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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, June 3, 2016****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, Mr. McNeely, Hon. Alfred Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. O'Reilly, Hon. Wally Schumann, Hon. Louis Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Vanthuyne

The House met at 10:00 a.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Ministers' Statements

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 34-18(2):
2016 WILDLAND FIRE SEASON**

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that this year's wildland fire season is off to a slow start compared to the previous two years. As of May 30th, there have only been two wildland fires reported in the Northwest Territories. All indications are the eight-hectare fire near Madeline Lake, along the Ingraham Trail, was a holdover from last fire season, which smouldered underground all winter. It is a strong indication of just how dry forests are in North Slave region. The second fire, 16 kilometres from Kakisa, was person-caused. It was started by an abandoned campfire. We are still in a drought situation in many parts of the Northwest Territories and the long term seasonal forecast for the next three months calls for above normal temperatures and near normal precipitation. The 20-year average for fires and area burned for this time of year is three fires and 46 hectares burned. At this time last year, 31 wildland fires had been reported with just over 7,100 hectares burned. Even with only two wildland fires to date, there is potential for another bad fire season this year. While lightning accounts for 90 per cent of fire start in the Northwest Territories, the 10 per cent caused by people can be prevented. Everyone has a responsibility to prevent and protect their homes, cabins and communities from wildland fires. People must be careful when using fire in these dry conditions. Only use campfires if they are necessary for cooking and warmth. Bonfires are not required for these purposes. Get the appropriate burn permit for any other fires such as burning grass and/or brush. Do not leave any fire unattended and make sure the fire is completely out before leaving it. Property

owners and communities should use FireSmart tools to reduce their risk of loss from wildland fires. Our 35 four-person fire-fighting crews are on strength as are our air tanker groups and rotary-wing aircraft. The department will assess any new wildland fire starts for potential risk to values and take measures, as appropriate, with resource capacity and expected fire risk in high value areas.

Mr. Speaker, the cooler weather conditions early in the season have allowed our government to provide much needed fire personnel to help with the Fort McMurray fire and other fires in the northern part of Alberta. To date, we have exported two 21-person wildland fire crews and agencies representatives, two radio operators, three supply unit leaders, one situation unit leader, one section chief trainee and one logistics chief trainee to Alberta. Our Electra air tanker, a bird dog aircraft, air attack officer and crews saw duty in Alberta. The Northwest Territories also provided 55 water pumps and 700 lengths of fire hose to Fort McMurray. We are honoured to be able to provide assistance to other Canadian jurisdictions as many of them have helped us in our time of need during the 2013, 2014 and 2015 wildland fire seasons. This year, Environment and Natural Resources has begun the process to update community wildland fire protection plans, and is drafting proposed amendments to modernize forest protection legislation, one of the commitments made in the Government of the Northwest Territories mandate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 35-18(2):
INVESTMENTS TO ADVANCE TOURISM –
TOURISM WEEK**

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to build partnerships to support, among other things, culturally-based tourism. The tourism sector offers the potential for direct and indirect economic growth in many of our communities and the possibility for diversification and growth of regional economies. As we look to the future, we can be assured that our government's strategic approach to tourism development is already working. In 2010, we

introduced the Tourism 2015 Plan with an ambitious goal of building the NWT tourism sector to a \$30-million industry by 2015. Today, Mr. Speaker, I can report that we achieved our goal and more, when visitor spending reached an all-time-high of \$146.6 million for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. This is particularly heartening as we prepare to introduce Tourism 2020, our next strategic plan for tourism development in the Northwest Territories. Under Tourism 2020 we will continue to invest in our tourism sector in response to our mandate commitments by building on key areas of program and financial investment including visitor attraction and experience, community tourism development, skills development, and tourism research.

Our Tourism 2020 plan also includes a new area of investment and growth: Aboriginal Culture Tourism, developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council and now a foundational part of our plan to increase the value of our tourism industry to \$207 million annually by 2021. Partnerships have been central to our success in tourism over the last five years and I am happy to announce that the department has reached agreement with the Canadian Executive Service Organization to expand its role in our Tourism Business Mentorship Program. The organization brings the pedigree of facilitating more than 47,000 successful mentorship initiatives in 122 countries around the world, including work in over 80 per cent of all Aboriginal communities in Canada. We welcome this expertise and look forward to the new perspectives it will bring to our budding tourism sector and the talented, energetic operators across the Northwest Territories. Mr. Speaker, there are few better ways to celebrate the ingenuity in our tourism industry than our annual Tourism Week. This year's celebration will be concluding this weekend with a number of events across our five regions designed to build awareness and interest in local tourism. As we mark Tourism Week in this Assembly today, I would like to recognize the continued partnership of Northwest Territories Tourism and the dedication and hard work of our vibrant family of industry operators and service providers. Few areas of our economy have been as bright as tourism over the last five years. We will continue to find ways to promote the Northwest Territories' natural beauty and unique northern spirit in a way that will allow our tourism sector to thrive and grow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Transportation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 36-18(2):
INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to report on the third successful winter of construction on the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway project. I will start by referring back to Thursday, April 7, 2016, an historic afternoon when rock trucks driven by Beaufort-Delta residents met at kilometre 45.3 and linked the north and south construction spreads. An exciting and proud achievement was reached in northern history that afternoon when crews placed approximately 48 cubic metres of gravel toward the final four kilometres of embankment on Canada's first public highway to the Arctic coast. The contractor focused on hauling approximately 26,000 cubic metres of material per day to place approximately 97 per cent of the granular material required for the highway's embankment. When construction wrapped up at the end of April 2016, approximately 116 kilometres of new embankment were fully constructed and the first lift was placed on the remaining 3.5 kilometres. Crews were also able to finish six of the eight required bridges and install pilings for the final two bridges. The Department of Transportation and the contractor are enthusiastic and prepared to make a final push to complete the project. I'm pleased to report that the project employed over 500 people at the peak of this winter's construction season. Approximately 74 per cent of the workforce came from the Beaufort-Delta region and other NWT communities, once again fulfilling the goal of substantially contributing to northern employment opportunities and delivering jobs where they're needed most.

At the same time, the project continues to contribute to developing a skilled northern workforce by delivering meaningful training opportunities and employability. These valuable opportunities enable apprentices in a wide variety of trades to earn work experience hours toward certification and improving their economic mobility. Mr. Speaker, the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway construction project is also contributing to circumpolar research aimed at improving construction techniques in permafrost conditions. In April, the Department of Transportation held a Permafrost Summit where world experts in cold region civil engineering and northern construction had the opportunity to observe the unique construction methods used to build the highway and visit two research and development test sites sponsored by Transport Canada. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to once again confirm that the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway construction project remains on schedule and within the approved budget of \$299 million dollars. As we approach the end of the construction phase of the project, the Department of Transportation is beginning to plan an

appropriate celebration to mark the opening of the highway in the fall of 2017 as anticipated. I look forward to celebrating this achievement in northern construction history with the opening of the northern-most segment of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, bringing us closer to achieving our goal of finally linking Canada from coast to coast to coast. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' Statements. Item 3, Members' Statements. Member for Deh Cho.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FIRST NATIONS LAND SURVEYORS

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, surveying has been part of the development of the human environment since the beginning of history. Land surveyors have a key role in most construction projects as well as transportation, communications, mapping, and defining legal boundaries for land ownership. It is an important tool for research in many other areas. Mr. Speaker, a little recognized fact is how much the Northwest Territories owes to the First Nations land surveyors who took on this role in the early days of our communities. I want to take this opportunity to recognize my constituent, Louie Constant of Fort Providence, who worked throughout the Northwest Territories surveying communities and highways. Louie, like a number of young high school graduates, began working as surveyor, learning on the job and working on various projects. Unlike qualified and professional surveyors, guys like Louie demonstrated their knowledge and skills of surveying by working alongside their formally-trained colleagues and proved their worth by playing a significant role in laying the foundation for roads and residential areas in most of our current communities. They built their skills on keen eyes for the land and deep familiarity with its features.

Today land surveyors use a variety of high-tech instruments and any jobs require professional training and certification. But we can build on the legacy of Louie Constant and other First Nation surveyors by incorporating traditional knowledge into the development of new infrastructure and promoting this profession among First Nations youth. I want to challenge the Departments of Lands and Municipal and Community Affairs to look at ways to promote land surveying as a career among youth in the NWT and highlight the role of traditional knowledge in planning our communities and the infrastructure that connects them. Working with professional organizations and private partners, the government can look for opportunities to encourage young people to choose a career in the field of survey work and land management

through a scholarship or bursary program. Few people are as familiar with the land today as Louie Constant and his colleagues. Lifelong Northerners have a wisdom of place and we have an opportunity to honour the role of First Nation surveyors in the continuing evolution of the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORTS FOR SMALL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, small business is a key component of a strong diversified economy. Any entrepreneur can tell you that operating an independent business requires more hard work and determination than most people ever imagine. It also comes with immense rewards, not only to the business owners themselves, but to the communities they serve. The small business environment is becoming increasingly challenging across Canada, but especially in the Northwest Territories. Like everywhere, northern businesses are forced to compete with big box stores, multinational conglomerates, the explosion of online services, as well as high costs, economies of scale and numerous procedures and policies at various levels of government. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business Red Tape Report consistently gives the Northwest Territories a failing grade for inaction and lack of leadership. New and young entrepreneurs experience overlapping requirements and lengthy application and permitting processes on top of start-up costs and the steep learning curve that comes naturally with any new start-up business. The GNWT's message of support for small business conflicts with the hoops and ladders entrepreneurs encounter just to get their enterprise off the ground. We only have to look at the NWT Brewing Company and Woodyard Pub as an example. While the GNWT has made some improvements with the Bizpal online service to help entrepreneurs navigate start-up and operation, the SEED program is frequently oversubscribed and sometimes seems like the government refers to it as the never-ending pot of gold for everyone's great ideas.

Mr. Speaker, small business should be one of our key economic diversification components. Dedicated and informed staff at the front line play a key role in supporting entrepreneurs who are trying to put together the crucial pieces of their operation. For example, the Hay River egg producers searched worldwide for months, Mr. Speaker, to find recyclable cardboard cartons for their eggs. The government's approach to small business must

reflect their values to our communities. These operations are often generational, cherished by the community for their character, dedicated to the people they serve and knowledge of their local market. These businesses have no comparison to big box franchises of the world. We need to work with small business sector toward a shared vision for what we want small business to look like in the North, and take strategic steps to get there. At the appropriate time I'll have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
"DAY OF PINK" SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ
COMMUNITY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow-up on my Member's statement of Wednesday, February 24th about the International Pink Shirt Day. As we heard that day from a number of Members and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, bullying is a daily experience for many young people across the Northwest Territories and Canada. On February 26th, I received a letter from It Gets Better Yellowknife, an outreach program to support queer and trans youth in Yellowknife, informing me about the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity's Day of Pink, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and other types of bullying. The Day of Pink, April 13, 2016, continues the work of Pink Shirt Day by promoting active dialogue in communities across Canada between LGBTQ young people and leaders in their communities. Last November the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity approached the mayor of Yellowknife to organize the event, and the mayor reached out to It Gets Better Yellowknife to take on this event. Like the Pink Shirt Day, the Day of Pink has grown into a Canada-wide event in April. Like most things northern, people take on the task and make it better. It Gets Better Yellowknife organization was no different. They developed a plan for a few extra ideas that worked well in Yellowknife and expanded a Day of Pink into Days of Pink, week-long educational and artistic events that promoted conversations throughout Yellowknife.

Mr. Speaker, the Days of Pink are about talking honestly and openly with peers about the bullying and violence that people deal with when expressing their love and their gender. They believe that when talking honestly and openly about these things they're able to educate themselves and fight ignorance in our communities. They address this by asking questions about how they express their

gender, what their gender means to different people, how they love, who they love, and how they can stop bullying and violence that people deal with when expressing their love in their gender. I believe that a safe NWT for everybody includes a safe place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirits, asexual, pansexual, and queer people. Day of Pink is about more than just bullying, it is about examining and discussing the way the NWT can better support the LGBTQ community in our schools, workplaces and communities. It is my understanding that this group is developing a report of recommendations to provide to the political leaders in the NWT to make a better place to live. I look forward to seeing this report and looking forward to seeing how we can implement these recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATION IN GNWT
PUBLIC SERVICE

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to talk about the Aboriginal content in the GNWT public service. Mr. Speaker, the Minister responded to one of my questions this week on the percentage of Priority 1 employees we have in the public service. His response was 32 to 33 per cent. I think the GNWT lead by the Department of Human Resources must develop a strategy that will see the public service get closer to the GNWT's goal of having a public service that is representative of the people we serve. In other words, try to get the public service to as close to 51 per cent Priority 1 as possible. Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the current suite of programs, policies and initiatives the GNWT is working with can achieve that goal. Mr. Speaker, currently we have 51 per cent of our public service in Yellowknife. Of the public service that work in Yellowknife, only 16.5 per cent are Priority 1 employees. Mr. Speaker, if the goal is to have 51 per cent of GNWT as Priority 1, I would say that goal would be close to impossible to achieve. Currently only 18.5 per cent of the people in Yellowknife that are in the participation rate would be considered Priority 1 under the Affirmative Action Policy. I don't wish to go into the weeds too far with this. Having said that, we have communities where the participation rate of Priority 1 candidates is 60 per cent; however only 35 per cent of the public service is Priority 1. Mr. Speaker, if the government continues on as they are currently for the next four years, the numbers will not change. Our government needs to develop a strategy that looks at this objective community by community and department by department, because the holistic approach of trying to get to that number

across the territories is not working. Mr. Speaker, it is my feeling that we can get as close as possible to achieving this goal by developing a good plan and having buy-in at the highest level of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister of Human Resources today in question period. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SUPPORT FOR NUNAVUT MP HUNTER
TOOTOO

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak briefly about the resignation of our fellow Northerner, Hunter Tootoo, from his position as the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and his decision to seek help for substance abuse issues. I do not know all the circumstances surrounding his resignation, and likely, only the people closest to him do. I do know that this decision must have been one of the most difficult of his life. He knew there would be extensive media coverage, that it would be discussed on every channel, in every newspaper, and in thousands and thousands of private conversations among his co-workers, in his community, and around the country. He also knew that he was giving up a prestigious, high-profile Cabinet position, one of the highest government positions in Canada. Despite all this, Mr. Tootoo made the decision to prioritize his health and well-being and the well-being of those close to him, and I have to applaud him for his decision. It can be difficult to talk about addiction. There is a stigma surrounding addiction that can leave people and their families to try and hide their problems and feel ashamed. However, we all know that addiction doesn't discriminate and anyone is susceptible. Admitting there is a problem and seeking help does not make a person appear weak. It takes courage to make that decision, and it's a choice that should be respected. I hope that those who need help and want help will be inspired by Mr. Tootoo's decision, and I thank him for leading by example. Information on how to access treatment options can be found on the Health and Social Services website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
INUVALUIT DAY 2016

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is Inuvialuit Day, so I am going to speak on that. Mr. Speaker, June 5th is set aside in the northern most part of our territory to celebrate Inuvialuit Day. June 5th marks the anniversary of the

signing of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in 1984. The day is celebrated throughout the Inuvialuit settlement region with drum dancing, Inuit games, music, and local country food such as muktuk, dry fish, moose, caribou, and so on. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement came into effect July 25, 1984. It was the first comprehensive land claim agreement signed in the NWT and only the second ever in Canada at the time. Mr. Speaker, the final agreement is a result of the determination and dedication of a group of Northerners initially called the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement formed in 1970. This group included leaders, movers, and shakers such as Agnes Semmler, Nellie Cournoyea, Victor Allen, Brian Purdy, Jim Koe, Bertha Allen, Jessie Amos, Peter Green, Sam Raddi, Billy Day, Andy Carpenter, Wallace Goose, Mark Noksana, and Kenneth Peeloolook. This committee involved into a strong negotiating body that worked hard to secure the Inuvialuit's rights to wildlife harvest and socio-economic initiatives and full participation in wildlife and environment managing regimes. These rights extend over the territory of almost half a million hectares in the Mackenzie Delta, Beaufort Sea, and Amundsen Gulf area, approximately 90,600 square kilometres of land and 12,980 square kilometres of subsurface rights. Mineral rights are owned by the Inuvialuit. The Inuvialuit Settlement Region communities include Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, Sachs Harbour, and Tuktoyaktuk. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement lays the foundation for future powers and authority. The Inuvialuit, Canada, and the GNWT are currently negotiating an Inuvialuit self-government agreement. Twelve different areas of government, from heritage resources to income support and training capacity building are included in the scope of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement is something Canada and all Northerners can celebrate. Other countries are torn apart by civil wars over the very rights the Inuvialuit tenaciously and we have peacefully negotiated. Ecological provisions are upheld as a world-class example of integrated resource management system. Mr. Speaker, I encourage the parties to continue negotiating, leading the way for the Northwest Territories and Canada and self-governed agreements for Canada's Indigenous peoples. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the seizure of huge volumes of fentanyl in recent Yellowknife drug busts is an indication that at least

some NWT residents are turning to the black market to satisfy drug addictions. In some cases, these addictions are the result of legitimate medical prescriptions. An NWT coroner's report last year raised alarms over overuse and misuse of prescriptions and how people are being prescribed potentially dangerous amounts of legal drugs by seeking multiple prescriptions. One means of reducing that supply for new and existing addicts is the creation of a prescription drug monitoring program. The Department of Health and Social Services has made some progress on developing this idea, but it now appears to be stalled. Obviously, any prescription monitoring program needs to be consistent with the new Electronic Medical Record, or EMR system.

At this time, the EMR system can't produce a valid prescription for a pharmacist. Apparently, work is underway to make this possible within patient confidentiality requirements. The main problem at the moment, though, appears to be money. The Minister of Health and Social Services points out that a monitoring program would require some dedicated staff time and an information system linked to all NWT pharmacies that can offer real-time access to patients' prescription histories. In the meantime, the department is educating clinicians about appropriate prescribing practices and teaching them to identify patients who may be addicted or at risk of becoming addicted to opioids and other drugs. I'm putting this issue back on the table, Mr. Speaker. I realize this budget doesn't include funds for a prescription monitoring program. The Health department rightly takes the overall approach that prevention is the surest path to patient health and that prevention is less costly than treatment. In the case of addiction in particular, any steps to reduce the number of persons who will ultimately need difficult and costly behavioural therapy will be a good investment. I'll have questions for the Minister on the current status of this program and plans for kick starting it in the next budget session. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ANNUAL INCREASE TO INCOME ASSISTANCE
BENEFITS.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I will speak today about some of the least advantaged, and unfortunately, least politically influential people in our society, those on income assistance. First, I want to congratulate the Cabinet on its decision announced in the budget address that income from the Canada Child Benefit, and the Northwest Territories Child Benefit, and spousal support will be excluded in the calculation of income assistance

payments. I also applaud the announcement of amendments to the NWT Income Tax Act to enhance the NWT Child Benefit, including different benefit amounts for children under and over the age of six. Now, I'd like to see a similar approach to adopt an annual increase to income assistance payments. Benefits were increased in 2015. But before that, I believe benefits were last increased in 2009. There does not appear to be any mechanism for providing an annual increase in benefits to offset increases in the cost of living, or even a mechanism to regularly assess whether benefits are adequate.

This is counter to most other programs of financial assistance providing benefits that are adjusted to reflect the costs of living. At the federal level, payments of public service pensions, Old Age Security, the Guaranteed Income Supplement, Canada Pension Plan, and Canada Pension Plan disability benefits are all indexed to inflation. Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement benefit rates are adjusted four times annually for inflation. Here in the Northwest Territories, Members have recently been informed that the monthly payment rate for long-term care room and board has been adjusted to offset the increased costs as calculated by the Consumer Price Index, or CPI. Not only that, if the CPI were to fall, I am told that rates would not be decreased. The NWT Senior Citizen Supplementary Income Benefit is likewise indexed to CPI, and there are annual indexing provisions in a number of other GNWT cost of living support programs. In Yukon, income assistance benefit rates are annually adjusted to offset the cost of living. Certainly, there has been no decrease in the costs of living, according to CPI figures, which are only available for Yellowknife. Costs have increased on average by 1.6 per cent in the past year, and as much as four per cent in the area of food costs. Mr. Speaker, I seek and ask consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. All of the above makes me wonder why income assistance recipients are left out of annual increases to meet the valid need of paying higher costs to stay fed, clothed, and sheltered. In the absence of a guaranteed annual income, levels of support provided by income assistance cannot lift people out of poverty. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COLVILLE LAKE SOLAR POWER PILOT
PROJECT

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to speak about the Colville Lake power pilot project. It is producing a huge amount of significant results as the pilot project. After spending a number of years growing up in that community, I have come to realize it is this government's initiative that really helps the smaller communities in seeing and playing a part in the contribution to the consumption of fuel and gas emission reductions and continuous independence with these little communities, which are only seasonally supplied. Later on today, I will have some questions here for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COMMUNITY WILDLAND FIRE PROTECTION
PLANS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the forest fire season of 2014 is still strong in the memory of NWT residents. The GNWT spent \$59 million fighting fires that year. Last year's fire season was also demanding, the second worst on record. We are also aware of the recent wildfire that caused evacuation of Fort McMurray destroying ten per cent of the city. While the residents of Fort McMurray are slowly being allowed to return to their homes, that wildfire is still burning out of control at more than 550,000 hectares. Here in the Northwest Territories, the 2016 season hasn't been busy as the Minister said earlier today. In fact, we have only had two fires. Only eight hectares have burned so far this year, Mr. Speaker. But Mr. Speaker, experts anticipate drier weather and the increased fire risk that comes with it. Now is the time to prepare, Mr. Speaker. In my riding, both Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic are surrounded by dense forest. A fire break was planned for Fort McPherson, but two years ago, that project was put on hold. As I mentioned we have had many fires that year, and for that reason, that project was put on hold. We know that taking preventive action works. In 2014, the community of Kakisa was saved from fire damage thanks to their use of fire smarting practices to clear the surrounding area of potential fuel. The 2014-15 fire seasons may have been expensive, Mr. Speaker, but it is much more expensive to rebuild than to protect. I will have questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Thebacha.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF JIMMY
SCHAEFER

MR. SEBERT: I would like to send condolences to the family of the late Jimmy Schaefer of Fort Smith who passed away last evening. Mr. Schaefer was a former chief of the Salt River First Nation and instrumental in some of their treaty negotiations, was a long-time resident of the community, and related to many throughout the North including his nephew and our colleague, Minister Schumann. Mr. Schaefer enjoyed a long and useful life. He will be missed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences to the family as well. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 154-18(2):
SUPPORTS FOR SMALL BUSINESS AND
ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier, you heard me talk about the need to work with small business sectors toward a shared vision for what we want to see small business look like in the North. My question today is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister comment on what he sees as the main barriers to successful small business operations in the territory and how we might address them as a government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the main barriers, as I see it, is the ability to develop business plans and the access to financial assistance and aftercare so that the biggest barrier to being a successful business is getting through the first year and surviving for five years, so any aftercare we can provide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. I would also argue that there are some challenges found within dealing with our government as it relates to the barriers that small business face. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister comment on how the GNWT might further reduce red tape for independent business and boost its grade in the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's Red Tape Report Card?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Reducing red tape is a constant priority of our government and we spend a lot of time at it. I don't find the Canadian Federation of Independent Business Red Tape Report card of much help or assistance or very useful. I don't feel that having somebody coming down from Toronto once or twice a year and giving us a failing grade and not making any suggestions on how to improve. They don't go to the communities. I don't find that report very helpful.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Well then with that, I guess I ask the Minister: does the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment have a mechanism for collecting constructive feedback from small business to determine how government programs might better serve their needs?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Here in the Northwest Territories, we are very fortunate to have very strong Chambers of Commerce. We have the NWT Chamber of Commerce and we have at least five or six chambers throughout the Northwest Territories in every region. We have a very close relationship, and the NWT Chamber of Commerce shares our view of the red tape report, and because of the fact that we are a small jurisdiction, we can interact almost on a one-to-one basis with businesses, especially when we travel to the regions.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for his reply. This will be my final question. Does the Department of Industry, Tourism, and Investment regularly review and consider successful small business programs in other jurisdictions, and if so, are there examples that could be implemented in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As a government, we participate in federal, provincial, and territorial meetings in a number of different areas. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment participates, FPTs and small business, so I always say that by participating, we gain a lot more than we contribute in these FPT meetings because we get access to best practices in every jurisdiction in Canada. Just recently, British Columbia has outlined what they're doing with small business. They have a round table for small business in BC that they feel every province and territory can benefit from doing something similar, so this is something that we have access to on a regular basis.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 155-18(2):
INUVIALUIT SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT-
IN-PRINCIPLE

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about Inuvialuit Day. Today, my questions are for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, the Inuvialuit are negotiating a self-government agreement with the GNWT in Canada. My question is: when was the agreement-in-principle signed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle was signed by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the federal government on July 22 2015 in Inuvik. With the signing of the Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle, the parties are actively working towards the timely conclusion of a final Inuvialuit self-government agreement.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my second question is: what is included in the agreement-in-principle?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I will try to cover that in a few short sentences. The signing of the Inuvialuit Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle marks an important step on the road towards Aboriginal self-government for the Inuvialuit. The agreement-in-principle serves as the foundation for the negotiation of a final Inuvialuit self-government agreement. The agreement-in-principle deals with various matters such as culture and language, health, social services, education, economic development, justice, and taxation. It also describes the Inuvialuit Government and its roles and responsibilities, the structures of the Inuvialuit Council, and the relationship the Inuvialuit Government will have with Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my third question is: what does the implementation of the agreement-in-principle mean for the GNWT Inuvialuit beneficiaries and Inuvialuit living outside the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Implementing the agreement-in-principle means that the parties will complete the negotiation of the final self-government agreement and that all of the necessary arrangements and agreements that need to be in place before the effective date of the agreement are worked out and agreed to by all of

the parties. The agreement-in-principle sets out the structure of the Inuvialuit Government, an exclusive Aboriginal self-government that will serve and represent Inuvialuit citizens and deliver government programs and services to Inuvialuit in the Western Arctic region.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my final question is: how do the agreement-in-principle and current negotiations uphold the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples? Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier this week, the successful conclusion of modern treaties and self-government agreements can be seen as the ultimate expression of free prior and informed consent among partners. The Government of Canada's recent adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an encouraging and tangible demonstration of the federal government's renewed commitment to Canada's Aboriginal people.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 156-18(2):
COMMUNITY WILDLAND FIRE PROTECTION
PLANS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are a follow up to my Member's statement for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. As I mentioned in my Member statement, in 2014, the community of Fort McPherson put in a proposal for the fire break for the community, as it is in the approval process. Then the NWT was hit with record-breaking fires that year. I would like to ask the Minister: what is the status of work towards building a fire break in Fort McPherson? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to look into that particular community for the Member and get back to him on what the status is for the Fort McPherson fire break. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know the latest NWTAC's meeting as well, they're in full support of preparing all our communities for with fire breaks and doing their part as well. I'd also like to ask the Minister: Tsiigehtchic's 2010 community wildland fire

protection plan recommends a building of a new break. What is the status of that project as well?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and same with that particular one. Wildland fire protection plans are a shared responsibility in Northwest Territories. They are jointly with the Department of Municipal... MACA, ENR, and also the local community governments, so I'll have to confer with my colleague and see what the status is on that and with the local government.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the department for reinstating the fire crew in Tsiigehtchic. It was out of commission for a few years. It started last year, but people are working there once again, and I would like to thank them. I would also like to ask the Minister, how is the department using this unusual quiet month to prepare the rest of the fire season?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: We have ongoing efforts to train and maintain our equipment and personnel for the fire season, so it's an ongoing effort that is continually working throughout the seasons. Like I said in my Minister's statement earlier today, we have taken the opportunity to send a number of our personnel to Alberta to help in their wildfire season, so it's a significant contribution that the Government of the Northwest Territories has done to help Alberta. We continue to work on them on a daily basis.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister: will the community of Fort McPherson have to submit another proposal or will the department just act on the proposal that they had in 2014? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have stated earlier, I will have to confer with MACA and the local government to see where we are at on that process and have a look at it.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 157-18(2):
SMALL COMMUNITY FUNDING IN NEW BUILD
CANADA PLAN

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should ask this question to the Minister of ENR, but I'll address it to the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Yesterday the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs did a Minister's statement about the Federal Infrastructure Funding

Program for the NWT community governments. It was great to hear the department was able to access the small community funds which is part of the New Building Canada Plan: Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component. Mr. Speaker, thank God, lots of words, can the Minister please provide this House on what the definition of a small community is according to the New Building Canada Plan: Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know there are seven of us over here, right? Mr. Speaker, the definition of a small community, as defined by the federal government under the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component and Small Communities Fund, is communities with a population of under \$100,000... or 100,000 people. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: I was getting excited, there. \$100,000, I don't think we could afford to use this program at all. I thank the Minister for that answer. As a federal program, there is a cost-sharing component to access them. Can the Minister provide the House with: what is the cost-share for this program in the communities and/or GNWT?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will just clarify it's 100,000 people, not dollars, and the federal portion cannot exceed 75 per cent. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: The federal component, 75 per cent, I would like to ask the Minister, what is the communities' share and/or the GNWT's share?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: My apologies. The federal portion cannot exceed 75 per cent. The communities' share would obviously then be 25 per cent, but what a lot of communities will use is the money that we give them to leverage a lot of the federal funding. We give out \$28 million to communities to help with their infrastructure, so they are able to use that to leverage. That's their 25 per cent to leverage the other 75 per cent from the federal government.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I know that he's my favourite Minister. It seems this week I seem to be asking him a lot of the questions. Next week, I'll find another one, maybe. Well, finance is next week, too. Sorry, he'll be back.

---Laughter

In the Minister's statement, he spoke about how Municipal and Community Affairs will issue a call for

the funding applications in the coming weeks and will support community governance through the Canada application and approval process. Can the Minister please explain what the department means by supporting community governance with this process? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We provide support to the communities in a number of different ways. We help them with completing applications for the small community funding from co-ordinated work between our regional staff and headquarters staff. For larger projects, on a case-by-case basis, MACA can provide advice through helping communities hire project managers, reviewing designs with them, and RFPs, and then the regional managers of capital planning will also help communities complete their quarterly reports and claim forms. We provide a lot of assistance to the communities, and they are very appreciative of that. I always like to say, at the end of the day, the final decision, the ultimate decision, is the communities to make, and we will support them in any way that we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

QUESTION 158-18(2):
ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATION IN GNWT
PUBLIC SERVICE

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today in my Member's statement I talked about the Priority 1 candidates in the GNWT, or employees in the GNWT. I would like to ask the Minister of Human Resources, would the Minister re-examine all the programs, policies, and initiatives that are designed to increase the number of Priority 1 employees in the GNWT to ensure their efficiency? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Human Resources.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I get to the question, I would like to just correct an answer that I made yesterday. I said yesterday there was about 32 per cent Aboriginal representation in the public service. Today currently we're actually at 30.8, so it's actually less than I had indicated previously. I've been with the Department of Human Resources now for about six months, and I have actually already directed the department to begin looking at a number of the programs that are available. For example, the Aboriginal Management Development Program is targeted at senior management in the public service, but we know there are a lot of individuals, Aboriginal individuals, at lower levels who want to transition up but going from an officer level to a manager level may not be appropriate. I've already asked, or

rather directed, them to begin work on seeing how we can broaden those programs out to meet our needs. I've also directed the department to do some research for me on the effects of affirmative action since it came into place. Have we actually got any results by having an affirmative action program that is more passive and based on hiring as opposed to something that is more active? I've already asked the department to begin that research, and once I get that information, I'd love an opportunity to sit down with committee and go through some of the details. We have a number of programs out there that are available where affirmative action applies, such as regional recruitment, the corrections training. Some departments are doing some very specific things. We are looking at these programs and, once we got more data, as I said, I'd love to sit down with committee and have a heart-to-heart on how we can move forward to improve the results around affirmative action in our government.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to thank the Minister for that response. I would like to know if the Minister is prepared to re-examine the role of the advisory committee on aboriginal employment in the GNWT, I don't know if that is the exact right term, and then try to give that committee a greater role in ensuring that the Priority 1 candidates continue to increase in the GNWT. I think that's a very good committee, so I'd like to ask the Minister if he's prepared to give a greater role to that committee.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Aboriginal Employees Advisory Committee is made up of Aboriginal employees of the GNWT, and their role is to provide some guidance and advice to the Minister and the department on how to have a more responsive system, a system that is hiring more Aboriginal people, where appropriate. I do believe they have a pretty solid role; I think they're doing some good work. As we move forward and get some of the statistical information and have a better sense of where we are and how we have actually responded over time, I will have a conversation with committee and we can talk about the advisory committee and whether or not its role is appropriate or not, but I think we need to do a little bit more work first and have a discussion with committee before we make any of those types of decisions.

MR. BEAULIEU: I recognize that the Minister of Human Resources is not solely responsible for the Affirmative Action Policy. I would like to know if the Minister is prepared to have a regular role, maybe during committee or anything, on a regular basis conferring with other Ministers of other departments to ensure that each department has a human resources plan that also has the contents of what is needed in order to increase Priority 1 hires in the GNWT. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This is a conversation we do have at the Cabinet table. I regularly share the information on where we are with respect to affirmative action. That information is available to the Ministers by department. I also continually push the different programs and opportunities available to the individual departments, like the Regional Recruitment Program and things like the geographical hiring for non-statutory jobs. I am happy to continue to push this as a priority. I'm happy to help move this government towards a public service that represents the population that it serves. We do have challenges, Mr. Speaker. There are some departments that are doing better than others. There are some departments that are doing worse than others. Some departments have a significant number of statutory requirement positions where they need individuals with specific skills, which is why we must work closely with Education, Culture and Employment. The initiative that Education, Culture and Employment is currently pursuing, Skills 4 Success, will help us focus in on the types of jobs that we need to train and work towards. I think it needs to be a partnership between education as well as all the departments. I know the departments and the Ministers are eager to have a representative workforce as well, so we are working on those things.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask if the Minister would consider developing a new strategy for increasing Priority 1 employees across the GNWT public service, including the development of a human resources plan by each department. Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We do have the strategic plan, the 20/20, for the Government of the Northwest Territories, which is focused on building a public service that is responsive, respectful, but also representative of the population we serve. I will commit to working with each of the departments to try to find priorities and activities we can do within the individual departments. As far as individual human resources plans, I believe much of that work is already begun, or has existed in the past. We will look to see if we can revitalize any of that, but also need to focus in on: what is it really going to take to develop a workforce that is representative of the population? Our workforce isn't currently representative of the population. I think the number of individuals who identify themselves in the workforce is not 50 or 51 per cent Aboriginal. I think, once again, we really need to work closely with Education, Culture and Employment, target those jobs that are out there, and move forward with Skills 4 Success, and the government has to be a partner. We are a partner on Skills 4 Success,

which will help us develop the workforce and improve our rates here in the Government of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 159-18(2):
PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Can the Minister tell us the status of the development of the prescription drug monitoring program and when we might expect to see a recommendation that could be shared with the social development committee? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have developed a steering committee, as the Member mentioned in her Member's statement, to review options around prescription drug monitoring, and we've asked them to come back with recommendations on best approaches that would be appropriate here in the Northwest Territories. We do know that the most effective monitoring method needs to be consistent with the department's emerging suite of e-Health tools, such as electronic medical records. At this time, there have not been any final recommendations provided by the committee on how to improve or implement a prescription drug monitoring program. However, it is still our intent, and we are still moving forward with that work to help curb prescription drug abuse here in the Northwest Territories and help us advance the design of a monitoring program. However, given our current fiscal environment, it's not possible to state with any certainty when this will be able to move forward, but we are committed to moving forward and we are committed to getting that work done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for that answer. I appreciate that the electronic component is a significant dimension of this program. Can the Minister give us a brief description of how the linkage to the pharmacies across the territory would be achieved and how we will partner with the pharmacists in ensuring that the system works across the territory? To have their buy-in, not just the technology.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, at this time we don't actually have any recommendations from the committee. The membership on that steering committee does include the NWT Pharmacy Association, and we already collaborate with pharmacists across the territories on a number

of initiatives. They are a critical and a key component to making this a reality here in the Northwest Territories. We will continue to consult and work in collaboration with the pharmacies across the Northwest Territories to ensure that a program, when it is put in place, is both effective, efficient, and responsive to the needs of both clinicians, pharmacists, and most importantly the patients.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Minister, this question has to do with the project rolling forward. Obviously there will be a presentation of plans when those are available, and I'm wondering if there's any chance we can see them in the coming year's budget.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The budget is before the House. We are going through the budget. Hopefully we'll do Health and Social Services in the next couple of days. There is no money for the implementation of a prescription drug monitoring program in this budget, but we do have the steering committee. We do fund the work they're doing within existing resources, and that work is going to continue. We are still moving forward; we are still quantifying what a prescription drug monitoring program will cost. We are looking at how to incorporate e-Health and electronic medical records, and we are working with pharmacies to find out how we're going to make that linkage with them to make sure that the information is readily available but not contravening things like the Health Information Act.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My last question deals with amalgamating this initiative into the work of the new single territorial board. Can the Minister comment on whether, and how, the creation of the new board will affect delivery of the electronic medical records system? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Moving to a single authority should actually help us move this forward in a quicker manner because we will be able to work as a system as opposed to a fragmented group of authorities. With respect to planning for the system-wide EMR, it began years ago and implementation is well under way. Four authorities are currently using the EMR, representing a significant portion of the NWT populations; that's Yellowknife, Hay River, and Fort Smith, and system-wide resources have already been identified to help move that forward. We are hoping in 2016-17 to bring the Tulita, Sahtu, Deh Cho, and Beaufort-Delta in as well. This is a huge step for us and this is an ability for those involved in a circle of care of individuals to actually see the records, so that individuals will know what has been prescribed for an individual as long as they are in the circle of

care so that they don't over-prescribe. It doesn't link in the pharmacies, which is a key component of the prescription drug monitoring program. That is something that we need to do as well, and as I've indicated, the steering committee is going to provide us advice and guidance on that. We will cost it out, and we are working closely with the Pharmacy Association. Unfortunately, as I've said, given our current fiscal environment, I'm not in a position where I can actually say when we will be able to roll that out. Needless to say, though, we are still doing the work so that we can have a business case to present and discuss when appropriate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Sautu.

QUESTION 160-18(2): COLVILLE LAKE SOLAR POWER PILOT PROJECT

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned in my Member's statement, my question is directed to the Minister of the NWT Power Corporation with respect to the pilot project that is, I would probably say, completed and producing results here in the community of Colville Lake. As you know, it's a small-populated community similar to a few others in our NWT area. Visualizing and seeing the results, having spent a couple of years in my growing up days there and seeing and reading by candle light now to solar powered-generated LED light bulbs is really a vast and significant change here and contribution should be given to the previous Assembly in doing so. My question today is, after realizing the repeated benefits, are those benefits going to be reviewed and applied to other similar communities of that size? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to attend with the Premier, several weeks ago, and other staff from the Power Corporation and government officials, at the opening of the solar battery diesel plant, grand opening, official opening, in Colville Lake. There is a Solar Energy Strategy that the Government rolled out in 2012, I believe, and so we are committed to looking at other projects. It appears that there will always be a need, obviously, in view of where we live to have a combination of supplies, if I can put it that way, of perhaps diesel, or including diesel, but we wish to, in particular, look at the diesel communities and hopefully replace them with solar alternatives to as high an extent as we can. There are expenses involved. The plant in Colville Lake was not cheap, but it also built capacity for the Power Corporation going forward.

MR. MCNEELY: My second question is: what other communities are on the list on a move-forward basis?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We are, of course, as I mentioned previously looking at replacing diesel so that we are looking at the thermal communities. I could perhaps undertake to provide a list of communities that we're looking at in the future. I don't have that list in front of me now.

MR. MCNEELY: With the savings that we are realizing and seeing here, is the Power Corporation going to pass that savings on to the ratepayer or the customer? In addition to seeing the benefits that are being created by solar power in the small community of Colville then applied to the other communities and the recent reduction and restructuring of the board of directors of the corporation, that's an additional benefit as well. Are we going to see those benefits passed on to the consumer or customer, and are they going to realize in seeing that benefit on a monthly-end bill?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The prime objective of the Power Corporation is to supply customers with safe, reliable, cost-effective energy. As part of this, we are rolling out other projects that will assist in us arriving at that end. I will say, though, at least initially, that often solar projects are quite expensive and do not result in an immediate reduction in the amounts that people see at the end-of-month bills. But there are other benefits to solar. It reduces the emissions that go into the atmosphere, so again, the Power Corporation is intent on delivering power, whether it's diesel or other means, at the cheapest possible price that we can, and hopefully we will be able to pass benefits on to the ultimate customers. I don't see that reflected in bills in the immediate future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 161-18(2):
ANNUAL INCREASE TO INCOME ASSISTANCE
BENEFITS

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi. We've put one of the Ministers at the end of the row to work today, and I'd like to work with the other Minister opposite at the end of the row. Earlier today I did commend the government for the changes that they've made to income assistance, but I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment whether income assistance payments were increased or not on April 1, 2016, and why.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, the income assistance was not increased on April 1, 2016. However, they were increased on April 1, 2015. The reason we didn't look at the increase was, obviously, there was a federal announcement of the child benefits and we wanted to look at our regulations. The Member stated it very well in his Member's statement on why we were looking at delaying any type of increases. Currently the GNWT does have a northern market basket measure. We worked with the Governments of Yukon and Nunavut to create this. All other jurisdictions across Canada have a market basket measure that represents a modest basic standard of living in which they represent their income assistance. We've created one in 2014 for the northern territories, but that was the reason the federal government did make an announcement with the federal child benefit and we're looking at how we can benefit from that, and we are currently going through our regulations and changes right now.

MR. O'REILLY: I thank the Minister for his response and the efforts that his department is making, although I don't believe that an annual increase in income assistance necessarily should have been linked to things that were happening with other governments and sorting out things at our end. I'd like to ask the Minister if he is prepared to look into the issue of indexing income assistance payments to cost of living.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes. The department is always looking at reviewing our programs and services to make sure that they meet the basic needs of our clients in the Northwest Territories. Currently about 15 per cent of our department's budget is actually on income assistance. In 2014-15, we had over about 3,323 families on income assistance. With the low economic downturn throughout the Northwest Territories, it is increasing and on occasion we do bring supplementary appropriations before the House for approval to offset some of those costs. As I mentioned to the Member, the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut have created a northern market basket measure which was finalized in 2014. We do base that on when we were reforming or changing the level of benefits available from the income assistance programs. Last time it was done was April 1, 2015, and as I said, the department is always looking at reviewing our programs and services.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for helping me make the case for indexing of income assistance payments. I'm wondering, though, if he could commit to looking at this issue within the next year and bringing that back to the appropriate committee.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The Member did bring up these questions during business plans. We did direct the department to look at what other jurisdictions are doing from 2014. The Member did mention that Yukon is doing something similar, so we will look into what Nunavut and Yukon are doing in terms of indexing to the cost of living. I think our northern market basket measure is effective when we are reviewing our programs, but we will see what Yukon and Nunavut are doing and if they are in fact indexing their income assistance and programs.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi. I do appreciate the Minister's commitment on that and I look forward to sitting in on the committee work on that particular issue. I do note, though, that we have a number of other income support systems in place where payments are made to families and individuals. I'm wondering if the Minister could commit to review whether we should be incorporating indexing into all of those programs as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Obviously as our Minister of Finance said, the best social program is a job, having job creation. One thing that our department has done was create five positions, employment transition officers, and I think it's the first year that they've gone through it. We're trying to get people out of income assistance and relying on government and getting to the job workforce, and it's been very successful so far. We're hoping to continue to support people getting into employment. In terms of bringing income assistance, we are going to be going through an income assistance review and how we work through those, and we will be obviously taking the information from standing committee and I look forward to our discussions moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 162-18(2): OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIRST NATION LAND SURVEYORS

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I spoke about young people working as surveyors, and these young people had a very great opportunity in the early stages of their careers in working with mentors that help refine their careers and their work as surveyors. My questions today are for the Minister of Lands. Could the Minister provide some examples of survey work that is currently taking place in the NWT? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any ones off the top of my head. I mean, I will follow up on that and see if there is work that is ongoing right now, but I take the Member's point and I appreciate his comments about trying to get our young people interested in the trades, surveying and community property assessment and that. It's a thought that we've shared, and if we can encourage our young people to take those types of training, then there could be some opportunities available for them.

MR. NADLI: I'm glad the Minister didn't go on an obtuse tangent, but he committed to the idea of the point. Would the Minister agree or commit to work with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, municipalities, and other departments as required to find meaningful ways to recognize the work of First Nations surveyors in building our current communities? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I'll refrain from going on another tangent that the Member speaks of. I will be very diplomatic in my answers. Mr. Speaker, could I ask the Member to repeat that question please?

---Laughter

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that was a 360. Would the Minister agree to work with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, municipalities, and other departments as required to find meaningful ways to recognize the work of First Nations surveyors in building our current communities? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I could have just said yes in answer to his question. Yes, I will work with the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. We all know that he can be difficult to work with sometimes, but I will commit to working with him and seeing what kind of opportunities we can put together for people. I have been looking through a number of courses offered through other institutions and looking at what the requirements are, and there is no reason why we can't maybe look at making some of those opportunities available here. Again, the first part of it is to try to get our people across the Northwest Territories interested in this type of occupation. There will be opportunities for them.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for his reply. What is the Department of Lands prepared to do in terms of promoting careers in surveying and geomatics among First Nations youth, highlighting how spending time on the land can enhance future professional skills?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We started the process during this exchange, where we're promoting trying to get those interested in surveying to take up the trade. I think one of the first things we do is have to identify where some of our needs are for training. If we can identify those, and if there are opportunities for us to put some training programs together, work with Education, work with the School of Community Government and try to get some opportunities available. But I think, with the exchange we just had today, that's a good start in promoting the desire to get our people interested in the trade, and that way they would have a fairly good occupation where there always seems to be a demand for that type of trade. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

QUESTION 163-18(2): ACCESS TO FEDERAL FUNDING FOR HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister responsible for Addressing Homelessness announced various funding commitments related to the \$16.6 million in federal funding this government has received for housing. I have questions for her related to those announcements. Like the rest of the territory, Hay River has a growing problem with homelessness. Since Hay River does not have an emergency shelter, are we ineligible for any of the \$600,000 that was announced yesterday for semi-independent housing units within emergency shelters? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for Homelessness.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Homelessness is a serious issue within the whole Northwest Territories, and it's a priority of the 18th Legislative Assembly and a personal issue for myself, a professional issue, so I am committed to addressing homelessness during my tenure here. The \$600,000 specifically, though, is to work with the resident or the homeless shelters within the Yellowknife area because of the need, the amount of homeless people in the community. Once that is finished, then we would be looking to work within the other communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: I understand that Yellowknife is almost a magnet community for homelessness, so I understand there is a great need here. Could the Minister elaborate on the \$750,000 third-party social housing, the money going to social housing, third-party social housing providers? Who are these providers and what type of social housing are they providing, and is there any of that in Hay River?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I can't say directly if there's any in Hay River. I will get back to the Member on that question. My background is in Yellowknife, so third-party housing providers are things like Rock Hill or the Bailey House or Lynn's Place places, that provide social housing to the communities and that we support them as well.

MR. SIMPSON: I'd like to know: does Hay River meet the department's definition of "small community," thereby making it eligible to receive some of the benefits of the \$1.2 million being put towards single units to address small community homelessness that was announced yesterday?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Anything outside of Yellowknife, actually, meets the definition of "small communities." There are some projects that we're doing. There are things already in place, the Northern Pathways to Housing; the Small Community Homelessness Fund which gives food, et cetera; transitional supportive housing; public housing, everybody's aware of; Homelessness Assistance Fund. Then the Small Community Homelessness Fund, like I say, provides mostly meals, foods, and you can get, in the south it's up to \$10,000 and in the northern regions it's up to \$15,000.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, I would just like to ask who in the department is working within Hay River to develop a plan for homelessness, to address homelessness in Hay River. I'd like to be of any assistance I can. I'd like to offer that to the Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: My awareness, right now in Hay River we're working with the Small Community Homelessness Fund in providing support to the Hay River Soup Kitchen, the Hay River committee for people with disabilities and the Family Support Centre. As I said, once we have been strategic in what we're doing in the capital area, then we'll be reaching out to the communities. One thing I should have said also is that we are building small units within other communities in the North, so we're not only focusing on Yellowknife. We are taking a holistic approach.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address, day 3 of 7. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committee. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 54-18(2):
NWT OFFICE OF THE REGULATOR OF OIL AND
GAS OPERATIONS ANNUAL REPORT,
2015-2016

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled "NWT Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations Annual Report 2015-16." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 55-18(2):
UNW ELECTRONIC PETITION RESULTS - UNW
PEOPLE'S PETITION – BUDGET 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to file a document called "UNW Electronic Petition Results." This petition did not meet the standards to be submitted as a petition, so I'm submitting it as a document. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion of first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters with Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

MR. SIMPSON: I now call Committee of the Whole to order. Mr. Beaulieu, what is the wish of committee?

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to continue their consideration of the mains with the Department of Human Resources today.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Are we agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We've agreed to consider Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017, and we've agreed to begin consideration of the Department of Human Resources. I'll turn to the Minister responsible for the department for opening comments, Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to present the 2016-2017 main estimates for the Department of Human Resources, and I'll do my best to keep my remarks brief. Overall, the department's estimates propose a

decrease of \$680,000, which is about 2.8 per cent below the 2015-16 main estimates. These estimates limit non-program related expenditures and continue to support the long-term sustainability of the fiscal framework. In our role as a corporate service provider, \$4.5 million or about 19 per cent of the department's 2016-17 funding, is allocated for direct support to departments and agencies through programs to address hiring, development, and well-being of GNWT employees.

Highlights of the proposed estimates include:

- a reduction in compensation and benefits due to the elimination of three positions;
- a reduction in non-program related contracts.

The Department of Human Resources continues to provide leadership, direction, and support to the GNWT in all areas of human resource management, which ultimately helps to facilitate the achievement of government priorities by all departments. This includes:

- modernizing legislation and policy for the GNWT as it relates to the management of the public service; and
- offering effective recruitment, development, and retention of staff through quality GNWT-wide programs, services, and advice, including working towards a truly representative, inclusive workforce; and
- leading the government-wide initiatives for occupational health and safety.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. That does conclude my opening remarks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Usually we do take a break, so my witnesses aren't here. I'm happy to take the table and begin the discussions until the witnesses do arrive.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. What we can do is just take a break and then, when the witnesses arrive, we can continue.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Members. I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order. To start off with, thank you Mr. Minister. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I would.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort the witnesses into the Chamber, please. Would the Minister please introduce his witnesses.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Bronwyn Watters, who is the deputy minister of Human Resources, and on my right, Michelle Simpson, who is the director of corporate affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): We will now proceed to consider the detail for the Department of Human Resources. I will move on to this one. We will defer departmental summary and review the estimates by activity summary, beginning at page 210. Human Resources, active position summary, information item, do we have any questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think this is the right section. I'm just wondering if our witnesses can tell us what's happening with safe disclosure legislation, which is also known as whistle-blower protection. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thanks, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we do have a safe disclosure policy in place that was negotiated with the UNW, and they are part of the review committee on that. When that agreement was put in place, we did indicate that we were going to move forward with some safe disclosure legislation here in the Northwest Territories. We did not move forward with that in the last government. We were monitoring the effectiveness of the safe disclosure policy that we did put in place, and we had very, very few individuals who actually took up and utilized that policy. It doesn't mean we don't need the legislation, and what we are doing moving forward is we are incorporating the safe disclosure legislation within the new Public Service Act which is being worked on currently in the Department of Human Resources. It will all be part of one act as opposed to two separate acts.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. When can we expect to see the amendments to the Public Service Act come forward? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is a significant piece of legislation requiring a significant amount of work. It will be done in the life of this government. We don't anticipate getting it in front of the House until 2018, which will allow us the time required to get this act

into a modern state. In the meantime, with respect to safe disclosure, we do have the safe disclosure policy that was designed in cooperation with UNW for individuals who wish to disclose information or have concerns about things they see within the public service, so 2018.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. We'll look forward to that in 2018. I had one other matter I wanted to pursue. It's the Safe Advantage program, which I think is run through our Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. I think, overall, GNWT has had some problems with our compliance and ratings and have had to pay a number of fines in the past as a result of, I guess, our not very good performance. What kind of assurance can the Minister provide? Or tell us what's happening in terms of the Safe Advantage program. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we are committed to a safe workplace for all of our staff. Our people are our most valuable asset, and we need to make sure that they are working in safe environments. To that end, the Department of Human Resources does provide assistance to all the departments who have established individual occupational health and safety committees throughout most of the work sites and most of the departments through the GNWT, most of the departments, not necessarily every work site. I can tell you that through the Safe Advantage program there have been years where we have got fines. There was, when the program was first put in place, we got fined a number of years in a row. The fines are dependent on a couple of things. They are dependent on our claims history over a given year. They are dependent upon how we respond to a questionnaire that is provided to us, and our claims history, and then also a site visit or a telephone call to a location. I can tell you that for this year we have passed, and there is no claim or no fine going to be levelled against the Government of the Northwest Territories. I believe last year we were also fine free. But we have had years where we have been fined, and this is something that the Department of Human Resources as well as every other department in the Government of the Northwest Territories must stay on top of, must ensure that we do have the safe work sites that we want for our employees.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's certainly good news to hear that we passed this year and that there were no fines because, of course, as we want to set a good example as one of the main employers in the Northwest Territories and particularly as a public government. I presume that there's some sort of report that will come through this evaluation. Can the Minister commit to provide that report to the House? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we do get a report and a summary from the WSCC, who is administering the Safe Advantage program. I can say that this year we actually did pretty good with respect to our results. We compiled its March 2015-16 management questionnaire and submitted a response: 92 per cent on part one and 100 per cent on part two. We did pretty good and we did all right on the interview, which resulted in no fine. We will provide the report, when we get it, to committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, I think it's good that the report will be provided to committee, but I guess I'm hoping that the Minister will commit to table the document in the House. I think we want to show that we're leading by example, so I'd ask if he could table the report in the House. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, before I commit to tabling that document, I would like to obviously talk to the Minister responsible for the WSCC. It's really their report to table, but given that our information's in there I will certainly have a conversation with the Minister responsible for the WSCC.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Any further questions? I see none. Human Resources, directorate, operations expenditures summary, activity total, \$4,547,000 on page 212. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I guess everybody wants to agree to get out of here earlier.

---Laughter

Sorry, I must apologize to the Minister. I have a few questions on this page. Policies and communications, you didn't have any money at all in the last two fiscal years, but you have a \$975,000

increase in this. Can you explain the rationale to this please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in complying with the information required in these different main estimates, we have done some reorganization to try and make things a little bit more clear. You'll notice that the corporate affairs line was significantly larger in previous years. We have done some reorganization to make it a little bit more effective and a little bit more clear. That \$975,000 was in that area previously in corporate affairs.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. Directorate, there was a \$231,000 decrease in it. Was that also part of the policy and communication or was some savings elsewhere? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you look onto page 213 you'll also notice that there's a position reduction within the directorate, and one of the positions that was eliminated was the assistant deputy minister of Human Resources. Some of those costs are directly related to the reduction of that position.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to the expenditure category, computer hardware and software, you only have \$6,000 in that area, and there's \$105,000 the previous year, so we're not expecting any upgrades or new computers or anything like that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, for the specifics on that detail I will go to Michelle, or Ms. Simpson, my apologies.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Simpson.

MS. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In previous years, the department was totally evergreened and all of our systems are up to date, so funds were internally reallocated this year to cover compensation and benefits because the evergreening for all of the computer systems was done in previous years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Simpson. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: My last question potentially on this page. I notice in travel more than 50 per cent is cut, so could they explain what the reduction in travel is and how this cost-saving measure is going to be implemented. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the budget in the area was reduced to reflect historical expenditures, what we actually spend in that area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess then historical, but the head increase was \$86,000 previous years, revised and main, so how is it historical if this was the main... like the budget? Just I'm a little confused in this matter. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm not sure what the rationale was for the increase in the main estimates in 2015-16. We'll have to go to Michelle for some detail on that. But what I was indicating is we've reduced the amount to what we actually spend and traditionally spend over time in this particular area. We may have had a spike in one year. I'm not sure what the rationale was there, I wasn't around at that time, but our traditional expenditures, what we actually spend, is about \$35,000.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): No further questions. Calling Human Resources, directorate, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$4,547,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Moving onto page 213, Human Resources, directorate, active positions, information item. Any questions? Mr. Thompson, go ahead.

MR. THOMPSON: I agree to ask a question. The Ministers talked about the assistant deputy minister being removed, was this part of the cost reductions or is this part of retirement or what was it? Was it planned or not planned? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the elimination of that position is part of the reduction exercise. The position was vacant and has been vacant for some time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Any further questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As it was in directorate and it appears to be here in labour relations, over the last couple of years there seems to be an increase in contract services and just quickly jumping ahead in management recruitment services, there seems to be a significant increase under contract services. I wonder if the Minister can please give an explanation to the House as to why the department's overall contract services appear to be going up and maybe we can get a description on what Human Resources requires contract services for. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if we were to take the main estimates and spread them out over a long period of time, you would notice in the Department of Human Resources in this particular area every four years or so you'll see an increase in the amount of contract services. It is directly related to collective bargaining. The Government of Northwest Territories is currently involved in a number of collective bargaining discussions with the UNW, the NWTTA, the medical association, although it's not completely related here, but those costs will spike every couple of years as those negotiations come to the end of their term and we have to get the experts, the lawyers, and others that are going to help us through the negotiating process. That is what that is specifically for. They will likely go down if and when we conclude our negotiations for a couple years depending on the length of the negotiated terms, and then they might spike back up again.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne. Questions? I see none. Moving on to page 215. Human Resources, labour relations, operations expenditures summary, activity total, \$3,310,000. Questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I agree to ask more questions. In regards to your fees and payments, I notice a reduction, almost a 60 per cent reduction, in your amount of money here. What is the rationale for that?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the fees and payments program management budget were re-profiled to support increased compensation and benefits, so you'll see a slight increase in that area. There was also a decrease to the budget which reflects the historical expenditures once again what we're budgeted for compared to what we spent. We were moving to have these more in line with what we have spent traditionally or historically.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Historically, is that over the number of years or just last year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The department looked at past actuals over a number of years to try to determine what we're actually spending as opposed to what was budgeted and there was some variances, so we've moved them down accordingly.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I notice about an \$18,000 increase in travel in this one. In the other section there was reduction in travel, so could the Minister explain why the increase in travel in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is the division that does investigations and works with the UNW on resolving grievances and whatnot, so there is some travel and there's also a requirement to do some site investigations. Our positions and our employees are throughout the Northwest Territories so these individuals do have to travel. In reviewing the actuals, we did notice that this is one of the areas under travel where are numbers were higher than they were, say, in the directorate, so we've had to increase it accordingly in order to accommodate the

investigations and other work that this division is doing.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I understand this correctly, the actuals are... We're saying travel has been more in this area throughout the years because I mean I'm looking at actuals in 2014 at 38, they almost doubled in 2015-16 and now 2016-17 we're at another \$18,000, so I'm seeing a steady increase in here. Is that just because of the work that's been involved? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes and we do see a rise in the number of investigations and complaints that need to be investigated which is driving our need to travel out and do worksite and workplace investigations and site inspections. With the more investigations, the more travel.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: In regards to investigations, is there a reason for the increase in it? Is it just people more aware or is it better promotion on your guys' part or what's the rationale for this?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are a number of reasons, but the reason we think that we've seen the greatest increase is the Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace Policy that we have put in has resulted in a number of files and investigations that we need to do increasing. It's a fairly new policy, new program, and I think we expected some ramp up as we're implementing it and we have seen that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just with this policy, do you guys submit a report to committee on not the specific incidents but the number of incidents and what the costs are and what it involves? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I don't believe that we have provided a report but there's no reason we can't so I will commit to providing committee with a summary, a written summary, and if you want to

have a meeting we can do that, too, but I'll start with a written summary to committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Further questions. I see none. Human Resources, labour relations, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$3,310,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Moving on, page 216, Human Resources, labour relations, active positions, information item. Any questions?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. Page 218, Human Resources, management and recruitment services, operation expenditures summary, activity total, \$4,734,000. Questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think I heard a mouse in the Chamber squeaking something from over there.

---Laughter

I think the Minister wants to take an early weekend, but I think this is the place where I should be asking questions about staffing appeals. What I find difficult in this process is we've already been through the business plans, there has been some really good discussion back and forth, and then we get a completely different document that I guess is not really as detailed or well laid out as the business plans, but we're trying to probe and get some issues onto the table. It's not always clear to me where they arise in the main estimates, so that might be an observation I offer in my reply to the budget address. The issue of staffing appeals, it's my understanding that staffing appeals, the numbers have been going down, but also the length of time that an appeal can be filed has also been reduced in regulations. There's a whole number of reasons why people are excluded from even appealing a staffing action, so I guess the issue is one of fairness. How is the department looking at the issue of fairness in staffing appeals, particularly by parties? How many may not be government employees because I think we want to make sure that we have a robust system of hiring folks and that people don't feel that there's bias in any way in the hiring process. But if you're not even eligible to file an appeal or you have a very restricted right to file an appeal, people start to lose, or could lose, confidence in the hiring process itself. I'm wondering if the Minister can just tell me how the

department has considered these issues in the context of staffing appeals. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Staffing appeals give candidates with appeal rights an opportunity to be heard if they feel that a procedural error has been made during the competition process that might negatively affect how they were considered as a candidate. With respect to independence, the staffing appeals are reviewed by an independent staffing review officer who is appointed by the Minister of Human Resources and is not a government employee. Amendments made by the staffing appeal regulations which are outlined in the Public Service Act clearly on page one of appendix, well it's on page one of the regulations, they clearly outline who is eligible and who is not eligible for appeal rights. These amendments to the staffing appeal regulations came into force on July 15, 2015. The changes were expected to improve the timeliness and efficiency of the staffing process and previous timelines in the staffing process allowed I think it was 10 days response time when a candidate was notified by e-mail or fax. Due to the immediate nature of e-mails or faxes, candidates can immediately receive or respond to staffing appeals. Changes to the regulations now require candidates to appeal rights within five days instead of 10 days recognizing technology and the ease of communications. Amendments were also provided to provide additional clarity on if and when a staffing review officer may actually dismiss an appeal, but the changes did not affect an individual's ability to appeal. GNWT employees who are applying to GNWT jobs have the right to appeal, Indigenous Aboriginal candidates have the right to appeal; it isn't just GNWT employees. There's a few other criteria that I can't remember off the top of my head.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I appreciate the explanation. I'm all for efficiency, but I don't want that at the expense of fairness. It's my understanding is that the grounds and who can actually file an appeal are very, very limited which I think can lead to issues of credibility of our hiring process. What is the department doing in terms of the fairness of staffing appeals to ensure that we can maintain credibility and confidence in our staffing processes? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the parties who have appeal rights

include any person eligible for priority consideration under the Affirmative Action Policy and any current GNWT employee. There are some scenarios where appointments to positions may not be appealed under regulations and those are clearly outlined within the policy and regulations. That's a person with a staffing priority status under the Staff Retention Policy, any position considered an executive position as determined by the job evaluation system, and teacher and/or principal jobs. With respect to fairness, I mean we want to be fair, we want to be open. Anybody can apply on jobs, but there are some limitations on who can appeal. And I mean we'll certainly continue to look at this to make sure that it's fair and reasonable, and I'd certainly like any insight the Member might have, but at this time, I mean we weren't going to do any additional review of the appeal process given that a review was done in the last Assembly and came into force in July 2015.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll take the Minister up on his offer and put together some thoughts on this and pass those back to him because I think there are ways that we could ensure that we can maintain confidence in our staffing process by ensuring that we have a fair appeal process. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Minister for being so open and transparent.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm looking forward to that conversation, but in light of that conversation I will point out that most of the employers throughout Canada, in fact many places throughout the world, don't have appeal rights at all. This is something that we felt was appropriate given things like our Affirmative Action Policy and our desire to work with Northerners to employ Northerners. Most employers don't have an appeal mechanism at all for job competitions and we have I think in many ways gone quite a distance to work with residents of the Northwest Territories. We're always looking for ways to improve obviously and I look forward to that conversation.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thought Mr. Beaulieu was ahead of me. We're on page 218, correct? I just want to make sure because yesterday I was a couple pages ahead sometimes. In regards to contract services, I see a huge increase from \$8,000 to \$350,000. Can the Minister explain why there's this huge jump and discrepancy

in money since it was \$8,000 last year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, there are three positions being eliminated within the Department of Human Resources, all of them were vacant, and they are a result of the reduction. As a result of eliminating some of these positions, especially the area around strategic human resources, we've had to do some reorganization within the department. The re-allocation of the marketing and communication budget from the strategic human resources section, which was about \$212,000, as well as some internal re-allocation of budget from purchase services to better align us with historical expenditures in this area have resulted in that change. That's a matter of taking out of the strategic human resources section, put it here because those positions have been eliminated and some adjustments based on historical expenditures.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I get this correct, we lost three positions, now we're reallocating money here, and are these contract services doing the work of these three positions or is it other contracts that are going to be done? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I guess I didn't explain it clearly. The positions have been eliminated, that's part of our reduction exercise, but some of the programs and services they're delivering continue to exist, but because those positions don't exist and that section has been changed, those services are now going to be delivered in a different area. They're now going to be delivered in management and recruitment services. The dollars that are coming out of the \$212,000 are part of the marketing and communications budget, not the staff salary budget but the services or the programs they provided.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regards to fees and payments, it's dropped by \$19,000. You know, it was up by 18 and then it's down by 19, is there a rationale for this?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is going to sound like a really repetitive answer, but in this particular area we really dug deep into the department trying to figure out what we're actually spending, and compare it to what our budgets were, and realign our budgets with actual expenditures rather than historic budgets. And this is one of the areas that, you know, we felt we needed to align in order to capture the fact that some of the fees and payments that we're making out there with respect to some of our software, our human-resource-specific software, have escalated and changed over time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This purchased services the reduction to 135, is this actual historical or is this a reduction in services? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Sorry, I'm a little confused. I thought we were talking about the fees and payment line. Which line are we talking about?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, yes, I've now moved on. Sorry, Minister. You gave me the answer and I accepted that answer and so now I've gone onto purchase services. I notice that there is a huge decline that's actually more than 50 per cent. Is this historical or is this part of the reduction process? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm going to go to Michelle on this one for the detail. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Simpson.

MS. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is part of the reallocation of the marketing communications budget from strategic human resources, so the contract services went up to 212 as the Minister indicated, and then we had internal re-allocations for the purchased services budget to move up into the contract services as well. The answer is both. It is part of historical expenditures, as well as re-aligning some of the funding to re-allocate those services into an area management recruitment services from strategic human resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Simpson. Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: We're good.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Okay, Next we have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to just dig a little deeper into the appeal process. I recognize that the appeal process is appealing procedural errors, but many of the people that actually launch the appeal thing to appeal process is something else, sometimes like perhaps maybe feeling that they weren't being treated fairly or that there is a bias in the process because the individual that just happens to be the casual that comes out to be the best candidate for the job most times which is kind of indicating to us that maybe if you get your foot in the door and you learn a little bit about the job you can probably beat everybody else in the job. When there's an appeal requested and individuals launch an appeal the officer looks at only the procedure. Usually after this many competitions the government's not making procedural errors, so most times the decision is upheld and individuals lose the appeal. I want to know if there's going to be any system in place moving forward that looks at things other than just the appeal process, I mean, sorry, just the procedural process.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the appeal process is fairly strict and I mean fairly thorough as the Member's indicating and it is based on procedure. I think the Member's talking about something else and I don't believe at this time we're putting any mechanisms to have that discussion. However, having said that, I'm a strong advocate and I'm encouraging the Members to have their constituents who approach them who have concerns about, you know, their inability to get a job with the Government of Northwest Territories to get in touch with some of the individual client service managers that exist within the Department of Human Resources. These individuals are prepared and ready and willing and able to give advice on interviews and how the interview process works and the Government of the Northwest Territories helps them understand the types of things that they might want to do to be prepared. They are also available to give some advice and guidance on resume writing, on the types of things that they'll be looking for during the competitions, the staffing officers and the hiring departments were looking for in resumes so that people can be better prepared. Our client service team and managers are happy to meet with people and give that advice. We want to work with Northerners to

employ as many, but as far as the appeal process it is a procedural review.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman. I recognize that that is the role of the appeal officers to look at potential procedural errors. What I'm asking is, is there anything aside from procedural errors that makes the appeal process almost redundant? If you're only looking at procedural errors and you're not looking at anything outside of that, this appeal process is... You know, as the Minister indicated we may be the only jurisdiction to have that type of process because it's probably not effective because it looks at just procedures. What I want to know is are there any potential or future plans to look at an individual that applies for a job that appears to be a Priority 1 candidate that appears to have all of the qualifications that are laid out in the job ad, and then the individual puts their name in and they lose the job, so they appeal it and they said procedurally everything was fine. But they're not looking at the fact that maybe he was the most qualified person for the job but yet was not considered. That's what I'm asking is there anything outside of just this procedural appeal that could give people an opportunity that should have been getting jobs to get those jobs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if a P1 candidate applies for the job and is the most qualified and isn't offered the job, it would have to be based on something, either procedural error or the person did not pass a component of the competition. The person would have the appeal rights if they failed the competition or failed the interview. I am not sure what the Member is getting at. We want to be fair. We want to be open. We want to be transparent. We are encouraging people to be ready. We are happy to help them be ready. When it comes to a competition, every individual still has to meet the qualifications, pass the interview, and in turn be offered the job. I am not sure exactly what the Member is getting at. If the Member could maybe be a little bit more clear and help me understand that, it would be great.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: What I am saying is a qualified Priority 1 candidate goes to interview and does fail the interview, it has nothing to do with the procedure of it, went through all of the procedure, but the individual is feeling that whether it was the

written assignment that, according to the individual, was not given a fair assessment on the written assignment, or that during the interview the individual was not considered to be a good candidate by the people doing the interview and got a failing grade. A person that doesn't have a priority status wins the job over the person. The person is feeling that that is what the issue is. It has nothing to do with procedures. Where could that individual go to launch any sort of appeal?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I think I have a better understanding. I think the Member might be talking about systemic barriers or other things that may exist within the system and how we work to address that. We do have an Affirmative Action Policy that all departments are bound to utilize and apply. We do have the appeal process where an individual, if an error in process has occurred, they can appeal. I would suggest that if the Member is aware of situations where somebody is claiming that they were not given the credit that they deserve because they are P1, that is a discussion that I would like to have with the Member. If he has some individuals that he can identify, I would certainly be willing to have that conversation with him.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Rather than bringing it up for a political sense and discussing it with the Minister, there is nothing in place, then, to ensure that Priority 1 candidates applying for jobs, who are qualified, are given every opportunity into getting a job. Right now, as I understand it, whether you are a qualified Priority 1 candidate or not, you go through the steps that... I cannot talk about specific cases here, but I will talk directly to the Minister about the specific cases. If a Priority 1 individual is going to apply for a job where there is actually an individual filling that position as a casual, that is not a Priority 1 candidate, often that person gets the job. I don't want to start drawing upon the numbers of times I have had that happen with me since I became an MLA nine years ago. What I am saying is, is there any way of protecting or is there anything in the system that will allow a Priority 1 candidate to be given preference because this is what this is about. Affirmative action is about preferential hiring. Is there any way that this type of appeal process would pick up anything that the candidates coming forward feel is unfair treatment, not necessarily procedural error treatment, but unfair treatment, or not, given the full opportunity to present themselves as a good candidate for this job? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I am going to recognize a reply to that, and the ten minutes is up. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair there are a couple of things I would like to talk to. There is the allegation that some departments are utilizing casuals. I may be not paraphrasing this exactly right. If I don't nail it, I apologize. It sounds like the Member is suggesting that casual hires are being used to train individuals who then get jobs, as opposed to the other candidates who might be applying, which may not be fair. I have heard similar things. It is anecdotal.

What I will commit to do is have the department do a bit of a review over the past year or two. Going back further than that might be difficult, identifying how many casuals in turn ended up directly in positions, through the competition process, that they had been occupying as casual. That will start giving us some numbers and start maybe taking this from anecdote to reality, at which point we can have a more fulsome discussion. I apologize if I missed it, but I think what the Member is talking about to some degree is about some of the systemic barriers that may exist within our system. Individuals may in fact meet the criteria on paper, but they may then result in not passing a competition, not passing a written assignment, not passing the oral portion of an interview. It may be based on systemic barriers. We are currently reviewing job descriptions and how we write job descriptions to try to remove some of the systemic barriers that have been inadvertently placed within our job descriptions to make them a little bit easier to understand and assess. The catch is interviews are based on what is in job descriptions. If we start removing some of those barriers that we put in, it should make it more competitive and fair for individuals who are applying on jobs who might have language barriers or other challenges they are being faced with.

We are also constantly looking for ways to improve our interview process to recognize some of these systemic barriers, language being one of them, that sometimes can be an impediment to passing an interview. As a territory that supports eleven official languages, that is not something that we want to accept or tolerate. We are looking for ways to improve our interview process. At the end of the day, individuals have to be assessed on something. The resumes that are submitted are just one tool. They have to be interviewed. They have to, in some cases, do written assignments. People do have to pass it. If they are not passing, we need to understand why. We are trying to break down some of those systemic barriers that we may have inadvertently created over time. As far as the appeal process, it also has to be based on something. It can't be based on opinion. It has to be

based on something that is structured, which is why the appeal process itself is based on procedures. I am happy to work with committee to try to find ways to break down some of these systemic barriers we may have inadvertently created. I am not sure that an opinion portion of an appeal mechanism makes any sense as far as the structure.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Questions? Seeing none. Human Resources, management and recruitment services, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$4,734,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. Moving on. Page 219. Human Resources, management and recruitment services, active positions, information item. Any questions? Seeing none.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. Page 221. Human Resources, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$3,799,000. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just five or six agreeable questions. The first one is when we talk about human resources planning. Has the government looked at talking about summer employment? I realize each department has priority or has to make the decision. But can the Minister please provide a commitment or a working tool so that it becomes part of our mandate or our policy that we will look at employing summer students and that we have a goal in each department and every department is given a goal so that they can fulfil that mandate so that we see summer students come back so that we show that we care about them and that we want them to continue on to get educated and come back north. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Department of Human Resources helps facilitate summer student hires. Ultimately, the hire of any summer student is the responsibility of the individual departments, as the Member has indicated. To help facilitate the hires so that the departments know who the students are, know where they are, know what types of skills they have, the Department of Human Resources does facilitate the application of our summer students into the summer student employment program. This is where all students can come and be registered. As of June 2nd, we have 562 students registered and 217 students hired, which is a little down from where we were in previous years. The department

also does provide a couple of different programs. One of them is the progressive experience program. One of them is the related experience program, which does provide a little bit of financial assistance to the departments to actually do some of the summer student hiring to help them offset the cost. Departments are not funded for summer students. In order to hire summer students, they have to rely on some of the money that they may have in the budgets or as a result of vacancies or other things that are happening. Their ability to hire is limited by budgets and whether or not they have some vacancies over time that can actually help them carry some of the students. A number of months ago, I had a conversation with the Premier, who indicated that he would like the departments to at least meet the types of targets they had last year. On his behalf, I did send out an e-mail to the Ministers and the departments encouraging them to meet the numbers that we attained last year. Yes, we are still a little down, but hiring isn't over. Earlier today, the Premier sent a follow-up letter to all of the Ministers and the departments encouraging them to meet their targets in recognition that we are a little bit behind. Cabinet is aware. Cabinet is pushing the departments to hire. The departments have to make the decisions based on what they actually have available as far as money. We provide a little bit of money through those two programs, and we have a complete database of all students who are available. If they are looking for students, and they say I want students with this type of skill, we will send them the resumes based on affirmative action of individuals who meet those particular skill sets.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for the well thought out and well-planned answer. All that information, I am well aware of. I understand the progressive funding out there and the department does a really good job. However, I would really, really love to see this government work, and you take the lead, that the other departments actually have a number in place, and we have the money put aside so that we can hire our summer students so when they come back, they are guaranteed work, so they can continue to go on to school. I understand that through ECE, we have an increase in funding for their tuition and that. It still costs a lot of money to go to school. I am hoping that this department can take the lead and come up with a mandate, working with the Premier, because the Premier is excited about this. I know in the past I have had other Premiers stand in this House and make it a mandate that you will hire students. I am asking the government, you as the lead department, to take this on your own or take the lead on it and work with the departments to

earmark money in the budgets so that we can hire summer students. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Mr. Chair, once again, we have a significant number of students who apply. Last year, we had 612 students apply, and we were able to hire 341 of them by the end of what is considered the summer students hire period. We are committed to hiring as many as we can. We do have money. There is money. It is not all coming from the departments through their vacancies. Through the progressive experience program, we have enough money to fund up to 80 positions. This is exactly what the Member is talking about. Through the progressive experience program, we bring back the same individuals who do the same jobs on a regular basis in order to build upon their education and continue to consolidate learning in a particular area. We have enough funding for 80 positions. To all the departments, funding provides a wage subsidy of \$330 a week per place of employment to a maximum of \$5,000 per student a year. The departments do have to come up with the additional money. The related experience is a little more focused. It is actually focused on 24 placements for Health and Social Services authorities to provide a wage subsidy of \$525 per week for placement to a maximum of \$8,400 or 600 hours. This is mostly for individuals that are pursuing health careers. The intent there is also to bring back the individuals throughout their education, so they have an opportunity to consolidate learning for their education. We are putting a good pot of money into supporting the departments already. On top of that, the departments do fund the remainder through their internal budgets. There isn't a pot of money just for hiring summer students outside of progressive or related experience programming. If the committee members feel this is something we need to invest in, this is a discussion we need to have as an Assembly as to whether or not putting dollars in there is something that we should be doing or whether we should continue just trying to utilize the programs that exist. I am sure that Cabinet is listening. I am listening. Happy to have the conversation if this is a priority of the Legislature.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am aware of my time here, so I will try to be succinct with my comments. Great job with the 80 with the progressive experience. Even a better job with the 24 with related experience, which is in the health care system, which is great. Well done. But we are missing other fields, and we are missing this

opportunity. I am not talking about all students coming back north. I am talking about our P1s, and our P2s, which are our priorities as government. That is what we should be looking at doing. I am hoping that we can hear something from you guys that we can talk about it. I am hoping Cabinet listens and hears and the Premier hears the message so that we can get this done. You have shown a lot of leadership, and I applaud you for that. We are talking 104 positions, which is important. We are still short, and I am trying to see that the government looks at our youth, which is our future. We want these people back here. If we don't make the incentive to bring them back... I know that ECE has done some stuff, which I applaud them for that, but we want to get our youth back here. Waiting to get them back here is to respect them and give them the employment and show them that they have done well going to school. I am hoping that you can do that. Can you provide us with a breakdown of the communities, number of jobs that are there? I know you have made that are available in the past. Can we get that information to committee? I think you say you do that every Monday, but can we get those things to us broke down into our communities as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Minister, I am going to allow a reply. The ten minutes is up.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I have committed to getting those numbers. I can certainly have it provided by communities throughout the Northwest Territories. Sometimes the numbers are one or two, so we want to be cautious about confidentiality, but we will get those numbers to you: as of June 2nd, 562 applications, 217 hires. There are still some offers out there that aren't fully counted in that. I do hear the Member. I know the Ministers hear the Member. We have to think about magnitude here. There has to be work too. There has to be meaningful work for these summer students to do. Hiring summer students and not having them do anything that is going to help them develop a skill set or help them build their resumes is not particularly helpful. The GNWT is not the only employer out there. We have lots of students coming back. We will certainly do our best to hire as many as we can. There are some questions. I have heard a lot of individuals say we are paying some of these summer students incredible sums of money. We are paying them based on the collective agreement that we have negotiated with the UNW base and the work that we are having them perform, there has been a lot of discussions about those types of thing, whether we should create a category of summer students and have them do temp-type work or random-type work. But those would need to be defined and evaluated

and compensated. All of these things do come with a price tag. Every one of these things comes with a price tag. Happy to have further discussion on this. Happy to hear what the Members have to say. But as a caution, there are other employers. We only have so much money. We are working hard to, at least, meet previous year's numbers, and we will continue to do so.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Recognizing Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, under this category I want to ask more questions about recruitments since this category includes recruitment. I am not going to request to go back to the previous category, but I do have an additional question on a Priority 1 candidate and the Affirmative Action Policy. Could the Minister advise me why it would be necessary to go beyond interviewing anyone else if you have Priority 1 candidates that are qualified for the jobs that they are applying for? Whether it be a Priority 1 candidate individual or whether there be several Priority 1 candidates, why would we interview anyone else at all? According to the Affirmative Action Policy, should we not just go to the qualified Priority 1 candidates and interview them first? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, when a job ad is put out, the criteria is determined based on what is identified in the job description. I have already indicated we are going to be going through job descriptions trying to remove some of the systemic barriers. Should a P1 candidate apply, and meet the criteria outlined within the job description, they would be interviewed. If there were three P1s, they would be interviewed. If there were one P1 and one P2 and 40 P3s, we would interview the P1. If that person passed we wouldn't have to go any further. If that person did not pass the interview, then we would look at the P2. If that person did not pass the interview, then we would certainly be looking at P3s and other candidates. The Affirmative Action Policy is pretty clear that if there are P1 candidates who meet the criteria established within the job description, they would be interviewed. If there are 40 P1s who meet the criteria, we will try to identify the ones who have the highest ranking as far as meeting the criteria.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes. I had indicated in my question that it was qualified Priority 1 candidates. Just to get this very clear and on the record, the Minister is indicating that if

Priority 1 candidates are qualified in accordance with the job description that is put out there, then they only interview the Priority 1 candidates in round one of interviews. We will call it round one of interviews. It may not go beyond that. Is that what I am hearing? That only Priority 1 candidates will be interviewed? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, if there was only one P1 candidate, we might actually look at a P2 or P3 as well. However, if the P1 passes, the P1 would be offered the job. That is to save time later should an individual not pass. The priority would still go to the Indigenous Aboriginal candidate who is screened in and passes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, that is where we run into problems. If you have a qualified Priority 1 candidate, but there is only one, because for some reason the department makes a decision that it would not be appropriate to only interview one person, I wouldn't know what the problem would be, but if that is a decision made, as the Minister just indicated, there is a possibility of a Priority 1 or non-priority candidate who would be interviewed. And that is where the problem comes. With that scenario, then, if the Priority 1 candidate passes the interview but is way behind in the scoring against the other two persons, Priority 2 and Priority 3, in that incidence who would get hired?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: If the Indigenous Aboriginal candidate passes the interview, the offer would be made to the Indigenous Aboriginal candidate as long as he or she passes the interview.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I have some questions on the summer student program. I am a firm believer in investing in our youth and investing in students. Students are out getting their education. We need to attract the person back. We need to treat that student with respect. When they come to the Government of Northwest Territories, we should do all we can to try to make positions available for the students. I would not advocate to create a budget for summer students because, under normal circumstances, I do understand that we have a certain amount of turnover in our

system. If we are turning over nine per cent of the public service, as an example, we will say 400 people roughly, at that point in time in which it takes to recruit 400 people, there could be a two-month lapse, say hypothetically. We have 400 people changing over approximately two months. That creates quite a bit of a surplus in that area. That surplus is being used to hire summer students. This year, many summer students have been advised that, due to the budget reductions in the exercise that we are currently going through right now, they were not able to be hired because of this budget reduction. I received a call from the media asking me what I know about that as a former Minister of Human Resources, and my response was we are on a status quo budget. We have an internal supply right now from April 1st to June 30th. There should be no change in what is occurring this year than what has occurred last year. Departments are out there saying due to the budget reduction exercises we are unable to hire the summer students that we need to hire. That was my response. I don't know whatever happened with that. It was a question that was posed upon me. I would like to know if the exercise that we are going through right now has any impact on the hiring of summer students this year. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through the Premier, I gave direction and guidance to the Ministers that the Premier would like to see us hire as many students as we did last year. We looked at the numbers. We are down from last year right now. As of June 2nd, we hired 217. Last year around this time, I think we were up to 260-something. We are certainly down from where we were last year. As a result, the Premier has sent a reminder letter to all the Ministers and the deputies today indicating that we have to get our numbers up. We are committed to getting to the same type of numbers that we had last year. I can't speak for the other departments. But I have given direction to both my deputies that I would like to meet and, if possible, exceed last year's number, but certainly meet. The Department of Human Resources is very close to meeting our numbers from last year. The Department of Health and Social Services is a little bit down, but we are looking and we are trying to find ways to hire as many students as we can. The Member is right. The departments do utilize some of their dollars through vacancies to help fund some of the casuals. If there are no vacancies, obviously it does make it difficult. But we know that we run, at any given time, around 400 vacancies. It is constantly changing positions. But it is a similar number, constantly changing positions. I don't know what some of the departments are saying to some of the

summer students around the layoffs. If they are, I would suggest that that isn't consistent with the message that Cabinet is giving the deputies. As I said, the Premier has sent out an e-mail today indicating that he would like all the departments to at least meet last year's numbers. The summer is not over. We are still hiring. We are still looking to hire and we will continue to hire. We will work hard to reach last year's numbers.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister at the Department of Human Resources is made aware by other departments if other departments are considering reducing the amount of PYs in any particular community, especially the small communities. I would like to know if the Ministers have an obligation to advise this Minister or the Premier when they are reducing PYs, not necessarily people, but the position in various communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. I am going to recognize reply. Our time is up.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to change a PY in the Government of the Northwest Territories, it is a funded position. It requires us to go through the mains process that we are going through today, which means the Members do have an opportunity to see any funded positions that are being moved from one region to another or being eliminated. As with our policies and procedures, we have policies and procedures with respect to staff who are affected. If a position is going to be moved or eliminated, we have a very thorough process we follow in an attempt to retain our staff as best as possible. We really want to keep our staff, as opposed to having our staff leave. Ultimately, position changes are brought to the attention of Human Resources, especially if an incumbent is involved. Ultimately, changes to established positions do come through this House so we all get to see them at some point.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. I recognize the next Member, Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Ministers have in front of them how many students have been hired. I was wondering: would you be able to tell the committee the number of summer students hired in Hay River over the past couple of years compared to a similarly sized Inuvik and Fort Smith?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't have the numbers in front of me for previous years other than last year. I can tell you last year was one of the highest number of summer students that we were able to hire. Fort Smith, this year, as of June 2nd, we have 23 students hired. Last year at this time, we had 33 students hired in Fort Smith. At the end of the summer student season, we had a total of 41 summer students hired in Fort Smith. In Hay River, between the Hay River and the Hay River Reserve, we have 21 students hired as of yesterday in Hay River/Hay River Reserve. Last year, we had 21, so we are a little up from where we were last year at this time. In total, we only had 25 summer students hired during the whole summer student period last year compared to the 41 in Fort Smith. I believe the other community you asked for was Inuvik. As of yesterday, we have 21 summer students hired in Inuvik. Last year at the same date, we had 25. We are a little down in Inuvik. Our total hire as of August 14th, which is basically the end of the summer student period, last year was 38. We are a little behind in Inuvik from where we were last year, but we are still working. Was that it? Was that the communities the Member wanted?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Minister. Yes, and I see that traditionally Hay River has far fewer summer students than either Fort Smith or Inuvik, despite having a larger population, significantly larger, especially including the reserve when it's compared to Fort Smith. Why is that? Is it a reflection of the fewer number of overall government positions or is there some issue that needs to be addressed regarding summer student hiring in Hay River specifically? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a good question. I couldn't say 100 per cent what the reason is. But I can say that in all the other community and region numbers they do include numbers for Health and Social Services. Whereas, in Hay River and Hay River Reserve, they don't because the Hay River Authority currently is outside the public service. They're bound by the same terms and conditions of our collective agreement and, I mean, we don't crack their summer student hires, so we have no numbers here for any summer students being hired within the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority. That might account for some of it, but I don't know. I will get in touch

with the Minister and Health and Social Services and see if we can get some information from the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to see what kind of numbers of summer students they've hired. I will certainly provide that to the Member and committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think, overall, the health and social services authority accounts for a relatively small number of overall hires, so I don't think that would account for the quite large difference between the communities. Just a concern... I've had lots of people in Hay River concerned about the lack of jobs for summer students. We, know, like the other Members have elaborated on, we're trying to bring students back and we're trying to do the same thing in Hay River. I'll just leave it at that and I'll follow that up with the Minister at another time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Mr. Minister, comments?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, thank you. In August 2014, Yellowknife Health and Social Services hired 17, Stanton hired 17 summer students, Beaufort-Delta hired eleven, Fort Smith hired seven, Deh Cho hired one, Sahtu hired one, and the TCSA hired one. There is actually a fair amount of hiring of summer students happening in the health authorities. I will get that information for the Member. I will just point out that I mean, yes, our numbers are lower than they were last year, but in some places we're doing a little bit better. In Hay River... It happens to be one of the communities; we're actually doing a little bit better than we did last year. I do take the Member's point on the number and how it doesn't compare to other communities of similar size. I will get the numbers on the health centre to see what kind of hiring they're doing, and we'll have a bigger picture of where we are in Hay River.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Still time for follow-up, Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Human Resources, are they in contact with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority regarding summer students? Is there any sort of encouragement to hire summer students? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: No, we have not. Technically, they are outside the public service. They have their own collective agreement; they have their own terms and conditions of

employment. I'm happy to reach out to Hay River. I'll talk to the public administrator to see how they're proceeding with summer student hires. If they want access to our database, I'm certainly happy to allow them access to our database.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you for that offer. I look forward to some collaboration on that front. Thank you, Mr. Chair. No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Closing comments, Mr. Minister?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Questions. Seeing none. Human Resources, regional operations, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$3,799,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Page 222, Human Resources, regional operations, active positions, information item. Any questions? Seeing none. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, during question period I asked the Minister of Human Resources just briefly on the human resource plans. The strategic human resources, I'm kind of reading a bit of the activity here and I'm seeing workforce planning as a part of it. I just want to ask a question maybe about the human resource plans that the departments would have. I want to know: what the status is of the human resource plans from the departments? I just want to know roughly the percentage of departments that actually have human resource plans for their staff.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, all departments either have them or are developing them, and I can't tell you the exact number of the variance, which ones are done and which ones are still in process. I will commit to getting that information and sharing it with the committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask the Minister who's responsible, which Minister or is it the Premier, that's responsible to give direction to the Ministers to ensure that their departments do have human resource plans?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, ultimately the Ministers do have some responsibility encouraging their departments to complete and prepare their human resource plans. The deputies report to the Premier who also is responsible for giving the direction to them to meet those conditions. It's kind of a shared responsibility, Mr. Chair. I mean, I work with both the Department of Health and Social Services and Human Resources to make sure that they are developing theirs, and I know the Ministers are doing the same, but it's a shared responsibility.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairperson, I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister can provide a status report on that particular item and provide it to committee.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. I've already committed to providing sort of an update of where we are, which ones are completed, which ones aren't. Is the Member looking for something different than that or is that what the Member is looking for?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Beaulieu, on clarity.

MR. BEAULIEU: No, that's what I'm looking for. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, absolutely, I'll get it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Anything further, Mr. Beaulieu? Strategic human resources, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$7,254,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Page 225, strategic human resources, active positions, information item. Any questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister explain? There's a loss of two jobs. What were those two positions and are they currently filled or what? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of the reduction exercises and looking into how the department is doing or providing services, three positions in total were eliminated; one in the directorate, two in the strategic human resources division, for a total of three positions. The positions within the strategic human resources division were the director of strategic human resources and an admin assistant, strategic human resources, both of which were vacant.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly? None? Questions? Seeing none. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): We shall return to page 209. Human Resources, department total \$23,644,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. Does the committee agree that consideration of the Department of Human Resources is completed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister. Thanks to your witnesses, for appearing before us. Do you have any closing comments? Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): I move that we report progress. A motion is on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and is non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried on both sides.

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, Member for Sahtu?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do I have a seconder? Member for Great Slave. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried. Masi.

---Carried

Item 23, third reading of bills. Item 24, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Monday, June 6, 2016, 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 the Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address (Day 4 of 7)
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 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. The House adjourns until Monday, June 6, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

