Act and Section 11.1 of the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, I hereby table the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Pension Administration Report – Retiring Allowances Act and Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act as at March 31, 2014. Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Bromley.

TABLED DOCUMENT 191-17(5):  
CORRESPONDENCE FROM  
ALTERNATIVES NORTH ON THE  
CREATION OF THE  
NWT MINING ADVISORY BOARD

TABLED DOCUMENT 192-17(5):  
CORRESPONDENCE FROM ECOLOGY NORTH  
ON MINING INDUSTRY ADVISORY BOARD  
REPRESENTATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 193-17(5):  
PUBLICATION (NATURE, VOL. 517) REGARDING  
DISTRIBUTION OF UNUSED FOSSIL FUELS

TABLED DOCUMENT 194-17(5):  
PUBLICATION (ELSEVIER LTD.)  
EXAMINATION OF OIL RESOURCE UTILIZATION

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have four documents to table today. The first is a letter from Alternatives North to Minister Ramsay and calls to our broader representation or in-depth representation on the Mineral Advisory Board, and a similar letter from Ecology North. The first is dated 4<sup>th</sup> of February and the second is dated 6<sup>th</sup> of February.

I'd also like to table, and according to my commitments to the Premier, the science behind the new knowledge that we need to leave most of our fossil fuels in the ground. The first is in Nature, published on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2015, entitled "The geographical distribution of fossil fuels unused when limiting global warming to 2 degrees C," wherein it says though we show that development

of resources in the Arctic and any increase in unconventional oil production are incommensurate with efforts to limit average global warming to 2 degrees C.

The second one is the Energy Policy...(inaudible)...Journal, No. 64, published in 2014 and entitled "Un-burnable oil: An examination of oil resource utilisation in a decarbonised energy system." Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 16, notices of motion, Mr. Yakeleya.

### Notices of Motion

MOTION 33-17(5):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE  
TO FEBRUARY 16, 2015

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, February 12, 2015, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on Thursday, February 12, 2015, it shall be adjourned until Monday, February 16, 2015;

And further, that any time prior to February 16, 2015, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills, Mr. Abernethy.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 44-17(5):  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
HOSPITAL INSURANCE AND  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION ACT

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 44, An Act to Amend the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill includes amendments to the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act that would require the Minister to:

- develop a territorial plan for health and social services;
- authorize the Minister to establish regional councils to provide advice with respect to health services and social services;
- authorize the Minister to establish a territorial health and social services authority to replace a number of boards of management;
- address matters relating to the transition of responsibility from boards of management to the territorial health and social services authority;
- require investigations into harmful events experienced by patients and clients receiving health and social services;
- set out powers and duties of inspectors and investigators;
- make consequential amendments to a number of other acts; and
- make other related amendments to update the act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support the overall act, but I know Hay River does have some concerns about the public sector, our hospital authority, that's not in the public sector. I guess I would like to put that on record that there is some concern here. We do support some of the activities and changes here, but we do have some concerns going forward how we implement this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to go on record as supporting the principle of the bill and I appreciate that the Minister has been working hard to consult with the public. However, I have had some feedback that indicates some Aboriginal governments are still a little bit surprised at how rapidly this is advancing. I know the Minister has been meeting with those governments and I think that's being resolved, but I did want to mention there was some serious concern that hadn't been resolved. I look forward to, if we give second reading today, that we enter into a process where much of that concern can be fully vetted and dealt with by the Minister and committee. Mahsi.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister and I have had a tour of the Sahtu on this bill, and with the support we had from the Sahtu communities and leadership, we are actually looking forward to

seeing this bill come to fruition so that we know we can do some things that are different and beneficial. Right now we are experiencing some difficulties with the health system because of the way our system is set up in the legislation. The Sahtu is very supportive, all the communities that met with the Minister, and so I will be fully supporting this bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 44, An Act to Amend the Hospital Insurance and Social Services Administration Act, has had second reading and is referred to committee.

---Carried

Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my constituency assistant from Lutselk'e, Mr. James Marlowe, in the gallery today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 188-17(5), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2015-2016; Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act; and Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

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

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee today? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We would like to continue with consideration of Tabled Document 188-17(5), the Department of Human Resources to be continued, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, NWT Housing Corporation and Justice, time permitting. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** We will proceed with that after a brief break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. I would like to ask Minister Beaulieu if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber. Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I would.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Is committee agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Minister Beaulieu, for the record, could you please introduce your witnesses again today. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To my right is Ms. Shirley Desjardins, deputy minister, Human Resources; and to my left, Ms. Michelle Beard, director, corporate affairs, Human Resources.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. We are on page 247, strategic human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$8.339 million. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have one question for the Minister with regard to the percentage of senior management or Aboriginal employees within the government sector. We are hearing that there is a different percentage in each department. Are we getting closer to representing the population that we serve with our government employees? I know there was some type of discussion, and with the time we have left in this government, are we moving the bar up a half percent or a percent or something where we can say yes, we're getting closer to the number of representation by the population that we serve in the Northwest Territories with our government employees, especially senior management and the Aboriginal people in our government? Thank you. That's the only question I have.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Our affirmative action numbers are around 32 percent across the public service. Representative by population would be about 50 percent. We have an Affirmative Action Program designed to bring that number up more so that the public service is more representative. At the senior management level, the percentage is lower than that. I do believe it's around 20 percent of our public service that's Aboriginal. Thank you.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I don't know if the Minister wants to confirm

those numbers. I thought our senior management was a lot lower than that. I don't know if he's speaking specific for Human Resources that the upper management was 20 percent. I thought HR and Finance were having problems staffing from the Northwest Territories. Perhaps the Minister can clarify that.

As I go along, too, the 20/20: A Brilliant North, NWT Public Service Strategic Plan, I'm not too sure if this is the activity that's rolling out the Regional Recruitment Strategy. I noticed that the Minister's opening remarks didn't talk about the Regional Recruitment Strategy. I know that it's certainly an initiative of the Executive to get to the regions and say, look, you start hiring our people first, and I think many MLAs on this side of the House want to see that, because constituents are coming to us and saying, look, it's so hard to get in the door, to get interviews, we don't get feedback on our applications, and they really come to us complaining about getting a job or even getting an interview for a job with the Government of the Northwest Territories. If the Minister would please respond to that, the Regional Recruitment Strategy, as well as the senior management statistics. I don't know if it's for Human Resources, once again, and/or GNWT as a whole.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The exact numbers as of December 31, 2014, across the public service was 31.1 percent indigenous Aboriginal persons. In senior management, it is indigenous Aboriginal persons in senior management, 18.2 percent of the public service. Specifically in Human Resources, indigenous Aboriginal persons, 34.2 percent, and indigenous Aboriginal persons in senior management, 30 percent.

On the regional recruitment, it's a program, I believe, that does have merit. We felt that it would be a program that would increase the Aboriginal content of the public service for sure, but the way in which we rolled it out, I think the uptake was not what we thought it would be. The responsibility and the way that the hiring process went, it seemed like once we identified a position for competition and then we went into a competition and if we felt that there was that specific job could have potential for regional recruitment, it was after we had gone through all of the steps and then we would consider looking at a regional recruitment process.

What we're doing now is up front, at the screening. Where we think we'll achieve success is that up front we're now deciding prior to going through the recruitment or interview process. Once we go through the screening and we're finding that the Aboriginal candidates are very close to screening into the job, instead of now saying, well, this

number is 60 percent and if you go below 60 percent you fail the screening, what we're doing is going back to the department as the HR people, going back to the department and asking the department to look at regional recruitment for this position, and individuals that may have screened lower than what the requirements are could still be eligible to get into that position with an element or a portion of their salary going to training them up to meet all the responsibilities within that position. We think we will have success.

We have the Aboriginal Management Development Program. We use direct appointments. We have an advisory council, Aboriginal Employee Advisory Committee, and we have just completed a survey, working with, I can't remember the name of the organization at this time, the Aboriginal Human Resource Council. We also have Aboriginal and cultural awareness training in the public service. We're hoping that many of these programs and initiatives across the government led by Human Resources will increase our numbers.

To answer the question of both the Members that we do anticipate that once the accountability framework rolls out in all the departments at all levels that we will see an increase in the Aboriginal content in the public service.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Just with the Regional Recruitment Strategy, I'm glad that the Minister was able to explain it a bit. I'm really curious why he didn't reference it specifically in his opening remarks, because it was a significant initiative by the Executive to say, look, you've got to start hiring our local people and our Aboriginals. I don't know what the number is at now of empty positions, but I'm sure my colleagues must have asked that earlier as they deliberated this department.

A lot has to be said about some of these entry level positions being over-qualified. What happens there is that as our people look at the job requirements, they get, I don't know, apprehensive, so it seems overbearing, and in reality it's just entry level positions there. Has the department begun reviewing some of these entry level positions and making it easier for our Northerners and our Aboriginal people to apply for these positions, because I think that's a huge part about these positions. Because I know that a lot of people don't know that there's training behind these positions.

A classic example that I use, I think it was in the Justice department where there was an entry level clerk position. They wanted them to have a legal terminology course and a few other things when in fact it was about being in the front line, about setting appointments and that kind of stuff, and a legal terminology course, that's something that can be done afterwards. You know, let's hire the people. I've always found that once people learn the job, learn the organization, they're the ones that

become the longest lasting employees of any organization. It's just a matter of getting in the door.

I'd just like to ask the Minister again about, I don't know if it's part of the 20/20 plan or is it part of the Regional Recruitment Strategy, when and how will they be reviewing a lot of these job descriptions?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We have worked with that as a department, Human Resources. We've reviewed all of the vacancies to be filled. We've looked at the qualifications of those vacant positions and we've looked at if any barriers at all were placed in any of those positions, barriers that would make it difficult for individuals of a priority group to get into those jobs.

One of the things that we had always talked about was positions that were considered to be difficult to fill. Initially we were looking at I do believe it was between, the number kind of moves around, but I would say a good, safe number would be close to 300 positions were in that category. After we reviewed the qualifications of these jobs, we're saying that we could probably bring that number down, which were truly difficult to fill positions, to about 80 by reviewing the qualifications and making sure that the qualifications laid out in these jobs that were vacant are qualifications that are needed to fill the functions of that specific position. We've been going through that, so we're thinking that once we remove unnecessary qualifications, unnecessary experience, then you would see that more individuals become eligible for these jobs. We're working with the departments on the succession planning and workforce, in addition to all of these reviews that we're doing on the job descriptions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Next on the list I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate this opportunity to ask a question here. I have an issue that comes up frequently with constituents with a variety of backgrounds. Many seemingly very qualified people don't even seem to get interviewed, and these are long-term residents, Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, quite a variety of people from all walks of life. I know I've talked to the Minister about this and I know he's aware of this.

What sort of monitoring is done? Like, do you monitor the number of complaints about this and requests for appeals or however people might respond? What are the plans to try and dig deep into this one and perhaps give it a little study or research to see if there's something we can't do to respond? These are long-term residents and they're being forced to leave in some cases when they can't get employment. I know that's not consistent with the goals of this government.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Many of the items that I spoke of, the qualifications review, the barriers, would help in some of these cases, but I know what the Member is referring to when the individual is clearly qualified, has the experience and has all of the education requirements to do a job that's listed and the individual doesn't succeed either at the screening process or the interview process. Each time those types of things occur and an individual, whether it's to the Members here or directly through our department of HR, launches a complaint of that type, we do follow up and check. So I guess it's a matter of providing a response back to individuals that would come to us, but I'm going to have the deputy minister just touch a bit on how we're trying to address that specific issue.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Deputy Minister Desjardins.

**MS. DESJARDINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Right now we're currently working on a human resource management framework, accountability framework. That is a strategic tool to look at measures with our stats on these kinds of things that you've raised about the number of people that have applied that haven't been receiving jobs. We're going to be looking at the deeper issues to why they're not receiving jobs. Is it their resume that requires working, or is there a job match for them? So we're starting to look at those kinds of things to be more proactive into any issues that we have, regardless if its applicants that are applying on jobs, but as well as for the tools that we have in place such as the appeal process is going to be assessed, as well, for any of our recruitment measures as part of our Workforce Strategy as well.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Desjardins. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks for the response from the Minister and his deputy. It is concerning. I mean, the Minister knows, and staff I'm sure, in several cases or many cases where this has been raised, we have worked with individuals. Staff have helped the individuals tune up their applications and so on, but in every case there's still no resolution. So I hope, as you do that internal look, that you will contact people that have had this experience and they're maybe on record as appealing, or perhaps ask MLAs to suggest constituents names that have been through this if there's not a privacy of information concern there. I have many that have said yes, put my name forward, I'm happy to talk about this. So there are some opportunities there to speak directly and get that perspective, one perspective and the department will have a perspective, but it would be nice to capture those.

So I guess I would ask if the Minister will commit to making sure that those who feel like they have been frustrated can have some input into that review.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will commit to contacting the Members to obtain a list of individuals that may have been faced with being qualified and not being able to get into the public service.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank the Minister for that commitment, and that was just one suggestion. I'm sure the Minister has others on how to find people, but I appreciate that.

Just looking at the budget, I just had a question. It seems like we took quite a jump up in '14-15 and we're maintaining that. Compensation and benefits are actually down. I have to congratulate the Minister on that. I'm not sure how he has managed to do that, but that's a rarity, but the rest is up. I'm wondering: is there an explanation and is this a temporary blip that's expected to go back down? I imagine maybe we were working on 20/20: A Brilliant North, NWT Public Service Strategic Plan or something that bumped it up, but I'm just wondering why there's a \$2 million increase there. Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you. I'd like to have the director explain that jump that occurred between '13-14 actuals and the mains from '14-15.

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

**MS. BEARD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The overall decrease in strategic human resources, so for the employee development and workforce, planning is due to the passive restraint. So the department took \$322,000 out of that program area for passive restraint. The compensation and benefits, the increase there is for each of them are for the collective bargaining increases. So that's, for the year, four collective bargaining increases. So the only movement in this is the decrease of the \$322,000 for the passive restraint and then the increase for the collective bargaining for year four.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Beard. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Yes, somehow that's not fitting with my perception of the numbers here. I appreciate that explanation. It looks like the Minister is on it. I'm talking about the jump from '13-14 about \$5.5 million to about \$8.5 million nowadays. I'm looking for an explanation of the increase. It hasn't been through compensation and benefits and

renewed contract with employees and so on. Thank you.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. In the '13-14 actuals it was a process where we didn't spend the money that was in the budget. So if we go back to the mains from the previous year, the mains of '13-14 would be more in line with the mains from '14-15 and the mains from '15-16, but the actuals indicate that we didn't spend all the money. There was an opportunity in that area where we had passive restraint, so we didn't spend the money. That's why it reflects the difference, the large difference there.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I obviously don't have that number in front of me so I'll leave it at that. But if the Minister does come up with any further information on that, I would appreciate it.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Next I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to just follow up a bit from where I left off yesterday. I had asked about a retention strategy. The answer that I got from Ms. Desjardins talked a lot about recruitment but didn't talk much about retention. So I'd like to ask again, what are we doing? Do we have a retention strategy, was my first question, and what are we doing to retain employees? What retention efforts are we putting in place? Thank you.

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

**MS. DESJARDINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I did focus a lot on recruitment yesterday. We are also looking at different initiatives on our retention strategy and into looking at engagement and supporting the capacity for learning and knowledge share. That's all part of 20/20. So we're looking at different initiatives that would support retention into the workforce that we currently have, and we're doing a lot of research right now on best practices and we will be incorporating that into our tools to support clients.

**MS. BISARO:** So, could I get a bit of an explanation as to what engagement means? Thank you.

**MS. DESJARDINS:** Engagement means basically that people are motivated to do their work, whether it's through interesting work, it could be in the feedback they receive with their work to whether they're engaged with the benefits that they receive. So it could be different things that would support their engagement. What we're doing is looking at some research on all these kinds of engagement tools that we can utilize to support why and determine why people are leaving the GNWT and

the Northwest Territories. So right now we're looking at all these different strategies to support our clients.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the deputy minister for the answer. I wanted to lastly ask about succession planning. We know that we have a large number of our fairly senior staff who are going to be leaving the employ of the GNWT due to retirement over the next five to 10 years, and I believe that in the last year or so we've heard from the Department of HR that they are working on succession planning.

I would like to know how they assist various departments in this succession planning, and I think there are one or two initiatives that are out there. How are those initiatives working? Do you feel that there's been some success? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Minister Beaulieu. I'm sorry, did you want me to give it to the deputy? Okay, Ms. Desjardins. Sorry.

**MS. DESJARDINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We do have some management training programs, leadership programs for the departments. Besides that, we are refocusing our services into succession planning, which includes the departments, our client departments, human resource plans. With that we are going to be looking at targeting our retirement workforce in working down from their retirement dates and looking at some tools that will support them with their succession planning and looking at initiatives that is best practices that will support them, whether they're difficult to recruit positions or not, we need to help support and identify them. We're looking at different initiatives that would support them with these plans, so that's going to be our refocus is with those. Also, we're going to provide some more tools about the aging workforce and our other generation that's coming in, the millennials, about doing some education for engagement because they have different values than the different generations so we're also going to be providing some tools on that for engagement.

**MS. BISARO:** My last question. I asked yesterday about direct appointments, and in response the Minister advised me that there was no change to the Direct Appointment Policy. I guess I would like to ask the Minister, I wasn't so much asking about the policy itself but I was asking whether or not there's been a change in how we apply that policy. So if he could advise me.

I had stated that I understand that we've made some changes in how we use direct appointments and I guess I would like to ask that question again and not to the policy but to how we apply the policy. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Ms. Desjardins. I'm sorry; I can't understand. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Sorry, Madam Chair. I guess the only change to the direct appointment had occurred when there was an accommodation, a duty to accommodate employee had occurred. Then in that case, the Minister could do the direct appointment. That duty to accommodate had a bunch of prerequisites to it where we would be dealing with the union, the receiving department, the department the individual was leaving and so on, and we could do a direct appointment, I as Minister could do that direct appointment. Also, the direct appointment at the timing of an individual that was affected, so individuals where their job may be moved or where their job is no longer used in the public service would be looking for another job and would be affected. Up until that was approved, the direct appointment can only occur after the individual had been terminated from their current job.

So now what we do is before the individual is terminated, as soon as they are affected we can then direct appoint them. So that would be a direct appointment by Cabinet, but it would be a direct appointment that could occur before the individual actually lost their job. That's really the only change.

The other direct appointments are, like I had indicated, it is a Cabinet policy and those direct appointments are not changed and the process in which we applied the direct appointment has not changed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on the list I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to follow up on a couple of things in terms of recruitment and retention as well.

Yesterday the Minister stated, I believe, that it takes about six to eight weeks for when a job that's available to the general public closes to the hiring process. So about a month and a half to two months before someone can get a job within government. I know we've got to go through the interview process and all the areas to make sure that this individual is qualified and ready for the job; however, that seems like a long turnover time for when I put my application in to get a job and the job is actually offered. I'm thinking that if we're all competing for jobs in the Northwest Territories, the high cost of living here, you know, six to eight weeks of expenses while waiting on a job can be a financial burden on individuals, or they might actually take a job elsewhere while waiting for this to happen.

So I want to ask the Minister and his department what steps have they been taking to decrease that time of the job hiring process so we can get more people into the public service and working in our programs and services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you Madam Chair. One of the areas that do take time is due process. It's in the Public Service Act, and now we are looking at modernizing the Public Service Act to streamline that specific process of the appeal. The Member is correct; from the time the advertisement goes out until the actual job offer is made is a long period because we allow for the appeal process.

So, recognizing that, we are looking at reviewing or modernizing the Public Service Act so that would take a lot less time. Perhaps the deputy minister can also offer some assurance on the process and what other practices we're looking at.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Deputy Minister Desjardins.

**MS. DESJARDINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. With the modernization of the Public Service Act we'll be looking at streamlining two best practices. As well, any of our processes that we do to support our clients will be streamlined, so it's in our work plan starting right away. We've already started on that and looking at each of our processes to determine what efficiencies we can remove as part of our accountability with restraints into ensuring that we provide efficient services to our clients. Everything that we do with recruitment is being reviewed right now to determine what's efficient and effective.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Desjardins. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thanks, Madam Chair. In terms of streamlining the appeals process, there were a couple that were referred to but I wasn't given specific details on. How long is the appeals process now and how do you streamline an appeals process? How do you streamline an appeals process and currently how long is that right now?

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Madam Chair. For the times and what we're using as opposed to maybe a conventional letter of appeal, it could be using some e-mail process, but using the Internet and so on, so I'm going to just ask the deputy to provide the details of what we're streamlining.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you. Ms. Desjardins.

**MS. DESJARDINS:** Thank you, Madam Chair. What we're doing with the appeal process is looking at it from beginning to end on determining what's best practices out there, what is more effective across jurisdictions, because there are organizations in unionized environments that have appeal processes, so we're looking at that right now to see what they do. We haven't really made any

decisions what it's going to look like until we look at best practices, but most jurisdictions' appeal process for filing appeal is four days. We're looking at taking that into consideration with everything else from beginning to end, whether it's filing an appeal or how you review an appeal. All of that is being researched right now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen):** Thank you, Ms. Desjardins. Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that's a good practice, because you heard some Members here say that some people don't even get an interview and they don't even understand why they didn't get an interview in the first place. They don't have an opportunity to appeal because they didn't have a chance to even get to the interview process. I mean, we might be screening out people that are long-time residents and might be screening out people that have the community experience but maybe not the education that is always required, so that is something that could also maybe be looked at.

We talked about vacancies yesterday and didn't get around to asking again, but there were a lot of vacancies. Does the Minister, well, not off hand know right now, but how many of those jobs are entry level jobs that we have right now, and has he been talking with, I guess, Aurora College, specifically office admin students or people in those entry level positions to try to fill these jobs, and if he's meeting with Aurora College on a regular basis or when individuals are slowly coming up to graduation time that these individuals are recognized for potentially filling some of these entry level jobs? Is he talking to the Aurora College on that front?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Deputy minister.

**MS. DESJARDINS:** Thank you. We do have several working groups across government that are looking at different initiatives that are targeting colleges, especially northern colleges, to determine what our needs are. Not only just our needs within government but needs across sectors and are looking at different initiatives where we could have potential where they align to the services and jobs that we have. We have several working groups that are currently working on these initiatives and are in the planning stage right now.

**MR. MOSES:** Will those recommendations in a report come before standing committee so that the department and these several working groups that we have throughout the Northwest Territories are held accountable for the work that they do? It seems like there are a lot of working groups out there trying to do the same thing and I think Members sitting at this table have given some good recommendations already.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Should we take that more as a comment or did you have a question?

**MR. MOSES:** Will the recommendations from these committees or the reports that they have become come before standing committee so we can hold them accountable to the work that they're doing and ensure that these recruitment and retention practices are best served?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you for the clarification, Mr. Moses. Minister Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the committee wishes to have the department appear, then we would go through the regular process of appearing in front of committee specific on these items.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Committee, we're on page 247, strategic, human resources, operations expenditure summary, \$8.339 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 248, strategic, human resources, active positions. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** We will return to page 227, department total. Department of Human Resources, department total, \$24.324 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Does committee agree that consideration of the Department of Human Resources is completed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. Thank you, witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

Committee, we will begin the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. I'll go to the Minister responsible for the department, the Honourable Bob McLeod, if he would like to provide any opening comments.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I do, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2015-2016 Main Estimates for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$110,000, or 1.2 percent, over the 2014-2015 Main Estimates. These Estimates continue to support the objectives of limiting expenditure growth in order to sustain the long-term sustainability of the fiscal framework.

Highlights of the proposed estimates include:

- \$201,000 in forced growth for collective bargaining adjustments;

- \$25,000 in forced growth to increase the level of core funding provided to the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association; and
- \$122,000 in expenditure reductions.

The proposed estimates support the priorities of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Specific activities in support of these priorities include:

- continuing to strengthen the Government of the Northwest Territories' relationship with Aboriginal governments through the negotiation of bilateral intergovernmental cooperation agreements that reflect the unique interests and challenges of Aboriginal governments;
- ensuring that appropriate leadership and support is available to all departments in fulfilling the Government of the Northwest Territories' objective of strengthening and maintaining relationships with Aboriginal governments through the creation of a new Aboriginal consultation and relations division;
- ensuring the effective ongoing implementation of devolution plans and agreements, including providing leadership to the Intergovernmental Council on Lands and Resource Management;
- continuing to work effectively with our federal and Aboriginal partners to finalize and implement land, resources and self-government agreements in all regions of the Northwest Territories; and
- supporting the Government of the Northwest Territories' more prominent and active role on the national scene by assuming the chair of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, providing a leadership role in the planning for a National Round Table on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and co-chairing a national working group established to find solutions for reducing the disproportionate number of Aboriginal children in the child welfare systems across Canada.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Do you have witnesses to bring into the Chamber?

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Agreed?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Premier McLeod, could you please introduce your witnesses.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left I have Martin Goldney, deputy minister. To my right I have Richard Robertson, director of finance and administration.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Committee, we will begin on page 31, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. We will defer this page until we've completed detail and information items. Page 35, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$4.018 million. Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a couple of questions, but first really a general comment in response to the Premier's remarks. I notice the establishment of a new Aboriginal consultation and relations division. Overall, I think we've been doing pretty good in that area. Where I see us falling down is consulting with the rest of the residents of the Northwest Territories. Can we expect that there will be a division established to finally bring that up to standard as well?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have set up that division in order to fulfill the consultation requirements with Aboriginal people and treaty rights, which is a specific and unique Aboriginal rights relationship with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** That wasn't what I was asking. I think that's obvious and appropriate. I'm asking what is being done to set up an equivalent one where we also have a responsibility to consult with our people and our residents on issues that are important to them, which are the activities of this government. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** All departments on all initiatives we consult and consult and consult with the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I don't believe that that is so, and that was said, of course, for eons about consulting with Aboriginal people. Fortunately, there's good law for Aboriginal people and we are now finally responding in a responsible way to capture the input of Aboriginal residents. Unfortunately, we don't have that same law, although we have the same obligation for those who are not Aboriginal residents.

So, would the Premier take this on to establish a division or some equivalent mechanism to ensure that we do, in fact, fulfill our moral obligations in the absence of a law to consult with the residents of the Northwest Territories, which we are not doing now? Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I'd like to remind the Member that this is the Department of Aboriginal

Affairs and we do, in my mind, consult on a regular basis with non-Aboriginal people and we fulfill all of the requirements of this government in that regard. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I'll equally remind the Premier that this is the business of public government, which is the business of all residents of the Northwest Territories.

My second question has to do with the direction, I believe the division leads the development and review of negotiating mandates that guide GNWT negotiating teams at all land, resources and self-government negotiations, according to the document. We have a couple of unsettled land claim areas where we don't seem to be making progress, and that has been true for quite a while, at least very minimal progress. I know the Premier would like to see advancement in those areas, as we all would.

What is being done to try and deal with those sorts of things in new and innovative ways if we're not able to make any progress with our current approach? Is there any room for creative thinking there, or is it just such a fundamental brick wall that we have to wait until there's a little crumbling in that brick wall before we can make any progress? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. We have tried to find new and innovative ways to break down some of those walls. We've tried bilateral negotiations, for example, with the Dehcho First Nations where we had a working group of senior officials to try to resolve some very long-outstanding land issues. We thought that we had made good progress because the senior officials were able to resolve almost all of the outstanding issues, but at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour they were all rejected out of hand. But I think at least we've had some good dialogue and I think a much better understanding between both governments. We've also kept the Government of Canada in the loop and we were looking to try something similar with the Akaitcho Government. We've had some initial discussions, but they haven't advanced as far as we were able to go with the Dehcho First Nations where our Senior Officials Working Group met on a regular basis for almost two years to allow us to have a better understanding from both governments. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thanks to the Premier. I really don't have any more questions. I'm not suggesting that that's an easy one to make progress on. I've got almost a lifetime of experience watching the difficult issues trying to be resolved, and yet, unsuccessfully. I think it's good every once in a while to have that discussion and see where we're at and see if there's anything else we can do. I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I'm still optimistic. For example, I'm meeting with Dehcho First Nation leadership that were here in the House this afternoon. We expect to be meeting sometime tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of general comments, but more likely leading up to some questions as well. But for the most part I think the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs might understand where I might be coming from today, because we had such a large group today. Just touching base with some of the leaders, there's some renewed optimism that things could be salvaged, things could be made possible in terms of at least realizing a dream for some of us, the conclusion of land claims and self-government arrangements, especially with the regions that haven't settled yet, including the Dehcho First Nations and Akaitcho.

But before I get there, I am kind of reminded of our responsibility for working with the GNWT, plus the working relationship with the federal government and just the long history of First Nations' rights in the NWT. I think the leadership of the day, back in the '60s, the '50s, had a large part in defining Aboriginal rights through the treaty entitlement across Canada and it continues today. There have been legal precedents and, at the same time, jurisprudence on First Nations' rights and especially harvesting rights. It's very clear in terms of how it is defined through the federal courts plus the provincial and territorial courts.

My question is: What is this department doing in terms of trying to heed? I know we've come a long way in working to establish a very good constructive working relationship with First Nations, yet with the increased responsibility of devolution, this government has to have a clear mandate in terms of regulating. Plus, in terms of its policy, in terms of the general laws of application, that despite perhaps one group's clear defined rights within the federal Constitution of Canada there are still policies and regulations that need to be applied. I'm speaking in terms of harvesting rights, in terms of wildlife, whether it's wildlife in terms of caribou, or else harvesting rights and whether it pertains to forestry and a person has to go in the bush and cut some wood to heat their homes or to put food on the table. Perhaps it would be beyond the scope of the Minister to comment but, I mean, I would like to understand how it is that we're trying to make the best of possible situations and go forward and be constructive and try to at least maintain good, positive working relationships but, at the same time, ensuring that things are done in a constructive manner.

Basically, what I'm getting at is: Has this government taken on a policy shift in light of devolution, or are we still maintaining perhaps the status quo of trying to at least maintain a good working relationship with First Nations? Mahsi.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In my estimation, there's been no policy shift. We continue to work at having good working relationships with Aboriginal governments. If anything, we've taken on additional responsibilities in a number of areas. I think also some of the recent court decisions with regards to Aboriginal treaty rights and harvesting certainly have clarified a lot of the case law in those areas. I think the best example I can use is the development of the legislation for the Wildlife Act, where we shared with all of the Aboriginal governments to make sure all of the provisions of their land claims and treaties were followed. I still feel the Northwest Territories shows the rest of Canada the way in all these areas when it comes to recognizing Aboriginal and treaty rights when it comes to harvesting and the right to hunt for food. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. NADLI:** I think this government has a long history of a very good written relationship with First Nations. Recent efforts to try to move forward are really commendable in terms of some of the leaps and bounds we have made thus far. My hope is there could be greater efforts to at least bring on board the remaining outstanding regions that have unsettled land claims. That's the Tlicho and Dehcho First Nations.

I understand the Premier has committed to meeting with the Dehcho First Nations. He stated recent offers between DFN and the GNWT have been rejected. I'm inclined to ask why those offers were rejected, but I think from here on I am hoping that dialogue will continue and all efforts will be exhausted to try to bring all parties back to the table and a greater effort in trying to reach some creative solutions.

I know it's challenging. We've been at the table before. It's ensuring the leaders of the day have clear direction given to their staff and the staff follow up to ensure what the leaders envision as agreements are realized. I'm hoping the few days we have before us will be very constructive. Just a comment, but the Premier might want to respond. Mahsi.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** That's our hope too. We have 280 days left in our mandate and certainly that would be something we are aspiring to, if we can reach some sort of agreement before the end of our term, the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. That's what we aspire to. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Next on my list I have Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of comments. First of all, the contribution of dollars going into the Indspire Awards. I think it's a very beneficial program and one way that this government supports non-government organizations that recognizes our Aboriginal Northerners that are doing great work in the North and even across the country. We have had some Northerners that were recognized under this program.

Also, I just want to acknowledge the ongoing support for the Women's Advisory, which we just witnessed here last week with the Campaign School. I think that was something that this government is supporting these non-government organizations to do good work on behalf of government. I've mentioned in this House before about working with non-government organizations to do this.

That leads me into my only question in this area. We see one of the highlights proposed in these estimates is \$25,000 in forced growth to increase the level of core funding provided to the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association, and I think this is the first time I've ever seen one where it's highlighted that we're increasing core funding for a non-government organization. Is this a common practice with this government across all departments, that we work with non-government organizations, and if it is, how many times or how often do we go through the review process? How many years before we look at the forced growth to offset it?

I had questions earlier today about daycare facilities and 2007 was the last time we looked at revising that funding policy. Sure enough, in time, over the eight years, there has to be some forced growth. I just want to know how often this is reviewed and if it's going to be a common practice within this government, because we do have a lot of great non-government organizations that do excellent work on behalf of government for the people of the Northwest Territories. Is this a common practice across government and is this something we can expect to see as we move forward with all departments?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The government has what they call the Third-Party Accountability Framework where they review the funding, which is, generally, there are three categories of NGOs that they deal with. In this case, I'd say this is more of like a one-off situation because, from what I could see, the Status of Women Council and the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories had never

received any increase for a long period of time. I'll ask, through you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Robertson to give a little more detail as to how we were able to come up with \$25,000 in this difficult financial period.

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

**MR. ROBERTSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Premier stated, through the Third-Party Accountability Framework we applied that against the core funding that these two organizations actually rely heavily on government to maintain their operations. This money goes towards covering their operating costs as well as their core group of employees. The forced growth was focused more on the salary equivalency. If they hadn't received any changes in their compensation of benefit budgets for, I believe, three years, this was actually just to try to give them some level of growth to be able to attract and retain their employees. The breakdown was \$15,000 to the Status of Women Council and \$10,000 goes towards the Native Women's Association.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just following up on that, who initiates the practice? Is it the department that goes to these organizations and seeks this information and whether or not we have to increase the salaries or the core funding to this group, or is it a request brought forth by the non-government organization to initiate the process and that review and make the necessary changes?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. The Third-Party Accountability Framework is a government policy framework, and generally it's up to individual departments to apply it. In this way there is consistency across the government, and if there is an NGO, I guess they deal with individual departments.

**MR. MOSES:** Just more of kind of like an education awareness little dialogue here. It's good to know, because we do, as Members, get approached by a lot of NGOs about core funding, about operations, about salaries, things of that nature. So in terms of how it's being developed, I know looking at the avenues moving forward. Just more of a comment and I'm glad to see that this department has increased the forced growth for these two organizations, because as NGOs it is pretty tough to do business out there sometimes. I'm glad to see that this department has taken that initiative and worked with these two groups that are doing really good work.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. I'll take that as a comment. Next on my list I have Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to first of all congratulate the department here for actively taking, as it says in the last bullet, a prominent role on the national front on some very important issues to people in the Northwest Territories and certainly to people in my riding, and that the Government of the Northwest Territories, through the Minister here, is taking on the national spotlight as to the issues that we have to deal with and we have been partners across Canada. I want to say congratulations. Even though we are considered a small government, we carry a big punch sometimes, and that's good because that's the uniqueness, as the Minister says. We're a very unique style of government. When you look through the jurisdictions across Canada, with 40-some thousand people, 42,000 with a budget of \$1.8 billion, it's not very much when you look at it compared to BC's or Ontario's budgets. Their transportation budgets beat ours how many times over, and Alberta. Yet, we're very unique. I want to say congratulations to the Minister and his staff on this important role that he is going to play with the working group and that we're bringing that uniqueness, and that I want to say that guidance, to what needs to be happening.

The Premier was just talking to my colleague Mr. Moses, and the budget for the Status of Women and the Native Women's Association is shocking to hear that it's been three years without them having any type of increase. That's not good. We need to support these two organizations that have to deal with the role that the Premier is going to be playing on the national front. I look at the budget and I know we can't increase the budget. I think it should be more than what you guys had in there. It's not my job though. Your department is very specific in terms of its very uniqueness. It's a unique department because it deals with Aboriginal rights set by the Constitution of Canada. You're negotiating new treaties or implementing new treaty clauses in the Northwest Territories. It's very unique. And that's all you're asking for with the amount of work that you're doing? This is the Aboriginal...(inaudible)... This is big time here. I'm shocked, because what you're saying here, the bilateral agreements, the cooperation agreements, we have in Canada special rights for Aboriginal people based on history. You can do a history course if you want, but it's in the Northwest Territories.

My question is in regard to the Intergovernmental Council, the forum, and the unique interests and challenges that we have with Aboriginal governments. These are written, living documents. We write our documents. This Intergovernmental Forum, is this something that the Premier foresees will be continued on in the new government in this forum here? For myself, what are the unique interests that we have and the challenges for

Aboriginal governments to come into force? I want to ask that question.

The other one is: Do we have the support from this department here to work with all the other departments on – it says on page 1 of 2, the second bullet – the appropriate leadership to support as available to all the departments in fulfilling the Government of the Northwest Territories' objective to strengthen and maintain the relationship. Do we have it, if we were to support the Department of Transportation, ENR and suffer because of negotiations? Some are being negotiated and some of the negotiations are completed and working on implementation. I don't know how many staff members you have for \$9 million that's in the budget here. But I'm thinking that it's because you have a big department, and I'm supporting this department if you get it now. I'm supporting the department and I'm saying that it's really important, really important.

You know what, Mr. Chair? From where the Aboriginal people have been in the past to where they are now, it's incredible if you look at how far they have advanced their cause and their assertion to their rightful place in Canada and the uniqueness of being in with the Government of the Northwest Territories and in trying to fit in the mosaic of the Canadian Constitution. We had several court cases that ruled in favour of the Aboriginal people. I even asked some of the Ministers what does it mean because of these court cases. That's what I'm saying.

I just wanted to let the Minister know that do we feel comfortable that, yes, the other departments are getting the support they need from this department here. Are we running thin or are we okay? Are we doing justice to our Aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories? I want to let the Minister know that the work that's being done in our communities, I've been receiving updates on the quarterly reports from the negotiations that have been happening in the Sahtu in regards to what's happening with our claim and our new treaty.

I just wanted to say in closing with the time that I have, that one leader in Tulita was a good reminder. That leader in Tulita that told me that we can't always be fighting the territorial government. That's what he told me. He said that we have to work with them. As the elders have said in the past, we have to work with the government. We could agree to disagree, but we still need to work. I wanted to say that's what we have to keep telling our young.

With the Aboriginal Affairs, are you working closely with the education system or Aboriginal governments in bringing in living treaties now that are called land claims into our education system and is part of their core curriculum?

I want to leave it at that in giving the Minister and staff kudos, because you have a very important department. It's with another nation of government and they're building that nation of government. I think I will leave it at that.

As Mr. Moses said, I think that the Indspire Awards should be looked at also in the Northwest Territories. Not just on a national front but we should look at it territorially again as a discussion, because we would do it. Let's look at something ahead that we can use to inspire our young people to do good things for everybody in the North here. Mahsi cho.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just some of the comments that were raised, the Intergovernmental Council we see as a very important forum for the Government of the Northwest Territories to work with Aboriginal governments that have signed on to devolution and that have their own land, so it allows us to collaborate and coordinate.

The land claims are part of our curriculum in the high schools. The Indspire Awards are very inspirational to see successful Aboriginal people in all walks of life. The Aboriginal relations and consultation division is something that used to be housed in Justice and has now been moved to Aboriginal Affairs. I think we've expanded it. We just completed staffing the unit and we think it will be very helpful for dealing with coordinating Aboriginal rights and treaty rights, working with all of the departments.

Through you, Mr. Chair, I would like to ask Mr. Goldney to go into a little more detail about that division. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. GOLDNEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Premier mentioned the new division that is reflected in the budget. We are calling it Aboriginal consultation and relations division. One of the primary functions for this division, not only will it support our ongoing intergovernmental work in relationship building and the task that we have to strengthen relations with Aboriginal governments and formalize those relations but it will also help – and we see it helping – coordinate some of the work across departments internally.

The Member asked how well we are supported to do that work. Many of the departments engage with Aboriginal governments in their subject matters directly and have people on their staff tasked with doing some of that engagement. We see an opportunity here to build a bit of a community of practice among our personnel across our departments. This will be coordinated through the

work of this director, so we are very much looking forward to continuing to strengthen those relationships and build those ties, not just externally but internally across our organization as well.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, deputy minister. Next on my list I have Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of questions here. Mr. Moses has already referenced the increase to the Native Women's Association and to the Status of Women Council of the NWT. I'm glad to see that a couple of organizations which do work outside of government have been given an increase. I gather that it's up to each organization within each department to kind of scream and holler for money, and that's unfortunate. I would urge the Minister, as Premier, to look across government and maybe set something in place so that organizations are evaluated more often than every five years and that increases for all NGOs or all non-profit groups are looked at every two years, say, and increases granted if they are justified.

I wanted to just ask in regards to the women's advisory unit hard on the heels of the very successful Women's Campaign School this past weekend. I suspect it's not in this budget, but I wonder if there's any inclination on the part of government to fund, whether it is Status of Women Council or another organization, specifically a campaign school on an annual basis. Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you. When I floated the idea over the past couple of months, there was very little support for it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** I guess I'd like to know from the Minister who the idea was floated with and how far and wide did he ask. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** It was floated by all of the MLAs, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** Mr. Chair, I guess I missed that conversation. I don't remember being asked what I thought. I guess I would suggest to the Minister that we need to go a little further afield than just MLAs when we're getting input on whether or not a campaign school should be held more often.

My second question has to do with page 34 where it references a review of negotiating mandates. One of the things that have concerned me for a while is the position of the federal government with regard to funding of not negotiations, but funding of the agreements. They have a policy called Fiscal Harmonization Initiative. I would like to know from the Premier whether there has been any determination by the federal government. Is this something that is in place now or is the federal government still sitting and waiting? If this is in

place, how is it impacting us and how do we fund agreements once they're reached? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** This is a concern to us. We have been modelling the self-government agreements. Potentially if all of the seven self-government agreements were in place, we anticipate there would be a very severe shortfall to pay for self-government. Obviously, the Government of Canada has a different point of view. They see self-government as reducing their costs and we have pointed out to them where we expect there is a significant shortfall. They have indicated they are reviewing it and they've been reviewing it for some time now without any substantial change in their policies. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that. I'm glad the government is continuing to fight against the federal government on this particular situation. It is going to have a very large impact on our finances if we don't get some solution to where the federal government wants to go and where we feel we need to go. Just a comment. I urge the Minister and his department to keep fighting the federal government on this Fiscal Harmonization Initiative. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Premier McLeod, any comment?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are going to continue to push on this one. We are also making sure the Aboriginal governments are aware of it, to see if we can, together, push on this very important matter. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. No further comments, Ms. Bisaro?

**MS. BISARO:** No.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you. We are on page 35, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, \$4.018 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 36, corporate management, grants, contributions and transfers, total grants and contributions, \$1.205 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to get a breakdown just to confirm the core funding to the Metis locals. Can I get a breakdown on what exactly the Metis councils are getting?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. They get \$13,000 a year in core funding, Mr. Chair. Sorry, Mr. Chair. Since then, we've done a review

and increased it to \$20,000 in core funding for Metis locals.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** That's really good news, \$20,000. This is our own funding from the territorial government, no flow-through from the feds? This is out of the goodness of our hearts to fund the local Metis \$20,000 to have them operate their office like the Status of Women or the Native Women's Association? Is that the type of funding we're looking at? Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** That's correct. That's funding from the GNWT. We review it on a periodic basis. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I hope the periodic basis is at last once a year. We appreciate it. I don't even think the federal government is funding it and we're doing it. That's the unique challenge in the communities. Some of them do not yet have a land claim organization to fall back on, especially for the Metis people and the locals to come up to the same par as the Dene organizations, band councils. This is peanuts compared to their organizations. There is still an inequity and injustice from one Aboriginal group to another Aboriginal group. It's clear. We see it in this government and the federal government. I've always stated that this is where the Metis and the Inuvialuit need a lot of help in our smaller communities. Certainly, there's a long way to go.

I do appreciate the increase the government has given. Is this increase for this year? Over the 11 years I have been here, we've always had \$13,000 for the Metis councils in each community. This is the first time I'm hearing \$20,000. We should have had a letter written, a big celebration. Thank you.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The increase happened two years ago. Thank you.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The Minister talked about the funding being checked periodically. If this funding happened two years ago, we know that forced growth has happened. We deal with it in our budgets and the Premier talked in his opening about the Native Women's Council and the Status of Women getting an increase. So, this was two years ago and we're still at \$20,000. As much as the Metis councils appreciate the funding, if you do the breakdown on core funding that we give to the Metis locals, maybe I could do an exercise as to what it really costs and what \$20,000 a year for a native political organization that is recognized and entrenched in the Constitution, Section 35, to implement or have their Aboriginal rights recognized and affirmed. I hope the Minister goes to the federal government and says this is what we're doing in the territorial government. We're a small government. What gives here? What gives? This type of funding shouldn't be allowed in this day and age for an Aboriginal group of this stature that is in the Constitution.

I'm just saying what's on my mind and my frustration. I know the funding for other Aboriginal groups, they wouldn't take this. This is to an organization that certainly could use more help in this area. I'm just rambling, so I'll let it go.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I know the federal government does provide some funding in some cases to Metis locals. Certainly, I'll apprise the federal interlocutor for Metis, Minister Valcourt, the next time I see him, which shall be soon.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I certainly hope the Minister sees him real soon and makes a point of this inequity, unjust, and that one of the pillars of Canada received some recognition and not to have this type of issue with us.

Anyhow, I just wanted to raise that for the Metis locals. We fund the Native Women's Association double what the Metis locals are getting. Again, I wish the Premier and I wish the Minister good luck to talk to the federal Minister on this issue here.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I expect I'll be seeing the federal Metis interlocutor on February 27<sup>th</sup> of this year.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Committee, we're on page 36, corporate management, grants, contributions and transfers, total grants and contributions, \$1.205 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 37, corporate management, active positions. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 39, implementation, operations expenditure summary, \$723,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 40, implementation, active positions. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 43, intergovernmental relations, operations expenditure summary, \$1.990 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 44, intergovernmental relations, grants and contributions, grants, \$350,000. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to ask a quick question to the Premier. It seems like a lot of these positions are, well, they are all out here in headquarters. I'd like to ask the Premier, when do they plan to decentralize some of these positions?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** I think you're a page ahead, Mr. Blake, but I'll leave it to the Premier. Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is not our intention to decentralize any of these positions. We're a very small unit to begin with and we cover quite a number of files, including federal and national meetings, and so we don't expect to decentralize any of them.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Committee, we're on page 44, intergovernmental relations, grants, contributions and transfers, grants, \$350,000.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 44, intergovernmental relations, active positions. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 47, negotiations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.609 million. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions here. In terms of negotiations and the number of tables that we're at and where we're going in terms of progress or not, has there been an increase in the activity in and around negotiations and under this particular activity?

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, we've gone from 15 tables down to 14 tables with the successful conclusion of the Deline Self-Government and Land Claims Final Agreement.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for that. Good to know. Does implementation enter into this section or is it in another section, and with devolution, has there been an increase in the activity for us in this department in and around implementation?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I think we already approved the implementation section. But devolution was a fairly seamless transition and it hasn't resulted in any increased requirements for funding under implementation. Most of the implementation is for implementation of land claims or self-government.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Premier for that information. Just one last question. I'd like to ask about negotiations with both the federal government and Lutselk'e Dene Band in and around the Thaidene Nene National Park. Where do we stand as the GNWT? What is our role in these negotiations? Can I get some kind of a status report on where the negotiations are at? Are they at a standstill? Are they moving forward? Are they going backwards? We haven't heard anything about it for quite some time.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** It's quite a complex arrangement. We have tried to make sure that the

negotiations for land claims and self-government, although it's coordinated, the lead on dealing with Thaidene Nene has been identified as the Department of ENR, working very closely with ITI, Lands, Aboriginal Affairs, Justice and other departments, whereby we expect to have a park complemented by northern tools, and there are some active discussions going on as we speak.

**MS. BISARO:** Just one last question. Can we get any kind of an indication of when we might get some kind of a resolution and some kind of an agreement on this proposed park?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The federal government has agreed to pause at their end to allow us to work with the Lutselk'e and we expect to have some results by the end of March or early April that would indicate whether we're moving forward or not.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Committee, we're on page 47, negotiations, operations expenditure summary, \$2.609 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 49, negotiations, active positions. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Page 50, lease commitments. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Work performed on behalf of others. Questions? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just a question here. I note from the '14-15 Main Estimates to the '15-16 Main Estimates the amounts are pretty similar but the revised estimates for '14-15 went up some \$200,000 or so. Could I get an explanation as to why the revised mains are so much higher and why we've gone back down to a lower number for the start of this budget? Thank you.

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

**MR. ROBERTSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The nature of these four implementation agreements allow for carry-over of unspent money from year to year. What you're seeing from the increase from the opening '14-15 mains to the revised is the accounting entry to record the money that was unspent from the year prior, so we are allowing to carry it forward and it enables to spend it in the year of '14-15. The '15-16 is the money that will be allocated from the federal government. There will be a similar accounting entry that will take place after the year-end closes to make an adjustment for that carry-over. The good news is we don't have to return it back to the Canada. We are allowed to carry that forward, but it's money that we use for the overall coordination which goes towards

salaries and our travel and hosting the various committee meetings that we are responsible for. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Director Robertson. Committee, we are on page 51. Mr. Yakeleya.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Chair, I just want to understand something from the section here, Sahtu land claim implementation. Under the terms, the territorial government will get funding from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and Canada will provide a 2015 grant payment to the GNWT to assist the Sahtu implementation activities pursuant to the Sahtu Implementation Plan. Just help me out here. There is one government giving another government money, so then they can help with the implementation of the Sahtu Implementation Plan? Is that normal? Is that what the process is set up to? How many activities, I guess, with the Sahtu Implementation Plan are done or concluded or are ongoing? I'm trying to figure that out here. Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Member answered his own question, but I will ask, through you, for Mr. Robertson to go in more detail.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Director Robertson, go ahead, please.

**MR. ROBERTSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In negotiating the implementation plan for the Sahtu Agreement, we recognize that the GNWT would have obligations stemming from the Sahtu Final Agreement. The negotiations were successful in achieving some money from Canada to be able to fund those obligations. So the federal government will provide the Sahtu directly for the cost of implementation; the GNWT receives money for their own obligations that they need to carry out as a result of the final agreement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you. I knew I was smart. I knew I should have listened to my Mom, who said, "You're smart. You're smart."

I want to ask the Minister on the implementation plan for the Sahtu that we fulfilled all obligations under the Sahtu Implementation Plan by our government, because I'm hearing some other things from the federal government that they're not quite all completed. You know, some of the implementation plan is 10 or 20 years late. I'm trying to figure that out. Thank you.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that they work on 10-year implementation plans. Our government implementation people meet on a regular basis with the Sahtu to make sure that the implementation plans are achieving the results that they're supposed to. They are updated every 10 years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** I'm thinking about the meeting we had last year in Sahtu when we talked about the implementation plan of the Sahtu Land Claim Agreement and some of the work that needed to yet be negotiated and worked on. Out of the number of activities, how many does the federal government yet need to complete? How long will it take for them to complete the implementation plan? I'm hearing that the territorial government is up to date on our implementation plan. I know some dates take a little longer than we anticipated, but what I'm hearing is that we're okay.

I congratulate the Premier and the staff on the Deline Self-Government Agreement. I look forward to having that finalized and put to bed.

I just want to make sure that I'm getting the correct information. I'll be going back to the Sahtu and talk to my implementation people there and ask some of the finer details of this. Hopefully what I'm hearing here is okay so I don't need to come back and ask some more questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The 10-year implementation plan for the Sahtu Dene-Metis Claim expired on March 31, 2014. The parties are reviewing and revising the plan to reflect the current status of obligations and associated activities. The final draft implementation plan is expected to be completed by April 2015.

Canada now has a financial mandate to negotiate implementation funding levels for its treaty partners for the next 10-year period and we expect negotiations to begin by April 2015. In the interim, the parties have agreed to a status quo funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you. Premier McLeod. Committee, we are on page 51, work performed on behalf of others. Questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you. We will turn back to page 31, Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, \$9.340 million.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Agreed. Does committee agree that we've completed the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Thank you, witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

Thank you, committee. Next we will go to the NWT Housing Corporation. I will go to the Minister responsible, Mr. McLeod. Do you have opening comments?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Yes, I do, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2015-16 Main Estimates for the NWT Housing Corporation. The main estimates propose a budget of \$143.127 million, an increase of one percent from the 2014-15 Main Estimates. The budget includes a contribution of \$85.368 million from the GNWT for 2015-16.

As Members are aware, one of the five priorities identified by the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly is to address housing needs. The approach of the NWT Housing Corporation recognizes that there are significant differences in housing between our market and non-market communities and there are needs along the entire housing continuum, from homelessness to homeownership.

The activities reflected in the 2015-16 Main Estimates for the NWT Housing Corporation build on the work we have done over the first three years of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly and some of the highlights include:

- In 2015-16 we will continue to make extensive investments in our infrastructure. Overall, we expect to spend \$35.9 million on capital projects. Highlights include:
  - Major retrofits will be completed on 232 existing units. This investment will mean that approximately 700 NWT HC units will have received a retrofit during the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.
  - In 2015-16 the planned seniors independent living complexes in Fort Good Hope and Whati will be constructed. Work on the seniors facilities in Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Fort Liard was started in 2014-15.
  - An additional 36 market rental units will be added as part of the overall initiative to add 100 market rentals in smaller communities to support service delivery.
  - Energy investments in 2015-16 are expected to total \$3.4 million, including photovoltaic solar systems for units in Whati, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells and Lutselk'e.
- In 2015-16 we will continue to strengthen our relationship with our local housing organizations through the implementation of the initiative to improve community housing services. We plan to spend \$54.4 million in 2015-16 on community housing services.

- Specifically, this initiative has changed the roles and responsibilities of the LHOs and the NWTHC. It was implemented on April 1, 2014, and we continue to work with our partners to improve service delivery. These overall improvements are reflected in our public housing rent collection, which reached 97 percent for 2013-14.
- As part of the initiative, we are opening new LHO offices in Fort Liard, Whati and Gameti which will improve services and add local jobs.
- Overall, these main estimates include funding for 128 positions in LHOs. In addition to this, we are increasing the number of apprentices supported through the LHOs from 10 to 15.
- In 2015-16 we will continue to work in partnership with low- and modest-income homeowners to support repairs and preventative maintenance and to help residents that need some additional support to purchase a home. We plan to spend \$7 million on homeownership programs in 2015-16.
- There have been a number of changes we have made in recent years to improve our homeownership programs.
- During the current fiscal year we are providing supports to about 350 low- and modest-income homeowners for repairs and preventative maintenance.
- In 2015-16 we will introduce CARE - Mobility as part of our major repair program. CARE - Mobility will target support for seniors and other residents that require modifications to their home to address mobility and other issues related to the disability of a household member.
- In 2015-16 we will continue to strengthen our programming related to homelessness. As Members know, the NWTHC activities are just part of the overall support as homelessness is addressed through the activities of a number of departments within the GNWT.
  - For the NWTHC, these main estimates result in increasing programming related to addressing homelessness from \$325,000 at the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly to \$855,000 for 2015-16.
  - Current programs support direct assistance to homeless persons or persons at risk of becoming homeless, community-based initiatives that address homelessness, capital improvements to existing shelters, and the operation of four transition houses in smaller NWT communities.

- In 2015-16 the NWTHC will add \$150,000 to support implementation of a Housing First approach in Yellowknife. This work will be coordinated with the GNWT Integrated Case Management Project and the work being done by the Yellowknife Community Advisory Board on homelessness.

Finally, 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 Members as we work towards the goal of all NWT residents having access to affordable, adequate and suitable housing.

That concludes my opening remarks. At this time I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Do you have witnesses you'd like to bring into the House?

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Mr. McLeod, can you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right I have Mr. David Stewart, president of the NWT Housing Corporation, to my left is Mr. Jeff Anderson, vice-president of finance and infrastructure of the NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Committee, I will remind everyone that the items under Housing Corporation are items only. Members may, of course, ask questions on these items. We will open it up to general comments. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see a lot of expenditures going to the communities, which is great. I know the elders facility in Fort McPherson did go out to tender. I haven't heard the latest on when the work is scheduled to begin, but I would like to get that information.

Also, as I mentioned a number of times, there's a huge demand for housing in the small communities, Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic. As we move forward, I know our government is trying to attract people to our territory. In order for people to live here, we need places to stay. As we move forward, we have to ensure that there are houses in the communities for people to stay. Right now, we are at capacity in the communities. We have a

waiting list of up to three to five years in some cases. Young families, young people who want to begin a family, it's really needed. As we move forward in the next few years, I'd like to see this government start planning and implementing new units in the communities. It's great to see multiplex units going into the communities. It's really appreciated, but we need more. There are more young, single people out there who need a place to start their own life. I have been getting a number of concerns about that as I have been travelling to the communities.

As we move forward, also, there are a number of elders who have explained that they have a two- or three-bedroom that's not needed. They would like to have a one-bedroom place because it's easier for them to get around. With that, we do need to build a number of multiplex units in the communities.

As we move forward, as well, Mr. Chair, the CARE program is working and is very helpful in the communities, the same with HELP. A number of people are very satisfied with this program. As we move forward, I'm looking forward to that carrying on and seeing more homeowners in the territory.

If the Minister could just give a little update on the status of the facility in Aklavik and when they plan to open that as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, the contract in McPherson has been awarded and my understanding is they are going to start the work this summer. The one in Aklavik, they are doing a great job on it. It should be opened in late spring. It should be completed in late spring. So we are looking forward to seeing how that rolls out.

Some of the Member's comments, he was talking about the units in the communities. We recognize that we need places to stay in communities. It's one of the reasons this government has committed \$21 million over three years to put an additional 100 market rental units in the communities. I think that is going to go a long way to addressing some of our housing needs in the communities. We are doing replacement units right now and we keep saying we are challenged by the declining CMHC funding. We have been using that for a reason for a number of years, which is the truth. We are fortunate that our government has stepped up to the plate and I think they've contributed an additional \$2.5 million to the NWT Housing Corporation to offset some of the declining CMHC funding. That's a challenge that we face right now, but we feel with some of the programs that we have, with HELP and trying to transition more people out of public housing into homeownership, then that would free up more public housing units, because there's always going to be a need for public housing units.

The elders, in many cases we have elders that will be in a particular public housing unit for 40, 45 years, pretty well since it was built. We've heard the concerns and we've actually kept many of these elders in their units because they just don't want to move. There are some that do want to move to smaller units and we try and accommodate them. But for the most part, we try to keep the elders in a unit that they've pretty well had since the unit was built back in the '70s. We're challenged on both sides, but we would like to get many of them into smaller units if that is their wish.

I think I've touched on all the Member's points, and if I missed any, I'm sure the Member will remind me.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you. A number of years back, I think it was in the mid '80s or so, there was the HAP program. A number of people took advantage of that in the communities. Residents were given the opportunity for materials and it was up them to either put in labour or a lot of them constructed their own houses throughout the territory in all the communities. There are a lot of people out there that would like to see a similar program like that moving forward. Are the Minister and the department looking at that sort of program in the near future?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The quick answer is no, we're not looking at that particular type of program. It was a very successful program when it ran. We were able to get many people into homeownership units and some of them are still in there. Many of these units, through some of our other repair programs we've actually paid for all of the renovations to these units. I think at the time it was the right program at the right time and it did, I think, transition a lot of people out of public housing into their own homes. Off hand, I can't think of how many we did across the Northwest Territories, these HAP units. There were a number of them that were done, but some of them are still there. Some of them were turned back over to the NWT Housing Corporation because people realized, once they were in there, that they had to pay all their own utilities and it got to be quite costly. I think that's a minority though. I think the majority of them managed to keep up their units pretty good. Now, through our CARE program, we're renovating a lot of those units that they basically got for free during the HAP days. It's not something that we're looking at any time soon.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Next on my list I have Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm wondering if the Minister can answer how many new units will the NWT Housing Corporation be putting on the ground and can he provide a list of those locations.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. New units, we're doing 40 replacement units in '15-16 and we're doing the 36 market rental units in '15-16. We will be glad to provide a list to the Members. I believe we have all the locations and everything. We have all the locations, so we'll provide that list to committee.

**MR. HAWKINS:** When the Minister says 40 replacements, we're doing one for one. When he says the Housing Corp is doing 36 market, is that new, new, in the sense of new in a net context? If he could provide that detail.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Member is correct; the 40 are replacement public housing units and the 36 market housing are new units. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** As far as housing investment, what type of money is the Housing Corporation investing into the Territories here, working with private vendors to develop housing initiatives or options for people in the range of \$100,000 to \$250,000? What I'm really getting at is entry level housing for people to be able to afford to buy, getting out of the apartment building style of living where families want to get out. In this type of ballpark, usually it's treated as people's first step into the market world. What type of initiatives is the Housing Corporation partnering in order to target first time homeownership for people?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, we have, through the PATH program – providing assistance to homeowners – and the HELP program. The HELP program is one where we try to transition people out of public housing. They'll stay in a HELP unit for a couple of years and then if they feel that they would like to be homeowners, they can transition into the PATH program, which is providing assistance to homeowners. They have the option, I think, of purchasing the HELP unit that they're in and I think they're given a \$10,000 incentive to move into homeownership.

We have \$7 million that we have invested into CARE and PATH for 2015-16. We have a breakdown of the numbers of what's in each program and I will be pleased to provide that to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Mr. Chairman, I will be pleased to accept that. The Minister has already mentioned 36 market rental units and he said that's adding to the 100 market rentals in the smaller communities, which is good. I assume with the 36, would the Minister be able to provide the detail as to where those 100 market rentals are in the smaller communities? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, 36 is year two of our goal of 100 over three years in the \$21

million investment. We have locations picked for all of the units this year and the ones that we did last year, and I'd be pleased to provide that information to committee so they'll know the whereabouts of all the market rental units. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you. What's driving the location of those particular units, the 100 market rentals objective? Are there statistics or surveys being done? Are they working in collaboration with an organization that says we want to hire 10 people but we don't have 10 homes to put on the ground to either sell them or rent them? What's driving the direction of where those units will be placed? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Chair, we work closely with the NWT Teachers' Association. They provided some of the information as to some of the communities that are most challenged as far as housing goes. We relied a lot on some of the information, some advice we got from them. I will have Mr. Stewart add on to that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to add on, certainly the Teachers' Association was an important part. We also work with our Department of Human Resources to understand where there were vacancies, for example in communities where there were barriers in the past in terms of being able to recruit people for services in those communities. Then we looked at our own stock in terms of where we may have existing units that are vacant or where there is particularly high demand to help sort of come up with the overall allocation of those 100 units by community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. With that said, do we have any particular market rental units in existence in any of the communities that aren't being utilized at this particular time? If so, can I get a list of that as well as what the market rents would be charged? I assume a monthly basis for those particular units.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will provide a list of... I couldn't answer offhand if we have any vacant units in the communities, but we can look that up and provide that information. The rents are basically in line with the public housing rents. We try to calculate it along the same line. For example, the monthly rent for a two-bedroom unit would be \$1,250 in Trout Lake and \$1,410 in Ulukhaktok.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The Minister had mentioned that there was going to be some new homelessness money going from \$325,000 to \$855,000. Can I get some detail on what that initiative is specifically targeted at and where we can expect to see it rolled out?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a number of programs we have in terms of the homelessness. I will just quickly go through them. The first ones are obviously the Homelessness Assistance Fund, which is about \$125,000 per year and it provides support to individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in terms of getting them out of that circumstance.

We have the Small Community Homelessness Fund which provides support for community organizations that are in our smallest communities that are providing things like soup kitchens as well as food banks, those sorts of activities, and we can provide a list of those that are being funded right now.

We have the Shelter Enhancement Fund, which is \$100,000 that's application-based for existing homelessness shelters to be able to provide support for capital improvements. That's capital in the sense of the building envelope but also equipment that they may need to have as well.

Then we have the program we introduced last year, the Northern Pathways to Housing, which is about \$280,000 in terms of the operation. That's four, those four pilots on the transition housing in the smaller communities and we're working with a number of community groups to get those projects started and I think we are getting some good input from a variety of communities.

Then lastly, as was mentioned, we are setting aside \$150,000 to implement a Housing First model in Yellowknife and we will work closely with the Community Advisory Board here to come up with the best approach to do that particular project, but our resources would be focused on the infrastructure side of that and we would need to work out some of the processes in terms of identifying potential clients and making sure a variety of services are available.

That's all of the homelessness funds we have available. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you. Apparently there's been a housing agreement with the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada. I wonder if the Minister could provide some detail on that, not just program detail but where we would see some of that initiative and detail roll out on the

ground and where we will see that support. I think there's a four-year program of money. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The agreement we signed was for money we get from Canada. We roll that money into many of the programs that we deliver, so through the CARE, PATH and mostly focused on the homeownership side. We utilize some of the money they give us along with the money we contribute and that goes towards many of the programs we offer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard):** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Noting the clock, I will rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Minister, and thanks to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

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

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 11, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Tabled Document 188-17(5), NWT Main Estimates 2015-2016
  - Bill 38, An Act to Amend the Jury Act
  - Bill 41, An Act to Amend the Partnership Act
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

