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The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, October 31, 2012****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The honourable Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mr. Miltenberger.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 79-17(3):
2012 ANTHRAX OUTBREAK

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, the anthrax outbreak this summer in the Mackenzie Bison Range was the largest we have experienced in Northern Canada.

At least one-third of the Mackenzie wood bison herd was lost and included bulls, cows and calves.

The outbreak was discovered during a routine surveillance flight on July 3rd when 128 carcasses were found at Mills Lake. The Anthrax Emergency Response Plan was activated as soon as these carcasses were found. An enhanced surveillance program was implemented and all carcasses were identified and treated by incineration and/or chemical disinfection in accordance with World Health Organization guidelines and the Anthrax Emergency Response Plan.

The active infection phase of this outbreak ended in late August. A minimum of 440 bison were lost to this outbreak.

Response teams worked very hard for seven weeks to dispose of the carcasses and ensure public health and safety.

At the height of the outbreak, about 120 people were working to deal with it. This included Environment and Natural Resources staff, contractors and more than 55 emergency firefighters hired from Fort Providence.

I would like to thank all those involved in this enormous undertaking: staff from the Department, the scientists, crews working in the field, and contractors. I would especially like to thank the

community and leadership of Fort Providence, who not only accommodated these extra people in their community but also supported our efforts to deal with the outbreak.

Mr. Speaker, wood bison are a federally listed species at risk in Canada. The herd now numbers less than 1,000 animals, meaning it is no longer considered to be recovered as defined by the draft national Recovery Strategy for the Wood Bison in Canada. In addition, Mr. Speaker, this disease-free herd is seen as essential for the Canada-wide recovery of the species.

Normally, anthrax affects mostly bulls; however, this outbreak affected many cows and even calves. The high loss of cows during this outbreak will affect calf recruitment in the herd for years to come.

Recognizing the severity of this situation, both the Wekeezhii Renewable Resources Board and the Mackenzie Wood Bison Management Plan Working Group have recommended closing all harvesting for at least one year.

In response, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources initiated a number of actions aimed at ensuring the long-term viability of this herd.

In August, all limited entry draw and outfitted tags were rescinded for this year. On October 5th, all harvesting was closed in wildlife unit R/WB/02, the area between Frank Channel and Yellowknife, which had been open to general hunting licence holders.

Over the fall ENR also began consultations with the Aboriginal governments and groups on reducing or eliminating all wood bison tags for the 2012-13 season.

Based on these consultations and in an effort to give this valuable resource every opportunity to recover from this significant setback, I am announcing today that I will be taking steps to close all harvesting of the Mackenzie wood bison herd for the current hunting season. This change will come into effect November 1, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, our actions in this area will not stop at closing zones and eliminating the harvest. Over the coming winter, ENR will continue to monitor this herd. In the spring of 2013, the department

will also undertake a population survey of the herd. Information collected from these initiatives will be used to discuss potential future management actions with the WRRB, Tlicho Government, the Mackenzie Bison Working Group and other partners.

Mr. Speaker, we understand this places hardship on harvesters but the conservation of one of the few disease-free wood bison herds in Canada is a priority. Mahsi.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 80-17(3):
DELINE FINAL SELF-GOVERNMENT
AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, on September 12th negotiations towards a Deline Final Self-Government Agreement reached a significant milestone. After many years, the negotiators have agreed on the draft text of a Final Self-Government Agreement and financial agreement. This achievement is important as it lays the basis for the parties to ratify the final agreement. As Mr. Yakeleya noted when this was announced last month, the move towards self-government complements the Sahtu Comprehensive Dene and Metis Land Claim and gives Deline the opportunity to make their own history.

Mr. Speaker, this government's goal of a strong and independent North built on partnerships depends on the successful conclusion of land, resources and self-government agreements.

The Deline Final Self-Government Agreement is the next step in political evolution for the people of Deline. When completed, it will contribute to greater political autonomy and economic self-reliance. The residents of Deline will have decision-making powers over matters that affect the well-being of their language, culture and community. More importantly, the Deline First Nation government will be able to make laws that shape the programs and services that are important to the daily lives of their residents.

While a number of steps remain before the Deline Self-Government Agreement will be ratified, this milestone is an excellent example of partners working together and achieving results. Over the coming months, the parties will review the documents internally and decide whether to approve them. The next step will be for the negotiators to initial the draft Final Self-Government Agreement and financial agreement.

Mr. Speaker, once ratified, the Deline Self-Government Agreement will be the first stand-alone self-government agreement in the Northwest Territories. It will provide the Sahtu Dene and Metis of Deline the means to implement their Aboriginal

right to self-government and strengthen their community, and create new business, investment and job opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. Ramsay.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 81-17(3):
SAHTU OIL AND GAS ACTIVITIES

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the oil and gas industry has been at the heart of our economy for many years. As one of our enduring industries, we have always recognized the need to work not only with the companies that want to tap into our vast resources but also with those who live and work in the regions so that the economic benefits remain exactly where they should: in the North.

This past September, representatives from industry, government, Aboriginal organizations and corporations, community leaders and small business gathered together in Norman Wells for the Sahtu Exploration Readiness Session. The two-day workshop was an opportunity to discuss and identify the best ways to capitalize on the opportunities in the region over the coming years. We talked about the many opportunities and possible challenges related to Sahtu development.

We also heard from industry. They shared their experiences working in the region last winter and their plans for the increased exploration this upcoming winter season.

I attended this session, along with my colleague Mr. Norman Yakeleya, and we were both pleased with the level of engagement. We are confident that the people of the Sahtu are well aware of the challenges that lie ahead. They are ready to roll up their sleeves and do the work needed to ensure this coming winter exploration season goes smoothly for everyone.

We are continuing our work in the Sahtu as it moves into this new development phase and we will continue to work together to translate the potential in the Sahtu into jobs, investment, business growth, training opportunities, infrastructure development and growth for our communities and Aboriginal corporations.

The prospect of long-term, sustainable economic development in the Sahtu and the potential for spinoff benefits for other regions is a reason to celebrate. Consultations are underway with stakeholders to address any concerns that could limit future progress. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is working closely with other departments to ensure development takes place in a manner that brings economic benefits to our residents, while protecting the environment. We are, for example, working with other regulators and industry to ensure that valuable baseline

information is collected in the area during exploration. In addition, we are working with these partners to explore the possibility of launching a regional study to help ensure developments are undertaken in a manner that considers the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

While we focus on the activity in the Sahtu, we are not forgetting that vast untapped resources remain in practically every part of the NWT. In particular, interest in the Beaufort Sea continues to grow, and this region will also be a focus of exploration activity in the coming years.

The economy of the NWT had always relied heavily upon development of its vast resources. As we prepare for the day when we will have the authority to make the decisions that affect us, we must take bold steps to work towards creating the sustainable economy that will position the NWT as one of Canada's primary economic engines for years to come. This will strengthen and diversify our economy, a key goal of the 17th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 82-17(3):
EDUCATION IMPROVEMENTS:
NORTHERN STUDIES 10 AND INUVIK SCHOOL

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is dedicated to providing relevant curricula and improving educational outcomes for all students of the Northwest Territories.

At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission meeting in Inuvik last year, Nunavut Minister of Education, the Honourable Eva Aariak, and I committed to developing a comprehensive curriculum on the history and legacy of residential schools. We developed it in partnership with the Legacy of Hope Foundation, through much research, interviews with residential school survivors, archived materials and collaboration. This past spring we piloted this program in eight schools in the NWT and Nunavut.

Earlier this month we launched the new curriculum to nearly 70 teachers from the NWT and Nunavut as part of a three-day in-service. This included a keynote address from Commissioner Marie Wilson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, sessions with residential school survivors, discussions on the role of the teacher, and the supports in place with the Healing Drum Society and Health Canada.

The new residential schools unit comes with a full collection of teaching resources that helps students and teachers explore the policies and historical context of colonialism that supported residential

schools. Students will learn about the positive and negative impacts that residential school experiences had on many people. They'll talk about the opportunities for reconciliation and healing that are needed today.

I want to thank all of the people involved in developing the materials for this course. They were on display earlier today. I hope you all had a chance to see them. The curriculum coordinators developed these materials with an eye to sensitivity and care for this very complex issue. We were gratified and astounded at the wide coverage the launch of this important curriculum generated. Mr. Speaker, there is obviously not just a northern desire to set us on a path of reconciliation and healing, there is a national one.

Mr. Speaker, as students, teachers, families and communities explore the residential schools curriculum, this will herald a new beginning in understanding, collaboration and healing. The principles behind this curriculum support this government's Aboriginal Engagement Strategy, and will give students throughout the NWT and Nunavut a better understanding of our collective history.

In that spirit of new beginnings, we are also celebrating the opening of the new school in Inuvik. On October 10th, East Three School was officially declared open. This is an unprecedented building project in the GNWT's history.

It provides a superior learning environment for the nearly 700 primary and secondary students. The learning experience is infused with regional culture. This is a facility where students and the community can feel comfortable and at ease. The school was built to stimulate both younger and older students, and each wing has a distinct personality, meeting in the centre with a gymnasium and shared library. To enrich the students' experiences, there are Smart Boards in every classroom, a wireless network throughout, and multiple computer labs, giving students access to the best learning tools. With student-centred and differentiated instruction practices in place, we look forward to improved outcomes and achievements. I'm proud to say that the school was completed and under budget.

We sincerely acknowledge the work of many people in this project:

- the Inuvik Capital Planning Committee, comprising town representatives, the Beaufort-Delta District Education Council, the Inuvik District Education Authority, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation;
- the Public Advisory Selection Committee to Name the New School;
- our colleagues at Public Works and Services;
- the architects, Pin/Taylor Architects; and the contractors, Dowland Contracting Ltd.; and

- the staff and students of the school, who have been active participants in ensuring this school meets the needs of the entire community.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Sahtu, Mr. Yakeleya.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HEALTH CARE IN THE SAHTU

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I want to offer my condolences from the Sahtu region to the young man's family up in Inuvik. We certainly offer our prayers to that family. Also to another resident of the Sahtu that passed away last night, Mark Collier from Norman Wells. We offer our condolences to the whole family in Norman Wells.

I talked with the elders a couple of days ago. I want to thank my colleagues for allowing me to take a couple of days off to attend the funeral in Fort Good Hope. The elders talked to me and said we need to take some time to help one another. That's the way of our culture. Our culture says to support the family.

I want to thank the people also on behalf of the Grandjambe family, the people of Inuvik who helped donate a lot of good food to the community of Fort Good Hope. I just want to do this before I start my Member's statement.

People in Fort Good Hope had approached me while I was there and they've been telling me that the health centre up there is quite busy and sometimes when they go there, the people are being turned away. They are being asked not to come back, or they're being given aspirins or pills and not really getting checked out. Even one elderly lady in Good Hope, I asked how she was and she said, my leg is sore and I keep going to the health centre but they keep sending me away. Now I don't want to go back to the health centre anymore because I don't like to hear that word no.

We know that our nurses are working extra hard, but we also know that they're the only health care centre in our community and they should be taking an extra step to check them out and make sure they're okay, rather than give them pills or any type of medication and send them away. Our doctors don't come regularly. We don't have the type of service that we have in the larger centres where we take it for granted that our doctors are here.

In the small communities they want to know if they can get the same type of health care and have our people there, especially the elderly people, not be turned away. Have the nurse check them over, look through the medical charts, make sure they are

okay and if they have to go to a larger centre, send them out. A lot of our elderly people are saying that the health service is not up to par and they want me to ask the Minister if this could be changed.

During my oral questions I will be asking the Minister of Health questions on these health issues.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON YELLOWKNIFE SKI CLUB – ANNUAL SNOW SHOW

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Snow is on the ground and the land and waterways are freezing up. While some of us may grumble about the onset of winter, there are many of us that are celebrating. Snow is a playing field for many Northerners. The Yellowknife Nordic Centre is just such a playing field, and many Yellowknifers are waxing their skis to get going once again in the sports of skiing and biathlon.

This Saturday the Yellowknife Ski Club is kicking off the new season with the Annual Snow Show. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. the chalet will be a hive of activity as people sign up for programs, get advice on equipment, bid on silent auction offerings, buy some goodies at the bake table and get real steals on used skis.

This year, 2012 Olympian Denise Ramsden will be at the Snow Show to share stories of road cycling on the streets of England this past summer, and of growing up in Yellowknife learning to ski on our trails and speed skate at our arena.

The Yellowknife Ski Club has over 570 members and it's the largest sport and recreational club in the NWT and the largest volunteer-run recreational facility in northern Canada. For 45 years the club has been maintaining ski trails, providing facilities and programs, and helping kids learn to ski.

The Ski Club offers programs for all ages and for all skills and abilities, from the youngest bunny rabbit to master skiers. The Ski Club has something to offer for everyone.

This Saturday the many dedicated coaches and program coordinators will be on hand to answer any questions and explain their programs. Events include competitions and social activities such as NWT Ski Day in February and, a first for Yellowknife, World Snow Day in January. I challenge everyone to make this winter more active and to get outside to enjoy our great outdoors.

But why dwell on this? The fact is that our communities thrive with the support of community groups such as the Yellowknife Ski Club and all those active community groups across our territory. Our families benefit, and I offer a hearty thanks to

those groups and leaders for providing these great services.

The board of directors of the Yellowknife Ski Club asked me to invite all Members and the community to attend the Snow Show at Yellowknife's Nordic Centre this Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and I know Denise would enjoy an opportunity to say hi to all as well. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON STEM CELL DONATION

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last summer I was very fortunate to attend a Relay for Life here in Yellowknife and I ended up walking for a bit there. While I was walking for the cause, I ended up upon this booth where we had some volunteers that were looking to sign up volunteers for donations of stem cell donors. I was very fortunate. I did the cheek swab and got my name into the database.

About a week later, it was very coincidental, but I ran into a nurse who had asked me if the NWT was doing anything in terms of stem cell research or stem cell donor campaigns, mainly because there was a young Aboriginal girl down south who couldn't find a match, and brought Kim to my attention, so I looked into this a little bit further and wanted to bring it to the attention of the Assembly and the people of the Northwest Territories.

Stem cells are immature cells that can either become red blood cells, white blood cells or platelets. A variety of diseases and disorders are treated with stem cell transplants, including blood-related diseases such as leukemia, aplastic anemia and inherited immune disease and metabolic disorders. In this case, the patient's diseased bone marrow is replaced with the healthy stem cells from a donor, which usually is a volunteer donor or somebody from the family. This is a very safe procedure and, in fact, anybody who donates has to go through a very small surgical process and then come out on the other side very well. In fact, most people who donate... Well, everybody who donates their blood and stem cells from their bone replenishes within six weeks.

With that said, when somebody becomes a donor and volunteers as a donor, all they have to go through is a small surgical process. They recover, but the big thing is they save somebody's life.

I want to bring to the attention that less than 30 percent of patients who need a stem cell transplant will find a match within their family. Most people depend on an unrelated donor, meaning all these volunteers who go to these booths and get their cheeks swabbed and get into the database. A person's best chance of finding a matching donor is

within his or her ethnic group. As it currently stands, Canada's database is 76 percent Caucasian and the other ethnicities only represent 24 percent.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MOSES: As I was saying, as it currently stands in Canada's base for stem cell donors, there are 76 percent for Caucasians, 24 percent for ethnicities, and of those 24 percent for ethnicities only 0.9 percent are Aboriginal donors. That means if we have anybody that needs stem cells and is Aboriginal, it's going to be very hard for them to find a donor.

Right now there is a special need for ethnic males in the ages 17 to 35.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services to see what this territory is doing to help close that need for this type of help.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the gallery where we have a former Member. Mr. Ernie Bernhardt is in the House today. Good to see you.

---Applause

The honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, Mr. Hawkins.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON POEM: PLAN NORD

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once upon a midnight dreary, whilst this Cabinet pondered weak and weary,

Over a quaint curious volume of forgotten lore,
dreaming of pensions, travel... need I say more.

Whilst the Premier nodded, nearly napping,
suddenly a Regular Member like myself came a rapping,

As of some, one gently rapping, upon the Cabinet door.

'Tis a Member with ideas, and community problems
that needed to be solved,

Then the Premier muttered, tapping at my Cabinet door –
Only this, he laughs, nothing more.

Ah, distinctly I remember it was a bleak December,
With the Members' cap-in-hand, asking for a hand,
something slightly more than spam.

Eagerly the Premier wished the moral; - Vainly I
sought to borrow simply his ear to talk about a Plan Nord,
a future, a tomorrow.

From my finance books surcease of sorrow –
sorrow for the lost Members' quest, there is no
money to borrow.

The Member hath ideas, the Premier jests... I say no more.

Nameless, hopeless we stood there evermore.

Opportunities for growth lost forevermore.

And with silken, sad, and certain rustling of opportunities struck down without a tussle.

Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors, filled before a people working, families fed, children happy, a future with bread.

So now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood firm and repeated to the Premier of our chance.

A Plan Nord I say will help this territory advance.

This Premier scoffed, some Member still entreating entrance at my Cabinet door;

Tis a Member wanting to see “Plan Nord”? – Ah, nothing more.

Presently my soul grew stronger, hesitating then no longer,

“Sir,” said I, “truly your forgiveness and all I ask if for your ear.”

Plan North will put people to work and it will make those bellies fed.

But the fact is, this Cabinet kept a napping, so gingerly as Members like myself kept a rapping.

And I scarcely sure I heard you say, open the door wide and hear us more;

Darkness there seems to pour.

All I ask is for the Cabinet to look at Plan North.

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the Cabinet the Premier goes turning, all my soul starting within me to burn.

Sooner or later this Premier must hear the tapping of the Members' call and a clapping.

What we need is some assurance, not a threat, Mr. Speaker, we ask for more.

Let it be sure and queer, all we are asking for during question period is this government to consider a plan just like Quebec, Plan Nord. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. The honourable Member for the Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN YOUTH ABROAD PROGRAM

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Northern Youth Abroad is a Canadian and international program marking their 15th anniversary this year. I would like to acknowledge that more than 70 Northwest Territories youth were participating, representing nearly every community.

Northern Youth Abroad gives young people ages 15 to 22 the opportunity to live and work in communities across southern Canada and sub-Saharan Africa while they gain high school credits, work experience and life skills.

Designed especially for youth in isolated communities across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Northern Youth Abroad has viable objectives such as building cross-cultural awareness by living with a host family and doing meaningful volunteer work. Other objectives include encouraging youth to take responsibility for their own learning, to graduate from high school, to find ways to make a difference back home based on their experiences, and become participants in their global society. Finally, Northern Youth Abroad seeks to build a self-confidence and life skills essential for youth to successfully pursue post-secondary education outside of their home communities and avoid the pitfalls many young Northerners fall into when they move to cities in southern provinces.

Here are just some of the positive impacts Northern Youth Abroad have had over the last 15 years:

- better than average Canadian high school graduation rates in regions that have the lowest graduation rates in the country;
- a bridging program for youth at risk;
- exchange between youth between different northern communities;
- fostering the strong sense of volunteerism in northern communities;
- strengthened community and cultural awareness and our connectedness to the rest of the North, the rest of Canada and the world;
- motivation building, esteem raising and leadership development.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Jamie Norwegian, Jodie Bonnetrouge and Waylon Simba for successfully completing the 2011 Canadian program, and Marina Sabourin who was selected to be the first ever group-leader-in-training and assisted with one of the groups in Botswana in the summer of 2011.

Northern Youth Abroad is a registered charity and receives funding through Municipal and Community Affairs youth core funding. This year 25 applicants from the Northwest Territories have been selected to participate.

With that, I recognize the Deh Cho students Grayson Somers and Joey Lacorne.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. NADLI: With that, I want to recognize the Deh Cho students Grayson Somers and Joey Lacorne for being selected to the Canadian program, and Jeremy Landry for being selected for the international program.

Thank you to the Government of the Northwest Territories for its ongoing support for Northern Youth Abroad and becoming one of its 2011-2012 funding partners. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last June, June 6th to be exact, the 17th Assembly passed a motion asking the government to establish an ombudsman office. Several weeks ago the government responded to that motion and the response was tabled in the House. The response was neither a yes nor a no, which was both disappointing and hope inducing.

In the response following a summary of what the ombudsman does not do, the government stated: "The Government of the Northwest Territories is currently reviewing these legislated-based rights, as well as a number of policy and program-based rights of appeal, to identify gaps and better ascertain what role an ombudsman office might play in the Northwest Territories."

There's no question that there are gaps. I have mentioned them before. Three times in the 16th Assembly I spoke of the need for the NWT to have an impartial arbiter, an ombudsman to assist our residents with a dispute or a disagreement so they can avoid having to go to court to settle it. Some of the gaps are these: landlord tenant issues that are outside the jurisdiction of a rental officer; housing or income support issues where an appeal has been denied; administrative decisions by officials at hospitals and other medical facilities; times when a resident rightly or wrongly feels that they have been treated unjustly and without fairness. I'm not sure why the government feels it has to determine the role of an ombudsman. It's pretty well defined in other jurisdictions. There's no need to reinvent the wheel here.

I expect there also would be economies of scale if we establish an ombudsman office. It would be an opportunity to collapse some existing appeal boards and tribunals and save time and money. But the biggest opportunity is that an ombudsman can ensure fairness in the delivery of government services and programs. It will provide an avenue for clients of government programs and services – our residents – to lodge complaints outside of that program or department that they're accessing, an avenue that does not exist now.

In the last five years, I've seen many instances where an ombudsman would have been of benefit to the NWT and its residents. The need for this service has not yet gone away and I will have some questions for the Premier at a later time. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT FILM INDUSTRY

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been given a gift, and that gift is our recent surge of TV films showcasing the North. I say gift because not every jurisdiction in Canada can boast of TV productions such as NWT Ice Pilots, Ice Road Truckers, Licence to Drill and the acclaimed CBC's Arctic Air at their doorstep. Although I give credit to the NWT Film Commission for maximizing the economic opportunities for our local residents and local businesses to participate in the media arts industry, I do have to say we are far from being the ultimate production location of choice for many professional film companies.

I can stand here today and defend this statement, as I attended the NWT Professional Film Forum held here in Yellowknife on October 2nd of this year. This forum was held during the successful Yellowknife International Film Festival that showcased such films as our very own Mr. Richard Van Camp's "The Lesser Blessed."

So what were these top film producers saying at this forum? What were their needs? Simply put, tax incentives would be nice, but this was not the core motivating factor of choosing NWT as their film location. They did mention the current NWT Film Commission website was a great start, but they all agreed that they required to see a symbolic gesture to support the industry with proper incentives such as travel incentives, underground travel coordinators, proper transportation to and from shoots, people who know how to handle their equipment for set-up and operation, mobile caterers and mobile motorhomes for use.

The producers clearly indicated that we are missing the opportunity at the bare minimum to truly be a destination of choice. They also suggested that we create our own infrastructure to ensure our future in films, ideas such as cultural consultants and creative staff writer understudy programs would go a long way toward this infrastructure. In fact, talking with them also yielded the idea of a joint mentorship program with Omni Films offering on-the-ground training for such positions at their Vancouver production sets. Think about this: The potential of a new study training program with Aurora College and the real-time experience in Canada's version of Hollywood.

We need to keep this gift alive and not let this industry vote with their feet when things start to slow down. We need to invest, we need to create, we need to teach and we need to share.

I will be asking more questions later today with the Minister of ITI on whether or not the NWT is ready to make this real commitment and investment to ensure our future in this film industry.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MEDICAL TRAVEL INSURANCE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many people in the Northwest Territories travel outside the North on a regular basis. Northerners are well-travelled folks, not the least of which the people in this very room. Being stuck away from home – I'm not one of those, though – injured or ill and finding out that you do not have medical travel insurance can be a very, very costly lesson.

Many NWT residents still don't seem to know that the NWT Health Care Plan does not cover medical travel expenses that originate outside of the Northwest Territories. In Canada, residents covered by NWT Health Care will have necessary medical care paid for either directly or through reimbursement, but this coverage does not include medical travel costs, which is the expense for things like medevac, air or ground ambulance, the cost of transfers between hospitals, escorts, hotel or meals, or any other expense related to an accident or an illness when this originates outside of the Northwest Territories. Those fees could well run into the thousands of dollars. Emergency ambulance services for Inuit and treaty cardholders would be covered in some situations, but other expenses and flights home are not covered.

The story could be even worse for anyone travelling outside of Canada without medical travel insurance. Our travellers are only reimbursed at NWT rates for their necessary medical care. Let's say the fee in a foreign country for necessary care from a doctor or in hospital was \$1,000. If the NWT rate for that same service is only \$250, then you are going to be out \$750.

Our residents travelling abroad also have to pay for their own ambulances, travel, accommodations and similar costs. A medevac from another country, or even within Canada, is very expensive. Any time that you need a plane or an ambulance, you are looking at a very large bill.

I would remind everyone, if you are planning on travelling outside of the NWT, you should purchase medical travel insurance prior to travelling. Such coverage is available through many outlets such as banks or insurance companies, and can be

purchased on-line or over the phone. You can purchase plans that cover you for one trip or several trips or for a year at a time. It is a very modest cost, especially compared to the expenses incurred in the case of required transportation costs of an accident or illness while travelling.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Do not fall into the tragic situation and financially devastating situation when you least expect it. It is up to you to protect yourself by buying independent medical travel insurance. Please purchase insurance for yourself and your family, your students that are out going to school, and remind your friends and neighbours of the risk of travelling outside of the Northwest Territories without medical travel insurance.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Member for Thebacha, Mr. Miltenberger.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, as well, would like to recognize a former roommate from the really good old days in the last century when we were in Grandin College together, a lifelong friend, Mr. Ernie Bernhardt.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a wonderful constituency assistant, Maia Lepage, who is also here chaperoning two of our Pages for the week. She is doing double duty this week.

At this time I would also like to recognize Mr. Ernie Bernhardt, who has been an ambassador, innovator and teacher of arctic sports throughout the circumpolar region of the world.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. I would like to welcome all visitors in the public gallery here today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The honourable Member for Hay River North, Mr. Bouchard.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 266-17(3): FLEXIBILITY IN HEALTH CARE FUNDING

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health. I

didn't make a Member's statement because he has already heard my issues. He's heard about the lack of full-time doctors in Hay River. He's heard the interest in the nurse practitioners and the need for midwifery. My question is: With the department's lack of flexibility in funding, has the department come up with any solution for the health authorities to allow flexibility in these types of areas in funding these positions?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Physician funding is restricted by the Financial Management Board, so that funding is not used elsewhere. However, we are making a business case for three authorities including the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, to the Financial Management Board to create flexibility within physician funding.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next question along those lines, is on their business case. When can we expect this business case to go towards FMB and get some results?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We will have the business case completed by December 31, 2012.

MR. BOUCHARD: My next question is along the lines of would this be implanted for the upcoming year starting April 1st of the year 2013-2014 financials.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: If the business case is approved by the Financial Management Board, we're hoping that the flexibility will be built into the funding by April 1st the following fiscal year, so April 1st during the 2013-2014 fiscal year is when we hope to have the flexibility built into the funding.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just wondering if the flexibility in this funding is the department's solution for funding midwifery in the authorities, or do they actually have other plans for additional funding.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We're not thinking about paying for midwifery by building flexibility into the physician funding. That would be presented to the Legislative Assembly as an increase to O and M when the Midwifery Program is ready to go ahead in Hay River.

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

QUESTION 267-17(3):
HEALTH CENTRE POLICY

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services

what the health centre's policy is when a patient or client comes into the health centre and want to see a nurse. What is the policy? Is the nurse supposed to take them into the examination room and work with them or chase them away?

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The clinical practice is to see the patient. If the patient has pain, then the practice is for the physician that is there – whether it be a nurse, nurse practitioner or doctor – to see the patient and examine the patient.

MR. YAKELEYA: How is this policy being monitored or being enforced? When I was in Fort Good Hope, certainly, residents there had told me about this not being fully enforced. How is this policy being encouraged so that the people who go to the health centre know that the nurse is going to see them in the examination room, rather than to either give them some pills or tell them not to come back, or not to really look at the issues? How is this being monitored and enforced?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Our activities, when we're dealing with patients of any location in the Northwest Territories, is to use the clinical guideline practices and that if an individual comes in, the nurse is obligated to give them an examination. If they determine that it's something minor and they can give them some medication, then that may be a decision, but otherwise, they should be following the policy. It's being monitored by our Health and Social Services department with the health and social services authorities across the North.

MR. YAKELEYA: The patients that I spoke to have gone to the health centre. Is there someone in the front that has enough information to say you have the right to ask for an examination, other than the nurse looking at you saying don't come back or here's some aspirin, come back the next day or come back when the doctor is in the community, which could be six weeks to three months? Our people won't ask. You have to tell them they have the right to be examined and get a second opinion, if possible, and not to be asked to take some pills and go home.

What kind of policy encourages our people in the small communities who speak Dene Kede, who speak a second language – English is their second language and Slavey is their first – that they have the right to be examined?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: In our system we have quality assurances. If that is happening in the Sahtu or something that is happening outside of our clinical practice guidelines, then we will assure that individuals can go to quality assurance. We have people in each of the authorities and at the

department that can be contacted. I can provide that information to the Members, or the Member specific to this question also.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Final supplementary, Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, I have had indications where a mother went in with her child to get the child looked at because of a skin rash and that. The nurse didn't really give the young child any type of medication and sent the child and mother home.

What assurances can the Minister give me here today that I can call the mother back and say go back to the health centre and the nurse will check the child over? How can we give this type of assurance to the people in Fort Good Hope that their health centre will look at the people no matter what, and then make the proper prescription of what type of medication they could be taking?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I know there is a standard of practice, like I have indicated earlier, for the health practitioners to see the patient. However, I'm sure that this happens. I'll have the deputy minister contact the CEO from the health authority to ensure that is happening across the Sahtu.

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

QUESTION 268-17(3):
FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I want to follow up on some really distressing reports we've heard on CBC over the last couple of days about food not being on the table of our people across the North, and the failure of our food banks. Our people are, obviously, suffering here. If they didn't have country food they would be starving. I would like to ask – recognizing that there are ripple effects through our families, education, health, so on – first of all, what is the situation from the Minister's understanding? To what degree does this exist in the Northwest Territories?

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. What I can offer is the programs that we currently deliver into the communities, whether it be to the organizations. Part of the programs that we offer, of course, is income security. Within income security there are all different programs, as well, whether it be Productive Choices, individuals that can access the income security. We also offer other areas such as, again, through my department, the Labour Market Agreement. I know the Member is referring to specifically the food area, but we work

closely with the Health and Social Services department, and also the Minister responsible for Homelessness on the actual funding that's available. It is a joint task force that we try to deal with those matters.

We've heard over the radio, as well, on CBC. We are fully aware of it and we are dealing with that at the community-based level.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister for those remarks. Unfortunately, this Assembly is becoming known as one that studies problems rather than deals with them. I really hope that the Minister will take the lead in working with his colleagues in addressing the situation and committing... First of all, will he commit to finding out the extent of the problem and why our food banks are failing, and people do not have food on their table despite all the programs mentioned.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: As I indicated, there are approximately three departments working on this particular project and we are aware of it. To the extent of the challenges, we need to work together in collaboration and identify solutions, because that's where we've been focusing on as a department, and we will be informing the Members as we move forward on resolving this issue. That's our prime mandate. As my Department of Education, Culture and Employment, we'll do what we can with the programs in existence to offer a remedy to these situations.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the remarks from the Minister. Again, we want to see action here and less studying. Surely, we must know something about why this is happening. Is it bad decisions? Are some people making bad decisions? If so, what are we doing about correcting those decisions? You know, bad decisions, I'm going to gamble this week with my income support and then starve later. That's a bad decision. What are we doing to help people make better decisions, if that's the case?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Again, we are providing the programming through ECE to the communities, to the organizations to deal with those challenges that we're faced with. Again, interdepartmental, that we are working towards a solution towards this and we'll continue to stress that. It is important to us and it's one of our priorities. We will be reaching out to the communities that are most impacted.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for that commitment. We've refused programs to help feed our children in schools. We've refused milk subsidies and so on. We really need to get going. This is serious and has direct impacts on our children and our people. People are hungry. What will the Minister do in the short term?

People are starving right now, or at least undernourished and so on, according to the reports. What will he do right away?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: What I can do as Minister responsible is, again, work with the two Ministers, but at the same time, with our programming, as we speak, my department is doing the research within those communities that are impacted, the challenges that we're faced with and what can we provide. If we need to improve in those areas, we'll continue to do so in our programming. This is what I can provide to the Members, that my income department area will be going to those communities from a regional perspective and provide solutions to the challenges.

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

QUESTION 269-17(3):
STEM CELL DONATION

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to follow up to my Member's statement, in terms of stem cell donor campaigns and awareness. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if the Minister is familiar with this program, and if so, is his department currently doing any type of programs that are similar in the Northwest Territories that they're doing in other jurisdictions throughout Canada?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In March 2011, at the provincial/territorial/federal Ministers' meetings, the Ministers announced that they would jointly put \$48 million into stem cell research. The NWT is included in that research and will benefit from it as well.

MR. MOSES: I had asked the Minister about questions in terms of the awareness campaign. Up until last year when I went to the booth, I didn't really know too much about it, and I did a lot of work in the health promotion area.

Once again, I'd like to ask the Minister if there are any programs that offer education and awareness in the Northwest Territories to the residents of the Northwest Territories that make them understand about the cheek swabs and getting into the database, and becoming a donor for the stem cell bone marrow transplant donor list.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Although you can donate anywhere in Canada, the NWT government does not specifically have a program dedicated to stem cell. However, we have advised the authorities and have shared information with the authorities, that should somebody in the authorities and within their various authorities across the Territories want to donate stem cells, then they have that ability to do

so, and we provided that information. As far as an awareness campaign to the general public, we haven't done anything on that at this time.

MR. MOSES: Obviously, there are organizations in the Northwest Territories who are giving this type of awareness campaign. Would the Minister and his department commit to supporting these organizations, finding out who these organizations are and supporting them either financially or through human resources to get this education out to people of the Northwest Territories, so that should one of our residents need this type of donor request, that it's there for them? Will the Minister commit to offering that support?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, we would commit to supporting and creating awareness with the organizations across the Territories working on trying to get the message out to people on stem cell research.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of one of the biggest, I guess, advocates for this type of research is the Canadian Blood Services out of Alberta. I'm asking for another commitment here from the Minister.

Would the Minister contact their office and get information about awareness campaigns, education materials, and look at developing a more comprehensive plan focused on partnership with the Canadian Blood Services to deliver this comprehensive plan to the residents of the Northwest Territories?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: The bank is managed and established by the Canadian Blood Services. If we are going to proceed with any campaign or any programs, it would be working with the Canadian Blood Services.

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

QUESTION 270-17(3):
DAY PROGRAM FOR
MEDICAL TRAVEL CLIENTS

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services some questions on medical travel. Firstly, I just want to wish all Members of this House a beautiful day.

---Laughter

I have had constituents from Nahendeh contact me on the medical travel issue. The issue is about when they get here, they are here for a day trip. The flights from Nahendeh come here in the morning and they depart in the evening. Their appointments are usually in the morning, but for the four or five hours in the afternoon, the medical

travel clients have nowhere to go, nowhere to wait. Do we have anything existing to help our clients of medical travel that are here in Yellowknife for the day? Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe that we have a day program for the patients that come here for medical and get their appointments and have a lot of time on their hands before the flight, but we would be pleased to work with medical travel people to see if something can be developed. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, sometimes they are housed here overnight and their appointment is in the morning, and then they still have to wait a long day as well. In fact, I had a resident actually ask the hotel for a half a day rate, but the hotels in Yellowknife don't do that.

Is the Minister willing to talk with the Hotel Association in Yellowknife or something to allow half a day stays and somewhere they can relax? Often they are travelling with children or elders. They just have nowhere to go during the day. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I have no issue with the medical travel people talking to the hotels to see if something like this can be established for our medical travel patients. Thank you.

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Minister will get that medical travel staff to engage in discussions. When can the Minister initiate such an action and start discussions for us with the Hotel Association, or is he looking for alternate places where people can sit and relax for the day while they are waiting for their late evening flights? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I can request the information back from the department to have that discussion with me by the end of next week, and then within the next couple of weeks, if something can be established and that the medical travel people think they can make some headway with the hotels to establish this into their policy, then we will try to have it done within the month of November. Thank you.

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased that the Minister is willing to do that. Will the Minister advise me when they begin those discussions? I will certainly share that with the constituents travelling from Nahendeh. Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we can keep the Member advised. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 271-17(3):
QUEBEC'S PLAN NORD

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have questions regarding Quebec's Plan Nord, not specifically about it but what the Premier can do in regard to a Northwest Territories plan North. Although I tried to make a little spinoff of *The Raven*, which is written by Edgar Allan Poe, about the plight of Members trying to get the issues and the ears of the government, Plan Nord by Quebec is built around four major objectives which ensures the well-being of northern development for Aboriginal people in communities, achieve the immense economic potential of Quebec's north, make the North accessible and, finally, protect the environment.

With these types of tenets that are very important in principles of Quebec, not unlike the Northwest Territories, what does the Premier think of the concept of the idea of us finally developing a plan North which would build some certainty of both the industry and, of course, environmental protection? Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity to discuss Plan Nord with Premier Charest before the last election where he lost the election. We discussed the elements of Plan Nord. He was very excited about Plan Nord. He saw it as the way of the future. But in discussions with Premier Charest, it quickly became obvious to me that without devolution, and recognizing that Quebec is a province, unless we had control or we had the ability to make decisions on land and water and development of resources, it would be very difficult for us to implement something similar to Plan Nord. Also, we are waiting to see whether the new Quebec government will be continuing with Plan Nord or changing it or not continuing with it.

I think that there are so many elements of a plan that I like. I will pay them the ultimate compliment by saying that we are going to steal as much of this plan as we could. I think we are developing quite a number of initiatives and strategies. I think we will be able to come up with our own plan Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer from the Premier. I thought it really spoke to, sort of, the position at large.

It is difficult to jump into something like this without having control of the lands and whatnot. If he learned a little bit about Plan Nord, what you will

find is it also is complicated with tax incentives, which is a challenge for us without devolution. It is never too late to start planning for tomorrow, especially in partnership with our Aboriginal governments that we are equal partners in the future of the Northwest Territories.

Does the Premier himself see a chance for us to get something on the discussion agenda with northern government partners, the Aboriginal governments, about developing a plan North in the Northwest Territories speaking of the values of the North, as I mentioned earlier? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, this is something that we are working on from a number of fronts. First and foremost, we are working with our Aboriginal government partners, obviously, on devolution. We have been able to develop an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy where we are working very well with our Aboriginal governments. I think that we are starting to develop a common vision and understanding for going forward in the North.

As a government, we have a host of strategies that we are working on, including the Economic Opportunity Strategy, a Minerals Development Strategy and the Transportation Strategy. We are developing energy plans. At the end of the day, we will pull all of these together and we will have plan Northwest Territories where we will all decide to get in the same canoe and all start to paddle in the same direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: Mr. Speaker, I certainly like what the Premier said. The only thing I would change, of course, is to define this more as a roadmap or blueprint towards the northern future that we all share an equal investment in. When I say that, I don't mean just Members, I also mean Aboriginal governments, as well, because they are our partners into the future of the territory.

Does the Premier see in the short term a chance to bring all of these strategies together in a blueprint document? Whether it is called the Northwest Territories plan Nord or by any other name would certainly be welcome. Does the Premier see an opportunity to start to sew this future together as a forward plan type of thinking? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, that is our plan. Ultimately, we will pull all of these strategies together. We have put in place the framework so that we can all work together. That is what we are trying to develop through Section 6 of the Devolution Agreement-in-Principle. We will have the benefit of all of these strategies that we will have input from all of the different sectors and stakeholders of the Northwest Territories and governments as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier knows better than anyone, by all means, through my experience with him, seeing him in charge of many portfolios over the years, as well as his experience in public service, he would be able to say, to some respect, that history is always curious about getting into an area without a plan, and it makes it challenging whether it's taxation plans, whether it's land use plans and, again, mining strategies as you add all these things up together, hydro strategy, et cetera.

Does the Premier see in the foreseeable future some type of document we can get out there to the rest of Canada and the world as we court further investment in the Northwest Territories, a chance to lay something out as a blueprint, and when would we see this? Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you. I guess that's the rationale behind a number of these strategies, is that we want to make sure that industry and other potential investors know that we're a responsible, mature government that can make decisions, and that we will have a very smooth transition through devolution and that they will have a very clear understanding of where we're coming from in areas like minerals development, economic development, the land use and sustainability frameworks amongst others. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 272-17(3):

NORTHERN YOUTH ABROAD PROGRAM

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I talked about the wonderful achievements of the Northern Youth Abroad Program. In some respects it provides an eye-opening experience for the youth of the Northwest Territories.

My question is for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. How has MACA supported the Northern Youth Abroad Program over the past 15 years?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We recognize that investment in our youth is in an investment in our future, and to that end I think, with the support of the Legislative Assembly, we've contributed much funds to the young people in the Northwest Territories and given them an opportunity to broaden their horizons. The Northern Youth Abroad is a classic example of that.

Over the last two or three years, we've had 63 young people go through the program; I think 49 in the Canadian phase and about 14 in the international phase. We contributed, through our Youth Core Program, \$100,000 to Northern Youth

Abroad. As well, ECE makes a contribution to that as well. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Thank you. I think it's very commendable for the department and this government for providing financial support for the Northern Youth Abroad. How else has the Department of MACA supported the Northern Youth Abroad Program? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. The Northern Youth Abroad Program, as these young people are ambassadors for the Northwest Territories, we see many of these young people moving into our Youth Ambassador Program, which is a great program that's also funded by MACA. So it gives them a really good experience, and we continue to do what we can to support them financially so they have an opportunity to see the rest of the country, as well as the rest of the world. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: Thank you. What is MACA doing to ensure all recreation leaders and youth centres in the North have information about the Northern Youth Abroad Program? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We have youth workers in all the regions in the Northwest Territories and part of their duties would be to try and keep the communities updated as much as possible on the programs that are available to the youth as well. We have a website and there's an excellent youth website that they can go on to see what programs are available to the youth.

The department does a really good job on trying to get as much information out there so we can access applications from all over the Northwest Territories, and I think we're starting to see an indication that youth out there are being reached because we are getting applications from every region in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The success of the program is clearly evident. Would the Minister be willing to do further work with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to ensure that the Northern Youth Abroad is promoted in schools across the NWT, especially in the small, isolated communities? Mahsi.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. In this day and age of electronic communication, I think that it's a lot easier to reach all those across the Northwest Territories. Pretty well everyone is on the computer and has access to the Internet, but I will work with my colleague, the Minister of Education, and our own youth workers to ensure that we get all this information out to all the schools across the Northwest Territories so youth out there have an opportunity to access our programs. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 273-17(3):
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Premier. I'm following up from my Member's statement when I talked about the need for the establishment of an ombudsman office.

I want to say I appreciate the response from the government to the motion that was passed in June, but I do wish that it had been a little more definitive. The response to the motion talks about a review being underway, and I also appreciate that the government is doing due diligence in looking into things, but I hope they are looking at not only maybe adding to what we have already, I hope they're looking at collapsing a few things.

So I'd like to know from the Premier whether or not there's any consideration by the government, as they do this review, to collapse some of the current appeal boards and tribunals and bring it under one office, hopefully an ombudsman office. Thank you.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all with regard to the ombudsman office, we're reviewing the legislative base rights as well as all of the different avenues there are currently for which people that have issues can have them addressed, and we will take what we find and we will see what is the best way forward we would go without reinventing the wheel. If we take that approach, it depends what kind of wheel we're going to use as some of the wheels cost \$900,000 and other wheels cost \$10 million. So we would certainly look at finding out what we think has to be done, and if it means perhaps we'd also look at what existing programs we have that could be rolled in. Of course, we would bring it forward to committee or Caucus to seek their input as well. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Premier for those remarks. I guess I would like to advise the Premier that there's one other wheel that he forgot to mention, and that's the Yukon's wheel and it's only \$600,000. So I don't think we're going to go anywhere near \$10 million.

I mentioned gaps in my statement. There certainly are gaps in what we currently have, and specifically I'd like to mention a gap I believe exists for residents who encounter a problem with a government staff person. So I'd like to know from the Minister what currently exists for clients of GNWT services – and that would be our residents in most cases, sometimes an NGO – for them to lay

complaints about service that they have received from staff, or in regard to staff actions or ethics. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess those are the kinds of areas where we're doing further analysis. I think there's a number of avenues. I think the average citizen, if they've got a complaint, they usually phone their MLA or they'll phone the Minister in charge or they'll contact the Premier's office. I guess there are other avenues like legal recourse and so on. So there's a number of different avenues and I guess those are the kinds of things that we will be doing the analysis on, in addition to all of the best practices that we'll be reviewing. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Premier. I appreciate that the government is going to do a full examination. I would hope that's what we would do. The Premier mentioned that people can talk to their MLA, they can talk to a Minister, they can go to court. Court is not an option. In the minds of most people it's not financially feasible for them. I think going to your Member of the Legislative Assembly takes out any element of fairness or impartiality in many cases. I appreciate they need to be considered, but I hope they are looked at with an un-jaundiced eye.

I would like to ask the Premier – there is no indication in the response to the motion when the government review would be done – if I could get an answer to that.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess within the context of the 120 days that we are required to respond, that didn't get us enough time to respond. I fully expect that within six months we should be able to respond.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks, Mr. Premier. My last question then goes to if we have a review that's done in the next six months or so – and I think that's a reasonable time frame – I'd like to know from the Premier if it's feasible that we could expect the establishment of an ombudsman office within the life of this 17th Assembly.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I guess that will be based on some decision points that we will have to come to. I guess to me the most obvious one will be if we see fit to proceed with establishing an ombudsman office, would it be established as part of the Legislative Assembly or would it be an officer of the Legislative Assembly? If we make it as part of the government, that would be defeating some of the objectives that have been described in why we need an ombudsman office. I see some decision points that would have to be made. Also, if at \$600,000, if that's what Yukon is, and assuming we follow the Yukon model, where would the money

come from? We would have to make that decision as well. Conceivably it's doable before the end of the 17th Assembly, but there will be some decisions that have to be made.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. McLeod. The honourable Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolynny.

QUESTION 274-17(3):
NWT FILM INDUSTRY

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the pleasure earlier today to talk about NWT films and, more importantly, the NWT Film Commission. I want to make sure, on record, to say that they are doing a great job for local residents and businesses. Their website is actually a great tool. It points out SEED money and a lot of opportunities in links in the industry to get our local industry up and running. But if you drill down a little further in the website, it talks about the mandate of the NWT Film Commission and it points out awareness of promoting the NWT to national and international film markets. Is this enough? Are these words enough? My questions are for the Minister of ITI.

Can the Minister tell us what he and his department are doing with the information gathered with the recent NWT Professional Film Forum? His department was present. His department was listening and taking notes. What does the Minister plan to do with this information?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. David Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I share the Member's enthusiasm when it comes to the future of the film industry here in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has gone a long way to getting us where we're at today. We've established the website. We've established the Film Commission here.

The Member talked about his participation in the NWT Filmmaker and Producer Forum that was held earlier this month. We had helped out with hiring a facilitator for that event. The report and the Member talked about a number of ideas and issues that came up through that forum. We're interested in getting that report from the consultant. Once we get that report, we are also working with our partners at Finance on a joint working group to try and look at possible incentives for the film industry here in the Northwest Territories. We're anxious to see the report. We're anxious to move forward.

We've gotten some really positive feedback just lately from producers that are filming here in the Northwest Territories and we really do believe that we will continue to see films being produced here in the Northwest Territories and continue to see that positive feedback. On our website, we've seen

1,800 hits just since the website's been put into service in July of this year. We're doing our best.

MR. DOLYNNY: I appreciate the Minister's enthusiasm. I think everyone in the Northwest Territories shares that enthusiasm. If we're truly going to support the business of professional filmmaking in the NWT, we need to start treating this as a business. The GNWT needs to look at the proper infrastructure and the proper investments to help offset the very expensive budget costs of bringing film crews, bringing equipment and production into the Northwest Territories.

What are the Minister's specific actions that he'll be undertaking with himself and his department to deal with these so-called costs to the professional, national and international filmmakers?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I think we've done a lot with the website. We've got a number of times on there. We've affiliated ourselves with the Association of Film Commissioners. It's an international organization that gives, when we use their logo on our website, us instant credibility to the industry world-wide.

As I mentioned earlier, we are working with and we have worked with ECE. We're working with Finance. We're trying to find a path forward. We believe that once we do get the report from the consultant that took part in the producer forum, we will be able to chart a course forward and identify areas where we feel we can improve on.

Certainly, the Member and other Regular Members, when we do start taking those next steps forward, we certainly will be looking to Members to share where we're going next and their input will be valuable in that approach.

MR. DOLYNNY: I do share the enthusiasm with the Minister. As we learned in my Member's statement today, the premise of creating our own infrastructure in terms of new jobs and new opportunity and to ensure the future in our films could start with Aurora College, the Department of ECE, and proper investments from ITI in the creation of such concepts as film cultural consultants and creative staff writer courses. These positions were singled out as being imperative for professional film producers to tell their stories, to understand the land and its people, and to preserve our northern culture accurately. This, of course, was topped off with companies such as Omni Films offering a joint mentorship to advance the spectrum of this new emergent education. Would the Minister commit to work with his fellow Cabinet colleagues, his department, the Department of Finance and the industry to create this opportunity for these new positions?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: We've been doing all of this on what amounts to a shoestring budget. Certainly, if we are going to move forward, we're

going to start talking about positions. We certainly need to look at finding some additional funds to make us get to where we need to go.

I'd like to, again, chart that course for Members, work with Members, and we want to make sure that we do this right, that we take advantage of the opportunities that are out there.

Again, the Member mentioned Omni Films. That's been a company that's done work here in the Northwest Territories. We need to keep getting the positive message out that the Northwest Territories is a place where people want to produce films. They want to come here and do the work. That's something that we have a reputation for right now. In this industry your reputation means a lot. It means everything. For us, it's very important that we maintain that good reputation, and by putting some programs in place, by looking at an implementation of film rebates, implementing a film tax credit system, or increasing a dedicated amount through the SEED program, we have to look at everything. I think we will look at everything and we'll get this right.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Final supplementary, Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the Minister mentioned a couple of times the information report from this film forum. I think Regular Members would appreciate that and having access.

Finally, the topic that was mentioned of tax incentives. Not as prevalent as we may think, but it would also be an economic benefit for this industry. If jurisdictions like Yukon and Ontario are leading in this area, and provinces like Saskatchewan only learned that by dropping it, their film industry recently dried up, we don't have any form of tax credit or rebate program in this industry.

Will the Minister commit to this House that he, his department, the Department of Finance will come up with a form of tax incentives, travel rebates, lodging rebates, or expenditure tax refunds to make the NWT a lead player for the future investment of the professional film industry?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Again, we are working toward that. We will continue to work with the folks at the Department of Finance. We will get that information. It's a work in progress.

I appreciate the Member's enthusiasm about the film industry here in the Northwest Territories and its importance to our economy here. We're going to make sure that we get this right and continue to work with both Finance and Education, Culture and Employment.

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

QUESTION 275-17(3):
MEDICAL TRAVEL INSURANCE

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Again and again I hear from constituents that don't know that they are not covered for medical travel expenses by NWT Health Care when that travel originates outside of the Northwest Territories. I want to ask the Minister what measures our government has undertaken, or if they feel any obligation to make sure that people are aware of this or are reminded of this. What responsibility do we have as a government to make people aware of this?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. The honourable Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although the government or Department of Health and Social Services does not have an obligation to advise people on their travels to get medical insurance, I think it's a good idea. I know that travel agents, when you're going by plane, advise you to get medical insurance, but people who drive out don't usually bother getting medical insurance, although it's a good idea. I think the premiums are very reasonable and it's something that if you do, as the Member indicated, have an accident while you're down south, medical bills can be astronomical. Even getting to and back from the hospitals down south can be a big cost.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: No one thinks about these things until it happens to them and then it's too late. I've had two really serious incidents of people requiring medical travel for accidents and issues that took place outside of the Northwest Territories, in Alberta actually, and it cost a lot of money.

I know the Minister is saying that we don't have an obligation to tell people, but I'm wondering if it would be worthwhile to have this information posted somewhere. Like when we issue health care cards, would it be worthwhile to have one line on the health care card that says this health care card will entitle the cardholder to medical services within the Northwest Territories and medical services in Canada at other health service providers, but have a line on it that says this does not include medical travel that originates outside the Northwest Territories. Would that be one way of conveying it? Would a public announcement? We put public announcements on the green screen for all kinds of things. Would something like that go some ways?

I've just been amazed at how many times this has happened to constituents of mine and I've spoken about this in the House many times before, but it's still not something that comes into people's consciousness when they're about to travel.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I definitely think it's well worth advertising this. I think that it is something that I could advise the department to start working with the authorities to get the word out to people who are going to travel outside our jurisdiction, to ensure that they are carrying medical travel insurance. I think it would be well worth doing that, even if it only prevents one person from having to pay huge medical bills as a result of an accident or something like that.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Because of this one particular incident that happened to a constituent of mine, I recently went on the RBC website and clicked on travel insurance and, actually, for my husband and myself for \$75 per year you can buy medical travel for multiple trips. They even send you a little card that you can have plasticized so you can carry that in your wallet. It is as you said, Mr. Minister, extremely inexpensive.

I'm wondering, most of our constituents visit a clinic or a health centre or a health authority or a hospital or wherever they receive their medical services. Most of them would attend there at some point during the year. Do we have a poster that conveys this information that we could post in a public place, such as our health care facilities? Do we have one now, and if we don't, could we get one that warns people of this cost to avoid?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: We may have that type of poster in the health authorities. I'm not aware of that, but if we don't, we should. I think that after today I will advise the deputy minister to contact the health authorities to ensure that these posters are in all of our health centres across the North, advising people that it would be a good idea to have medical travel insurance.

I didn't know you could buy sort of like an annual medical travel insurance. That would be even better. It's usually per trip, but if you can buy something on an annual basis, much better.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I was surprised to find out that you could buy it for multiple trips over the course of a year and how cheap it was; \$75 for myself. I'm over 50, but it was \$75. But there are a number of sources for this, so that's something else I'd ask the Minister if he could also put together, because people may not know where to go to look on line. But there are several sources, and I would like to include that in the public information we make available to Northerners so they know where they can easily access this coverage.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: I will commit to providing the sources on advising people to get medical travel insurance. I will also commit to putting on the

posters where they can get the medical travel insurance from.

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

QUESTION 276-17(3):

POST-OPERATION AFTERCARE PROCEDURES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if there is a policy on patients who get or receive surgery at the Stanton Hospital. Is there a policy that they have to stay there so long, and then they have to leave the hospital back to their hometowns? I'm not too sure what that policy is called, but is there a policy in place?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess not so much as a policy but more of a clinical practice. A decision as to when the patient is released is a clinical decision made by the physician that's responsible for that patient.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thanks for the clarification from the Minister. I've been told, when I went to Fort Good Hope, that there are several patients from the Sahtu that had surgery in Yellowknife's Stanton Hospital and they were released based on the clinical decision by the doctor of when they came back to their home communities. Because of the operation and because of the sensitivity of it, they were released a little too early and then they had to come back to the Stanton Hospital for some more medication and recovery.

I want to ask the Minister what assurance he can give me that these patients, once they leave back to their communities, that they possibly, to the highest degree, will not come back to the Stanton for further medication on that surgery.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Every patient that has had surgery has a plan, a care plan as they are discharged from the hospital. This could include medication, follow-up appointments, and also advising the patient to look out for certain warning signs, post-surgery warning signs, and if anything comes up, they are to report back to the clinic. I will just make sure that these post-surgery plans are thorough and that everyone has a clear understanding of this plan prior to leaving the hospital.

MR. YAKELEYA: Is there any sense the Minister has in regard to some of the patients... Sometimes they are released, and even they know that they are released a little too early, and they just need to stay an extra week or two for the recovery. Sometimes they do not speak up and they are released back to the communities, knowing that it's not quite right.

Is there any sense that the Minister can assure me and the people of the Sahtu that they have the right, if they would insist that they stay an extra week or two at the hospital, to make sure that their recovery is well in good terms?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: That's a very tough question. It's something that only the doctor or the surgeon can answer. They are going to determine, based on the condition of the patient, on whether or not the person should be released. If the patient is unhappy, that they think they're being released from the hospital too early, yes, they do have an avenue where we have had situations down south, in Edmonton to be exact, where the family felt that the patient was being released too early. They contacted us. We contacted the medical people and the person got to stay a couple of extra days. I mean, there is something in the system that can allow us to do that.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people I spoke to about the surgeries in the Stanton Hospital were very concerned because there were a number of incidents that indicated that these patients left the hospital a little too early and their recovery wasn't quite healing up, or somewhere along the line it brought them back to Stanton. It cost a lot of money and it caused a lot of heartache.

I want to ask the Minister, within Stanton I'm speaking about, when people have these surgeries that they are fully informed when the doctor is going to release them. However, they have the right, also, to say we want to stay because something along the system is not quite right for them to go back to their communities, fearing that they are going to come back here because of the nature of the surgery. Can the Minister help me out in terms of how do we get to that point where patients would be staying here a little longer than they expected to?

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Specific to the Stanton Territorial Hospital, we can touch base with the CEO and advise the CEO of the issue and the CEO will have that discussion with the doctor that, at any point, if the individual is indicating that they themselves don't feel well enough to be released from the hospital, that we then have some system where the CEO and the physician would have that discussion at that one time when this occurs. I can ensure that that happens.

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

Written Questions

WRITTEN QUESTION 15-17(3):
CRIMINAL CHARGES AND
ALTERNATIVE MEASURES DATA

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice, and each is requesting information for the calendar years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

1. How many charges have been laid to individuals by the RCMP and then withdrawn or stayed?
2. How many charges have been laid under:
 - a) causing a disturbance;
 - b) breach of probation; and
 - c) breach of undertaking?
3. How many times has the Alternative Measures Program been proposed, how many times has it been accepted and how often have the program's objectives been fully achieved?

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 88-17(3):
LETTER ON CANADA-CHINA AGREEMENT
AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter from the Union of British Columbia Chiefs to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, entitled Canada-China Agreement Abrogates Rights of Indigenous People, wherein the request that they direct the Government of Canada to reject the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement with China. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Bouchard.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 15:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT, NO. 3

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, November 2, 2012, I will move that Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act, No. 3, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

BILL 16:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2012-2013

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, November 2, 2012, I will move that Bill 16, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 14:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2013-2014

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2013-2014, be read for the first time. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2013-2014, has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Mr. Miltenberger.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 14:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2013-2014

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2013-2014, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, the bill authorizes the Government of the Northwest Territories to make infrastructure expenditures for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2013-2014, has had second reading.

---Carried

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 84-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations

Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 84-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): We will proceed after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I will call Committee of the Whole back to order. The item before us today is Tabled Document 84-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013. I would like to ask Minister Miltenberger if he has opening comments.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair. I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013.

This document outlines an increase of \$20.928 million in operations expenditures for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The major items included in the supplementary estimates are:

- \$13.8 million to report two special warrants approved on July 31, 2012, and August 17, 2012, for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for the increased costs being incurred due to the severe forest fire season in 2012;
- \$4.4 million to report a special warrant approved on August 17, 2012, for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to fund the costs of identifying the disposing of diseased bison in the Mackenzie Bison Sanctuary;
- \$4.1 million for the additional cost resulting from the new Collective Agreement between the Union of Northern Workers and the Government of the Northwest Territories;
- \$3.9 million for the Department of Public Works to fund the costs associated with the demolition of Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Samuel Hearne schools in Inuvik.

I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary estimates document, Madam Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort the witnesses to the table?

For the record, Mr. Miltenberger, could you please introduce your witnesses?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have with me the deputy minister of Finance, Mr. Aumond; and the assistant deputy minister of Finance and deputy secretary to the FMB, Sandy Kalgutkar.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. General comments from Members on the operations expenditures. Any general comments? Detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Please turn in your document to page 3. Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures, Office of the Clerk, not previously authorized, \$32,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Office of the Speaker, not previously authorized, \$1,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, not previously authorized, \$3,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Statutory officers, not previously authorized, \$5,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Legislative Assembly, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$41,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 4, Executive, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$21,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Ministers' offices, not previously authorized, \$22,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Executive, operations, not previously authorized, \$37,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Cabinet support, not previously authorized, \$19,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Total department, not previously authorized, \$99,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Moving onto page 5, Human Resources, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$7,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Human resource strategy and policy, not previously authorized, \$35,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Management and recruitment services, not previously authorized, \$32,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Corporate human resources, not previously authorized, \$42,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Employee services, not previously authorized, \$41,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Regional operations, not previously authorized, \$41,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Total department, Human Resources, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$198,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Page 6, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$15,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Negotiations, not previously authorized, \$24,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Implementation, not previously authorized, \$5,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Intergovernmental relations, not previously authorized, \$8,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Total Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, operations expenditures, \$52,000, not previously authorized.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Department of Finance, operations expenditures, deputy minister's office, not previously authorized, \$875,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Fiscal policy, not previously authorized, \$711,000. Mr. Bromley and then Mr. Dolynny. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe this was the Housing Corporation we were on and I'm wondering if I can get an explanation of the amount planned for the NWT Energy Plan solar panel installation in Inuvik. What exactly is the Housing Corporation plan with solar panel installations? Thank you.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's for \$85,000 and that's money that will be used for a nine-plex at the Bertha Allen public housing complex in Inuvik. Installation of solar panels on the roof would supply energy to the complex and operate the mechanical and electrical systems. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you. Sounds like a worthy project. I wonder, do we have any estimates of what efficiency this would gain over the normal course of events and/or do we plan to install monitoring so that we can learn valuable lessons and collect useful data on which to base future similar decisions? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The payback is estimated to be five years, and yes, with the solar technology available, when they've measured the technology available to measure the benefits, we'll be looking to do that so we can learn from this investment. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: That's all I had, Madam Chair. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe we're also on fiscal policy. I believe that number has been read out, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Actually, I'm going to call deputy minister's office again for \$875,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Fiscal policy, not previously authorized, \$711,000. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks for clarifying. I want to zone in on the comment regarding the \$700,000 line entry in this expenditure, and it reads, "To provide funding to address an increase in the cost of living tax credit expense due to a higher personal income forecast." So I guess my first question is: What is driving the anticipated increases in personal income tax revenues? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Madam Chair. The forecast is this normal forecast that we get from Finance Canada, and the current projections from what Finance Canada are indicating are personal income taxes are higher than we initially projected. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. So I guess what we're hearing is that this is a statistical variance. Are there any other mitigating factors or forces that are driving this forecast?

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you. What the forecast is indicating is the amount of personal income tax fillers is likely to increase, and that means our personal income tax revenues have also corresponded to the increase as well. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Using the second line of that bullet it says, "The net effect on government operations is nil as there will be an offsetting revenue amount." Could we get layman's terms as to what does that mean? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you. This is, as the Member will recall, when you go to our '12-13 Main Estimates budget, this is based on the change in how we account for the corporate income tax credit. The credit is now reported as an expense against the Department of Finance's appropriation, and then the offsetting revenue is also recorded under our revenues. So there's no net impact. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Great, I appreciate the explanation there. So I guess the ultimate question here is: What impact does this have, or is this being incorporated into the fiscal framework and would we be anticipating an updated fiscal forecast?

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you. As we prepare our '13-14 budget, we will be updating our revenue forecasts. The next update from Finance Canada is, if I recall, in the first week of December and then we'll see our updated fiscal framework when we

present them with our '13-14 budget in early January. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Again, I appreciate the explanation. Going back to what was said just a couple of minutes ago regarding the new accounting or public accounting practices that this government and many other governments were subjected to in causing a lot of changes in the way monies are being allocated and descriptions, what would be the anticipated... Are we going to possibly see a corrective fact like this ongoing, or is this just a year where we're going to see this type of net impact being an offset of revenue? Thank you.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Madam Chair. I thank the Member for that question. The unions are continually working with the public sector accounting board, the accounting board that drives account policy for governments. And our view to them is a lot of these changes, they're making public accounts much more difficult for the ordinary reader to read because of these types of adjustments. We have regular dialogue with the accounting body and we are working with other governments to ensure that accounting rules are being much more clear in the future.

MR. DOLYNNY: No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Fiscal policy under the Department of Finance, not previously authorized, \$711,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Budget, treasury and debt management, not previously authorized, \$34,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Office of the comptroller general, not previously authorized, \$43,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Office of the chief information officer, not previously authorized, \$10,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Total department, Finance, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$1.673 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$22,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Public safety, not previously authorized, \$8,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Community operations, not previously authorized, \$18,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): School of Community Government, not previously authorized, \$10,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Lands administration, not previously authorized, \$20,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Sport, recreation and youth regional operations, not previously authorized, \$8,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Regional operations, not previously authorized, \$7,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Total Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$93,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Moving onto page 10. Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$3,000. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I wonder if I could just get an explanation. I see there are a number of transactions related to the implementation of financial shared services. I believe that this is an opportunity for increased efficiency and, ultimately, lower operations costs. This is sort of related to the previous one we had – \$436,000 – where various departments have expenses listed. I wonder if I could just get an explanation.

Again, are we further ahead? Are there efficiencies and savings related to these new expenditures for shared financial services? Just a brief explanation overview would help here.

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

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. In response to the Member's question, the amounts of money that he sees transferring out of the various departments into financial shared services and the Department of Finance represents the amount of resources and, in some cases, people that are transferring from line departments into finance that will be undertaking the financial transaction processing on behalf of departments. The intent is to relieve program managers in the line departments from the day-to-day routine transactions such as travel claims, paying bills and

stuff like that, and standardizing that process across the GNWT into one processing place, which will be in the Department of Finance.

In terms of getting efficiencies, we hope once the processes are standardized and the routines are down, that we'll start to see the efficiencies in the amount of time it takes to process claims and the amount of less time it takes to receive money and get bills paid. Right now we have a Financial Shared Service Centre up and running in Inuvik in the Beaufort-Delta. That's the first centre. We have plans to undertake in Norman Wells in January and February, and then later on in the early part of the next fiscal year in the South Slave and then into headquarters is the plan. We'll see transactions like this or transfers such as these over the next year, year and a bit. That will allow us to fully utilize the investment we've made in our new financial system corporately. Really what it will have us do is we're finding now that things aren't necessarily done the same way in every department and we hope to standardize that process, thereby making those transactions more routine, more efficient and relieving departmental managers of that duty, and letting them concentrate on managing their budgets and making use of the financial system to make better decisions in managing their budgets.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for that explanation. It does seem logical and like a reasonable investment to me. I did, however, hear the words "we hope" and "we expect to see" and whatnot, and I would agree that that's a reasonable expectation. I agree on the hope part. Obviously, we would hope there was some analysis done that would indicate the high probability of savings here. I expect that's the case.

This is a complex thing to measure, but will we have some monitoring in place and an ultimate evaluation plan? I know, over the years, we've seen a lot of back and forth within and between departments and across departments to wrestle with this problem. I'm just hoping that we, obviously, have some form of evaluation in place to ensure we capture the lessons that are to be learned here.

MR. AUMOND: Certainly, we do have some clear objectives and we do have a matrix where we can measure the efficiencies around the transactions. Like I say, right now we only have the Beaufort-Delta office up and running, so after it's been up and running for some time, we'll be able to provide Members with the results of that. It will probably be a year or two years until we get the whole system up and running that we'll be able to get the larger picture, but certainly, as the Beau-Del gets up and running and we trudge on into the Sahtu and the South Slave we'll be able to provide the reports, after we monitor them for a while, to Members.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, again, for those remarks from the deputy minister. That sounds reasonable to me. I know that this will take a little time to put in place, and I would think it would take even longer to do an evaluation. I just appreciate the opportunity to ask questions and make sure that that evaluation process is in place. That's all the questions I had.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, negative \$3,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Asset management, not previously authorized, \$4.088 million. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the department knows, and the Minister, I treat every capital project with the same lens and same measuring stick, and I'm doing so with this project as well.

My first question is with respect to this \$3.9 million for demolition work done to the E3 school program. Could the Minister give a breakdown where exactly that \$3.935 million is being used?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. Of the \$3.935 million being requested, \$3.3 million will be for the demolition of Samuel Hearne Secondary School, \$635,000 will be used to undertake some further investigative work and prepare Sir Alexander Mackenzie School for demolition in 2013-14.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you very much. This clarifies, I think, yesterday's other question that we had, so I'm glad we're seeing clarity here today on that. I appreciate it very much.

If, by chance, the amount of demolition for the \$3.3 million comes in under budget, what happens to that surplus of money if there is one?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The money would be lapsed and returned to the government coffers.

MR. DOLYNNY: I would assume that there was a tracking mechanism for that money, and that may be responded to with my other question.

We know that this is the first of potentially two or more phases of demolition work to really complete the whole project of demolition. Can we get some type of idea what the scope or magnitude of the total budget for demolition or remediation is for that project?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The combined projects come to \$8.855 million.

MR. DOLYNNY: I guess my other question is: Has there been any other remediation or site preparation work done in previous years that have been added to the project in general, or is this the only time we have seen this type of remediation work with this project? Thank you, Madam Chair.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Other than I think it was referred to as destructive testing to find out what was actually there, that was referenced yesterday, this is the only work that has been done in terms of the demolition and remediation. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: The department indicated that there were bids or tenders that have gone out for the \$3.3 million component of the first part of the money. When did this RFP close and when would we expect the beginning of such demolition? Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Aumond.

MR. AUMOND: Thank you, Madam Chair. The tender for this work closed just a couple of weeks ago and the contract will be awarded if this budget is approved. I would expect that the work would commence shortly. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: One final question, Madam Chair. The Minister of Finance indicated if there should be any savings in design, that money should be transferred to general coffers.

Again, my question to the department Minister is: As a Regular Member, how is one able to track such money going into such coffers? What is the mechanism, Madam Chair?

MR. AUMOND: When the Financial Management Board approved this for consideration by the Assembly, the department was also directed that should any funds be surplus, they are to be lapsed at the end of the fiscal year. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: I am still confused. As a Regular Member, we have the right to follow funds or capital expenditures. Should there be any surplus in a project, how is one able to track that back? We are hearing about lapsed monies. I am a bit confused, Madam Chair. How do we track these so-called savings going back to general coffers?

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The year-end accounting will capture all the money across government that has lapsed. One of the specific ways, if there is direction of committee, we could look at a negative supp that would specifically target any funds should they be lapsed on this project. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: I think that is the clarity I am looking for. No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, committee. Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, asset management, not previously authorized, \$4.088 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Public Works and Services, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$4.085 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Agreed. Thank you. Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$63,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Program delivery support, not previously authorized, \$169,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Health services programs, not previously authorized, \$1.212 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just would like some background on this. I thought that this work had been brought back into the public service fold some time ago. There were some issues early in the 16th and there was quite a review done. I wonder if I could get the background behind this. It seems like a substantial amount. I don't know what the total contract is, but this is an area where, obviously, we want the highest standards. When we didn't have them, our people suffered and our system was not working well. If I could get some background that gives some perspectives on that, thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The existing base funding was \$2.527 million. The contract amount was \$3.069 million. There's a shortfall of \$542,000 and the cost drivers of the increased costs for dietary, housekeeping and laundry services related to the contract. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: So let's see, it's currently \$2.5 million and we are adding a little bit more than .5, so something like a 20 percent increase here. When was the last time this was increased?

This Minister, I know, has some history and knowledge about the back and forth between public servants and contracting out these services. I wonder if he could remind me of what that has been and what our current thinking is. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: My understanding is that this is basically an accumulated amount, that over the last number of years the costs have been absorbed within the operation. It's no longer sustainable, hence the request that's now before this House. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: I appreciate the Minister's remarks. Have we done a review on whether we want these services carried out by a contract versus public employees?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Madam Chair, with your indulgence, I would ask the Minister of Health to speak to that program issue. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you. Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Madam Chair. Built into the contract is an escalation of 2.9 percent, an annual increase. I think that so far that contract has been moving along, from our understanding, between Stanton and the provider. I don't believe we have done a review, but I could check to see if the review has been done and advise the Minister, but I don't know if there's been a review done recently.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's all the questions I have. I appreciate the Minister's commitment. I would look forward to any information he could provide on that.

Like I said, I believe it was done early to midterm in the 16th Assembly, if my memory is correct, which there are no guarantees. Thank you.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question on this item as well. It also refers to the item under community wellness and social services. In this particular one with the dietary, laundry and housekeeping contracts, we are catching up to what the actual expenditures are as opposed to what we are budgeting. This is not the first time that we have run into these kinds of requests in a supplementary appropriation. So I'd like to know from the Minister if he can tell me – we always seem to be in a catch-up situation, we always seem to be granting these requests to top up contracts or top up the expenses of contracts after the fact – is this something that is standard practice and why do we do that. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There hasn't been any target investment in the amount of \$632,000 that's already been approved for 2013-14 in ongoing. As we look at improving and having a process that better reflects the concerns of the Legislature, I give the Member acknowledgement of her interest in this issue both in health, but across

government, forest firefighting, for example, of making the base more reflect the reality of the operation as opposed to having to come back. As we identify these areas, that's what we're attempting to do going forward here. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for those comments. I would like to say that I appreciate that we're going in this direction. I think it is the right way to go.

I'll ask the question and the Minister can confirm when we get to the section, but I'd like to know whether or not there's an increase to the base for the Charlotte Vehus Group Home and Billy Moore Assisted Living Group Home contracts when we get to that section. It's the same principle and my questions apply to both of those. So that's all I have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Chairman, when I get to that question, I will answer yes. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger, for saving the committee time. Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, health services programs, \$1.212 million. Is committee agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, supplementary health programs, \$6,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you. Health and Social Services, community wellness and social services, not previously authorized, \$1.385 million. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If anybody remembers, this was a big issue that we brought up when the contract was actually being awarded, and it went out for tender and we had two contractors come back with bids, and we had a northern contractor and a southern contractor. There was a lot of mix-up. The northern contractor initially won the bid, then he ended up losing out because of the Business Incentive Policy that the NWT promotes and somehow the southern contractor won this bid.

What we have before us now is that this southern contractor is coming back to this government and asking for an extra \$850,000 to do the programs and services that are provided. When we first saw this supp, it raised questions, obviously, right from the start.

I'm not sure if this is the usual practice of government, to start providing supps to contractors after they've awarded the bid. It kind of gets me wondering that we might have contractors out there who are lowballing the bid to win the contract and then when they find out the contract is awarded, then they come back to the government and we

find, possibly, excuses to give them the extra funding to run those programs when we have northern contractors up here who provide northern services, understand the northern economy, understand the buying and selling of northern products and yet we went south on this one.

I want to ask the Minister if he could explain to me how this southern contractor won the bid and yet is coming back to us, not even a year later after being awarded this contract, and asking for an extra, I noted this \$850,000 for that one specific one with the Billy Moore Group Home. How much money is being put towards the Billy Moore Group Home that they're asking for extra costs, and how that happens when we had a northern contractor who initially won the bid and possibly had a lower contract number at the same time? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. For that we'll go to Mr. Aumond. Sorry, we'll start with Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With your indulgence, I'll ask Minister Beaulieu to speak to the background issues related to this contract. Thank you.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not an increase in costs as a result of switching the contractors. The breakdown is that the Charlotte Vehus shortfall is \$547,000, Billy Moore is \$303,000, for a total of \$850,000 for both homes. It's a 2012-13 this year. It's not substantially higher than any other year preceding up until 2012-13.

I'll just run through some numbers. There was \$1.422 million in 2009-10 and then \$1.38 million, \$1.45 million in 2012-13 and those were the other. So it's not all of a sudden jumped up by that amount.

What's been happening is that the authority has funded this and has put themselves into a deficit with funding both of these homes in previous years. So the Billy Moore went from \$683,000, \$696,210 and then this year \$686,000. So there's not a substantial jump. It is just a steady growth and sometimes it goes up, sometimes it goes down.

But what's been happening, like I indicated, the two contractors were doing this and each year the contracts were signed and then its deficit funded, essentially, and the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority, as the House knows, goes into a deficit on an annual basis. This forms part of the deficit this year.

We're trying to deal with the budgeting issues across the board on all health and social services

authorities. So this supplementary is \$850,000 to just bring the budget up to where it should be.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thanks for the explanation. If Members recall, this was a big issue for me when I was dealing with it, but speaking to the contractor that lost the award, there was a stipulation in the contract that if he hadn't spent certain dollars in areas that he had signed during the contract, he had to give money back to the authority and he was doing that. So now we're basing our contracts based on a deficit. That doesn't make any sense, and if he could give a little bit more explanation how we award contracts based on our authority's deficit. Can I get just a bit more clarity on awarding contracts based on deficit? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. It's an award, it's an RFP process. Through the request for proposals we determine which is the best value to the authorities and it's awarded based on that. So this deficit funding, essentially what happens is when the health authority has a contract that they have to continue to run these two homes almost like a non-discretionary funding, in essence there's just no possible way that we could get the costs from running these two homes from approximately \$2.1 million down to \$1.2 million and expect to continue to run these two homes. So this money is put in for that.

As I said, previous years this formed part of the accumulated annual deficit for the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority. It had to be done and we had to continue to operate this. So it formed part of the accumulated deficit.

MR. MOSES: Thank you. In regard to the Charlotte Vehus Home, that was Parkland services, I believe, that was running that program. For somebody to run that program for the amount of years that they have, you'd think that the contractor would bid his contracts based on previous years' expenditures, and now they're coming back to us for over half a million dollars. I can see maybe \$100,000, but coming back for over half a million dollars to continue to run the same programs and services that they've done for years doesn't make sense to me. Now we're awarding them a contract where they've actually come back to us for over \$300,000. Under that award, is it next year that they're going to come back to us for half a million dollars, maybe more?

This gets back to where I'm feeling that contractors are low bidding this government to win contracts, and only coming back for supps afterwards to do the programs and services. I'm getting the same type of frustrations when this whole process went through and we did it in the House months ago, and I'm very frustrated to see this before us again, and frustrated that it comes in a bundle under a

supplementary appropriation act like this, where we have to approve everything together and this is part of that area as well.

The Minister did mention that they determine their contracts based on the best values. Is that value in dollars or value in services and programs? Can he explain what he means by value?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Before we go to Mr. Beaulieu, we'll allow Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is before the House is really to cover a base adjustment to a contract cost that has been absorbed to this point by the Beaufort health and social services system that, as the Minister has pointed out, has helped contribute to their significant deficit, which is now in the neighbourhood of over \$4 million.

The contract, as the Minister pointed out, was let. The contract prices have been fairly consistent. What has reached the breaking point, similar to the discussion we just had about the Stanton and the kitchen and laundry services there, costs have been absorbed in the system and they're no longer able over time, due to inflation and other pressures, to absorb those costs that have come forward to recognize that there's a base adjustment required to cover off the costs so that the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority does not just continue to run up a significantly increasing deficit. That's the financial background.

In terms of the question of value that the Member has asked, I'll ask, once again, Mr. Chair, with your agreement, to have Minister Beaulieu speak to that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Yes, for final comment, we'll go to Minister Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to speak specifically of the RFP, it's not only the value for money but there is an approved request for proposal indicators within the government system that Health and Social Services and the authorities follow. It's outlined that they would receive certain points and values in certain areas such as northern employment, northern supplier, cost, management, experience of management, background, directly related business or expertise and so on. There are several categories that are rated. In this one here the two main contractors were weighed off against each other all the way down, and based on the RFP consideration, which also includes the business incentive policy considerations with you evaluate the overall RFP. Those are, generally, the considerations that are in an RFP. It's not only cash.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Beaulieu. I see no other questions. Sorry. Madam Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm going to try and see if I can clarify this here. I have a question to the Minister. Is this money that is being asked for for these two group homes, is that money because the contractor has asked for an increase in the contract price for this particular fiscal year, or is the money going to the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority to deal with their deficit?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The money is a target adjustment to the budget that reflects an underfunding situation for this contract that has been there for some time that has helped contribute, as the Minister of Health and Social Services pointed out, to the significant current deficit of the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority. This is recognition of that gap, that deficit in their base funding.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. If I can put it another way: The contract is let for a certain amount, but the GNWT funds the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority at a lesser amount. Is that correct?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, they absorb the costs that contributed to their deficit reaching the point where we need to recognize it and do this base adjustment. But it's because they didn't have the appropriate amount of funding in their budget to cover that cost.

MS. BISARO: Just one last question here. To the Minister, I would hope that if we are adding money to the base funding that we give to the health and social services authority, is it correct that we should not see this kind of a request for a supp approval in '13-14?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, as we pointed out, there has been a base adjustment, a target adjustment of \$850,000 to the '13-14 budget.

MS. BISARO: That's all.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Moving on with questions, I have Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister mentioned a base adjustment to the programs and specifically the contractor who's taking care of the Charlotte Vehus Home and the Billy Moore Assisted Living Group Home. Can he give me a percentage on the base adjustments of the overall contract and what were the possible final numbers or where I can find the final numbers in both contracts that were, I guess, admitted?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not a base adjustment to the contract per se. The contract, as the Minister pointed out, has been fairly consistent in its cost. What this is, is an adjustment to the program area in the budget of the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services where they had a certain amount of money for a contract that was inadequate to the tune of \$547,000, roughly, and has helped contribute to the accumulated debt of the authority. I'll ask Minister Beaulieu to speak to the... He already mentioned it, but I'll ask if maybe he'll go over the cost over the last number of years for the contract. It has been consistent. What has been underfunded, as we've just discussed, has been the budget amount in the Beaufort-Delta's overall budget that had money to cover this particular program area that was inadequate.

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

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have the calculations on a percentage basis; however, the amount paying out to the Charlotte Vehus Home, \$1.459 million, and the total funding allocated to this line object was \$912,000. It was necessary to put \$547,000 into it. The change, I guess, in percentage would be moving from \$912,000 up to \$1,459 million.

In the Billy Moore Home the change is from total funding of \$383,000 up to \$686,000, for a total adjustment or increase of \$303,000. We've never had less, this has never cost less than the total funding since what we have recorded here. Even since 2005-2006 it was higher. The cost of running these two homes was higher than what the total funding provided by the system was doing. They've been accumulating deficit for these two homes ever since then.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In order to maybe try to provide clarity, if I could just point out the information that we have, the existing base budget for the Charlotte Vehus was \$842,000. They put out a bid for a contract that came in at \$1.459 million. That contract was awarded. The amount of money they had in that program area, \$842,000, a gap of \$547,000 that has been recognized as a base deficiency, and we are here to seek funding. Currently, there has been an adjustment to 2013-2014. Up until now the authority has been absorbing that cost and running a deficit which is no longer sustainable. The contract amounts have been fairly consistent. This is not a case where there was a contract awarded for \$842,000 and the price was subsequently recognized to be inadequate on the contractor's part. It was just the

funding in the organization wasn't there to cover that \$1.459 million.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the awarded contract to the Charlotte Vehus was \$1.459 million and the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority was the authority running specific programs for the Charlotte Vehus Home, or was it Charlotte Vehus running those programs and Beaufort-Delta covered them up, and now that Beaufort-Delta is in debt because they were kind of supplementing the Charlotte Vehus Home when Charlotte... Can I just get that clarity?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, the Member is correct; the contract was for \$1.459 million. The amount of money in that program area that the Inuvik Health and Social Services had in their budget was \$842,000, so a \$547,000 shortfall that they have been covering off as an authority and running a deficit to do that. They've reached a point where it's no longer fiscally sustainable, and as we try to adjust and have realistic budgets, this funding area, clearly, was underfunded. Hence this request and an ongoing target adjustment of this same amount for both facilities of \$850,000.

MR. MOSES: I guess my next final question is: Why hadn't the authority or department noticed this back when it started, when we first started getting our deficits and addressed it then, rather than addressing it now? Especially this year when we had this big controversy with the contracts. Why did the department not catch this ahead of time and adjust it then, instead of continuing to put this authority and government further and further in debt?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: There has been, speaking as the former Health Minister, an ongoing struggle with the authorities and deficits. Clearly, as they go through their operations items like this, program areas like this that are unfunded and the authority can no longer afford to carry that without incurring a deficit are coming to light and being identified, and we're coming forward to clear them off. The same as we've done with some of the costs, if I refer back to the Stanton issue, as well, with their dietary, laundry, and those types of service areas.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Moses. Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, community wellness and social services, not previously authorized, \$1.385 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Health and Social Services, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$2.835 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 12, Justice, services to the government, Justice, operations expenditures, not previously authorized, \$91,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Justice, operations expenditures, legal aid services, not previously authorized, \$34,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Justice, operations expenditures, court services, not previously authorized, \$50,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Justice, operations expenditures, community justice and corrections, not previously authorized, \$249,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Justice, operations expenditures, services to the public, not previously authorized, \$34,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Justice, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$458,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 13, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, directorate and administration, not previously authorized, \$52,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education and culture, not previously authorized, \$492,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, advanced education, not previously authorized, \$6,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, income security, not previously authorized, \$47,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$597,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 14, Transportation, operations expenditures, corporate services, not previously authorized, negative \$52,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Transportation, operations expenditures, airports, not previously authorized, \$146,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Transportation, operations expenditures, highways, not previously authorized, \$95,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Transportation, operations expenditures, marine, not previously authorized, \$12,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Transportation, operations expenditures, road licensing and safety, not previously authorized, \$25,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Transportation, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$226,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 15, Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$1,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, minerals and petroleum resources, not previously authorized, \$36,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, energy, not previously authorized, \$439,000. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to question the decision against the community's wishes for a Whati transmission line design, when I believe one of the principles of this government is to support local energy generation. I'd like to ask what the reasoning is. How does this support that principle when we know that there is, for example, a proposal for a mineral development in the area, which is currently proposed to use diesel generation of power and increase our greenhouse gas emissions, lend no support in terms of economic development and jobs and so on for people, when we could be developing local power within Whati, recognizing that it is a big hit on the capital front-line side, but we've been postponing this for a long time? It's time to get on with it.

I believe Yellowknife from time to time, certainly in low-water years, has to turn to our diesel generators. It's the same for Behchoko, also on that same power system. Now we're proposing to add

another community and possibly even another mine site without adding to the capacity of production. A couple of things that bring this into question. How does this fit with our principles and the current demand that already frequently exceeds the current power generation?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a project that was done in discussion in consultation with the Tlicho Government as well as the community of Whati. It depends on how you want to consider the sequencing. The transmission line will allow the community of Whati to go onto hydro. We know that we're currently looking at expansion in a number of areas for hydro. We're just concluding the Bluefish, for example, and we're, through the energy plan as we've laid out to committee, going to be talking about the broadening of the grid and the connection of the grids going forward to allow us to move hydroelectricity throughout the grid. We recognize that there is an opportunity on the Lac La Martre River for a significant amount of power. The community was looking at a much smaller scale. It ended up, after basically years of work, is the plan is to move ahead initially with a transmission line.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: No further questions.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, energy, not previously authorized, \$439,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, tourism and parks, not previously authorized, \$26,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, economic diversification and business support, not previously authorized, \$72,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Industry, Tourism and Investment, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, \$574,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 16, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, corporate management, not previously authorized, \$304,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures,

environment, not previously authorized, negative \$791,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, forest management, special warrants, \$13.791 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wondered, I know we didn't have a record number of fires, but I understand that a number of them were close to communities and were particularly intense. I believe the information that I saw was that we fought a very small percentage of forest fires out there. I'm wondering if the Minister can say what percentage of forest fires we fought this year and what the trend is over time. My impression is that it's going down over time, that we're choosing to fight fewer and there might be good reasons for that, but if that's happening and we're still having exceptional bills, it's something we need to be aware of and thinking about.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Mr. Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have that breakdown. Based on my recollection, we fought, on average, a normal number of fires. What we did have was an extremely dry season, a season where lightning started a month earlier, for example, a season that extended into September. We know that in just about every region there were major fires near communities requiring the mobilization of all our resources we had available, as well as importing resources from Alberta, Alaska, and any jurisdiction that we could get resources from, because every other jurisdiction in the country was facing the same challenge. There were major fires in Inuvik, Deline, Behchoko, Fort Smith, Enterprise and I believe Sandy Lake, to name the ones that come immediately to mind. And they were fairly significant in size requiring mobilization of all our resources and for a greater length of time than we anticipated. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks for the comments from the Minister. I would appreciate learning if the proportion of fires that we are fighting is changing over time. I imagine that varies a little bit with how many there are, absolutely, but I would be interested in that information if possible. That's all I had. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Moving on, I have Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask a question here, as well, with regard to the special warrants. They are both rather large sums. They are the bulk of what we are looking at in this supplementary appropriation. The special warrants are done while the firefighting season is still on, and

it's an estimate of what it's going to cost to deal with all the fires and what it's going to cost us to get to the end of the season. Now that we are at the end of the season, I wonder if the Minister could advise whether or not there is an expectation that we will fully expend the \$7.2 million and the \$6.951 million that we're asking for in the summer, approved by special warrant in the summer. Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The final accounting is just being concluded. There is going to be some under expenditure. The money will be identified. Of course, it's been voted by FMB that that money is coffered. That will be fully accounted for and returned to the treasury. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister for that remark. I guess my second question goes to procedure or process. The Minister just advised that through FMB, the actuals would be reported. I have wondered for a while now whether or not Regular Members see actual numbers of expenditures against what was approved by special warrant. Can I ask the Minister to answer that question? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. We'll go to Mr. Kalgutkar for that response.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we could certainly do that. If the Member will recall, we actually did a negative supp in the 2011-2012 year related to forest fire suppression costs for the same reason. We approved a special warrant and then we didn't utilize all of it and then we did a negative supp in that fiscal year. I think at that time, we did report the actual cost. Thank you.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to Mr. Kalgutkar for that. No, I don't remember that. Too many numbers too often, I guess. If the Minister could make available to Regular Members what's been expended, that would be great. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Any comment, Minister Miltenberger?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, forest management, special warrants, \$13.791 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, forest management, not previously authorized, \$49,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Page 17, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures,

wildlife, special warrants, not previously authorized, \$4.451 million. Mr. Bromley.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we heard today in the House with the Minister's statement, severe loss, up to 50 percent of this herd, due to anthrax. This is the Mackenzie Bison Herd, one of the few herds of this threatened species, so this is a very serious loss. I'm wondering, just so that we're learning along the way and making sure we are taking advantage of any opportunities to us, I wanted to ask, is there such thing as an inoculation program for anthrax that we might consider taking advantage of to help strengthen the herd and also help the population recovery. Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I understand, having talked to some of the biologists and such, that anthrax is a treatable condition if you capture it in time, but there's no inoculation that I'm aware of. In cases with wild roaming herds, we are responding late in the day after we, through our aerial surveys in this case, happened to find some dead bison that turned out to have anthrax, so we were playing catch-up the whole summer trying to identify the outbreak in the animals after the outbreak had already occurred. The short answer would be, no, I don't believe there's an inoculation for anthrax.

MR. BROMLEY: I do realize the current situation and how that works and why we're always behind. I guess I would just encourage the Minister to – obviously prevention would be much better – stay on top of any opportunities there.

My second question is, I know it's a learning path on how to deal with these carcasses in an effective way. People, I think, have been amazed at the degree of this infection, this epidemic, and how it's spread over quite a large area. Although, I guess, it was pretty defined in some areas as well. But, obviously, 50 percent of the herd; that says something.

In terms of the treatment of the carcasses, both in terms of costs which we're dealing with today, and in terms of effectiveness which is an issue with respect to the spreading of the disease directly related to our costs, what have we learned this year, and will we be able to be more cost effective in the future as a result of our lessons this year?

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: In my discussions with one of our very skilled veterinarians that we have in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources when I was on-site doing a tour, it was pointed out to me that on almost every site they were tracking the type of fuel mixtures that they used. They tried some with dry wood and green wood and no coal, some with coal, some with coal and green wood. They tried just tarping some to see how natural decomposition would work in the heat. They were going to go back

in the fall and test all the burn sites with all these carefully identified and catalogued burn sites to check the spore count to see the degree of success in eliminating the anthrax spores, and the lower the number, of course, the better.

We've had some discussion, as well, and some suggestions from the folks on the ground that work, really, like Trojans, in the incredible heat of summer disposing of the carcasses, suggestions similar to the suggestion you made, Mr. Chairman, for future outbreaks, coming up with a better way to dispose of carcasses that would see us possibly coming up with basically a big lid that you could put over a carcass once it's burning, to capture all the heat and have improved incineration of the carcass and destruction of the anthrax spores. We're looking at that as well.

From what I understand, as well, talking to the veterinarian, that this is a scientific issue of great concern across the land, so there's going to be papers written on this. There will be a comparison with other scientists, other jurisdictions as they track what they do. This is an evolving science.

My final comment would be, I was told that in the old days they used to think it was best to dig a pit, put the animals in and dump in quick lime and that would dispose of the carcasses. Then they found out over time that in fact the spores thrive on the calcium and the quick lime ingredients. They went back to check some of these other sites where they had done that and there were literally cauldrons of anthrax spores as opposed to a site with no spores left. We've learned a lot from that case and we're going to learn a lot from this one as well. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: That's all I had. One last request, I guess. I want to thank the Minister for those comments, once again, and just ask if he would bring forward a report, a briefing on lessons learned, say by this spring or winter session, and how we're better prepared to handle things when the next outbreak occurs. Mahsi.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, wildlife, special warrants, \$4.451 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, wildlife, not previously authorized, \$172,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, land and water, not previously authorized, \$21,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, total department, special warrants, \$18.242 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, total department, not previously authorized, negative \$245,000.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Does committee agree that consideration of Tabled Document 84-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013, is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Mr. Menicoche.

COMMITTEE MOTION 39-17(3):
CONCURRENCE OF Tabled DOCUMENT
84-17(3), SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 2, 2012-2013,
CARRIED

MR. MENICOCHÉ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that consideration of Tabled Document 84-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013, be now concluded, and that Tabled Document 84-17(3) be reported and recommended as further consideration in formal session through the form of an appropriation bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Thank you, Mr. Menicoche. We will wait for the motion to be circulated. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): Question has been called.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Mr. Menicoche.

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

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny): I will now rise and report progress. I'd like to thank our witnesses and the Minister. If I could get the Sergeant-at-Arms to please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Have a safe Halloween. Thank you, committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I have the report from Committee of the Whole, Mr. Dolynny?

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 84-17(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 2, 2012-2013, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted, and that consideration of Tabled Document 84-17(3) is concluded, and that the House concur in those estimates and that an appropriation bill to be based thereon be introduced without delay. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

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

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 14:
APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),
2013-2014

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2013-2014, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 14 has had third reading.

---Carried

Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Social Programs committee at 7:30 tomorrow morning.

Orders of the day for Thursday, November 1, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

11. Replies to Opening Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 17, Establishment of Northern Search and Rescue Base
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 5, Legal Aid Act
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Judicature Act
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until Thursday, November 1, 2012, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:11 p.m.