



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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

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

## **HANSARD**

**Monday, June 1, 2015**

Pages 6291 – 6330

**The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

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(Nunakput)

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*Minister responsible for*

*Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister responsible for Seniors*

**Hon. Tom Beaulieu**

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*Minister of Public Works and Services*

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*Minister responsible for the*

*NWT Housing Corporation*

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*Minister of Justice*

*Minister of Industry, Tourism*

*and Investment*

*Minister responsible for the*

*Public Utilities Board*

**Mr. Norman Yakeleya**

(Sahtu)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, June 1, 2015****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackie Jacobson):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 203-17(5):  
TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION  
COMMISSION CLOSURE**

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be holding its closing events from May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup> in Ottawa. This is time to reflect, and I would like to express my appreciation for the great work accomplished by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The work that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has done in the Northwest Territories and across Canada has been a critical step in the healing process for people suffering from the abuse and trauma of residential schools.

It has been no small task. The commission visited our communities, set up supports and provided a forum where survivors could share their pain and begin to heal.

I would like to thank the members of the commission, and in particular Commissioner Marie Wilson, a fellow Northerner, for her dedication and commitment during this process.

Residential schools have been the source of much of the pain and loss that many generations of Aboriginal people experienced. At the same time, schools can also be where some of that past is reclaimed, where some of the reconciliation that is needed can happen, where some of our hope for the future can be found.

There must be places dedicated to exploring this learning and reconciliation. Truth and Reconciliation Commission events and school curriculum are two examples of those places.

I am proud to say that the Government of the Northwest Territories has been a leader in Canada with the development of the residential schools

curriculum in partnership with the Government of Nunavut, the Legacy of Hope and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

A significant part of our history is in this curriculum, and the coursework and resources provide a deeper understanding of the impacts of residential schools on the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This will give our students insight into the challenges faced by survivors, and a context for healing and reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Northwest Territories, I want to thank the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for helping us to put the events and the effects of residential schools into their proper place in Canada's history. From now on, all people who go through our school systems will know what has happened and the impacts on the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 204-17(5):  
2015 FIRE SEASON FORECAST**

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to be the bearer of bad weather reports, but as Mother Nature may have it, and based on the reports from our meteorologist, we will once again experience drought over the summer of 2015.

The prediction for this fire season is for another year of hot, dry weather. The downturn in weather for the next two days is unlikely to make much difference. It will be getting warmer and drier in all regions starting on Wednesday.

This is the first time since 1998 that an El Nino winter is followed by an El Nino summer. In general, El Nino is known to produce warmer and drier weather.

The Northwest Territories has been under the effect of a blocking ridge through the month of May. All regions have been snow-free since mid-May, except for some areas in the Inuvik region. This is very early.

All regions witnessed record-breaking temperatures and very little to no precipitation through the month of May.

Most of our long-term seasonal forecast models indicate a high probability that these drought conditions will continue through August over at least portions of the southern Northwest Territories.

Indeed, five of seven weather models show very dry conditions across either all or portions of the Deh Cho, North Slave and South Slave.

These conditions will likely result in extreme fire behaviour and intense wildland fires, which can be difficult for crews to extinguish.

Everyone has a responsibility to prevent and protect their homes, cabins and communities from the risk of wildland fires. Property owners and communities should be using FireSmart tools to reduce their risk of loss from wildland fire.

FireSmart homes, cabins and neighbourhoods allow firefighters to concentrate on fighting the wildland fire, which ultimately protects more homes and lives. Information on FireSmart is available from local Environment and Natural Resources offices and local community governments.

As of today, 51 fires have been reported in the Northwest Territories affecting 69,320 hectares. Thirteen of those fires are out. Four were person-caused. This time last year, six fires had been reported with 31.5 hectares affected.

Environment and Natural Resources brought on its human and aviation resources early to deal with fire starts. Most crews had an early start in the southern regions.

Helicopter and air tankers have already been brought on to ensure wildland fires threatening communities or other values at risk are dealt with swiftly and aggressively. Infrared scanning of critical areas is being done to ensure these fires are out and there are no hold-over fire surprises.

As in previous years, we will continue to provide regular updates about wildfires both on our website and Facebook page.

Mr. Speaker, last summer was record breaking. There were 385 fires, 3.4 million hectares of forest land was affected by fire and several communities were threatened. The overall cost was over \$56 million.

Environment and Natural Resources will be acting upon lessons learned from the 2014 fire season.

Work on several of the recommendations of the 2014 Northwest Territories Fire Season Review Report, which has been shared with Members of the Legislative Assembly, has begun. Most of the work will be completed this summer or through the next year.

Areas recommended for improvement included public engagement, safety, human resources, Fire Management Strategy and Policy, operations, and procurement and financial resources.

Despite the unprecedented challenges Environment and Natural Resources faced last summer in managing the wildland fires, there were no serious injuries or fatalities to firefighters, residents or visitors.

Environment and Natural Resources continues to actively monitor the fire environment and has plans to assess and respond to new wildfire starts.

Mr. Speaker, I know we all hope Mother Nature will cooperate this summer by providing much needed precipitation in regular intervals.

In the meantime, Environment and Natural Resources will continue to work with other departments and communities to improve the GNWT's response to emergencies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr. Abernethy.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 205-17(5):  
WORKING TOGETHER: AN ACTION PLAN  
TO REDUCE AND ELIMINATE POVERTY  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time today I will table "Working Together: An Action Plan to Reduce and Eliminate Poverty in the Northwest Territories." This collaborative action plan demonstrates our government's commitment to work in partnership with other stakeholders to tackle poverty in the Northwest Territories. It builds on the great work that produced "Building on the Strengths of Northerners," the Anti-Poverty Strategic Framework, in 2013. Like the strategic framework, this action plan was developed by all levels of government working together with representatives from the private sector and non-government organizations.

In 2014 I tabled the Government of the Northwest Territories Anti-Poverty Action Plan, which outlined our government's commitments to act and invest in this important area. But we already knew that government can't do it alone. We also committed to work with non-government organizations, community and Aboriginal governments, business and industry and other stakeholders to develop a multi-stakeholder territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan.

That work has rolled out over the last year. I want to recognize the efforts of all the partners who participated in two anti-poverty round tables over the past 18 months. The perspectives, knowledge, passion and commitment of all participants were instrumental in the creation of the action plan and will be critical to its implementation.

Mr. Speaker, the completion of this territorial action plan is not the end of a process but the beginning.

The action plan outlines priority areas for action under the five pillars of the Anti-Poverty Framework and demonstrates how these priorities link to those identified in community wellness plans. It outlines work underway in each priority area, setting the stage for annual updates. This living document will help all of us work together to ensure our actions have the maximum impact on tackling poverty across the Northwest Territories.

I particularly want to thank the members of the advisory committee who took on the work of leading the development of this action plan. They include co-chair Bronwyn Watters, and members Julie Green, Mark Heyck and Bob Simpson.

I also want to make special mention of the late Liidlii Kue First Nation Chief Minnie Letcher who, as co-chair of the advisory committee, was passionately committed to ensuring the community voice was represented in this action plan.

Mr. Speaker, this action plan is just a start. As our collective efforts evolve, so will this plan. I am confident that, working together, we can begin to truly make a difference to improve the quality of life of all residents of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Mr. McLeod.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 206-17(5):  
INCOME INCLUDED IN CALCULATION  
OF PUBLIC HOUSING RENT**

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform Members about changes to how the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation calculates rent for public housing tenants.

In the coming months, Canada Child Tax Benefit payments and payments to foster parents will no longer be included as sources of income for the purpose of calculating public housing rents. I believe this change properly reflects the values of our people by supporting families who fulfill their responsibility to care and raise our children. In order to implement this change, I have directed the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to update their policies and procedures and develop training material for local housing organizations to allow for full implementation by October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

As Members are aware, the public housing rent scale was revised at the beginning of this government to improve consistency and fairness and address any disincentives to work. The further changes we are announcing today in the Public Housing Program builds on that work through improved consistency in our government's approach to social programming. This treatment of income aligns closely with the policies of the

Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Department of Health and Social Services.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation will begin using the total income reported on the income tax returns of household members to calculate rent. This approach will reduce the burden of monthly reporting for tenants and is consistent with the decision to not include Child Tax Benefit and foster parent payments in rent calculations as the Canada Revenue Agency does not consider them as income.

Reducing the reporting burden is especially important for tenants such as seniors and single parents. Not requiring income verification every month respects the dignity of public housing tenants by treating them more like other tenants and supports their self-reliance.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we can continue to make the public housing system responsive to the needs of our people and through this change further support our families and seniors, improve the consistency of government and foster self-reliance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 207-17(5):  
TOURISM WEEK**

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, this is National Tourism Week and across the NWT we are celebrating with events ranging from the "Be A Tourist In Your Own Town" promotion here in Yellowknife to community picnics, film screenings, open houses and complementary tours of local attractions.

There is much to celebrate and I would like to take a moment to highlight some of the recent successes and milestones this vibrant sector of our economy has achieved.

Last October I shared with Members that over 90,000 visitors travelled to the Northwest Territories in the 2013-14 fiscal year. That is the highest number of visitors that we have welcomed to our territory in a decade. Visitor spending also rose dramatically, increasing by 24 percent in 2013-14, to over \$132 million.

Growth and success seems destined to continue in 2015. Web traffic to the NWT Parks online reservation system doubled over last year when it opened on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Over \$100,000 worth of reservations were generated within the first five hours it was open.

Less than a year after its establishment, the NWT Conference Bureau has secured four conferences worth an estimated \$1 million in future business for the NWT's tourism sector. An additional six

conference bids could double this estimate by year end.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers tell us that our tourism industry is building momentum. It is vital that our government continue to support and grow this sector through the development of new products, community infrastructure and training and mentorship opportunities.

Tourism 2020, an extension of our two previous five-year tourism development plans, is expected to launch in the 2016-17 fiscal year and will guide the next chapter of our government's work and investments to grow and advance tourism in our territory. It will focus on creating exceptional visitor experiences in the Northwest Territories, enhancing the skills of the tourism service sector and supporting communities to develop attractions, products and services for visitors.

Mr. Speaker, strengthening and growing our tourism industry is a collaborative effort. Investment and funding leveraged from Canada's Northern Economic Development Agency serves to build community tourism capacity and create new tourism products. Destination marketing is expertly accomplished by Northwest Territories Tourism. Advice and guidance flows to our decision-making processes from the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee and the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Advisory Council.

Above all else, our tourism sector succeeds on the basis of the hardworking individuals who operate and deliver our territory's tourism products and services and provide the face and friendly smiles that welcome the world to our North.

Men and women, Mr. Speaker, like Toni and Henry Heron whose effective management, special brand of hospitality and willingness to share in their Aboriginal culture has contributed to the recognition of Queen Elizabeth Territorial Park near Fort Smith as one of the Top 25 Campsites in Canada by Explore Magazine.

Collectively, we are working to ensure that the NWT tourism sector will grow, continue to thrive and provide economic benefits across the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Premier McLeod.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 208-17(5):  
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the Honourable Jackson Lafferty will be absent from the House today and tomorrow to attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission closing events in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Beaufort-Delta, Mr. Blake.

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEMPSTER HIGHWAY RECONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents are very happy on upcoming work on the Dempster Highway this summer.

Last year we felt the impact of no construction on the Dempster Highway due to the end of the 10-year Building Canada Plan. This year we begin another 10 years of work on the Dempster and many other projects throughout the Northwest Territories.

I am concerned that this work has not been awarded at this time. From what I understand, we are awaiting the Treasury Board. It is very important we take advantage of the weather we get in June and July, as we usually get a lot of rain in August and September.

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

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON WRIGLEY PUBLIC HOUSING NEEDS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to point out the dire need for better housing in the community of Wrigley. When I say that housing in Wrigley is inadequate, I am actually agreeing with the NWT Housing Corporation.

A 2014 survey of community housing needs found adequacy problems with 38 percent of the community's houses. This is worse than any other community in the Northwest Territories. Wrigley is also right down there when it comes to housing and core need; there are problems with adequacy, suitability, or affordability. Almost half of Wrigley's houses are in core need, 46 percent of them.

I'm sorry to say, by this measure, Wrigley housing is not the worst in our territory but third worst. That is not something to be proud of.

During my recent visit to Wrigley, I heard many complaints about the neglect of housing problems. I heard about homes in disrepair. I heard about problems with mould, residents not being approved for housing assistance, and I heard about construction that was never completed.

When they are so widespread, these problems put stress on the community and everyone who lives



there. Housing is critically important to a person's overall health and well-being. When housing is very bad, there tends to be an impact on both health and education.

People in Wrigley feel their housing needs are neglected by this government. I believe they are right, and I also believe the trend of neglect includes public housing.

In addition to the problems I just noted, as of last year there were only eight public housing units in Wrigley owned by the NWT Housing Corporation. It pains me even more to look at public housing units across Nahendeh. In last year's annual report, the Housing Corporation reported only 125 public housing in all of Nahendeh. Compare that to 239 units in the Sahtu communities, 498 in the South Slave and 633 in the North Slave. The population differences do not fully account for that kind of disparity. These numbers also show that the problem has been going on for a long time. It takes years to build up a proper housing stock.

I would like to call on the NWT Housing Corporation to evaluate and come up with a plan to address the housing needs of the residents in Wrigley. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANOL HERITAGE TRAIL

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hiking the Canol Trail is no walk in the park. Just ask the 142 people who have hiked the trail since 2006. These are world-class hikers. Not only do we have a world-class hiking trail, we have world-class oilfields, world-class fishing spots, a world-class painted church, world-class hunting areas and several world-class national parks.

In the past 10 years, we have had world-class hikers in the Sahtu that have hiked the Canol Trail, a 222-mile trail from the Mackenzie River to the Yukon border.

A snapshot of the Canol: The Canol was once the biggest construction project in the '40s in North America. It was bigger than the Panama Canal. Of the 142 hikers who went on the trail since 2006, some continue today to have walked about three to four hundred miles on that trail. Of the 142 hikers, we had 48 youth participate in the past nine years. This year will mark 10 years of hiking the trail.

Those who have walked the Canol know the true meaning of teamwork, cooperation, encouragement and determination. They've been tested in every facet of their entire being. Pain and soreness was the common theme of the hikers. The youth have walked through the old remnants of the past and saw and felt what it was like in the olden days. Living on the land is not easy. Without proper

monitoring and regulations, the youth experience how government did not care about our land. Read the Canol containment report. Better yet, Mr. Speaker, go and walk the Canol.

I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Mr. Speaker, youth can better appreciate what we have today in our land claim and, more importantly, cleaning up the mess left behind. Without our great sponsorship of the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Aboriginal governments, the private businesses, the oil companies, the volunteers, the community councils and the hikers, this hike would have been but a dream. It takes committed people to make that commitment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY STRATEGY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not know whether our 100 percent publically owned Power Corporation should be competing for the Hay River power delivery franchise, but I guarantee Cabinet doesn't know either. Big questions, incredibly and worryingly, remain undebated and unresolved. Despite oodles of opportunity, Cabinet has failed to lead a meaningful discussion towards a renewed energy policy that will reduce energy costs, provide direction when questions such as the Hay River RFP arise, enable other companies to provide power, such as Fort Liard Geothermal, and begin to mitigate climate change.

In the absence of thoroughly debated and carefully crafted policy, incorporating today's technologies and potential for distributed energy, we actively kill sustainable opportunities, adopt an unaffordable and unsuccessful policy of massive subsidies and now propose to direct a Crown corporation that has failed to ever reduce costs, to compete for yet more monopolized responsibility for power delivery, all with zero consultation with MLAs or even with the current Hay River provider which has 60-plus years of doing the work.

I take great caution in supporting a large corporation in the delivery of power services. However, I am much more comfortable when the corporation is highly regulated by an arm's-length public body such as the Public Utilities Board which is mandated to protect the public interest. The PUB has demonstrably saved both taxpayers and ratepayers millions of dollars through their rigorous review and oversight.

The board regulates to compensate utilities for 95 to 105 percent of their cost of service, including a profit in the order of 8 to 9 percent. A 2008 PUB

study of NTPC cost of service found that NTPC was being compensated 130 percent of costs for South Slave communities. Not only was this not corrected, government ignored this fact, increased their own legislative power over the supposedly arm's-length PUB and crippled the PUB's ability to do their job with government fiat issued this April. The directive limits the PUB to issuing rate adjustments of only 1 percent or less, with the result that NTPC's 30 percent overcharge if still true today, will remain in place with only very minor adjustments perhaps for decades. So much for reducing cost of living.

As government flip-flops and makes murky policy behind closed doors, people pay ever-higher energy costs. Instead of a thoroughly debated energy policy that guides decisions and benefits people, the economy and the environment, Cabinet decisions are made in a policy vacuum and we let this happen.

I will have questions. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF INTERGENERATIONAL DAY

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Intergenerational Day and the day is being celebrated in over 100 cities across Canada, including Yellowknife. This is where younger and older people come together for intergenerational immersion. The goal is to create respectful relations and better understanding between children, youth and older persons, and it's good to see so many active elders in the gallery today. Welcome to you all.

Since time immemorial there have been generational differences, but the speed of change and the technological impacts on society in the last 50 years has widened the gaps in attitude and lifestyle between young and old. In recognition of these gaps, in 2008 a group of educators, health care workers, older adults, youth and parents created the i2i Intergenerational Society.

In addition, this month of June is Seniors' Awareness Month, and June 15<sup>th</sup>, specifically, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a day I try to highlight every year. It's unfortunate that such a day is necessary, but the upside is that it is an opportunity to do something about elder abuse.

The mistreatment, neglect and financial exploitation of our elders is much more common than most of us would like to admit. Elder abuse does not discriminate. It's found in institutions and private homes across all sectors and all societies.

Intergenerational Day is an opportunity to be reminded that our elders have made significant contributions to our communities in their younger

years. We can use this day to create better understanding, build empathy and disrupt the concept of ageism.

Our elders hold the wisdom, history and knowledge of our communities, our territory and of life in general. They should be respected, honoured and cared for in their later years, not abused.

As a government, we need to ensure measures are in place to recognize and address elders' issues, and we need to bring elder abuse out into the open and eradicate it.

Kudos to Intergenerational Day for taking a grassroots, hands-on approach to the issue. Kudos to Yellowknife, Norman Wells, Paulatuk and Fort McPherson for recognizing and being part of the 2015 Intergenerational Day. Lastly, thank you to all my colleagues for their purple support today in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDRESSING POVERTY CHALLENGES OF SENIORS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of poverty is very complicated, as we all know. Like a jigsaw puzzle being put on the table, you must first look at the problem by seeing the big picture, then you tackle piece by piece.

I view the challenge of poverty much in the same way. First you start by looking at the corners and the sides, or some even tackle the middle. Yes, poverty is something we can tackle. If we look at the big picture, we see problems and we must pick away at them piece by piece, whether it's putting our energies into housing, jobs, affordability, or even other types of necessities, such as affordability of food and their expenses.

There are many organizations out there that take seniors' poverty very seriously and they put their finger on it. The Canadian Centre for Poverty Alternatives will tell you that the lack of affordable housing is detrimental to many seniors because they can't afford to pay for their accommodations or their food or their drugs or their transportation or other types of necessities because something always falls off the table and their money never goes far enough.

Research continues to tell us that seniors need supportive living. Many other sources, all through the government, point to the fact that two-thirds of our seniors are not getting enough income in their old-age years through their OAS or CPP to help them meet the bottom line. In fact, seniors are more vulnerable than ever. Poverty among our seniors I wish was a rare occurrence, one we never spoke of, but the reality is, it is the reality.

I could go on with CMHC stats or other types of government stats, but the bottom line is our senior population is growing. In the Yellowknife area alone, if you're a senior between 65 and 74, in 11 years there's going to be an almost 400 percent increase in the growth of seniors. If you're in the age category of over 75 in the Yellowknife area, there is over a 400 percent growth in the next 11 years.

I often hear from seniors about the challenges of affordability, how they live in poverty, how they want to continue to live independently, but this just becomes so impossible. I often, again, hear from seniors that they thought these would be their golden years, but they're more often described as the lead years, because they're carrying around the lead weight of affordability and poverty, one that they never asked for but they struggle with day to day.

In short, this may be a puzzle, but I think if we all work together, I don't think any of these poverty issues are insurmountable. We must pick away at these problems piece by piece. Affordability, housing, food, we can do more. I certainly believe it's not an impossible task.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRESSURES ON MOOSE POPULATIONS

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Reading the newspaper a couple of weeks ago, I saw some startling images: photographs that showed a skinny moose with tufting fur and grey patchy shoulders crossing Highway No. 3. This didn't look like a healthy animal. In fact, tufting hair can be a sign of ticks. While moose can carry a few hundred ticks without serious harm, major infestations can cause discomfort and over-grooming, leaving moose underfed and vulnerable to weather and predation. This should concern us.

The moose, *Alces alces*, is an important animal for Aboriginal people in the NWT, including the people of the Deh Cho. A 2009 study found that moose in this region were productive and in good to excellent condition, but these animals may be subject to new pressures. Cold winters and summer forest fires have managed tick populations in the past, but if winters continue to become warmer and shorter as our climate changes, this problem will grow more severe. When infected animals move north, warmer weather means more insect larvae survive. As Northerners, we're familiar with annoying bugs, but unlike us, animals can't seek shelter indoors, spray repellent or use a fly swatter, and insects like ticks and mosquitoes can stress moose, including vulnerable calves, impacting their health and also their birthweights.

The forest fire season brings its own challenges. Fires may help forest regrowth, not to mention bring delicious morels, but they also damage animal habitats.

Let's think about that skinny, patchy moose again. Fortunately, these ticks don't threaten humans, and meat from infected moose is still edible. Fortunately, too, we haven't had to impose hunting restrictions like in some parts of Manitoba. Still, I hope that the GNWT will closely monitor moose health and take steps to ensure that moose populations remain strong and healthy. We must ensure that these important animals get the respect that they deserve.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REVITALIZATION OF FISHING INDUSTRY

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you are well aware, Hay River has a long history as being the NWT fishing industry capital. It's exciting to hear that this government is investing \$1.3 million through its Economic Opportunities Strategy to this industry.

Last week, along with members of the NWT Fisherman's Federation, I was glad to hear a plan go forward on how we're going to revitalize this industry and how we are going to implement a new fishing plant in the community of Hay River. This is a great renewable resource that we have in the Northwest Territories. We need to take full advantage of it. We need to make sure that all this fish is sold in the Northwest Territories. We need to get fish back onto the kitchen tables of the people in the Northwest Territories. We need to make sure it's in every restaurant. We need to make sure that it's in all our institutions, correctional institutions, hospitals, diamond mines, seniors facilities. We need to make sure that this resource is being taken full opportunity of.

Our quota that we have is a renewable quota. We are basically protecting ourselves. I understand that this is a multi-staged process. We need to find more federal funding to do this. We need to increase the prices for those fishermen. Some of the prices they're currently getting are the same prices they got back in the '40s and '50s. We need a plan to go forward to get this industry revitalized.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. The Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ACCOUNTABILITY OF NWT POWER AND ENERGY CORPORATIONS

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, on May 28, 2015, in question period with this Member, the Finance Minister took certain liberties

to talk about this new special relationship the government has with NWT Power and its Hydro Corporations. In the Minister's own words, "that relationship has become very close," and that, "we should look at how we should change our reporting relationship."

Upon review in edited Hansard, the Finance Minister mentioned not once but three separate occasions to the Member's questions, one of them: "the fact that the Auditor General himself has pointed out that we need to change."

Now, let's validate these comments to what was actually said by the Auditor General of Canada during the formal public audit review of the 2014 NWT Public Accounts and let's see if indeed the Auditor General told this government the need for a relationship change, or simply some cleanup in their accounting practice.

On January 22, 2015, the Auditor General of Canada met with Standing Committee on Government Operations and on January 23<sup>rd</sup> held an open public review. In both presentations the Auditor General stated the NWT Power and Hydro Corporations were not self-sustaining and required ongoing financial support. This merely prompted the management to adopt proper Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards, or PSAS, and a change of classification for the hydro corporations from business enterprise to what is referred to as "other government organization."

In the Auditor General's own words, "NWT Hydro will be accounted for on a line-by-line basis as opposed to a summary basis in 2015." That's all. There was no suggestion by the Auditor General about the GNWT's relationship change with NTPC, other than simple accounting cleanup. Nothing more.

So, the Finance Minister is spinning this to sound much different than what the Auditor General has presented to standing committee or the public. The question is why.

This goes back to my earlier questions last week. What is the secrecy behind this Cabinet, this Minister and this new hidden energy policy, but ultimately, when is this Minister going to come clean from behind the iron curtain? Thank you.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TRIBUTE TO GEORGE DOOLITTLE

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have the honour of speaking about a great Northerner and a great human being. George Doolittle was born on August 11, 1944, in Edmonton, Alberta, to Jane and George Doolittle Sr. He attended Colorado Springs College for a year and then went to the University of Alberta to

pursue engineering. However, George decided to seek adventure after a year of engineering. He travelled to several American and Canadian cities before settling in Inuvik, where he acquired a stationary engineer certificate.

George met Violet in Norman Wells in the fall of 1965. They fell in love and were married on June 10, 1967. He was welcomed by and became part of the vast McDonald family and had three children, Roy, Yvonne and Charlene. George and Violet raised their family in Inuvik, Fort McPherson and Norman Wells.

George has many grandchildren and several great-grandchildren whom he inspired and treasured. George was very proud of his family and all of their accomplishments.

George worked for the NWT Power Corp for many years and then for the Department of Transportation of the GNWT. During this time he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree by correspondence. He then retired, only to become busier than ever. He taught computers, which he himself was self-taught. He was a liquor inspector, an RCMP guard, a coroner and a commissioner. Education and work ethic were very important to George. He was also not one to shy away from getting involved. He ran for the MLA for Inuvik at one time and was also on town council for many, many years. He really loved all the people that he worked with.

George had a great and unique sense of humour. He often told jokes, sometimes corny, accompanied by an expression, gesture or even a dance. He also enjoyed comics such as Dilbert and especially The Far Side.

If anybody knew George, they knew George enjoyed his coffee and coffeing with his buddies. In Inuvik he could often be found at the Cafe Gallery, in Yellowknife at the Tim Horton's.

George had a triple bypass in 1992 and struggled with heart disease later in life. He passed peacefully on May 26, 2015, surrounded by his loving family in Edmonton at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. The family was happy to have those last few days together to laugh, to talk, to share, to comfort and to say anything else that needed to be said.

George lived a full and beautiful life. He was many things: a gardener, a carpenter, a techie, a car and motorcycle enthusiast, an endless volunteer, a traveller and an adventurer. But most importantly, he was a beloved son, husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, brother-in-law, teacher, mentor and friend. George had touched so many people's lives over the years.

George was a mentor to me when I was first involved in politics, when I had the opportunity to serve with him on the Inuvik town council. He has

left a great legacy to his family and will be truly missed by many, but continues to live in all those he touched with his kindness and wisdom.

Today the Doolittle family will lay to rest George Doolittle in the community of Norman Wells. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of this great man. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. The honourable Premier, Mr. McLeod.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize my niece Kathy Makela, who is visiting from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Kathy is a lawyer with the Native Law Centre there.

I'm also pleased to recognize the presidents of teachers' federations from across Canada here today. Carol Jolin, president, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-Ontariens; Mark Ramsankar, president, Alberta Teachers' Association; Dianne Woloschuk, president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation; Susan Swackhammer, first vice-president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario; Norm Gould, president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society; Peter Fullerten, president of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association; Guy Arseneault, vice-president-elect of the New Brunswick Teachers' Association; James Dinn, president of Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association; Shelley Morse, president, Nova Scotia Teachers' Union; Gayla Meredith, president, Northwest Territories Teachers' Association; James Ryan, president, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association; Ann Hawkins, first vice-president, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association; Rian McLaughlin, president, Ontario Teachers' Federation; Gilles Arseneault, president, Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation; Bethany MacLeod, president-elect, Prince Edward Island Teachers' Association; Colin Keess, president, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; and Carol Sherlock, acting president, Yukon Teachers' Association. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize the members of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Anti-Poverty who have joined us today. They're the individuals who have worked together, worked hard to consolidate all the information from residents across the Northwest Territories in the development of working together on an action plan to reduce and eliminate poverty in the Northwest Territories. So, I'd like to

take this opportunity to both recognize and thank Bronwyn Watters and Julie Green as well as Mark Heyck.

June is also Senior Citizens Month and June 15<sup>th</sup> is World Elder Abuse Day. Although today is not June 15<sup>th</sup>, Members of the House have joined me in wearing purple today to recognize this important issue, and I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize a few members of the NWT Seniors' Society who have joined us here today: Merlyn Williams, who is the president; Joyce Williams – both Merlyn and Joyce are constituents of the Great Slave riding; Margaret Marshall; Bill Reid; Joan Hiron; Bill Adkins; Darryl Bohnet, who is also a resident of the Great Slave riding; Dick and Loretta Abernethy, who happen to be my parents, welcome; Joe Walsh; Carole Robinson; as well as Jeff Renaud, CEO at the Avens, A Community For Seniors; and Kimberly Doyle, the executive director of YK Seniors. Thank you all for joining us today.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize Mr. Gerry Wood. Gerry is an MLA from the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly in Australia, representing the riding of Nelson. He's been the MLA since 2001. He's been visiting, sharing some of his stories, and we had an opportunity yesterday to visit and tell him about how we conduct business here in this Legislative Assembly. So, welcome to Canada and welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

I'd also like to recognize Mayor Mark Heyck. Welcome, Mark.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize all the visitors that we have in the gallery today. I guess our tourism numbers are going to continue to rise, as a bunch of folks are visiting us from across the country. Welcome to Yellowknife and welcome to the Northwest Territories.

I also wanted to recognize Merlyn Williams, the president of the YK Seniors' Society. I also wanted to recognize a former Bantam and Midget hockey coach of mine – he was a real inspiration for me as I was growing up – and his long-time involvement in minor hockey in Yellowknife, Mr. Joe Walsh. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to recognize some constituents from Weledeh today: Joe Walsh, who has just been mentioned; also Lois Little I see up there, and Carole Robinson,

Joan Hiron. There may be others. Welcome to the House.

Mark Heyck, our mayor. It's always great to see him here when he can get here. I'd also like to recognize the MLA for Nelson, Mr. Woods from the Northern Territory. It's really great to have him in the House as well. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to see so many seniors here today. I would like to recognize specifically one from the riding of Frame Lake, Yvonne Quick. It's always good to see Yvonne here. I want to just mention, as well, Carole, Loretta, Wendy, Joe, Darryl and there are many more up there who I can't see.

As an ex-teacher, I would also like to specifically welcome the presidents of the teachers' associations across the country. Welcome to our home. Welcome to our territory. I hope you have a grand time. I'm sure that Gayla will show you a grand time. Gayla Meredith is the president of our NWT Teachers' Association and is hosting all the other presidents.

Lastly, I'd like to recognize the mayor of our fair city, Mr. Mark Heyck. I think that's about it. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are so many people out there to recognize, I just want to say welcome to the majority of them, and I'll focus my specific recognition to our seniors. For seniors from the Yellowknife Centre riding, I would first like to recognize Ms. Margaret Marshall, Mr. Bill Reid and Mr. Bill Adkins as well as I believe I see Ms. Wendy Carlos up there as well. If I happened to miss any of the seniors who are up there, I'm sure they can understand. I can't quite see that far anymore. My eyes are starting to give up on me as the days go on. Welcome to everyone and thank you very much for coming today. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. I'd like to welcome everybody in the public gallery here today. Thank you for taking an interest in our proceedings.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7 oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta, Mr. Blake.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 843-17(5): DEMPSTER HIGHWAY RECONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, the request for tenders closed on April 1, 2015, for the widening

of the Dempster Highway. I'd like to ask the Minister, why is this contract not awarded yet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are several stages of approvals that we go through when we're dealing with the Building Canada Fund. The next step is to take all of the money that we have over the next 10 years and put them into bundles under \$100 million, and we had submitted our first bundle to the federal government and right now it's going through a review. We feel it's very close to being approved.

Because the bundles have negotiated contracts in them, it was important that the federal government ran it through the Treasury Board. What we've done is we've been providing information to Infrastructure Canada. In turn, they're providing it to the Treasury Board. So, we're at the very final stages. Our Minister of Infrastructure has been in contact with Infrastructure Canada and is also trying to assist us to move that approval along, but at this time we are expecting approval on June 4<sup>th</sup>, actually.

**MR. BLAKE:** As I mentioned, with the weather we have in August and September, it's really important that we begin this work in June and July.

Will the Minister ensure that future contracts be awarded at least by the end of May in the years to come? Thank you.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** This bundle that we submitted is four years' worth of projects. Next year it will be approved, so we would be able to go through the tender process a lot quicker. We have tendered in advance in anticipation of approvals from the federal government. So, at this point, as soon as the approvals come, we would be in a very good position to make the awards. As soon as we get approval we'll make the awards. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 844-17(5): WRIGLEY PUBLIC HOUSING NEEDS

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to follow up on my Member's statement on the housing issues in the community of Wrigley. I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation what kind of follow up is being done from the results of the 2014 Community Housing Survey, which prove what my constituents are saying about the dismal state of housing in the community of Wrigley. Thank you.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We use the results of the survey to assist

us as we plan our capital budget going forward. We do recognize that there is a need in a lot of smaller communities, especially in the Member's riding. There has been a reluctance in the past for them to welcome public housing into the community, but we're seeing that attitude start to change now and they realize that the best way to house a lot of their residents is to go through the public housing portfolio. So we needed those numbers to assist us with our planning. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** I'm glad the Minister, during our last tour which he attended with me in Nahendeh, knows that people were in favour of public housing. What is the Minister doing to beef up the role in Nahendeh communities that will result in more public and even better housing? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We have a number of programs to assist homeowners especially in upgrading some of their houses, and I think in the Member's riding we've had some fairly good uptake on that. A lot of them do live in private homes.

We did hear from a number of the Member's communities, when we did our tour, that they felt there was a need for public housing. We had a number of units that we had put there on speculation that we would have suitable clients for and that didn't pan out. So our plan is to convert whatever units we have there into public housing.

Again, we will look at the numbers and plan it as we go forward to possibly adding more public housing into the communities because we see that's the direction that they feel is the best direction to go at this moment. Thank you.

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much. Just specifically it's for Wrigley, the needs of better stock of public housing.

I'd just like to ask the Minister going forward, what kind of plans does he have with the department in addressing the concerns out of Wrigley? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** In the next couple of seasons I believe we have a couple of affordable housing units that are going into Wrigley. We would have to go in there and do a complete survey as to what the inventory is like in there. I think we have maybe eight public housing units in the whole community of Wrigley and I think we've got a couple of affordable housing units.

So, again, we will have to use the numbers from the community survey in assisting us as we plan our capital budget going forward. Thank you.

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

**MR. MENICOCHÉ:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Even though there was a recent survey, I

really believe that Wrigley has got to be reassessed.

Just in general, I know that we increased our borrowing limit. I'd just like to know, is the Minister going to approach Cabinet and see if we can get additional money from our borrowing limit to help address infrastructure shortages in the community?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We're always looking for opportunities to secure more money from not only our government. We've been very fortunate in the last couple of years that this government has stepped forward and I think we've put almost \$20 million into affordable housing units to try and address some of the challenges we face in the small communities, and also this government has stepped up in providing, I think, an additional \$1.2 million to try and offset some of the loss that we're facing with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's declining funding. This government has stepped up and, again, any opportunities we have, if there are any federal opportunities for more public housing money through the Affordable Housing Initiative in the past and the Public Housing Initiative, I think it was called, we try to find every opportunity we can to secure more money that we can put into housing across the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 845-17(5):  
CANOL HERITAGE TRAIL

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of ITI. I want to ask the Minister on the Canol Heritage proposed Doi T'oh in the Sahtu region. The Minister has been aware that there has been work by the federal government remediation and contamination team. Their assessment report has been dealt with. There are discussions with the land claim organizations. There is a park management committee framework set up.

I want to ask the Minister, what is his department doing in regard to working with the land corporations, the federal government and the remediation team to clean up the mess that's on the Canol Heritage Trail?

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; the federal government has made a commitment to remediate the area. They say it's going to take five years. Sometimes they say one thing and it may take, in fact, longer than the five years that they've committed to. But the other issue here is we had wanted them to take the class 1 sites – there are four of them to be

remediated – but the fact remains that they have that entire stretch of 222 kilometres, one kilometre on either side of it. It's a big area and it's going to require a lot of work to remediate.

We continue to look at that as an opportunity to put in infrastructure. This summer we are going to be putting in a cable crossing at the Twitya River. I had the opportunity to travel with the Member into the area recently. We are making those investments.

We've also worked with local organizations on some willow clearing on the first 25 kilometres. That work, I believe, has been completed or will be complete soon.

We're continuing to move forward, but again, one of the big hang-ups for us is the remediation that the feds have committed to on the Canol Trail itself.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Just for correction, it's 222 miles. I want to let the Minister know.

The remediation sites that need to be cleaned up, I want to ask the Minister, is this part of the transfer of lands from the federal to the territorial in the context of the territorial government taking over these lands? Is the territorial government in discussion with the feds so that these lands then can be transferred over to the territorial government so the Sahtu Dene and Metis can own, manage, develop and run the Canol Heritage Doi T'oh Canyon Park?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** The federal government excluded the transfer of the entire section of the Canol Heritage Trail – and the Member is correct; it is 222 miles, not kilometres – reserved for the Doi T'oh Territorial Park from the final Devolution Agreement. Subsurface rights were, however, transferred to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories can still apply for transfer of administrative authority from the federal government, and the Government of the Northwest Territories will be seeking to have the land transferred for the Doi T'oh Territorial Park before the end of this projected timeline of five years that I mentioned earlier.

**MR. YAKELEYA:** The contaminated areas, if you look at the report, it's pretty thick but it's very, very interesting. Just on the pricing of the fuel, one of the statements in the report says if they were to do the project, in costing out the project, a barrel of oil would cost about \$1,000. You know, the expense of doing business in that area.

I want to ask the Minister, given what we know from the remediation assessment and the contamination and work that's been done on the 222 miles of that stretch and what happened in the 1940s as of today, does the Minister, does his department understand the enormous step that we've taken to protect our lands and also the enormous amount of energy and effort it will take to clean up these

specific sites along the Canol Heritage Trail? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposed park, of course, follows the now defunct Canol Pipeline built during World War II, of course. It includes several waste sites with abandoned buildings. I know the Member and I have toured some of those abandoned buildings, equipment and vehicles interlinked with an old roadway. These sites present hazards to human and animal health, including oil spills, exposed asbestos, structurally unsafe buildings as well as almost 650 linear kilometres of copper coated steel telephone wire. There's a lot out there that needs to be remediated, needs to be looked at.

I think for us, we need to continue to impress upon the federal government the desire to have that remediated. I guess looking at it in a positive view it will be economic activity hopefully for some companies in the central Mackenzie Valley in the Member's riding, to help remediate the Canol Trail. Thank you.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister have an estimated dollar figure as to what the possibilities are the federal government is looking at? I say this because at one time the federal government said, looking at the Canol and funding, it is almost close to what it costs to clean up that we're still cleaning up the Giant arsenic mine here, and that's the equivalency of cleaning up the Canol Heritage Trail, and that's just on a hiking-type of discussion I had with the federal government representative.

Can the Minister tell me if he has any type of numbers?

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** The Member probably knows the area better than anybody, having spent as much time up there as he has. He would also know that there is an infrastructure there. Sometimes the only way to get in there is to hike in or to take a helicopter. The cost of remediating and cleaning up, you know, what are remote sites, is going to be very, very expensive. I wouldn't want to hazard a guess today on what that would cost, but it will be a tremendous figure to clean and remediate the old Canol Trail.

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

QUESTION 846-17(5):  
COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY STRATEGY

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to follow up on my Member's statement on energy



policy, and I direct it to whichever Minister takes responsibility for the current energy policy vacuum under which we are operating.

The government, as a regulator, needs to provide and be seen to provide a level playing field for businesses to be able to fairly compete and thrive.

How fair and level is the playing field when a private, highly regulated utility must bid against a publicly owned business directly and indirectly subsidized by over \$100 million in recent years? And I mean this. On what basis has this Cabinet possibly met and decided that there's a fair and level playing field here? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are cost of living issues here. There are decisions being made in a community that's interested in lowering those costs of living challenges, and it's an issue for the territorial government. The Power Corporation is a vehicle for all people in the Northwest Territories, a Crown corporation with 42,000 shareholders. That's the underlying impetus here. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I will let that stand for itself. Government has decided to support communities in opening their franchises for power delivery and distribution, suggesting that there is money to be saved, as the Minister just said, and that the cost of living will be lowered significantly through competition. The cost of power generation is as significant, or more significant even, than distribution.

Is the Minister now also prepared to give communities the discretion to open power generation to competition in order to fully address power costs for both our consumers, the environment and our communities? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We already have the practice of entertaining power purchase agreements and buying power from folks who are generating it. For example, the people of Lutselk'e.

**MR. BROMLEY:** There wasn't an answer there, but I do congratulate Lutselk'e by taking the bull by the horns and finessing a power purchase agreement, a rare animal indeed, from the Power Corporation.

Cabinet has severely restricted the power of the supposedly arm's-length Public Utilities Board to protect the public by restricting their ability to adjust power rates by more than 1 percent per year. This change means correction to the 30 percent excess NTPC charges South Slave Power was assessed in 2008, the last time they did a cost of power study, could take decades.

As the government has arbitrarily taken this regulatory power away from the PUB, are they

similarly prepared to arbitrarily roll back this unfair windfall for the Power Corporation at the expense of power consumers in the South Slave? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Nothing has been arbitrarily taken away and we provide a role, as government, in an orderly measured way when we think it's required to make sure that the system that we have before us functions to the best efficiency possible.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** I will take that as a no, they won't protect the people of the South Slave from that excess power charge.

This government seems willing to make decisions in a policy vacuum and without input, any input, an iota of input from Regular Members or Aboriginally owned communities, companies and consumers or communities, for that matter. As a Regular Member, I am acutely aware of the lack of such a policy and am uncomfortable, to say the least, to leaving such decisions to Cabinet's most recent whims.

My question is: When can we expect a rigorous, comprehensive and collaborative process to develop the umbrella energy policy on which to base the decisions, transparent decisions, that so greatly affect our communities, our cost of living, which the Power Corporation has never addressed, and our environment? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I would suggest that for the last eight years now, we've been hard at work with our evolving energy strategy, from the time we put \$60 million in our last government to a serious investment, \$60 million towards alternative energy that we've come up with an energy plan. We've had energy charrettes that have helped structure and focus that energy plan. We've had another energy charrette last November and there is going to be a response tabled in the House this week. We have a power system plan from NTPC power as it was looking at infrastructure for the transmission line expansion to see if that was a viable option. We have a Biomass Strategy, a Solar Strategy, all of which have involved MLAs, have involved committees with regular briefings. So, the Member is erroneous in his assertions. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 847-17(5):  
GNWT SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have questions for the Minister of Human Resources with regard to how we hire our summer students. Every year we get summer students who come up from post-secondary school, whether it's

in Alberta, BC, Yukon, even here in the Northwest Territories, Aurora College.

My first question is: How many government summer jobs are filled with post-secondary students? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of May 28<sup>th</sup>, we had hired 249 that have signed offers, 242 of those people are either finishing first year, second year, third year or in the fourth or fifth year. Seven of the 249 students will be starting university this fall. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** When putting out these jobs for competition with the students, has the Minister been working with the other departments or even with his department and looked at doing a coordinated start date for all post-secondary students so it creates an equal opportunity for all students who come back up to the North and for northern students, as well, to have the equal opportunity of applying on these jobs?

As we know, some schools, some colleges, some universities let their students out sooner than others. Obviously, those ones who are let out sooner have a greater advantage of putting their resumes out and possibly securing jobs while others are still in studies.

Has the Minister looked at creating a coordinated start date for all post-secondary students so that everyone gets an equal opportunity for these jobs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The government starts accepting applications from university students, post-secondary students, any time after December 1<sup>st</sup>. We run the application phase right up until August 15<sup>th</sup>, when some of the students are not starting back immediately at the beginning of September. So, we try to coordinate it so the first group who usually finishes university for the year, end of April, we hire a few of the students, a majority of the students then, and we realize there are more students finishing at the end of May and at the end of June. We try to coordinate it so those students are given opportunities as well. Thank you.

**MR. MOSES:** I think the Minister mentioned earlier that there were about 19 pending applications out there, job offers. I don't know what process they are in with these offers.

It's June 1<sup>st</sup> already, so I know some students would have gotten out of school at the end of April or even mid-April. We've still got some job pending offers here. As I mentioned, we still have Grade 12 students who are still taking studies, so they aren't going to have the equal opportunity to get some of these government jobs.

What is the Minister doing to speed up the process so some of these jobs get filled a lot faster, giving our post-secondary students more time in the job so they can save their money for when they go back to school in the fall? What is the department doing to speed up that process to ensure our post-secondary students get into the jobs a lot sooner? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Last year we hired 212 students at the GNWT. This year, as I indicated, we have 268 students working, plus pending. So, if you compare it to last year, we are slightly ahead of the number at this point than we were last year.

What we're doing is we are marketing ourselves in several ways. We have the e-mail messenger that goes out. We have a website. We looked at the human resources centres. We advertise in band offices. We talk to government services officers – we have 19 government service officers – and they are also involved. We have newspaper advertisements, et cetera, as an attempt to try to bring the students in as quickly as possible. So, we are fairly happy with the pace at which the students are coming in. We anticipate that we'll be at least around the number that we were last year, or maybe a little bit better than that.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Within our public service system there are jobs that we have that are hard to fill, and I know at that meeting with Aurora College last week we talked about how do we look at creating programs for those hard-to-fill jobs. We talked about mentorship for our post-secondary students.

What is the Minister doing to address our mentorship problems when we have jobs that are hard to fill? If we have jobs that are hard to fill and we have a student that is trying to get into that program, what is he doing to accommodate those students to practice what they're going to school for? Should we not have somebody in a position to mentor them?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We have been reviewing our vacancies and we have what we consider hard-to-fill positions of around 60 to 65 positions in the GNWT. Although not specifically targeted to those actual jobs, we do have some internship programs the government provides to the various departments, depending on the size of the department, a certain amount of money to get interns, and we provide enough money to have 32 interns in the GNWT. We usually end up filling all of those jobs. We also have a Progressive Experience Program within the student hires. We have 80 of those positions and currently we have 69 of them filled. The Department of Health and Social Services has the relevant experience programs for students and they have 24 of those positions in the

department and currently they have 15 of those positions filled.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Ms. Bisaro.

QUESTION 848-17(5):  
HUMAN RESOURCES OPEN HOUSES

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions, as well, today are addressed to the Minister of Human Resources. I'd like to start off by asking him about an event that was held about two weeks ago, not that long ago. It was open houses that the Department of HR held in seven different communities across the NWT. I haven't heard anything since they were held as to what sort of success there was from these open houses, what were the results of the initiative, so that's my question to the Minister initially.

Were these open houses successful? Does he have any results that he can share with the House as to the success or failure of this initiative?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. The Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is correct; there were open houses held across the North, and the idea would be to try to provide information to individuals who are interested in coming to work for the Government of the Northwest Territories. I don't have the matching amounts for the number of individuals that have come to the open houses and whether or not that resulted in us hiring more individuals as a result of the open houses. I know that it has been a good avenue for disseminating information from Human Resources and several departments that do participate to getting people in the communities who are trying to get work with the GNWT.

So far the information I've got is it's been successful, but I don't have the particular numbers on each of the open houses that results in actual people coming to work for the GNWT.

**MS. BISARO:** I look forward to seeing the numbers that the Minister can pull together at some point in time. I'm not surprised he doesn't have them. It was only two weeks ago, after all.

We've held open houses or career fairs, job fairs, whatever you want to call them, in the South as well. I would like to know from the Minister, my understanding is that when we hold a career fair or a job fair in the South that the staff that are attending these fairs are able to offer a job on the spot to applicants who they think are credible and could take a job. I'd like to know from the Minister if I'm correct in that assumption, and if that's the case, was the same ability given to staff at the career fairs or the open houses that we held in the NWT? Were they able to hire people on the spot?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** We are looking at the hard-to-fill positions, as the Member refers to the open houses in the South. We are looking at jobs that have been vacant for at least 18 months and have been advertised at least two times in the North and still with no success of filling the positions. Now we are trying to develop a team that will go down there and make job offers on the spot in those hard-to-fill positions. In the NWT, our open houses, we're not dealing with the same group of people. These jobs are not considered hard to fill. We will go through the regular process of the departments working with HR to go through the advertising process. The people who are attending the open houses do not have the authority to hire people on the spot at open houses in the NWT.

**MS. BISARO:** To the Minister: That's rather unfortunate. We have so many jobs in the GNWT which are unfilled, whether they're hard to fill or whether they're just "regular jobs," so I fail to understand why the department wouldn't want to hire as many people as possible, fill as many positions as possible, particularly in the North, but whether they be hard to fill or not.

One of the things that we have heard much about but have yet to see written on paper is the Population Strategy that this government is working towards bringing 2,000 bodies to the NWT to try and beef up our population.

I'd like to know what the Department of Human Resources is doing. What is their part in this Population Strategy to contribute to bring more residents to the territory?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** The Department of Human Resources works with all of the departments and we are thinking that reducing the vacancy rate is something that will increase the population in the Northwest Territories. I referred earlier on in my response to hard-to-fill positions that where we will be actively trying to hire individuals from the South and giving the people the ability to hire on the spot. In those positions we're expecting to increase the population by that.

As far as vacancies go, a year ago we had over 1,100, well, 1,175 vacancies six months ago. We're down to 1,038 vacancies, and today we're at 917 vacancies. Each time we do a vacancy we actively try to reduce the amount of vacant positions in the GNWT, and I think that we're being fairly successful.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister. I totally agree. It seems like a no-brainer that reducing the vacancy rate is going to bring more people to the Northwest Territories. But I guess I would like to know from the Minister, if we're trying to reduce our vacancy rate – and I

have to say, I have to give credit to the department for reducing the vacancies by 200 or so, as the Minister mentioned – or we're trying to fill jobs, why would we not, at these open houses, albeit we're giving out info, but why would we not give our staff the ability to hire on the spot to fill as many jobs as possible with Northerners?

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** To give them the authority to hire at the open houses within the Northwest Territories would not really be something that would be necessary. That's the reason we're not doing it. We could look at talking to departments that may want to go there and be prepared to look at applicants of certain positions that they may talk about in the open houses. But at this point we find that the departments are being relatively successful in trying to reduce the vacancy rates and do the hiring using the current method of how we are hiring people in the Northwest Territories. For that reason we had not contemplated the idea that individuals who are attending the open houses, we had the ability to hire on the spot.

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

QUESTION 849-17(5):  
HOUSING INVESTMENTS FOR SENIORS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement today I talked about poverty and its impact on seniors. To better set the stage, in Yellowknife we have at least 55 seniors on the waiting list to get into Avens. As a matter of fact, there's not a week goes by that I don't have a call from someone who says they can't even get on the list, they fear, maybe even their lifetime.

So, knowing that the last investments at Avens was 2007 where they were able to build eight units, and in 1992 where they were able to build 24 units, I'd like to ask the Minister of Housing when was the last investment invested into seniors housing in the Northwest Territories, more specifically in the Yellowknife area.

Can he describe the amount of housing provided to seniors and what investments in Yellowknife? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister of NWT Housing, Mr. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Yellowknife alone we've provided some money to the Aven's Working Group to help with their new plan that they have going forward. Sixty-four percent of our homeownership projects in the last year have been utilized by seniors. So as far as the actual investment in seniors housing in Yellowknife itself, there hasn't been much other than the programs that we have for repair, but across the Northwest Territories we have four seniors units that we're building and one seniors

unit that we're replacing in some of the smaller communities. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'd like to ask the Minister of Housing why they're not investing into more housing for seniors in Yellowknife. In my Member's statement I pointed out that in the age category between 65 and 74 we're going to see almost a 400 percent increase in growth, and further, at the age category of 75-plus we're seeing over 400 percent growth in the next 11 years in seniors. So, clearly, seniors need housing. They need housing options, and these housing options will keep them out of poverty. Avens is an able and certainly a willing partner.

Would the Minister be willing to find some money to help invest in their project so they can expand housing solutions for seniors? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** As I said before, we have given \$150,000 to help with the planning, and part of that planning, I'm assuming, is going to be a business plan coming forward with a dollar figure attached. So, we'll look forward to seeing what they come up with.

As far as the Member's numbers, the Member's numbers are correct. You know, we do recognize that there is going to be a larger population of seniors down the road and we at the Housing Corporation are coming up with some innovative ways to try and address that. One of those ways is working with the City of Yellowknife on their Canada Winter Games proposal to see if there are opportunities for us there to provide something to them to use as an athlete's village and then possibly turned into a seniors facility once the Games are done. So, we are finding innovative ways to stretch our limited resources as far as they can go. Thank you.

**MR. HAWKINS:** The Canada Winter Games, of course, is a number of years away. So, we can all hope, of course, and we'll see if accountability actually shows up in a sense of someday that actually materializes. More specifically, the Minister says they're looking for innovative ways.

What about being innovative by doing what the Housing Corporation's portfolio is really about, about establishing housing in need areas? Seniors need housing. It keeps them out of poverty situations. They're not all in that situation, but many are. CMHC facts will tell you that. So, if the Minister wants to be innovative, why doesn't he make a decision today to say we're going to put 50 more units in the city of Yellowknife within the next five years? He could do that by initiating that type of mandate and doing what Housing is supposed to do: build houses.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Housing does a good job of providing housing and programs, and as I

said before, 64 percent of the uptake is from... Oh sorry, I thought you were...

**MR. SPEAKER:** I was looking at the Page here. Go ahead.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Sixty-four percent of the repair programs are taken up by seniors. As I said before, we are challenged again by our limited financial resources. We are trying to put together a plan to deal with a lot of the houses.

In some of the larger market areas we're a little more challenged because we have our territorial Rent Supplement Program that provides some relief and we have a number of programs that are designed specifically for seniors and trying to help with their housing needs. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Sorry about that. Mr. Hawkins.

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A 40 percent increase in seniors in the Northwest Territories in the Yellowknife-specific region only is a serious initiative.

When is the last time this Minister of Housing has put in a request for a capital investment to have a serious impact in the housing situation directly intended to invest in seniors to ensure that they have quality housing to keep them out of poverty? When was the last time we've had an investment, and furthermore, what's stopping him from putting that request in to invest in seniors, invest in population growth that would make a huge difference? Thank you.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** As I said before, we have four seniors units that are going up across the Northwest Territories. We have one that's being replaced because of the age. So we have five in total and we continue to bring forward recommendations and we continue to have a look at where we can access money. As I said to the Member before, we are trying to come up with ways where we can deal with some of the issues of seniors housing here in the capital and I brought forward one of the things that we're looking at. The Member talked about 11 years. I know the Games are a bit away, but we need to start the work and start the planning now so we're not rushing at the last minute.

So, we continue to do what we can with our limited resources, again, being challenged with the CMHC declining funding, to bring more and more seniors housing on board, recognizing the fact that the population is growing rapidly over the next few years. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 850-17(5):

PRESSURES ON MOOSE POPULATIONS

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to follow up on my statement regarding the moose ticks in the NWT. My question is to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Recently on record, the NWT experienced major impacts on the woodland caribou in terms of their population decline. At the same time, we experienced a major impact on the Mackenzie wood bison population in terms of the anthrax outbreak. Now we're seeing, perhaps, the vestiges of a warming climate where it's getting warmer in the NWT.

Has the GNWT identified a risk to the NWT moose from ticks or other insect infestations? Mahsi.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We routinely monitor moose populations and we look at a general health insect infestation, and the one tick that we were paying close attention to see hopefully that doesn't migrate north, of course, is a tick that causes Lyme disease. At this point, we don't believe that particular black legged tick is in the North.

In terms of other ones, we rely on the moose surveys and feedback from hunters. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** I'd like to thank the Minister for providing that response. In parts of Manitoba they've placed restrictions in terms of harvesting of moose.

What pre-emptive measures will the department take to protect the NWT from future tick infestations? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Our first strategy, of course, would be to identify if there is a particular tick infestation and the magnitude that would warrant such type of intervention as we've demonstrated with the barren land caribou. We've tracked things very closely and we will intercede when we think it's warranted. We also have other legislation, the Species at Risk Act, if we think there are challenges in terms of actually affecting their survival of the species. So we're going to monitor it, but at this point I have seen nothing that would indicate that we have an infestation of that magnitude. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** The Minister is on record saying that the only real way to get rid of the ticks would be to put a flea collar on the moose.

How would the department identify and treat affected moose that are impacted by ticks? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I'd have to see that quote that has been attributed to me about putting flea collars on moose. I have no recollection of saying something of that nature.

However, be that as it may, the concern that the Member raised is, are we going to work together with communities and hunters and the users of the land and ENR to make sure that we keep an eye, and if there is a tick infestation that we identify that. We take the steps necessary to see that we remediate the situation to the best of our abilities. Thank you.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, in the southern NWT, the Deh Cho location, we're situated very close to Alberta and there have been records in terms of deer coming up to the NWT, and cougar sightings as well.

Will the department undertake, perhaps, some work with local harvesters and, at the same time, prepare and maybe work on a moose population survey and whether that's been planned for sometime this fall? Mahsi.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We are at work with other jurisdictions mapping the spread of the black legged tick that usually inhabits deer as it moves around. At this point we don't think it has moved north, but yes, we are monitoring that, the same as we were keeping our eye on the pine beetle to see if that was going to come north into the boreal forests north of 60. We will, as well, continue to do rotating moose surveys in various jurisdictions to keep track of the herd numbers and health of the moose. Thank you.

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

#### QUESTION 851-17(5):

#### REVITALIZATION OF FISHING INDUSTRY

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement, I have questions for the Minister of ITI and their current plan of how to revitalize the NWT fishery and maybe the construction of the fish plant in Hay River. I know that they've invested in capital money, but I know we're looking for federal money.

Can I ask the Minister where we currently sit in negotiations with the federal government to invest in the Hay River fishery? Thank you.

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

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has been very good supporters of economic development here through the CanNor office here in Yellowknife and across the North. We continue to discuss, with the federal government, an opportunity to invest in a commercial fishery on Great Slave Lake, and we do need about \$5.5 million to put in an export grade

fish plant in Hay River. We have earmarked \$1.5 million. We're going to need some partners. We have to continue to put the question on the table to the feds. I had the opportunity last year to meet with Minister Shea in Ottawa. We've invited her to the Northwest Territories. We want the federal government and the Ministers to be able to realize what a resource the commercial fishery is in Hay River. Of course, this is an election year, so it's important that that question about the revitalization of the commercial fishery on Great Slave Lake is front and centre in election campaigns this fall. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** The Minister indicated he had a meeting previously with the federal Minister.

Can the Minister indicate to me when the next planned meeting or FPT on this type of situation would be coming up? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** I will be back in Ottawa next week, and of course this is an issue that is important to the Member, it's important for our territory. We have to continue to focus our efforts on the revitalization of this fishery. We are going to try to attract more fishers. We also have a vision for what we want to see with the commercial fishery on Great Slave Lake, and I want to thank the Member and his counterpart, Mrs. Groenewegen, for their help and support in us trying to get where we need to go. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** In the department's plan that I heard last week, they talked about the price of fish and trying to bring that up.

Is the Minister aware of what the department is looking to do in increasing the price of the fish for the fishermen in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Our South Slave regional office is currently reviewing our subsidy program. Of course, they are going to continue to engage with the Fishermen's Federation. Now that we have developed a business plan with the Fishermen's Federation, we will have to bring that plan and the fishery into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by dramatically changing all the fundamentals that have been in place for well over four decades. This plan proposes new ownership, new responsibilities, new markets, a new commitment and, finally, the plan will bring along a new, long overdue vision, as I mentioned earlier, that will support the fishery for the years ahead of us. I want to thank the Member for his questions.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the Minister has been briefed about the meeting. At that meeting the fishers asked for the subsidy. The department indicated the price is going to go up. The current fishers are asking for

that price to be actually subsidized to that level right now so they can see how the industry will react to that type of price currently.

Is the Minister willing to commit to looking at that type of subsidy to increase the price for fishers on the Great Slave Lake? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** As I mentioned earlier, we are currently engaged with the Fishermen's Federation. We are reviewing the subsidy program that we have in place. This really is, or would be, a short-term or band-aid solution. The real effort has to be into the long-term vision of the fishery on Great Slave Lake. But if there is a way we can continue to work with the Fishermen's Federation in Hay River and the subsidy program, we want to ensure we are providing the supports we need to ensure we can get where we need to go, and that is have a vibrant commercial fishery industry on Great Slave Lake. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 852-17(5):  
ELECTRICITY RATE STRUCTURE

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this House on May 28, 2015, Minister Miltenberger explained to us that we had a clear example of why NTPC should be bidding in an open, transparent and fair RFP Hay River process. He further explained that Fort Smith and Fort Resolution are paying 21 cents per kilowatt hour compared to 31 cents for the town of Hay River. Now Public Utilities Board, PUB, documents confirm this and indicate Hay River has been overcharged by 30 percent for its power by NTPC for a very long time.

Can the Minister responsible for NTPC please explain why his riding is charged less for power by NTPC? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stand here dressed in purple with my nice flower on and it's a special day for seniors, I was expecting a few softballs from the Member, but apparently no consideration will be given to the fact that I'm a poor senior too.

With regard to his question, the rates are set by the PUB. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Okay. Well, we'll try to be a little gentler. To the even bigger question, why has NTPC been overcharging Hay River for years? Many are asking, "Why didn't this government collaborate with stakeholders to create an affordable level playing field in the South Slave?" So again, why would this government, this Minister, secretly support a 30 percent surcharge for Hay

River residents? Can the Minister please explain that? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We weren't secretly supporting anything. The rates are there. There is a rate rebalancing process underway. It has been set at a 1 percent increase for this year and 3 percent for subsequent years as we move towards rebalancing. Rebalancing a rate structure that we inherited going back to federal times that is well superseded, in many cases, by the requirement for NTPC and the government to put money into things to protect the rates for all power users in the Northwest Territories, regardless of who provides or who distributes the power. I would refer specifically to things like the \$37 million or so that we put towards cushioning rates over the last four years so that people across the Northwest Territories wouldn't be unduly impacted, or the \$20 million low water fee that protected all electrical users across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** I might have to come for that answer in question period one more time.

For now, why is the government, this Minister, through its Crown company, picking and choosing which communities are getting the biggest benefit of NTPC subsidized power? Can the Minister educate us on this optically unfair model? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The Member is making assertions that are erroneous. The rates are set by the PUB. There are challenges across the system. We did have a huge rate restructuring in the last government and we continue to work on managing those cost pressures, both in diesel communities as well as in the hydro communities. Thank you.

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

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, what we've been able to calculate today with my statement and also the statement today by Mr. Bromley is that NTPC has been overcharging Hay River for years. Then, when you have the concept of this new secret Cabinet energy strategy, one must start to pattern this alleged fairness to transparency and openness with public money or the lack thereof.

Can the Minister inform the House if his definition of competitive process complies with this government's stated philosophy on market disruption affecting the private sector?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The facts, when you take away all the bavardage and baffle-gab, is that there is a 10 cent, 30 percent rate difference between Hay River and Fort Smith and Fort Resolution. The Town of Hay River has made a conscious decision to go out and start a public process to seek providers to distribute power under

a franchise agreement. We, the Power Corporation, are going to put a bid in. There is no guarantee that we are going to get it, be successful. Other bidders may be successful, if they choose to bid. That is yet to be seen.

What we do know is there are issues where there are, according to the town's numbers, about \$3 million a year that goes into the coffers of ATCO in Calgary, their downtown Calgary office, profit. Anything NTPC makes stays in the Northwest Territories. So the issue is very basic and clear. There is a 30 percent difference. Hay River wants to lower their cost of living. The Northwest Territories Power Corporation and the Government of the Northwest Territories have that as a priority, as well, across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 853-17(5):  
ELECTRICITY FRANCHISE AGREEMENTS  
AND PROCESS

**MR. HAWKINS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You've certainly made me a happy man today. Let's see if we can get some happy answers. We've been hearing a fair bit, and I wasn't going to ask a question on this area, but I have to admit that I did hear a colleague on my right, Mr. Dolynny, ask questions about the Power Corporation and the bigger scheme of things. Although we don't share perspectives, we share the perspective of the public information and what's good for the public.

That said, there has been a campaign, in my words, of entitlement in the newspaper from a billion dollar industry that has been, in my opinion, a situation where Northerners need another option. We all know the cost of living. Part of their campaign, in my view, is they have been saying the government has been expropriating or attempting to expropriate their assets. I don't share that perspective and I think there are mechanisms in place, actually, if it so happens that they don't win the franchise agreement with the Town of Hay River.

Could the Minister responsible for the NWT Power Corporation explain and illustrate the process if the case happens to be that ATCO doesn't win the franchise agreement? How do they proceed in changing agreements? I thought there was an act that spelled it out in negotiation. I will leave it to the Minister to clarify for the public record, because I have great concern of the word "expropriation" used repeatedly in the public.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Minister responsible for the Power Corporation, Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regardless of who the successful

proponent is or bidder is for the franchise agreement, if it's not ATCO, then there would be a business negotiation that would hopefully take place in terms of the transfer and selling of the assets, recognizing their assessed value, negotiating whatever other premiums and issues might be dealt with. Failing that, there's an Arbitration Act, I understand, that would kick in if they reach a stalemate and there's a need to resolve this issue where there would be binding arbitration.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I appreciate you allowing me to sort of describe it at the beginning with great detail, because I think it's important.

Would ATCO have had to sign their franchise agreement recognizing in some form or fashion this arbitration process?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I understand that fact is a standard reference in all franchise agreements.

**MR. HAWKINS:** I'm going to ask the Minister this question. I'm not sure it's the best question, per se, in the sense of it's under his portfolio or his purview, but he's certainly a wordsmith.

Is arbitration the same as expropriation in his position or his capacity? Could he best describe it for the House?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** No, they are not the same.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Thank you, Members. The time for question period has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Mr. Dolynny.

### Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

#### BILL 37: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Government Operations has reviewed Bill 37, Financial Administration Act, and wishes to report that Bill 37 as amended and reprinted is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Bill 37 as amended and reprinted is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 75(5) to have Bill



37, Financial Administration Act, moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Dolynny.

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to return to Item 12 on the Order Paper, reports of standing and special committees.

---Unanimous consent granted

### **Reports of Standing and Special Committees (Reversion)**

#### COMMITTEE REPORT 15-17(5): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 37: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of Bill 37: Financial Administration Act, and it commends it to the House.

#### **Introduction**

The Standing Committee on Government Operations (“the standing committee”) is pleased to report on its review of Bill 37, Financial Administration Act (FAA).

Bill 37, sponsored by the Department of Finance, is intended to provide a legislative framework for the effective and efficient stewardship of government resources. It also sets out reporting requirements designed to ensure government accountability and transparency in the management and use of those resources.

Bill 37 received second reading in the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories and was referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations on November 4, 2014. From the date of second reading, the Rules of the Legislative Assembly allow 120 calendar days for the standing committee to complete its review. Given the complexity of the bill, the standing committee requested an extension of the 120-day review period, as permitted by the rules.

#### **Background**

The last review of the FAA took place in 1987. Since that time there have been substantial changes in the operating environment of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). These include changes in technology, public expectations for accountability and transparency, management and accounting standards, and business relationships between the GNWT, other governments and third parties. Over the years many issues and suggestions for improvement to

the GNWT’s financial management legislative framework have been identified by MLAs, the Office of the Auditor General and GNWT staff. As well, most other Canadian jurisdictions have undertaken major reviews or made significant changes to modernize their financial administration legislation.

In 2005 and 2006 the government developed a discussion paper and undertook initial consultations with senior GNWT staff and MLAs, including the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. This was followed by an initial legislative proposal for a new FAA in 2011 and a revised legislative proposal in 2012. Bill 37, based on this revised legislative proposal, was developed as a consultation draft in July 2014, which was used by the Department of Finance as the basis for consultations with GNWT departments, boards and public agencies and the Office of the Auditor General.

#### **Review Process**

When reviewing a bill, a standing committee has the latitude to structure the process so that it is conducive to ensuring the most effective review, given the nature of the bill, the subject matter and the degree of public interest. Bill 37 is a fairly complex and technical piece of legislation. For this reason, the standing committee made the decision to retain a consultant to provide technical advice on certain aspects of the bill.

#### **Consultant’s Report**

The standing committee retained the services of Mr. Lew Voytilla, FCGA, to provide advice to assist the committee in its deliberations on Bill 37. Mr. Voytilla has extensive experience with GNWT financial operations, and specifically with the Financial Administration Act, having served in a number of key senior management positions over a period of 30 years, including GNWT comptroller general, deputy minister of the Financial Management Board Secretariat and secretary to the Financial Management Board. As a management consultant and chairman of the board of directors of the NWT Power Corporation, Mr. Voytilla obtained direct experience regarding the impact of the FAA on public agencies. Mr. Voytilla’s knowledge and experience proved a valuable asset to the standing committee during the review and the committee thanks Mr. Voytilla for his input. A copy of the report that Mr. Voytilla submitted to the standing committee was shared with the Department of Finance during the course of the review and is attached to this report as Appendix A.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I’d like to turn this over to my colleague Mr. Yakeleya to continue.

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

**MR. YAKELEYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Stakeholder Submissions**

The standing committee sought the input of key stakeholders and members of the public with respect to Bill 37, through letters and newspaper advertisements inviting input.

One written submission was received from Ms. Elaine Keenan Bengts, the Information and Privacy Commissioner for the Northwest Territories. Ms. Keenan Bengts provided the standing committee with her observations on Bill 37, as it regards matters related to access to information and the protection of privacy under the NWT's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act. This submission was shared with the Minister of Finance and resulted in a motion to amend Bill 37, to clarify which act has paramountcy in the event of a conflict. A copy of this submission is attached to this report as Appendix B.

The standing committee held a public hearing on Bill 37 on May 26, 2015. No members of the public made submissions at that hearing. However, the standing committee allowed an opportunity for additional input from members of the public before the beginning of its clause-by-clause review of the bill on May 29, 2015. The standing committee received a verbal submission from Ms. Noeline Villebrun, a member of the public, at its meeting on May 29, 2015.

The standing committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the stakeholders who took the time to provide their input on Bill 37.

**Collaboration**

The standing committee wishes to comment on the high degree of collaboration and cooperation that took place between the standing committee and the Minister and Department of Finance during the course of the review of Bill 37.

The committee thanks Minister Miltenberger, his staff, and officials from the Department of Justice for making themselves readily available to discuss the bill. Minister Miltenberger met with the standing committee on a number of occasions, and his staff met with the standing committee's staff and consultant to review several aspects of the bill.

As a result, this review was marked by an unprecedented degree of collegial work, which buoyed the committee and reminded Members that our consensus system of government can work well when participants have a spirit of collaboration. In the view of the standing committee, this cooperative approach has produced a final revised bill, which notably improves upon the draft originally submitted to the standing committee.

**Issues**

During the course of the review, the standing committee raised a number of concerns and issues with Bill 37. Some of these were articulated in the

consultant's report and some were raised by committee members. Some resulted in amendments to the bill and others required clarification and/or resolution outside of the bill itself. These issues are summarized below:

**Addressing Potential Conflict with ATIPP Act**

As previously indicated, the standing committee received a submission from the NWT Information and Privacy Commissioner, which focused on access to information and protection of privacy matters under Bill 37. Ms. Keenan Bengts' submission pointed out that there is a conflict between Section 3 of Bill 37 and Section 4 of the ATIPP Act. Both sections provide that each act applies where there is a conflict. If the wording of Bill 37 remained unchanged, a conflict arising from the two acts would be subject to interpretation by the courts. The standing committee discussed with and received the concurrence of the Minister to a motion to amend the bill, for greater legislative certainty, revising the wording of Bill 37 such that in the event of a conflict between the two acts, the ATIPP Act will prevail to the extent of the conflict.

I'll now turn the report over to Mr. Moses.

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

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Yakeleya.

**Limiting the Impact of Bill 37 on Public Agencies**

The consultant's report pointed out the potential of Bill 37 to have a significant impact on the workloads of the Office of the Comptroller General and the internal Audit Bureau in the Department of Finance, as a result of added responsibilities for public agencies under the bill and on those public agencies who would be required to respond to these offices when they exercise their new authorities.

The standing committee considered options for addressing this concern, including the possibility of exempting certain public agencies from the requirements of Bill 37. In discussions with the Minister and Department of Finance it became apparent that Finance shared the committee's concern about the potential impacts of Bill 37 on the capacity of the department and public agencies. As a result, the bill has been amended to make the authority of the comptroller general and the internal Audit Bureau discretionary with respect to public agencies, rather than compulsory.

With respect to the internal Audit Bureau, the bill has been amended to limit the powers of the internal Audit Bureau to the government only, except where requested to exercise its powers in respect of a public agency by the Minister responsible for that public agency, or where

requested by the comptroller general to conduct investigations or post-investigation audits into allegations of fraud, negligence or other impropriety.

#### **Limiting the Impact of Bill 37 on Public Agency Budgets**

As observed in the consultant's report, "Bill 37 imposes much tighter control on public agency financial management" (p. 5) and, as a result, requires public agencies "to treat their ministerial approved budgets as if they were voted appropriations" (p.4). The standing committee was concerned that this might have consequences, perhaps unintended, for public money administered and controlled by public agencies.

#### **Education Surpluses**

Some education authorities derive some of their revenues from school taxes. The standing committee sought and received reassurances from the Department of Finance that any budget surpluses generated by these public agencies would not be returned to the GNWT's Consolidated Revenue Fund at the end of a given fiscal year.

The standing committee was informed that Section 136(5) of the Education Act provides that an education authority does not require ministerial approval for that portion of its budget that "relates directly to funds acquired by the education body through the taxation of property." The standing committee also learned that the Education Act provides for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), with the approval of the Minister of Finance, to give direction concerning the financial procedures and activities of an education body. The Minister of Finance currently provides this direction through the Finance and Administration Manual for Education Authorities (FAMEA). FAMEA allows that surpluses may be used to cover operating deficits in subsequent periods, or as the education authority sees fit.

The standing committee is reassured that the continued intent of the direction provided to education bodies with respect to surplus retention is to keep the funding within the education system.

#### **The Workers' Protection Fund of the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC)**

Section 78(4) of the Financial Administration Act (RSNWT 1988, c. F-4) currently in force contains a provision to the effect that a ministerial directive, issued by the Minister of Finance, "is of no effect to the extent that it affects the disposition of any funds in the Workers' Protection Fund continued under the Workers' Compensation Act."

This provision, the purpose of which is to protect the Workers' Protection Fund from use by the government, was not included in Bill 37. For this reason, and because of the potential impacts of Bill

37 on public agency budgets noted in the consultant's report, the standing committee was concerned that Bill 37 might permit the GNWT to access the funds in the Workers' Protection Fund for other purposes.

The standing committee sought to ensure that the Workers' Protection Fund would continue to enjoy the protections that it has under the current Financial Administration Act. As a result, an amendment to Bill 37 was made to re-introduce the limitation on the Workers' Protection Fund noted above which is in the current FAA.

#### **Addressing the Overlap of Authorities between the Financial Management Board (FMB) and the Minister of Finance**

In its review of the powers and authorities granted under Bill 37, the consultant's report noted (p.9) the potential for overlap between the authorities granted to the Financial Management Board and those granted to the Minister of Finance.

After some discussion between the standing committee and the Minister and Department of Finance, agreement was reached to amend Section 13 of Bill 37 to address overlap of authorities between the FMB and the Finance Minister as set out in this section and Section 7(1)(a) by clarifying that FMB approval is required for the Fiscal Responsibility Policy and the "policy respecting the management, collection and control of money, other than public money, held in trust or administered by Government or public agencies."

The consultant's report also raised a concern (p. 9) with respect to the authority granted to the Finance Minister to determine annual expenditure targets. The Minister of Finance confirmed with the standing committee that the intent of Bill 37 was to leave these authorities as they are currently exercised, i.e., that the FMB retains the authority to set departmental expenditure targets. Consequently, a motion to amend Bill 37 was passed that achieves this end by including the word "aggregate" before the word "targets," thereby indicating that the Minister of Finance has the authority to set an overall spending target for government, but that the authority to set individual departmental expenditure targets remains with the FMB.

Mr. Speaker, I'd now like to turn the report over to Ms. Bisaro.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Moses. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Moses.

#### **Planning and Accountability Framework**

One of the ways that Bill 37 increases the focus on fiscal accountability is by providing the authority for the Financial Management Board to establish a framework for planning by and accountability of

government and public agencies. As originally drafted, Bill 37 required that this Planning and Accountability Framework be tabled in the Legislative Assembly at the earliest opportunity after being established and after any amendments. The standing committee was concerned that this approach did not allow for the Legislative Assembly or its standing committees to have input into this important accountability framework while it was still in the draft stages. The Minister of Finance acknowledged this concern and agreed to a motion to amend Bill 37, which ensures that the Legislative Assembly or one of its standing committees is consulted before the FMB approves or amends the Planning and Accountability Framework.

### **Fiscal Responsibility Policy**

The GNWT introduced the Fiscal Responsibility Policy during the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. This policy is composed of the 1400 Section of the Financial Administration Manual and contains key rules that the government is bound by when borrowing money. Despite the significance of the policy, and the GNWT's commitment to be bound by it, the policy was never formally approved by the Commissioner in Executive Council or signed by the Premier. For this reason, it exists outside of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's process convention for the standing committee review of proposed policy initiatives and implementation plans. This means that the policy was brought into effect and can be amended without input from Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The standing committee is pleased to see that Section 13 of Bill 37 acknowledges the existence of the Fiscal Responsibility Policy by providing authority to the Minister of Finance to develop and implement this policy. However, as was the case with the Planning and Accountability Framework, the standing committee was concerned that there is no allowance in Bill 37 for the Legislative Assembly or its standing committees to have input into this important policy before it is amended.

The Minister and Department of Finance clarified for the standing committee their interpretation that Section 13(2)(d) of Bill 37 requires the Minister of Finance to bring the Fiscal Responsibility Policy forward for formal approval before the coming into force date of Bill 37, set for April 1, 2016. In addition to providing this reassurance, the Minister of Finance concurred with an amendment to Bill 37 to ensure that the Legislative Assembly or one of its standing committees is consulted before the Financial Management Board approves or amends the Fiscal Responsibility Policy.

### **Forgiveness of Debts and Obligations**

Under Section 25 of the current Financial Administration Act, the GNWT must have the authorization of an act in order to forgive a debt or obligation owed to the government which exceeds

\$1,000. The standing committee normally reviews these forgiveness of debts bills, and as part of that process, the committee has been accustomed to receiving detailed briefing materials from the Department of Finance explaining the circumstances giving rise to the decision to forgive a debt. Although this material is provided and reviewed in confidence, it provides important information that allows the standing committee to fulfill its oversight role.

Under Bill 37 the Financial Management Board may write off a debt or obligation owing to the government or a public agency without the authority of an act, provided that where the debt is owed to a public agency they do so on the recommendation of the governing body of a public agency. Instead of requiring the authority of an act, Bill 37 requires that any debt or obligation forgiven pursuant to the act, be reported in the annual report of the public agency [S. 62(6)] or in the public accounts in the case of government [S. 65(1)(b)]. Because the standing committee will no longer be reviewing forgiveness of debts bills, the standing committee sought reassurances from the Minister of Finance that the briefing materials that were once provided to the standing committee to substantiate the decision to forgive particular debts or obligations would continue to be provided to the standing committee for future reviews of the public accounts. The Minister of Finance provided the standing committee with written confirmation of this commitment and assurances that an arrangement to this effect would be formalized.

Section 62 of Bill 37 provides the authority for the Financial Management Board to forgive a debt owed to government or a public agency. The consultant's report contained a recommendation to the standing committee that this section of Bill 37 be amended to include qualifiers which would, in effect, describe the circumstances under which debts owed to the government or public agencies could be forgiven. After discussion with the Minister and Department of Finance, it was agreed that a motion would be made to amend Bill 37 such that debts owed to the government or public agencies may be forgiven by the Financial Management Board if the board considers that the collection of the debt is unreasonable or unjust or if the board believes that it is otherwise in the public interest to forgive the debt. The wording for this amended provision is based on similar wording contained in the federal Financial Administration Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to move the reading of the report along to my colleague Mr. Nadli. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Proceed, Mr. Nadli.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Deemed Appropriations

The consultant's report (p. 12) points out what may have been a drafting error in Bill 37, with respect to Section 77. This section, as drafted, provides for the comptroller general to charge an expenditure to an appropriation, even if that results in the appropriation being exceeded. Section 77 provides that the excess shall be a deemed appropriation. As the consultant notes: "This is a very significant departure from previous provisions in this area that restricted such authority to the recording of year-end expenditure accruals, and made provision that any overage was an interim appropriation, rather than a deemed one." The consultant goes on to question whether or not this was the government's intent, noting that "the new section 77 is not restricted to year-end accruals but would allow the comptroller general to exceed an appropriation at any time of the year and for any purpose and such excess would be a deemed appropriation."

The standing committee discussed the consultant's observation with the Minister and Department of Finance and learned that the intent of the bill was not to grant the comptroller general broad authority to exceed an appropriation at any time for any reason. Accordingly, a motion was passed during the clause-by-clause review restricting the authority of the comptroller general to book an expenditure that exceeds an appropriation and record the excess as a deemed appropriation so that it only extends to year-end accruals.

### Authority of the Commissioner

Section 111 is another section in Bill 37 which contains what may be considered a drafting error. In this section, Bill 37 appears to grant broad authority to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories to "do any act and exercise any power necessary for the purpose of fulfilling the obligations and enforcing the rights of Government."

In discussions with the Minister and Department of Finance, the standing committee learned that this authority was intended to be specific to borrowing authority granted under Section 110 of Bill 37. A motion was subsequently approved limiting the Commissioner's authority to the borrowing referenced in Section 110 of the bill.

### Reporting Requirements under Bill 37

With its focus on modern financial management practices and increased accountability, Bill 37 changes a number of reporting practices that exist under the current Financial Administration Act. During the course of the review, the standing committee asked the Minister and Department of Finance to provide details on all reports that will be required under Bill 37. The standing committee reviewed this material and added to it additional reporting requirements revealed as a result of its

own research. This list is attached to this report as Appendix C.

Mr. Speaker, I will now pass it on to my colleague Mr. Dolyunny.

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

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Nadli and my colleagues.

### Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Government Operations' Review of Bill 37 is the result of a highly collaborative process. The standing committee wishes to thank everyone involved in the review of this bill for their assistance and input.

During the clause-by-clause review, the standing committee and the Minister of Finance agreed to 16 motions to amend Bill 37. Those motions resulting in substantive changes to the bill were detailed in this report.

Following the clause-by-clause review, a motion was carried to report Bill 37, Financial Administration Act as amended and reprinted as ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

**MOTION TO RECEIVE  
COMMITTEE REPORT 15-17(5)  
AND MOVE INTO  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,  
CARRIED**

This concludes the standing committee's review. Therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Frame Lake, that Committee Report 15-17(5), Report on the Review of Bill 37: Financial Administration Act, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for further discussion. Thank you.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called.

---Carried

Mr. Dolyunny.

**MR. DOLYUNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 100(4) to have Committee Report 15-17(5), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on Bill 37: Financial Administration Act, moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 14, tabling of documents. Mr. Miltenberger.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 249-17(5):  
2014 FIRE SEASON REVIEW REPORT

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "2014 NWT Fire Season Review Report."

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Ramsay.

TABLED DOCUMENT 250-17(5):  
NWT OIL AND GAS ANNUAL REPORT 2014

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "NWT Oil and Gas Annual Report 2014."

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Abernethy.

TABLED DOCUMENT 251-17(5):  
WORKING TOGETHER: AN ACTION PLAN  
TO REDUCE AND ELIMINATE POVERTY  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

TABLED DOCUMENT 252-17(5):  
NETWORKING TO PREVENT OLDER ADULT  
ABUSE: A COMPARATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Working Together: An Action Plan to Reduce and Eliminate Poverty in the Northwest Territories."

On behalf of the NWT Network to Prevent Abuse of Older Adults and the NWT Seniors' Society, I wish to table the following document, entitled "Networking to Prevent Older Adult Abuse: A Comparative Research Study."

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Mr. Ramsay.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 59:  
ESTATE ADMINISTRATION LAW  
AMENDMENT ACT

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 59, Estate Administration Law Amendment Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Beaulieu.

BILL 60:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
MOTOR VEHICLES ACT, NO. 2

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 60, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, No. 2, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Beaulieu.

BILL 61:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
PUBLIC AIRPORTS ACT

**HON. TOM BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 61, An Act to Amend the Public Airports Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Mr. Ramsay.

BILL 62:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
CORONERS ACT

BILL 63:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT

BILL 64:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS ACT

**HON. DAVID RAMSAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 62, An Act to Amend the Coroners Act, be read for the first time.

I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 63, An Act to Amend the Victims of Crime Act, be read for the first time.

I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 64, An Act to Amend the Co-operative Associations Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsay. Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 65:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
SAFETY ACT

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 65, An Act to Amend the Safety Act, be read for the first time.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Blake.

BILL 66:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RETIRING  
ALLOWANCES ACT AND THE  
SUPPLEMENTARY RETIRING  
ALLOWANCES ACT

**MR. BLAKE:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, I will move that Bill 66, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act and the Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act, be read for the first time.

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

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 55:  
MENTAL HEALTH ACT

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 55, Mental Health Act, be read for the first time.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 55 has had first reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 57:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 4, 2014-2015

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 57, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2014-2015, be read for the first time.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 57 has had first reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 58:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 2, 2015-2016

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe,

that Bill 58, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016, be read for the first time.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 58 has had first reading.

---Carried

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

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 57:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 4, 2014-2015

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 57, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2014-2015, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 57 has had second reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 58:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 2, 2015-2016

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 58, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016, be read for the second time.

This bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 58 has had second reading.

---Carried

Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Tabled Document 248-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016; Bill 37, Financial Administration Act; and Committee Report 15-17(5), Report on the Review of Bill 37: Financial Administration Act, with Mr. Dolynny in the chair.

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

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Good afternoon, committee. I would like to call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We would like to consider Tabled Document 248-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016; Bill 37 and Committee Report 15-17(5).

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Okay, committee. We will commence after a short break.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** I would like to call Committee of the Whole back to order. We have agreed to consider Tabled Document 248-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016. I would like to turn it over to the Minister responsible, honourable Minister Miltenberger, to make opening comments. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am here to present Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016. This document proposes an increase of \$11.3 million in operations expenditures for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The more significant items included in the proposed supplementary estimates are:

1. a total of \$4.6 million for the Department of Transportation associated with runway service improvements at the Yellowknife and Inuvik airports, of which \$1.6 million is offset by a lapse in the prior year;
2. \$2.4 million associated with various departments to provide devolution transition funding for the continued transition of authority of Territorial lands, water and resources, of which this full amount is offset by lapses in the prior year;
3. \$1.5 million associated with the Population Growth Strategy which includes:

- \$1.3 million for enhancements to the NWT Student Financial Assistance Program, and
- \$215,000 to support the GNWT Immigration Program.

I am prepared to review the details of the supplementary estimates document.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Minister, do you have witnesses you'd like to bring into the House?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

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

Minister Miltenberger, if you'd be kind enough to introduce your witnesses to the House, please.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me the deputy minister of Finance, Mike Aumond; and Sandy Kalgutkar, our deputy secretary to the FMB. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond, Mr. Kalgutkar, welcome back to the House. Good to see you. Committee, I'll now open the floor to general comments on Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1. General comments. Does committee want to proceed to detail?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. We'll proceed with detail. Committee, I'll get you to turn to page 3 of the Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016. Expenditures on behalf of Members, Legislative Assembly, operations, not previously authorized, \$8,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$8,000. Any questions?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Agreed, thank you. Page 4, committee, Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, operational expenditures, intergovernmental relations, not previously authorized, \$50,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$50,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Page 5, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education and culture, not previously authorized, negative \$84,000; income security... Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Throughout this document we have quite a few



items that have to deal with the adjustment to the Collective Agreement. Can the Minister maybe give me a little more explanation why these numbers weren't available during our regular process of budgeting? I guess it's spread throughout the document. So, if the Minister could just explain to us why this is a supplementary estimate as opposed to the regular budget process.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These numbers are calculated as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, and some of it, as we've noted, some have gone up and some have gone down depending on the communities in the region. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you. I guess, would we have not negotiated these allowances in the process, or would we not have known that number or estimates based on April 1<sup>st</sup> when we went into budget?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** These numbers are set on a methodology that's negotiated with the UNW, but I'll ask the deputy to provide more information. Thank you.

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

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, as the Minister said, the methodology was agreed to at the time when the Collective Agreement was negotiated and in the methodology there are numbers that are as of April 1<sup>st</sup> that year. So, the methodology doesn't change. The numbers or the components that make up the northern allowance do change from year to year depending on what happens with the inflation as it relates to those factors. Thank you.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering if we're able to get that information or is it available on a public website where we can get the new northern allowance adjustments or the new allowances and which communities went up and which communities went down.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We can provide that information to committee. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I've just got a question about the ones that are going down. Is that based on the fact that the cost of living is going down in some communities? I would assume most of them or all of them would have gone up. So what would the differences be and why would there be a negative?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The one thing that comes to mind, and I'll ask the deputy to speak further to this, is things like if you put in a bridge across a river, possibly, I'm not sure of the methodologies there tied to cost of living, inflation and location and those types of things. But I'll ask the deputy, Mr. Aumond, to speak further. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a basket of goods that the proxy for cost of living and Yellowknife is the base rate. So, some communities may rise or fall in their cost of living differential compared to Yellowknife, and that varies from year to year. Thank you.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** So if we're using Yellowknife as the base and also using the calculations of the community, it could be the price in Yellowknife went down or the price of the community went up or vice versa I guess. Is that the factor or, I guess, how do we keep that stable in the fact that the greater the northern living allowance adjustment to a community, the cost to the community may have gone up, but if Yellowknife was affected then everybody gets affected?

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you. Yes, by Yellowknife being the base, Yellowknife is recalculated every April 1<sup>st</sup> and then every community is calculated compared to Yellowknife April 1<sup>st</sup>. So, depending on what those factors in that basket are compared from which community to Yellowknife, some communities go up and some come down on any given year. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Aumond. Committee, we're on page 5, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education and culture, not previously authorized, negative \$84,000; income security, not previously authorized, \$1.332 million; labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$226,000. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am in the right section. I wanted to ask a bit about the \$215,000 here to provide funding for increasing immigration to the Northwest Territories in support of the NWT Growth Strategy. I'd like to ask the Minister where this strategy is. I don't believe that Members on this side of the House have seen that strategy. I would like to know what it is that ECE is doing that will contribute to this Growth Strategy to increase immigration. Thank you.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The update on the NWT Growth Strategy is on its way to committee. I just signed the letter at the break and we will be tabling it before the end of session by Thursday.

What is contemplated here is to deal with the increased number of seats that we have, spots that we have with the Immigration Program and to be able to ramp up the recruiting and the advertising and getting the required immigrant staff or folks who are interested in coming or immigrating to the Northwest Territories to get them into the system, through the system under the new Express Program that has been set up and to make sure that we have every position that we have available for our nominees filled. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. It's difficult for me to feel comfortable in approving a fund, sorry, and to approve this funding in the absence of knowing exactly how it's going to contribute to a plan that I haven't seen yet. So, I appreciate that the Minister says that it's coming, but it certainly would have been helpful if we had had that strategy before we had to approve these expenses.

I just want to say, in my limited experience with trying to get somebody through this Nominee Program, it's not an easy process. It seems to be fraught with bureaucratic red tape and much of it, part of it is imposed by the feds, some of it is our own red tape, but the Minister mentions the express, I forget the title, but an express route, I guess, through the Nominee Program. Does that mean that some of these roadblocks through red tape and through requiring this document and that document and this evaluation and that evaluation, are some of those going to be waived so that we will be able to get people here quicker or better? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Yes, the intent is to look at a six-month timeline. It's geared to economic immigration where you can go in and reach into the lists that identify people who have the skills, if you need to bring in, to offer employment to. We had a base of 150 spots and we've received an additional 100, so we are very keen to get those all filled and operational as soon as possible. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister. That's all well and good. It sounds good, but what is the department going to be doing to fill these 250 spots? There's money here and there's also money in ITI, so it ends up to be about \$314,000. What are we using that \$300,000 for? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We've got \$100,000 identified for a communication campaign. There's \$30,000 identified for communication materials for the campaign strategy; \$15,000 for website change, revisions and ongoing maintenance; French translation, website and all

other materials is \$20,000; immigration, legislation and regulatory training is \$10,000; travel and transport, NWT and national, is \$20,000; and international travel and transportation is \$20,000. Thank you.

**MS. BISARO:** Thanks to the Minister for the detail. I accept it at face value, but I just have to reiterate that it's hard to know exactly how this is going to fit in with a strategy we haven't seen yet. Thanks. That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. More of a comment, but I will allow the Minister an opportunity to reply. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We note the Member's concern and hopefully the proof will be in the pudding here in the not-too-distant future. If we can fill those hundred spots and each spot that is filled is calculated to bring in somewhere in the neighbourhood of potentially three people or a shade more, depending if they're married and how many children they have, it's an investment that I think we need to make. Thank you.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to follow up on my colleague Ms. Bisaro's comments. I'm obviously uncomfortable with this without the context of what the strategy is, something we've heard talked about for years but have never seen the pudding.

Did I hear that we're going to spend something like \$100,000 on communication materials? If I did, maybe I can get some explanation, in this day and age of busying your thumbs for a couple of minutes and being able to communicate across the globe, exactly what that \$100,000 is going to.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a highly competitive area, especially economic-based immigration, so we have to look at what's available in Canada, what may be available elsewhere, and we have to be able to make sure that the people who have the skills we need are where work's possible, probable and available in the Northwest Territories, and all that requires some of the SEED money to do that. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Again, not something I can support. We have extreme unemployment in parts of the Northwest Territories, and we're travelling, there are international programs here and so on, and I'm all for immigration, but my understanding is there's a lot of people trying to get here, and I don't see how we're spending over \$300,000 on this

when we have already so many people who, with some training, could start to fill in these sorts of things. We've got the students graduating. The schools in Yellowknife are some of the best in the country, so we know we're producing capable people. What are we not doing to bring those capable people back home?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Mr. Chairman, as we have discussed and we have been taken to task for, the population is flat or declining. Everybody in the Northwest Territories who has skills, qualifications, that is available to work, for the most part is working. We have a very high employment rate in that area.

We know that there are job requirements in the North that aren't being filled. We are investing money, as well, to do a better job to make sure that northern students are given every opportunity to return home with employment with the government or anywhere else that employment may be available. We're making changes to SFA to provide more incentive for that to happen. We're going down south now with the Human Resource folks to job fairs and such, sometimes in conjunction with partnership with industry, where we can now hire while we're down there and make interim job offers pending reference checks.

So, this is not just that there's only one level to pull or there's a silver bullet. We know that we need to look at all these different areas. We know that many of our own students when they come home, even if they get jobs here, especially if they're in the fly-in/fly-out, may go south anyway.

So, we have all these challenges and we've been tasked and we set out a goal of 2,000 in five years, four now, and we need to leave no opportunity unexplored in order to bend that trend. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** I appreciate the Minister's comments but, I mean, many of us take a completely different view. It's that we're not doing the right things to retain our people. We are training some of the best people in the world, very professional people coming out of the Northwest Territories and they're leaving, or not returning, after education. Why is that?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I wasn't sure if that was a rhetorical question, but we have people coming and going all the time. We have some of the best benefit packages, lifestyle issues that we think would attract folks, as do the private sector. But the reality is we have a fly-in/fly-out population that is fairly large. We have our birthrate that balances out, but on the exodus side we have some folks leaving, a few more leaving than are coming. So, those are questions, one that Mr. Bromley raised, that we are trying to deal with, with incentives to come here and to stay here and to bring folks from other places where there are jobs that are going unfilled because there's not available

skilled labour in that area that want or can do that job. Thank you.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Again, Mr. Chair, we're doing all these things and they're not working. Is there not a lesson to be learned there? I mean, we hear over and over again that people want real supports, not big money going to big multinational companies and subsidies and \$300 million highways, you know, that are going to cost us to try and maintain. People have real needs right now, and if we were delivering those properly, we'd be retaining people, we'd be giving them the quality of life that will make them want to be here and we will be attracting those skills. So, without that reasoning laid out in a strategy that supports expenditures like this and programs like this vetted through committee, I can't support this sort of thing.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. I'm taking that more as a final comment. Is there a question to that, or is that the end of your questions, Mr. Bromley?

**MR. BROMLEY:** No question.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. As convention presents itself, I will let Minister Miltenberger have the final comment here. Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a challenge ahead of us and it does require some investment. We can't just turn our back on trying to address the issue. I know the Member's position is that we can somehow find all the talent we need in the North and if we keep it here it will all be well and good, but first we need an economy.

We have diamond mines that add \$1.6 billion to our GDP every year. They have a significant fly-in/fly-out population. We are working with the mines. In fact, there's a meeting this week to talk about this initiative, as well, from the private sector's perspective and the things they're doing to try to keep and encourage their workforce to stay in the North, and it's a long-term commitment.

You can't just, after 18 months, throw up your hands and say it's not working and let's not do it anymore and then wonder why our population keeps dropping. We have to make decisions, make choices, and we have to make investments, and that's what this is.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolyunny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Committee, we're on page 5, Education, Culture and Employment, operations expenditures, education and culture, not previously authorized, negative \$84,000; income security, not previously authorized, \$1.332 million; labour development and standards, not previously authorized, \$226,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$1.474 million. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Page 6, Environment and Natural Resources, operations expenditures, conservation, assessment and monitoring, not previously authorized, \$1,000; corporate management, not previously authorized, \$9,000; environment, not previously authorized, \$206,000; forest management, not previously authorized, \$15,000; water resources, not previously authorized, \$519,000; wildlife, not previously authorized, \$59,000. Total department, not previously authorized, \$809,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, committee. Turn to page 7, Executive, operations expenditures, directorate, not previously authorized, \$575,000. Ms. Bisaro.

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some concerns with the two items of funding on this page. The first one is under the directorate and it has to do with funding for costs associated with the communications functional review. Five hundred sixteen thousand dollars is itemized under directorate and then \$335,000 under Ministers' offices. I know we've been back and forth with the government a bit on this between Members and Cabinet. We have had some information about what this expenditure is for. I'd like to, first of all, I guess, ask the Minister, since this is an additional cost and I don't believe it's being offset by any funding that we already have like federal funding or devolution money or whatever, but I'd like to know what this \$516,000 under the directorate is going to be used for.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This funding is coming from transitional funding tied to devolution, and there are two things at play here. One is we have taken over about \$63 million worth of new programs and services that we've integrated into the government with many new responsibilities, mandates and authorities. We've integrated them into the Government of the Northwest Territories. As well, we have a communication infrastructure that's 20 years old and in need of enhancement prior to devolution, even more so now after devolution. We've taken on, for example, significant regulatory functions. We need to be able to manage those and other communication responsibilities. This money is going to go towards identifying what needs to be done and then putting in some funding to in fact address the communications issue, an issue I would add that, once again, we've been taken to task for time after time by Members of the Legislative Assembly, in terms of things that should

be done better, that need to be done better, and we're attempting to do that in a reasoned way.

I would ask, as well, if the Premier wanted to add anything further to that particular issue.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. We'll go to the Premier. Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly, we feel that it's important for us to fulfill our new responsibilities by having better communications, functions and structures, and in order to meet these requirements we're requesting funding that has been through the devolution transitional funding which will provide for three additional positions, three in the corporate communications and two in the Cabinet communications. This is an opportunity to provide communications that would respect our unique northern cultures and also fulfill a lot of the principles that we've talked about, to ensure the public is informed on a timely, accurate and consistent manner, that it's managed in an orderly and planned function, that the public is informed about government policies and activities and that the concerns and the views of the public are taken into account and ensure that the government is visible and accessible and that adequate information is provided.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to both Ministers. I hear that this money is going to be used for five new positions, and I can appreciate two things. I can appreciate that we've taken on greater responsibilities, and I can also appreciate that our communications have been seen to be lacking. I am certainly one of those who has suggested that we could do things a heck of a lot better. But I'm wondering where the decision that we needed five PYs has come from. Minister Miltenberger indicated that this money is going to be used to look at things and determine where to go. The Premier indicates that there are five PYs, so how did we come to this decision that we needed five PYs?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Ms. Bisaro. For that we'll go to Minister Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a GNWT communications functional review that captured this and did their review and took a look at what was needed to enhance our capacity. We've attempted to be very reasonable that what was in an ideal communications systems would require a much greater investment, but once again, I'd ask if the Premier wants to add anything further to that.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. We'll go to Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We did a communications review that looked at all of our responsibilities. They also interviewed deputy ministers and senior management and offered to interview MLAs. We also recognize the fact that, as we stated, we have new authorities, new legislation and program responsibilities, and also the communications environment is changing very rapidly with the advent of social media, 24/7 news cycles, and we also focused on communications professions standards such as communications policy, currency and congruence, strategic management of the communications function, professional functional excellence. We did look at other jurisdictions, the other territories which have smaller public service sizes and less government expenditures and smaller populations, where the Yukon government, for example, has 59 communications staff, the Government of Nunavut has 32, and the Northwest Territories has the largest public service size, the largest government expenditures, the largest population and we currently have 27 communications staff. So we took all of those into consideration. Functions review made some recommendations and we determined, through the results of the review, that three positions in the public communications sector and two in Cabinet communications will fulfill the responsibilities in the communications area that we feel are required. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks again to the Minister. I have a few more questions here. First of all, this is being funded through transition funding, but presumably once it has been funded through our devolution transition funding, it's then going to be added to the base. So, this is an increase to our budget, I'm presuming.

The Premier mentioned that through this report and through comparing Yukon, Nunavut and NWT, the determination was to add five PYs. Does that mean that this is the final decision that we're adding five PYs to our communications and our staffing complement is going to be 32 now, or is there going to be further additions to our communications staffing later on down the line? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** For that we'll go directly to Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through the review, we feel that would be sufficient to fulfill all of the responsibilities. As a government, we constantly review our programs and services. So, at this time, we expect this will fulfill all of those responsibilities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just with regard to the nature of the funding, this is coming out of implementation funding to the A-base, so it will be ongoing. Thank you.

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

**MS. BISARO:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have 18 seconds, so will fit another question in here. I appreciate the clarification on the funding, but we have just recently approved an operations budget in early March. We are now being asked to spend an additional \$800,000.

Why was this expense not put into the operations budget which we approved just a few months ago? Why does it have to come forward as a supp? Thank you.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** The work was still being concluded. The report has been written, the assessments made. We had to take it back through the due process and we weren't able to get it done in time. That would have been our initial preference, but it was not possible, hence this request through the supplementary appropriation process. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Next on my list I have Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think Ms. Bisaro covered a lot of the questions I had, but I will ask some of the questions a bit differently. I have concern with the fact that we're equating these positions and this funding through our devolution fund reserves that we have, but after the devolution money has been spent, this becomes part of the cost of the GNWT. Obviously, on top of the positions we've added to devolution, we're adding five more positions into Yellowknife. Is there any way we can make these term positions and we look at the assessment and the effectiveness after the devolution money has dried up after spending all this money on these positions?

I'm having a difficulty with the fact that we're creating more bureaucracy and I'm not sure what we're going to communicate more to the public. Often we get criticized with government about our communications, so I'm not exactly sure what these five positions are going to do with the communications of government. Could the Minister answer some of that information?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With devolution there were two funds. There was one-time transition money to help us over the course of the year to get up and running and then there was implementation funding where we negotiated a global figure, \$65.3 million a year

ted to our formula that will increase as our formula increases and goes into our A-base. It's out of that \$65.3 million that these positions are being funded from. That money will go into the A-base. It's not coming out of existing government expenditures, nor will it. That funding is covered there. Then the issue is, just to quickly restate, we have a system that hasn't been looked at in over 20 years, a communications system that has been the target of a lot of concern and unhappiness.

We've taken on a lot of responsibilities. We have funding available into our A-base where there is some funding available to help us pick up our game when it comes to a communications system. First we did a review that laid out the things we need to do, areas that need to be addressed. There are four areas: We are under-resourced on a comparative basis, we need to better define the roles and purposes, which we are doing, we need to work on consistent messaging, and we have to make sure that what we're providing is what is needed by the citizens. All this requires and points to the fact that we're not as well organized as we should be and we are significantly under-resourced. We think this will address that issue. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I'm trying to get clarification. I think on Ms. Bisaro's question, the Minister indicated it was going to be added to our ongoing costs and you just indicated to me that it wouldn't be added to our ongoing cost, but be part of ongoing devolution money. Can I get more detail? How are these positions going to be funded after devolution money has been expended completely?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. For that response, we'll go to Mr. Aumond.

**MR. AUMOND:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister stated, we have negotiated an A-base transfer of \$65.3 million to undertake the responsibilities related to devolution that goes into our formula. Of that \$65.3 million, if Members will recall when we put together the original budget, we left aside about \$10 million of contingency to deal with any issues that came up. So we still have some of that contingency money available and subject to the Legislative Assembly's approval of this request, there will still be about \$4.31 million of surplus money available from devolution implementation money. While it will be an ongoing expense, we were provided funding to offset that expense. So, to restate what the Minister said, this is not coming out of existing programs and service expenditures, but it's coming from that \$65.3 million that we got an A-base transfer for, for funding those activities related to devolution. Thank you

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** So I think I'm getting the picture here. This is funding from the federal government

on an ongoing basis. Why would we continue to have these positions if part of these positions are just to assess our communications system now? The Minister indicated we need to assess our communications system and the way we communicate. In my perspective, that would be reviewing something that would only be a short period of time, something we would need as a term, not a full-time position where after the assessment is done, we don't need that position anymore. Why wouldn't we do that as a term position or why wouldn't we do it as a contract to have the assessment done?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize if I wasn't clear enough. This was a two-step process. We did the functional review of our communications system which gave us the information that pointed to areas of concern, including the under-resourcing and being better organized to take on these new responsibilities. Based on that work, which is already done, we've come forward with this request to put some resources into the communication systems to make sure we can address those issues, improve the communication systems and incorporate all the work that needs to be done with the new authorities.

So, I apologize to the Member if I wasn't clear enough, but both those things were done. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Then I guess I've got a question about this communication report that was done. We've been given the information, as far as this report was done, in November. So, it should have gone through our regular budgeting process.

Why cannot we, as a government, get a report in November and have it ready for our March implementation of funding in the March review? Now we're back here on June 1<sup>st</sup> looking at something that we don't really have full direction on, we haven't had full discretion about it, we haven't had a business planning process to go through. I guess, why does it take so long to get that process going forward?

You know, then I guess the other question that I have while I have time here is: What happens if this wasn't approved? These positions would have to be reviewed in the fall, into our budget process, put into a business planning process and then approved through this Assembly that way. If we delayed this for a year, what would it do to our communications system?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** This report was done in November when the budgets were pretty well set. There was, as well, significant internal review, assessment, debate, discussion

going back and forth about what was exactly the best way to proceed. When we finally reached that consensus, we had missed that window. So we identified, as have Members and the public, significant shortcomings in our communications system. So, if this money is not voted on and it doesn't get approved, it would be about another year to potentially get the resources to work to do the improvements that are needed today. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** If I could get a little bit more detail. When we talk about communication, communication seems to me like consulting. I mean, anything can be communicating. We're communicating here in this House today.

What exactly does communicating mean? Does that mean we're communicating with the general public? Is that communication between Cabinet and Regular Members? Is that communication a communication system as far as telecommunications? What does communication mean when we're talking about these types of positions and what these people will be doing?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. For that reply we'll go to Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We've broken it out into two functions. One is corporate communications, that's communications coming from the departments whereby the departmental people know what's going on and they're communicating to the public and operational requirements and so on; and we also have Cabinet communications where we communicate new changes, new policies, explain new ways of doing business to the public and to the rest of the people in the Northwest Territories.

The review that was done concluded that the GNWT communications function is not being managed strategically. Communicators are being used as technicians, not strategic advisors. Communicators are not well-positioned in our organization to support planning and decision-making. Functional scope, roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities are unclear. There's policy enhancement needed to modernize and to provide guidelines, directives and processes that are missing and, as well, as I said earlier, there will be an additional focus on capacity to accommodate social media, online citizen engagement and other digital strategies as well as specific two-way strategies for remote and small communities. We have 18 to 20 government services officers and we need to address those specific communication challenges and needs of small communities. We also want to address communications, as we discussed here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Continuing on with questions on this activity, I have Mr. Bromley.

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again here I see, without informing us on the thinking and where things are at, we're being asked to spend the taxpayer's dollar and I think that's the under-riding and overriding concern here. We did have some discussions on this. I know the Premier will recall committee sent a letter back agreeing with the need for better communications but raising a number of concerns about the report.

Just to follow up on the number of positions we're talking about here, we're talking about five here, \$185,000 apiece. The briefing material said... Well, let me start with the review. The review said, in fact, the proposal was for adding I think it was 13 full-time equivalents plus up to three for each department and agency, which would amount to up to 45 to 54 positions. So, an amazing expansion from our current 27.

So I'm wondering – that's in contrast to the Premier's remarks – are there more positions to follow? Briefing material indicated there was, but the Premier is saying there isn't. The problem is that we have no context for any of this other than the earlier discussions that weren't concluded, so maybe I could just ask that question again. Which is it? Are we proposing to add positions eventually here or not?

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. For that we'll go over to Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We did have that discussion and our estimation was that five would fill the requirements that were identified after the communications review. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess where the debate becomes important is this 900-and-whatever-thousand dollars, over ten years that's \$9 million. These are significant dollars that we're talking about, and we know that there are very serious needs in a number of priorities – and I know the Premier and the Minister would agree – and we have not had that debate on where these dollars would go towards the delivery of our new priorities. That's talking about the \$63 million, \$65 million. So that's a process problem again.

The last communications we had from the Premier on this was that the Cabinet has made no decisions with respect to the recommendations of the report, so that's why committee, I guess, is surprised and disappointed at this coming forward in a supp when we see the process would call for it to come forward in a budget, as per what my colleague Mr. Bouchard said earlier.

So, I ask again, can this be brought forward through normal process, budgeting process, rather than in this supp without the background that we need on which to base our decisions?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The money that we've got into our A-base, \$65.3 million, is for specific functions tied to land, water and resource development. We don't have the latitude to be able to say we've decided we're going to spend half of it now on social programs, for example. We have obligations tied to devolution and agreements we signed to honour that commitment and fund those critical functions tied to land, water and issues related to managing that and the resource development.

In regard to the question about the layout, I'll defer to the Premier, Mr. Chair, with your concurrence.

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

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. If it's a delay, then we'll have the same problems that were identified in the communications review and we would not be able to provide the new services that will allow us to fulfill the new responsibilities that we have taken over.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that sums it up. With regard to Minister Miltenberger's comments, I had specified specifically the 63 or 65-point-whatever million of our new responsibilities, so that's what I'm talking about, indeed, and I think there is a lot of room here, although committee has never really been included in the discussion of the allocation of those funds, but that's the discussion that's missing here.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just restate, the conditions of this A-base transfer is to provide the functions that we negotiated with the federal government, AANDC, and we're committed to that. That money is built into our A-base to provide those functions that we've taken over that were formerly delivered by the federal government, and we don't have the latitude to arbitrarily say now that we're going to start taking that money and doing other things that what we negotiated and signed an agreement on.

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

**MR. BROMLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I completely agree with the Minister. My comments are in line with that. For example, I see development of the energy policy with our new

responsibilities, and particularly renewable energy, as some real opportunities for spending some of those remaining dollars, and I think we need a debate on whether it's best needed there or any other area such as that that committee might come up with versus the communications side of things. Committee did offer comments with respect to the communications side of things that we weren't convinced that we needed a change in structure, and we didn't have a response or a discussion following up from that, nor evidence provided that the current staff are insufficient or unable to do the work, so there is, again, communications that have not been completed here. Just a comment.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bromley. As indicated, a comment. With that, I'll continue on questions with Mr. Moses.

**MR. MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some really good comments and questions by committee members on how we got to these two issues of the five positions that we're discussing here. When you look at the review that was done in November, there were a lot of key findings, and I think Mr. Bromley alluded to briefly here in terms of just better management within our current system, and in terms of communicating to the public, do we need to fill more positions out there to try to do what other people are supposed to be doing right now.

I know all of our departments have communications staff. We have communications here in the Legislative Assembly, and I think it just needs better leadership and better management moving forward and addressing some key findings. Has the department done any... I know they did, last year, talk about fiscal responsibility and telling all the departments to look at cutting down their funding. Has the department looked within the departments to find ways they can better do their communication, considering the findings that were found in November, rather than just throwing more positions out there and looking at how we can improve our communication system? What are some of the key findings that were described under this report?

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a considerable review done on this, which is one of the reasons it took so long. As Mr. Bromley pointed out, the initial report, if it was accepted at full face value, would be coming forward with dozens and dozens of new jobs, which we knew in our day and age of ongoing fiscal restraint was not sustainable, supportable or acceptable, so we've worked at how we could address this and do some of the improvements. We've taken over, once again, \$65 million worth of new programs, hundreds of staff, in addition to the fact that it has been clearly pointed out to us that



our current system is not up to the task for the government pre-devolution, and post-devolution we know we have to up our game, and it covers all aspects of communication in a government that now has about 5,600 employees, 14 departments, just about a \$2 billion budget that covers a whole range of services across the whole spectrum from the health and social service side to building roads and everything in between. We have looked at this and what we've come forward with is what we think is the barest minimum we need to keep managing on a go-forward basis and look at some of the improvements that are expected, both by this Assembly and the public.

**MR. MOSES:** I appreciate the responses from the Minister and our Premier. As mentioned, when these positions come in and looking at things as policies and directives, we're taking on more responsibilities, especially in the land and water and looking at developing our... We're unique up here in the North in terms of how we do business, especially more unique because we have so many Aboriginal governments and groups. But you'd think that looking at creating policies and new directives for the departments might be more of a priority with these kinds of dollars coming out of this transition funding, and as you've heard already, that discussion hasn't taken place with committee on how these dollars are going to be spent.

As I said, we've got some departments here that need some upgrades on their policies as well. I understand that the Communications Strategy hasn't been updated in 20 years or so. I just wonder, coming out with how we're spending this A-base transfer funding and having those discussions and whether or not it's policies and directives, or should we possibly be getting more positions for those is more of a priority than just the Communications Strategy?

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** We are looking at all those issues, the structural issues, the policy issues, all the things that drive how we're structured. That's one big issue. The other issue is enough resources to, in fact, take all those improved structures, infrastructure policy base, and allow us to implement it in a more improved fashion.

**MR. MOSES:** I appreciate that and also just looking at we do have a bigger population, a bigger public service than Nunavut and the Yukon and that they have more communications personnel within their departments working for them. I like the fact that you want to upgrade and you want to add these positions, but just having that lack of discussion on how these dollars are being spent is a concern to, I know, some committee members, because we haven't really had that discussion and we're seeing some of these dollars being spent already. More of a comment as to having that initial discussion.

We've been doing some really good things here in terms of work that government has been doing with some committees, and I think this one is just something that also needs to be had in terms of how the dollars are being spent looking at these reviews as a government and not just making, I wouldn't say decisions on the fly, but making decisions when we could have had a more in-depth discussion. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Moses. As you indicated there, a comment, but we'll allow the Minister a final say on this. Mr. Miltenberger.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the Member's comments and I would just make the observation that having been in now my fifth Assembly pre-division, post-division, pre-devolution, post-devolution, every Assembly I've been in there's a struggle with communications. Having gone through all these big transitions and transformations and now compound that with the speed of light change to the infrastructure in a world and the demands of individuals, MLAs, the public, this is an issue that has been unaddressed for a long time. We would hate to lose another year because we didn't want to make the investment today for process reasons, even though we recognize that there are improvements that are needed. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we are on page 7. Mr. Bouchard.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd just like to bring up a couple of other issues. The difficulty that I'm having with this process is the timing of it. Like I indicated, the fact that this communication report was done in November, I guess committee has had some discussion with the department about it, and I think it was brought up on Friday about the supplementary exercises we are going through and some of the short notices we are getting on the reviews and the process and the fact that all of a sudden we hear now this money, these five positions are being added to the budget.

It seems like a very quick process for us on the Regular Members' side. I think some of us are having concerns on how this was all laid out. I understand the government had to do a review, but I'm having trouble swallowing the fact that we did a review in November and we couldn't get that information to this House by February or March to get approval. It just seems like it's taking us six to eight months to get the process of approval for any funding you want to do. It seems very difficult to us.

Now we're being asked to approve it in the supp when the supp only came to us a week ago. I'm just having difficulties on the process and the steps of how we got here.

Could the Minister give me more detail on was there a holdup in their area and why would it take us that long to go through the process and why couldn't we have seen this in February or March when we looked at the budgets? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just in terms of the timelines, it did come out in December. The budget for the fiscal year is closed off at the end of November. There was a significant amount of work that took place within the government, as Mr. Bromley pointed out, when there was an initial ask, potentially a recommendation of many dozens of positions. It required a lot of internal review and adjustment to come up with what we have come up with. We missed that window, and once the budget is set in the process for review, it's very difficult after the fact to try to add things. By the time this was all said and done, the other process was too far along, hence this request for a supplementary process.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. We'll go to Premier McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for clarification, I would like to point out that we wrote to the chair of the Standing Committee on Priorities on November 6<sup>th</sup>, offering a briefing of committee and asking for comments by December 1, 2014. We did get some feedback dated December 5<sup>th</sup>. I don't have a date stamp on the actual day we received it, but those were communications that happened at the front end. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some of those documents in front of me here too. I have a document dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, when we actually got the plan of the final report that we're making decisions on. So, that's my difficulty in the fact that we got it December 18<sup>th</sup>, but there was no indication that it was coming into a supp into the new year, or there's no discussion of it being added to our January discussions to get a briefing in January to talk about getting this put in the budget.

I don't have the details, but I do believe we have, in the past, added this stuff to the budgets in a quick manner. We have meetings in January; we have meetings at the beginning of February; we have six weeks of session in February/March with this type of stuff. If the Cabinet and the Executive deemed it as an exercise that had to be done as soon as possible, then we would have looked at it at that time. But for us to look at it in a supplementary in one of our last sessions, with limited time to review and discuss, and this is the

only place on the floor that we have it today to discuss this issue, I guess I'm having difficulties in the fact that we're forced to either allow the process to move forward or maybe we just hold the whole thing to a grind and we don't approve this and we let it go to the business plan process for the next Assembly.

I guess my concerns are how do we move forward when this type of stuff gets held back and we're forced to make emergency decisions based on the floor of this House? Again, I guess I'm having difficulty with the fact of what happens if this goes forward if we don't have this funding approved.

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

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As has been pointed out, we're here at the will of the House. We've identified an issue that we think has some urgency in being addressed, which is why it's here. There are a number of factors that caused us to get here, not get involved or inserted into the budget process. So, if this is not proceeded with, then we will be one year further behind in terms of addressing some of the key issues tied to improving our communications infrastructure. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** Again, I guess we're being handcuffed and pressured into just approving this \$800,000 expenditure, because Cabinet has put it in a supplementary estimate that we have had limited time to review, have had limited time to have that discussion. I mean, we expressed our concerns last week, but with limited input and time to do anything about it. We're talking about positions and we talked about positions and we talked about the budgets going up every year, and now we're going to add another five positions to it. Never mind all the discussions I've talked about in this House about decentralization, now we're adding five more positions into Yellowknife, into headquarters, into the departments that are swimming in positions already. So, I have problems with this expenditure and I feel that we should be not allowing this to go forward. That's my point.

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** I appreciate the Member's comments and fervour, and I want to reassure him on the communications side we're not swimming in positions, and that's one of the issues. One of the decisions that has to be made today by this Assembly is what trumps what in terms of as a government do we invest in the money to improve our services and systems or because there are process concerns separate from the validity of the request that would cause us to defer this for, potentially, at least a year or so. Thank you.

**MR. BOUCHARD:** I guess I want this House and the Minister to understand that I don't disagree with the fact that... I see the information before us that we probably had less than other jurisdictions in

these areas. I'm concerned about the GNWT positions overall. I've had those concerns before. The question I have in this House is whether we allow this to continue. They may have a valid point for these positions. My point is we really haven't had an in-depth discussion here and had that discussion with Regular Members because this came to us a week ago, less than a week ago probably. I am having trouble swallowing this expenditure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. I will treat that as a comment. I didn't hear a question in there. Ms. Bisaro.

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

---Carried

**CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dolynny):** Thank you, Mr. Kalgutkar and Mr. Aumond, for joining us today. We'll definitely see you folks tomorrow. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the House. With that, I will now rise and report progress.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Dolynny, can I have the report of Committee of the Whole?

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. DOLYNNY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 248-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016, and I would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do I have a seconder? Mr. Moses. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 57:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 4, 2014-2015

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that Bill 57, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2014-2015, be read for the third time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 57, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 4, 2014-2015, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Miltenberger.

BILL 58:  
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT  
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES),  
NO. 2, 2015-2016

**HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe, that Bill 58, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016, be read for the third time. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. Bill 58, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2015-2016, has had third reading.

---Carried

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Tuesday, June 2, 2015, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills

- Bill 48, An Act to Amend the Mental Health Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
- Bill 55, Mental Health Act
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
- Tabled Document 248-17(5), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2015-2016
  - Bill 37, Financial Administration Act
  - Committee Report 15-17(5), Report on the Review of Bill 37: Financial Administration 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 Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:48 p.m.