



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

5th Session

Day 43

17th Assembly

HANSARD

Monday, October 27, 2014

Pages 4961 – 5000

The Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Monday, October 27, 2014****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

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

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 104-17(5):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES TAKING A MORE PROMINENT
ROLE ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, we have seen remarkable political development in the Northwest Territories. Land, resources and self-government agreements are being negotiated and settled. In April we concluded devolution and have seen the smooth transition of federal powers to the Government of the Northwest Territories. As a result of these efforts, Northerners have taken greater control over their social, economic and political destinies, have found new ways to work together and have greater national prominence than ever before.

Each summer, Canada's Premiers meet to discuss matters of common concern. At this year's meeting in Charlottetown, Premiers discussed the aging population and infrastructure, along with energy, developing a skilled workforce, and Aboriginal child welfare. At this meeting the Northwest Territories led the discussion on the benefits created by access to stable and affordable housing for Canadians, families and communities. Premiers called on the federal government to reinvest in social housing and emphasized the need for strengthened collaboration among the federal, provincial and territorial governments to address this important issue.

While there, Premiers meet with leaders from the five national Aboriginal organizations. Work with the national Aboriginal organizations continues throughout the year in the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group, which includes national Aboriginal organizations and Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs from all provinces and territories. The Northwest

Territories formally assumed the chair of this working group in Charlottetown and agreed to co-lead some progressive work on Aboriginal children in care with Manitoba.

I look forward to leading a national dialogue on issues impacting Aboriginal peoples across the country through the working group and sharing some of the successful ways that our government is engaging and partnering with Aboriginal governments in the Northwest Territories.

Missing and murdered Aboriginal women is an important area of concern for the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group. Through Canada's Premiers, the Government of the Northwest Territories has supported a national round-table discussion on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and we are encouraged by the federal government's apparent willingness to participate. This initiative is being led by the national Aboriginal organizations, and our government recently agreed to help host a round-table in conjunction with Aboriginal Affairs Working Group meetings next February.

The overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in child welfare systems is another area where Canada's Premiers and the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group has focused their attention. Together with Manitoba's Minister of Family Services, we will develop action-oriented solutions that seek to reduce the number of children in care and improve the situation of Aboriginal children and families across Canada.

Other Ministers are also taking leadership roles at both the national and international levels. Nationally, Minister Lafferty co-chairs the Aboriginal Education Initiative on behalf of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. This initiative is aimed at improving Aboriginal educational achievement, and Minister Lafferty's position reflects both his experience and the groundbreaking work our government and the Government of Nunavut did on the residential schools' curriculum.

Internationally, Minister Ramsay recently took on the presidency of PNWER, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region. This forum brings together government and businesses from several US states and Canadian provinces and territories in the Pacific Northwest to promote common economic

interests. Minister Ramsay's leadership of this forum will be an important opportunity to advance awareness of the Northwest Territories' economic potential and take advantage of the relationships and partnerships we continue to build with our neighbours of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region.

Maintaining a strong relationship with our neighbours, like the western provinces, is also important to ensuring that regional issues are identified and addressed. The Western Premiers' Conference, held in Iqaluit this past July, gave Premiers from the seven western jurisdictions an opportunity to discuss Aboriginal child welfare, developing the labour market, exploring solutions for off-grid communities, disaster management and assistance, improving access to markets and modernizing internal trade. Given the importance of housing for Northerners, I was pleased to again lead the discussion on this topic.

Because we share similar circumstances and issues, strengthening pan-territorial relationships is a key intergovernmental relations activity. This year the Northwest Territories hosted the 12th annual Northern Premiers' Forum. Discussion included how to move forward on a range of issues important to Northerners, such as mental wellness, housing, energy options for northern Canada, infrastructure, climate change and the work of the Arctic Council.

At this year's forum we launched A Northern Vision: Building a Better North, which updates the collaborative vision of the three territories originally released in 2007. A Northern Vision outlines how our three territories will work together to develop the North as a region of vibrant, healthy communities with economies that offer sound investment and diverse employment opportunities, a flourishing private sector and protection of the environment for future generations. We also renewed the Northern Cooperation Accord, which formalizes our commitment to work together to advance shared northern interests.

Strengthening relationships with Aboriginal governments is one of this Assembly's priorities. Devolution has given us a new forum for building relationships in the Intergovernmental Council, which enables the Government of the Northwest Territories and Aboriginal governments who have signed on to devolution to collaborate on matters related to lands and resource management. This council allows Northwest Territories governments to share ideas and discuss common priorities and interests and will greatly benefit the Government of the Northwest Territories as it considers potential changes to lands and resources management in the Northwest Territories. This approach is unique in Canada.

The Intergovernmental Council held its first meeting on September 19th. Leaders and officials gathered in Yellowknife and talked about processes for future meetings and priority areas for work in the coming year. With this first meeting of the Intergovernmental Council, we are seeing a new, and very welcome, era of cooperation between the Government of the Northwest Territories and Aboriginal governments.

Mr. Speaker, Northerners have worked hard to ensure they have control over their daily lives and to highlight the unique circumstances of the North at the regional and national levels. We are seeing improved collaboration and cooperation with Aboriginal governments through our work in the Northwest Territories. We have positive lessons to share with our partners at the national level. We do some things differently with made-in-the-North approaches and can offer a model for intergovernmental relations with Aboriginal governments other areas of Canada can learn from. We are seeing the results of hard work undertaken by the Government of the Northwest Territories, and we look forward to sharing our successes with a greater leadership role at the national level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 105-17(5): FOREST MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Mr. Speaker, supporting a diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices is one of the main purposes of forest management agreements.

The first two agreements were signed this year with Timberworks in Fort Resolution and Digaa Enterprises in Fort Providence, jointly owned Aboriginal development corporations in each community.

Timberworks is owned by the Deninu K'ue First Nation and the Fort Resolution Metis Council, and Digaa Enterprises is owned by the Deh Gah Gotie First Nation and the Fort Providence Metis Council.

These are the first of several agreements this government hopes to sign with local Aboriginal corporations in areas where there is a sustainable supply of timber for harvest and a viable commercial use for the wood.

Mr. Speaker, this is a new concept in forest tenure for the Northwest Territories that provides for the kind of integrated, multiple use of forest land that is compatible with sustainable forest harvesting.

Forest management agreements give a local Aboriginal corporation non-exclusive rights to harvest timber from Crown lands for the purpose of

sustainable forest business development and growth.

Agreements respect settled land, resource and self-government agreements, interim measures agreements and land use plans. They do not affect the rights of persons to harvest or use the forest for subsistence or traditional practices. The agreements require the parties to follow all established regulatory processes and obtain necessary authorizations.

Forest management agreements benefit communities by supporting the development of profitable, locally managed businesses and increasing training and job opportunities for local people. Communities will be able to determine the growth of their business based on markets and their capabilities.

They also support the use of woody biomass as an alternative energy source and an economic opportunity for the community. An increased use of wood and wood pellets as an alternative source of energy supports the Government of the Northwest Territories' goal of an environment that will sustain present and future generations.

The agreements also offer opportunities to transfer knowledge about forest management planning and operations, the sustainable development and cooperative management of our northern forests and long-term access to timber supply in support of forest industry development.

Mr. Speaker, communities wishing to develop a forest management agreement must establish an Aboriginal corporation to negotiate terms with our government. The corporation should be community-based and include engagement with local Aboriginal groups.

It needs to establish a wood fibre supply agreement with a wood products facility, and both the corporation and the community need to participate in the development of a timber harvest plan for the agreed area.

Aurora Wood Pellets, a wood pellet mill to be located north of Enterprise, is expected to create an annual demand for 125,000 cubic metres of wood.

More than 40 people will be employed at the Enterprise site, with the potential to create additional jobs in the region.

This northern owned and operated business will purchase sustainably harvested timber from Timberworks and Digaa Enterprises and contribute towards a sustainable northern economy.

As a result, timber will be harvested, turned into pellets and directly supplied to residents and businesses right here in the Northwest Territories.

The timber harvest plan provides a framework for the sustainable management of the timber

resources and takes other values, such as biodiversity, into consideration.

Work is underway now to help Timberworks and Digaa Enterprises develop a strong business model and to work together in building a timber harvest plan.

Forest management agreements are a major tool that will help us encourage and support a viable forest industry that encompasses the full range of forest values. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Item 3, Members' statements. The honourable Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORTING A LOCAL MUSHROOM HARVEST

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Northwest Territories has an opportunity to cater to the world. Morel mushrooms that fetch hundreds of dollars on the international markets thrive in areas burned by forest fires and attract harvesters from far and wide.

It was encouraging to see residents tap into the local resource this summer and finally the government step up with some response. ITI held workshops and orientation meetings in the Deh Cho this past spring, including walking workshops where participants go out in the field and learn the steps involved in harvesting morels, from locating the species to processing them for markets.

ENR provided maps to help target productive areas, and ECE supported the Fort Providence entrepreneurs' efforts to train local harvesters. The government was aware of as many as seven buyers active in the region this summer. Best estimates suggest that this year's harvest was worth approximately \$1 million to \$1.5 million. An anecdotal report suggests a family in the Deh Cho may have earned as much as \$25,000 from their harvest this year. At the outset, local residents imagined they might easily match experienced pickers, but quickly discovered it takes at least two full seasons to develop the skills.

Draught was also a killer this year, and due to the summer's hot, dry conditions, the harvest didn't reach its maximum potential. A constituent had a total of 41 people working with him this summer, and in spite of the setbacks, many of them are eager to come back next year and pass on their skills to family and friends. Communities all around Great Slave Lake were affected by forest fires, and the government is planning to help residents capitalize on what could be a bumper crop of morels next year by distributing information booklets on mushroom harvest and offering more orientation visits and workshops throughout the

winter and spring. This is a great start, Mr. Speaker, and the GNWT needs to regulate mushroom harvest in a way that benefits residents of the NWT.

Aboriginal organizations should be encouraged to step in to help their community members. One of my constituents recommends including the harvest of non-timber forest products in the Fur Program, noting that the sale of mushrooms can generate enough profit to make this policy initiative well worthwhile.

We need to ensure buyers have business licences, that species are not overharvested and that people harvest species that they can correctly identify. We need to follow the example of other jurisdictions that have already carved a path through the fungal jungle and are using mushrooms and other timber forest products to diversify their economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm the first one that will stand up in this House and say that I've made a mistake, and I would like to retract a thought and a theory that I put forward in this House last Thursday.

The Minister's plan and the Department of Education's plan for Junior Kindergarten is not only going to hurt the regional and large communities, it is going to be a disaster in all communities, including small communities.

You cannot move an initiative like this forward with no resources. I know I may be repeating myself, but you can't do it. You can't throw \$15,000 at a small community and say, here, invite all the four-year-olds into your school program.

The Education Renewal Initiative, which the department touts as a great document and a great piece of work, the very principles of this particular document are that the community and the school are connected. The active involvement and role of all partners, students, families, communities, school staff, educators, Aboriginal governments and business are highly valued in the learning that occurs in and outside of the school walls. Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest to you that this principle of the Education Renewal Initiative has not been adhered to by the department or considered by this Minister when talking about the implementation of Junior Kindergarten.

I hate, as a legislator, to see things torn down that people have toiled and volunteered and struggled to build for years and years and years. I had a chance to be home in Hay River this weekend. It is not just the regional centres, I heard from Kakisa; I

heard from Lutselk'e; I heard from Deline; I heard from Fort Providence; I heard from all of these communities who have existing early childhood development programming which is working.

When we had the folks from Education come to Hay River and we had our workshop about the Education Renewal Initiative, we talked about the importance of things being driven from the community up, not from the government down. This Junior Kindergarten program is a prime example of the government dictating to the communities what they'll have.

I would rather see them pool the resources, if there are any, and it's very little, but pool the very limited resources for Junior Kindergarten into some kind of a pot of money and then allow communities that don't have early childhood development on a community-by-community basis to apply for, make a case for that and what they can do. Is it better in the school? Is it better in some other infrastructure within the community? Is it better in a church basement? Where could we best deliver early childhood development in those communities, instead of dictating to everybody? So, it's a no win. It's bad for the communities that already have something established, and it's not enough resources for the people who don't. It's a lose-lose all around.

Mr. Speaker, may I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement? Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, like I said, I hate to see things regress; I hate to see things torn down; and we are going to throw away federal money for Aboriginal Head Start; we're going to throw away the community participation and the dollars, the volunteers, because we're saying we're going to take over educating the four-year-olds, and we're not going to do a very good job with the plan that we have in hand.

I'm going to ask the Minister today, later on, if he will go back to the drawing board. Let's start again, let's find out where the need is, let's identify the resources, and let's come up with a much better plan. Take it back to the drawing board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week we heard several Members' concerns around the new Junior Kindergarten program which started in small community schools this fall. We've again heard from Mrs. Groenewegen today.

This year, in both the winter and spring sittings, Regular MLAs spoke out very strongly against beginning Junior Kindergarten without new funding. The Minister steadfastly refused to consider any suggestions for change, and he and the department forged ahead to implement the program at the start of this school year.

As with any new program or service rushed into implementation, problems are beginning to surface. But all is not lost with this program. The Junior Kindergarten program initiative is a good one. It can be a great one with a few changes, as the second and the third phases of the Junior Kindergarten rollout are implemented.

The Minister wants to provide Junior Kindergarten in communities without any existing daycare or preschool programs. Great, let's do that, but let's not at the same time force Junior Kindergarten on communities which already have daycare and/or preschool programs for four-year-olds.

The Minister wants the Junior Kindergarten to be free and optional. Great, let's do that in one of two ways. The Minister can subsidize existing four-year-old programs to make them free to clients, or he can provide subsidies to parents who now pay market rates for preschool or daycare so the program is free.

The Minister gets his wish for a free optional program for four-year-olds no matter where they live. Daycares and preschool programs in regional centres and Yellowknife, like Montessori, Treehouse in Hay River and Aboriginal Head Start in eight communities will not be decimated but will thrive and be able to expand their programming. The Minister's goal can be met without destroying businesses and NGOs. The goal can be met by focusing on the communities that need programming for four-year-olds. By doing so, the Minister can ensure that the children who most need early childhood development do actually get it.

What say you, Mr. Lafferty?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a theme day, but I will speak about Junior Kindergarten as well.

It is frustrating on this side. We have talked about this; we have all talked about this from this side of the House. We've made motions. We've talked in committee rooms about Junior Kindergarten and how it's being rolled out and how we've heard concerns from our education leaders, from our constituents on how this Junior Kindergarten program is being laid out. Still, we get the same

responses, and I know we're getting frustration from this side. Some Members don't even want to ask questions anymore. They don't feel like we're getting any results on this side.

We cannot paint all of the education systems in the Northwest Territories with the same brush. Like my two colleagues earlier talked about the Head Start program, talked about junior programs in the communities, we need to look at each community and how it's being implemented.

The frustrating part is we're supposed to be a consensus government. How is this type of process being implemented on consensus government? All the Members over here have talked about Junior Kindergarten and support the content, but not the way it's being rolled out, not the way it's being jammed down and bulldozed over other organizations.

My questions today will be for the Premier of the Northwest Territories. How can an issue like this continue to not be respected and not see results in a consensus government? I hope all of my colleagues from the Cabinet side are listening, because we need Cabinet, I know they've had this discussion, I know they've talked about Junior Kindergarten. They need to find a better way to roll this program out. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SERVICES REQUIRED IN COLVILLE LAKE

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend in Colville Lake a family's house burned straight to the ground. The chief, Alvin Orlias, and his predecessor and I have been asking for a fire truck for over six years. Yes, Colville Lake has no fire truck and no fire department.

Last weekend residents were forced to watch helplessly as that house turned into coals. The outcome might have been different if a fire truck had reached their home in time.

However, there's more. For example, why in 2014 is the trapping capital of the Northwest Territories, Colville Lake, a have-not community? Yes, it is one of our smaller communities with a population of 157 people, but don't they deserve basic emergency services like the rest of our vast territory? The community has no help in delivering health infrastructure, no permanent nurse. Residents must either travel to the Fort Good Hope Health Centre or wait for a doctor or nurse on monthly visits. Colville Lake has no RCMP detachment. I've spoken time and time again about the need for better policing service, but our government doesn't have the cash.

Another matter is the employment rate, which hovers around 40 percent in Colville Lake

compared to the 80 percent here in Yellowknife. Housing is another have-not indicator. Seventy-seven percent of Colville Lake homes are in core need. That means over three-quarters of the community meet the low-income threshold and live in a dwelling that fails in one or more of these categories: suitability, adequacy and affordability. The community has no cell service. It has a single grocery store, which serves limited options for buying healthy foods and other household needs.

Of course, Colville Lake isn't the only have-not community in the Northwest Territories. My colleagues Mr. Blake and Mr. Menicoche have communities in their ridings, like Kakisa, Tsiigehtchic, Jean Marie and Nahanni Butte, whose residents face many challenges the same as here.

Anyone with eyes can see we live in a double standard, or a two-tiered society. When will our government at this level and the federal level quit having double standards and help ensure equality and dignity for all?

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NURSING SERVICES IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been almost two years now since we've had a commitment in this House to have a full-time licenced practical nurse in Tsiigehtchic. The fall and breakup season are the only times of year that we in Tsiigehtchic have a full-time nurse in our community. Many times they count the days until freeze-up and breakup just to have that resource in our community, a little more income into the community, whether it's rent or the companies there.

Our people need to feel safe. The only time that our people feel safe is during the freeze-up months and also breakup. So I have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NWT CORONER SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Minister of Justice tabled the NWT coroner's report here in the House and it was one report that I kind of take into consideration when we're looking at creating legislation or looking at ways we can help these affected families move forward. After he tabled the document, I was also very pleased to attend a meet and greet with the coroners of the Northwest Territories.

Currently, there are about 34 of them in the NWT doing really great work. These individuals go above

and beyond the call of duty outside of a regular job in most cases. They get call-outs in the middle of the night, sometimes on the weekends, to go and do work, and in some cases the incidents that they go see are directly related to them, whether they are family, friends, relatives, and it can be very hard on them.

One of the training opportunities they did this past weekend was something in the area of compassion fatigue, to ensure that our coroners get the proper services and counselling that they need and how to deal with these kinds of issues.

It was really great to see that the RCMP was there as well as the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission being. Like I said, these coroners go above and beyond to do their jobs, and in the uniqueness of our small communities, it can be very hard for these individuals to do their jobs.

Looking at the coroner's report, one thing that I'd really like to address – and I will be asking questions on it today – is the number of cases that we have dealing with suicides. Once again, this report signified and showed that in the Beaufort-Delta we are leading again in the area of suicides, something not to be proud of. Actually, it is not only in the suicide area, it's in homicides, accidents.

One thing is that in the coroner's reports indicate, not this year but in the previous years, going back to 2009, alcohol and drugs was a big factor. At what point is this government going to address these issues, so that when we see the 2014 Coroner's Report, we're not going to have a high incidence of suicide rates in the Beaufort-Delta region again, and that any of the issues or any of the statistics in the report aren't going to be associated with alcohol and drugs? We have to take a big stance in that area. Like I said, I go back to 2009, and in most of the high cases of suicide, a lot of it is directly related to alcohol and drugs.

I will be asking the Minister of Justice as well as the Minister of Health and Social Services how we are affecting this and how we are changing things for the Beaufort-Delta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. Member for Range Lake, Mr. Dolyunny.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF WORKERS' SAFETY

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With WSCC safe advantage penalties well over three-quarters of a million dollars with claims growth mounting through the roof, the GNWT announced, a year ago, a promise, a promise of a new culture of safety with a renewed comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety Training Program for all GNWT employees.

Sadly, this was too good to be true. We must ask ourselves, what has changed in the past year to our culture of safety? Did we adhere to the safety promise? Did we in fact provide the required leadership and management for this higher obligation of safety? Were we accountable to our own safety laws? Or did the GNWT and its senior management ignore all the warning signs and disregard their legal obligation to provide the implementation and administration of their own occupational health and safety policy?

I believe the courts have answered these questions for us loud and clear. Recently, in a Territorial Court, where the GNWT was a defendant in a health and safety case, presiding judge Garth Malakoe ruled on action 2013-000272, "The ultimate goal of workers' safety legislation is to create a culture of safety within the organization. Those organizations which incorporate such a culture will avoid breaches of such legislation and the accompanying monetary penalty."

Now, to be clear, the GNWT pleaded guilty at a relatively early stage of this case and was fined heavily. However, not before Judge Malakoe reminded us again, "The GNWT has a responsibility to all the workers in the Northwest Territories. Part of this responsibility is to ensure that lawmakers pass laws that protect the workers. The other part of this responsibility is to ensure that the operational departments of the GNWT obey these laws."

Judge Malakoe further went on to say, "The GNWT has a heightened responsibility compared to that of the private corporation." So, in essence, the GNWT must be held to a higher standard than the industry, and if we don't respect our own laws, how then can industry be expected to obey the same laws? Clearly, we owe no less than that to the industry and workers we represent.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. DOLYNNY: Which brings me back to my original question today: With a working industry of over 5,000 employees, the GNWT, led by our senior management, appears to consider safety as an optional program with little or no regard for respecting or obeying our own laws.

The reality is, the GNWT should pay very careful attention to the courts, as the law applies as equally to deputy heads as it applies to the GNWT as a whole. With a number more cases pending in the courts, I fear these lessons of ignorance will become a more transparent reminder of each potential guilty verdict.

Mr. Speaker, being irresponsible and ignoring the law is no excuse for failing to abide, providing the proper resources for a safety culture. We need to

stop placing roadblocks of resistance and set the proper course of correction, of change, change that hopefully brings us on the right path to safety for all Northerners. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES WELLNESS COURT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate the Ministers of Justice and Health and Social Services on the implementation this fall of the long-awaited and brand new Territorial Wellness Court. This alternative court will reroute people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, cognitive challenges, mental health issues and addictions away from the conventional court system into situations where their underlying issues can be addressed in a healthy way. It is appropriate for these people that are not being well-served in jail and are better served through treatment programs and community-based services.

I appreciated a visit this summer from Judge Ruddy of the Yukon Community Wellness Court, who shared their relevant experience with their similar court. Yukon Wellness Court results have been stellar. The Yukon recidivism rate of 90 percent dropped for those completing the community wellness court programs to an astounding 11 percent. Equivalent reduction to 30 percent was achieved for people who partially completed the program. What a difference. It is my hope that our program will be just as successful and that continued improvements will be made.

For many years, offenders in need of treatment were warehoused with high-risk and violent offenders in correctional facilities, with predictable results. People who needed programs were put into a situation that nearly guaranteed that they would be put back into society, possibly with greater criminal skills rather than with the skills needed to cope as a responsible member of society.

The Wellness Court gives people who need our help to navigate our modern society, the tools to get to a place where they feel they belong and are valued. Less recidivism makes society a safer place, makes our jails less full and keeps families together and able to support each other. It's also much more cost effective and humane, as opposed to a policy of one-size-fits-all incarceration.

To date, many of our people have rotated back into our jails as soon as they got out, often due to mental health issues or addictions. Hopefully, the Wellness Court will break this vicious cycle. However, to be successful, we need to ensure that required medical resources are in place and that

monitoring systems and statistics are collected to ensure evaluation and adjustments as needed.

My kudos, once again, to all who have contributed to the start-up of the Territorial Wellness Court. I will have questions. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORTING A LOCAL MUSHROOM HARVEST

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Opportunities are everywhere, but unfortunately, when opportunity knocks, it doesn't always wait for Northerners to get up and grab it. That's why we must look very closely at what has happened over the last summer.

As Northerners have passed this recent tragic situation of many, many forest fires, and as we will be paying for them for years to come, we must look towards the opportunities that will be bountiful across our territory. As my colleague for the Deh Cho had said, the mushroom opportunities will be there.

We all know that the opportunities of accessibility and renewable foods such as mushrooms and the morel industry will bring Northerners, but when I look and hear and talk to people in these communities, they see the opportunities as their only chance. When you have an employment rate that is struggling to get up to 50 percent, they need every chance they get. When I talk to families in Fort Smith, Fort Providence and even Hay River, they're really looking forward to this chance. If this government doesn't realize what this chance is, I'll certainly remind them. It's called a job.

In small communities it's tough to find opportunities, but don't let this one slip by. As the government sits by and does nothing, may I compliment them on their ability to do nothing. I'm calling upon them to get some action and get some fire in their bellies again. It's time to create some territorial legislation that does set up a network that creates picking opportunities for the morel industry that allows Northerners to be working and benefit first, because we all know when those southern pickers show up, they are known as a very nomadic group. When those nomadic groups show up in large communities, as the group, that is, we know that they tend not to spend a lot of money on the local economy. This is a tragic circumstance that they're self-contained. The question is, when it gets to that \$1.5 million of harvest last year, how much has entered the hands of Northerners.

Other governments have found a way. I encourage this government to find the wisdom of Saskatchewan and even BC. The Nisga'a tribe is known for having great regulations to ensure that

their people benefit from this opportunity. It's time to develop regulations that make sense and further protect local economies that are trying to get on their feet. Let this government not watch the situation roll on by, by southern pickers who show up and invest nothing in the North and leave us with no opportunity.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Hawkins. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. The Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Mr. Moses.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 440-17(5): RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NWT CHIEF CORONER

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my questions today to the Minister of the Department of Justice in regard to the chief coroner's office and recommendations that do come out of her reports.

I'd just like to ask the Minister, what is his department doing to address the recommendations in this year's report that was tabled last week but also previous reports that give good recommendations to this House, and what is the department doing to address these?

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Moses. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of the recommendations contained in coroners' reports are acted upon, and we continue to work with other departments as necessary. I mean, a lot of the reports reflect alcohol abuse or drug abuse. Those issues are dealt with by the Department of Health and Social Services and we certainly communicate with those departments that are involved as well.

MR. MOSES: In regard to working with the other departments, are any reports brought to this House or to committees or even a report given back to the coroner's office on how those recommendations are made, because it's just hearsay to us when we hear the Minister saying that he's working with other departments to address these recommendations but we don't see an action plan, we don't see any timelines, we don't see any measurable goals or outcomes.

Can the Minister, I guess, elaborate a little bit further in detail how he's working with the departments to address these concerns?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Across Canada, similar to the Northwest Territories, coroners' recommendations are not binding, and we don't believe they should, in fact, be binding. Making

recommendations binding would change the fundamental role of the coroner as we know it. They would have to consider the binding nature of their recommendations before putting them forward. They may limit the kind of recommendations they can make. It would also require them to be very specific so that their recommendations can be followed.

Again, we do work with other departments. As far as a report that is put forward, I don't believe there is, but I could certainly go back to the department and ask them about that.

MR. MOSES: I stated in the House before, when we had our last chief coroner's report that was tabled in the House that it's more than a report and it's more than recommendations. We're talking about people's lives here. We're talking about families and relatives and communities that are affected by such incidents as deaths and those kinds of things that are happening in the communities.

Would the Minister be looking to making any kind of amendments to the Coroners Act to ensure recommendations coming out of the chief coroner's report do in fact become binding and do in fact become legislated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, across Canada the recommendations contained in coroners' reports are not binding, and here in the Northwest Territories we feel that they shouldn't be, in fact, binding. If the recommendations were binding, they'd have, in some cases, some pretty heavy financial practicality issues associated with those recommendations. Again, it would fundamentally change the role of the coroner if we were to make recommendations binding. Thank you.

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

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Moses. I think when it comes to the costs of a life, you shouldn't be putting financial implications on decisions that we make in this House moving forward.

As stated earlier, alcohol and drugs is a big factor in a lot of these deaths, whether it's homicide, whether it's suicide, whether it's accidental. I want to know what the department is doing working either itself or, because it's the chief coroner's report, maybe they could take the lead in trying to address some type of media layout or some kind of awareness campaign to address the high levels of alcohol and drug use that are related to deaths in the NWT.

Would the Minister be looking at taking the lead on that, since it's his department that work with the chief coroner's office? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, we do take recommendations that coroners provide us seriously. We do work with other departments. The Member is correct; the prevalence of alcohol and drugs as they relate to sudden deaths here in the Northwest Territories is certainly something that we need to pay attention to. Seven out of the eight suicides last year were alcohol related. So it's very important that we continue to work with the Department of Health and Social Services on addressing those root causes of alcohol and drug abuse across the territory. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 441-17(5):
IMPLEMENTATION OF
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my Member's statement, my questions are to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I'll try and be very, very clear. I know that if the public is watching, it may get a little bit hard to follow at times because there are so many different programs out there funded in so many different ways. I guess what the common denominator is, is that if Junior Kindergarten proceeds, it's going to pull four-year-olds out of a program, which is a significant removal from any program that's already out there, existing and successful. I think the Aboriginal Head Start program is one very prime example of an early childhood development program that's been around for many years, proven, funded by the federal government, and when we move the four-year-olds because the Government of the Northwest Territories all of a sudden says, oh no, we're taking on responsibility for early childhood development for those four-year-olds, and to pool resources, it gets complicated.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Education, how much thought, analysis, consultation into the impact of removing four-year-olds from all early childhood facilities in our communities and programs went into the initiative to roll out Junior Kindergarten. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Mr. Lafferty.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. When it comes down to meeting with the general public, the stakeholders, as I stated in this House on numerous occasions, there's been a lot of discussion that took place at the regional level. That was part of the process, as well, with the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative and now we're talking about the Early Childhood Development Framework. That's a 10-year agreement that's before us. Part of that process,

obviously, is engaging the daycares, the home operators in the communities on how, if there's going to be an impact on them, we work with them because we provide subsidies to them.

There have been numerous discussions that have taken place and we continue to do so. We have to re-evaluate our stance, as well, on delivering in the 23 communities. So, we will continue to make that a priority and engage the general public as well.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: The Minister refers to very, very broad initiatives like the Aboriginal Achievement Initiative. These are laudable and good goals to have, Aboriginal achievement, but when it gets down to the details about how we achieve that, there has to be more analysis than talking to people and consulting people at a regional level. We need to know what is on the ground; we need to identify what is already going on in every community. Every community is different, every community has a different level of resources already being dedicated to early childhood development. So it needs to be on a community-by-community basis, not on a regional level.

What work did the department do community by community to identify what was already in the communities in consideration of the Junior Kindergarten initiative? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Throughout our engagement with the communities, a list of dates have been identified, such as developing a response team that's made up of regional representatives, early childhood development consultants, ECE superintendents and also the departmental headquarters, as well, when it comes to dealing with the small communities.

At the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, all JK students were given information as well. Since we've been discussing the rollout of Junior Kindergarten in 23 communities, since September 26th to 27th, we hosted a forum, a symposium and had the educators come into Yellowknife. There have been approximately 75 operators.

September 30th was the NWTTA conference. That was another 900 or so teachers that came and they had a lot of social interaction in that respect.

October 13th to 17th is another one that the ECE director of early childhood development and learning division has called each of the communities to provide more detailed information.

So, there are lists of information that I will be sharing with the Members. Mahsi.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you for that long list of symposiums and forums and meetings that the department engaged in, but consultation is a two-way street. Sure, the department may have been telling educators and telling people who run

daycares and telling people that are in this line of work what their vision of Junior Kindergarten was. I understand that we were telling them. I'd like to ask the Minister, what were they telling us? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. Part of the engagement with the educators, we want to hear their perspective, as well, because they're the ones who are delivering Junior Kindergarten to our communities, the 23 communities that we are currently delivering Junior Kindergarten and hearing their perspectives. Just recently I met with my department. Why couldn't we have a survey done in the communities, as well, because we're into three months of Junior Kindergarten being delivered in our communities and we haven't heard much from the 23 communities. So, I as the Minister responsible want to hear their perspectives. Not only that, but from the regional perspective and also Yellowknife. So, I'm looking forward to those types of discussions coming my way. Mahsi.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that the department and the Minister are not hearing what the concerns are because we, as MLAs, are certainly hearing them and the responses that we are getting are completely understandable. We hear from people. I know this is supposed to be a short supplementary – I could stand here all day on this topic – so let me just go and ask the Minister a final question.

How much analysis went into the cost of adding Junior Kindergarten to existing schools on a community-by-community basis? Because when we, as the Standing Committee on Social Programs, heard about this initiative, we thought, wow, where's the money, a question that we never got an answer to and neither have the DEAs and DEC's.

I'd like to know, where is the analysis on the cost of something like this? I say the money is not there and that's one more reason why it's not going to succeed. Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When we first decided to roll out the Junior Kindergarten, obviously there was a discussion at the board level. I met with the board chairs back in 2013, in October, and introduced the JK. At that time we were talking about the cost factor, how much it was going to cost us. Obviously, throughout the time, we talked about how we were going to subsidize the JK as we move forward. We said, well, there's \$150 million going to the school boards already, how can we best utilize that funding to get the best results? Those are the discussions that we've had with the 23 communities that will be delivering Junior Kindergarten, working with the board chairs as well.

So, there has been a lot of analysis done on this particular JK delivery, and we just learned from Quebec, as well, that the universal daycare is not really working well for them. Now they're turning their focus on junior kindergarten for the province of Quebec. So, we are learning best practices from other jurisdictions as well.

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

QUESTION 442-17(5):
IMPLEMENTATION OF
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my question will be for the Premier of the Northwest Territories, and it's related to Junior Kindergarten and how it relates to consensus government.

Can the Premier indicate to me how we deal with a topic like this, that's been before this House for over a year, talking about the funding requirements. How does consensus government deal with this issue, one issue that keeps repeating itself with no results? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be very pleased to try to explain how we got there from here. As the Member may know, in the previous Assembly we had a Program Review Office, which still exists, and I was glad to hear one of the Members say that as a government we have to adhere to our own legislation, and I think that's what we have to do.

The Program Review Office reviewed the education system. The Program Review Office pointed out to us that we were not adhering to our own legislation; we were overfunding education by over \$17 million a year. It was pointed out that we should invest more in early childhood development, and that's what this government has done. We have invested in Junior Kindergarten. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BOUCHARD: I'm just wondering about the concern, and I see the concern is not Junior Kindergarten and the fact of whether it's needed or not.

How do we deal with this consensus when we're talking about how it's being rolled out? The concern is from different communities, from different leaders throughout the Territories saying that this program is not being rolled out properly when there's other organizations and other programs, such as the Head Start program, that are being overrun by this Junior Kindergarten program. How do we deal with that in consensus government?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Aboriginal Head Start program is a federal program and it's federally funded, and I don't see us interfering in any way

with Aboriginal Head Start. Where there are Aboriginal Head Start programs where Junior Kindergarten is being introduced, we're working it out so that they can coexist.

MR. BOUCHARD: I understand the situation, but I understand that these kids are being removed and they're being put into the public system. Who wouldn't take that on? It's a free program, but it's a program within some of the communities that's not necessarily needed. I guess the rollout is the question.

How can we change the rollout going forward in consensus government?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In consensus government we pride ourselves in being open and transparent and working things out. We've just rolled out Junior Kindergarten. It's only been in place for three months in communities where they have nothing. They don't even have daycare. So, as we do in consensus government, we are surveying the program, how it's working, and we will be reviewing it as early as the next session of this Assembly. Thank you.

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that Cabinet is proud of this program and I understand that Junior Kindergarten is going to be a good thing for some of the small communities that don't have anything. The question that I have is, it's being rolled out now, it's being implemented. Some of these organizations, some of these small communities already know those concerns.

Will the Premier commit to doing some sort of general meeting on Junior Kindergarten with all those people that are being affected, a Junior Kindergarten charrette let's call it, will the Premier commit to that?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We are always open to the very innovative suggestions from all of the Members of this Assembly. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 443-17(5):
IMPLEMENTATION OF
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. I wasn't going to ask questions on education today, but in listening to my colleagues ask the questions and the answers that haven't been forthcoming, I feel that I need to ask some questions.

Mr. Bouchard just asked whether or not the government would pull organizations together, and

that was my last question but I am going to go with it first. We need to get the organizations together that are currently providing programming for four-year-olds and ask them how we can accommodate Junior Kindergarten and their programs together without the one destroying the other.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education, will he commit to meet with all organizations that are currently providing early childhood development to four-year-olds in the NWT, with a view to finding a solution that works for both ECE and the NGOs. Thank you.

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

MR. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Member asked that question, because we met this morning on that particular topic. We were talking about the communication dialogue with the 23 communities and having some sort of forum or symposium for the whole Northwest Territories. It's a matter of bringing all the organizations to Yellowknife. I guess you would have to have it here, from the regional perspective. It would take some time to arrange that.

But as the Premier alluded to, we are open to these types of forums, to listen to the general public. It is already on our website as well. I like to hear from the general public as well. We are trying to be as open and transparent as we possibly can, to reach out to those individuals at the community level. Mahsi.

MS. BISARO: Thanks to the Minister. I have been listening to some of the words, and the Minister, earlier, said that he wants to hear the perspective of the people that are involved. My question to that is: Is he actually listening to what the people are saying to him?

He mentioned the teachers' conference on social interaction, and this is an opportunity for him to hear from the people that are in the program. That is not an evaluation. What we need is an evaluation. I think he also mentioned the survey of schools that are currently doing Junior Kindergarten. A survey is not an evaluation. We need to have an evaluation of the program. Every community, every school that is currently delivering that program needs to be looked at, the pros, the cons, the good, the bad and the ugly.

So I would like to know from the Minister, what evaluation is he speaking of? When he talks about evaluation, exactly what does he mean besides some kind of a forum? Thank you.

MR. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I'm open and I want to hear from the general public's perspective. Whether it be a symposium, a forum, the survey that I have just committed to, I want to share with the 23 communities, the regional centres, even from the Yellowknife perspective. If JK is coming to them, I

want to hear them, the parents. I want to hear the parents. Right now I am just hearing it from the school boards, but I want to hear from the parents' perspective, because what we are hearing now is 23 communities with Junior Kindergarten is working fine for those communities that are delivering it, but at the same time I want to reach out to those individuals. So when we talk about the evaluation of our Junior Kindergarten program, we're only into three months of delivering Junior Kindergarten into our communities, so we need to re-evaluate what we have learned since the delivery of the Junior Kindergarten. Those are just some of the discussions that I am currently having with my department.

MS. BISARO: Anytime something new is implemented there are always growing pains at the beginning, and we are obviously experiencing growing pains, but what I hear the Minister saying is, yup, nothing's wrong, but where anything is wrong we're going to wait a year before we do something about it, and I think that's very much the wrong attitude.

I'd like to know from the Minister, if he can tell me, does he have any intention or will there be any consideration for making changes to phases two and three of the rollout of Junior Kindergarten? Is that an option that he will consider and that we may possibly see in the future?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: It was the Finance Minister, our Premier and I who have stated that we are going to re-evaluate our situation. We still have time until the next delivery of JK into our regional centres and also to Yellowknife the following year. This is a situation where we are seriously looking at and also to share some perspectives from the 23 communities, the regional centres and from Yellowknife's perspective. We're doing what we can to reach out. Whether it be the taskforce that we established, the toll-free number, the website, we're doing what we can to reach out to the communities.

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

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister I would say that reaching out and hearing and surveying is not an intention to make changes. I did not hear one word from the Minister that tells me that he has any intention of making any change to the programming.

I'd like to know from the Minister, he needs to tell me, he needs to tell us on this side of the House, what does he need to understand that changes to the Junior Kindergarten program will make it better? What can we put in front of the Minister to convince him that there needs to be some change going forward?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Those are just some of the surveys and also the inventory that

we're going to be collecting from communities, and based on that, obviously, the decision needs to happen, or if there are going to be changes, obviously, I would have to bring it back to my Cabinet colleagues and say there is an outcry in this area. That is the input that I'm seeking from the general public, because we're responsible for the whole Northwest Territories, not just 23 communities but for regional centres and also for Yellowknife in order to deliver a successful Junior Kindergarten.

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

QUESTION 444-17(5):

SUPPORTING A

LOCAL MUSHROOM HARVEST

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Just recently I talked about the fungal jungle in terms of the potential of the morel mushroom industry to more than likely experience a bumper crop after the forest fire season that we experienced this summer.

My question to the Minister is: Buyers of wild mushrooms are typically from out of territory. What is the department doing to ensure buyers have business licences?

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

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to operate in the Northwest Territories, you would require a business licence.

MR. NADLI: Is the Minister willing to make an effort to engage Aboriginal governments and other organizations in supporting local mushroom harvests?

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is yes. We have done a lot of work. Last summer, I think the number of the harvest generated about \$650,000 locally, so that's a big number. We want to see that number increase. The Member is correct; with the number of forest fires last summer we do expect a bumper crop of mushrooms next summer. We are moving forward with plans to get into communities over the winter. We don't want to wait until the spring. We're developing pocket booklets. They're like a how-to booklet informing people about morel mushrooms, where to find them, what they look like, maps of the burn areas, harvesting methodology, harvester/buyer interaction, tools and equipment required and what to watch out for, including bears. So you have to watch out for bears. We also will be doing orientation visits. I talked about the visits to communities and we expect to get into communities between November and February. We want to get

into communities like Kakisa, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Enterprise, Hay River Reserve, Hay River, Fort Smith and Fort Resolution, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. NADLI: The Forest Management Act is in need of renewal. Would the Minister, in cooperation with the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, consider some creative interim solutions for regulating mushrooms and non-timber forest products such as including them in the Fur Harvester Program? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: I believe we've made a commitment to the Member to have a look at that, and it is certainly something we will be doing. Thank you.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister had indicated that yes, indeed, that businesses that operate in the NWT must have a business licence. We've seen when communities pop up over the course of the end of May going into June, we have villages out there and it was perhaps almost like the Wild West.

Can the Minister assure this House that potentially people who come up from down south, they will be checked and officials from departments will be on site to ensure people are operating legally in the NWT by showing their business licence? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, we certainly will take a look at the policing aspect of whether or not operators that show up in the Northwest Territories next summer have a business licence. They are also required, I believe, to carry Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission coverage, as well, to operate in the Northwest Territories because they do have employees working here. That's something where we have the winter to develop a game plan for next summer, and certainly I think we'll put a plan in place that will see a policing aspect to the best we can. The Member is correct; regulation falls under the FMA and that's something that we need to address. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 445-17(5):

IMPLEMENTATION OF
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to ask questions about the morel issue, as my colleague Mr. Nadli brought up, but there is so much to talk about with the Junior Kindergarten issue. I can't miss an opportunity to highlight the importance of this.

While I was in the communities on the weekend, Mr. Speaker, someone had told me they didn't want the Junior Kindergarten program, but the Minister over-wrote that community and so he used his authority to tell a community you're getting what you're getting. So, at the end of the day, what's the point of having community input and the community people managing their own school system? So let's get this clearly on the record.

What circumstances allow the Minister to override a community's decision and direction to want to do their own thing rather than being forced to accept Junior Kindergarten? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is the Member visited a community and there was one organization that may not be supportive of the JK, but there are other organizations in the community that we've been dealing with on constant occasions. Not only that but the school board that's responsible for that particular community, we deal with the school board. So the DECs, the school board, make the decision working with us to deliver Junior Kindergarten into their community. That's the avenue and the protocol we follow. The decision is from the DEC. Thank you.

MR. HAWKINS: This is the same Minister when I asked him to direct Aurora College to make them have e-mail so they are accessible to the students is now overriding a decision by the DEA in Fort Providence. They passed a duly qualified elected board motion that doesn't want this particular case.

Maybe the Minister can explain why he has ministerial authority and he wants to execute it and direct it at his own will, yet ignores the will of community people trying to take care of their own community in a fashion that's best for them. Can you explain that to the House?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When I speak to DEAs, we have an agreement in place where when it comes to rolling out the K to 12 programming and not only that, even post-secondary, we have a representative on there from the local DEA onto the DECs. I deal with the board chairs. Any issue brought to my attention comes from the committee perspective as well. By the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it is the board that decides which community will be delivering JK. Some of the community decided not to pursue it.

Again, it was me that provided the flexibility whether it is optional, full time or part time. Initially it was mandatory full time. I listened to the general public, the board chairs, when they asked me to consider flexibility, which I offered. As I stated before, there

are always changes along the way. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. HAWKINS: When the Minister keeps saying how he keeps listening to all of these people, I'm certainly glad that's the case. I'm sure the Minister listened very carefully when we went from one end of the Assembly on this side of the House to the other and all 11 Regular Members loudly, clearly and very passionately spoke that we didn't want Junior Kindergarten implemented in the manner as described by the Minister because it would affect Aboriginal Head Start, it would hurt day homes and it would have all these types of problems all related to funding and perspective.

So when the Minister says he listens, why is he not listening to the DEA that says they don't want it served up in the manner it's being served? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When it comes to the delivery of Junior Kindergarten into the regions, the 23 communities, we've worked with them since day one, even as far back as October when I first met with board chairs first introducing Junior Kindergarten. This is an area where we, again, have to evaluate our programming for the 23 communities and what have we learned from them. It's only three months into the delivery of Junior Kindergarten. It's not, like, a year into the programming, but now we have to re-evaluate. So that's where our situation stands. Again, it's our DECs that we have to work with. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's the DEA or DEC or MLA, I would be hopeful that the Minister would take our opinions into account. I trust the community people that have made a good decision.

The Minister keeps talking about having to examine what we've learned. It's been three months, next month it will be four and we've all reached the point where we say it's been too far, we might as well continue or we've done these communities, wait until we get to the next set. The bottom line is we have a DEA that passed a motion that says this is not right for them.

Would the Minister be willing to reverse his directive today in this House so the people of communities just like Fort Providence won't be imposed on by this Minister that want a different method? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Anything we do has to be documented. So if there's a letter from the DECs saying they don't want Junior Kindergarten in their communities – because I provided the option – whether it be Fort Providence or other small communities, then we have to act on the

correspondence that will come to my attention, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

QUESTION 446-17(5):
COLVILLE LAKE EMERGENCY SERVICES

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke about Colville Lake and the have and have-not communities in the Northwest Territories and two-tiered systems of standards of programs and services in the communities. I'm going to ask the Minister of MACA, given the fire in Colville Lake last weekend and that the Minister certainly heard through this Assembly that the fire marshal met with Colville Lake people. I understand that a fire truck is on the list of infrastructure that's going to be coming to Colville Lake.

Is the Minister looking at a type of fire training program for Colville Lake's newly developed fire department?

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're pleased to hear of Colville Lake moving some of their priorities around and getting a fire truck. So we would be pleased to work with the community in getting some training and that, once their fire department is established, we will, on their invitation, go in and work with them and get some training for their recently formed fire department. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Minister McLeod. I understand the Minister clearly heard me, he heard me about the capacity building in our small communities and that's the name of the game.

We often hear from our communities, our SAOs and band members that they're under pressure to look at community emergency plans.

Can the Minister of MACA tell us how often these training sessions happen to help our volunteers, be it firefighters or search and rescue folk, be ready for real emergencies?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. We try and work with the communities. We've been working with them the last while to update their emergency preparedness plans and we work with the communities, we don't try, we do work with the communities to upgrade any training that they might need, upgrade the equipment that they might need. The people at our disposal, we use their expertise to work with the communities to help them come up with a plan to deal with a lot of the situations that they're dealing with. Thank you.

MR. YAKELEYA: Given that November 1st is the opening of the trapping season and the Colville Lake people are out on the land setting up their

traps and camps, would the Minister consider working with the band manager as to looking at some possible dates, so when the community is prepared and ready, to have a firefighter training program come into Colville Lake?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We'd be happy to work with the community. Again, we will wait to hear from the community and what some of their timelines are. They know what's going on in their community. So once they extend the invitation and give us a definite timeline, then we will make our people available to go in and assist with the training of their fire department. Thank you.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Looking at old Hansard from 2006, that was the last time I asked for a fire truck in Colville Lake. I said these are some of the necessary emergency services that we've been asking for in our small communities. There are have and have-not communities in the Northwest Territories. That's the reality.

I want to ask the Minister the same question I had in the 2006 Hansard in regard to assessing homes to see if they are prepared to deal with any type of emergencies such as fires in the small communities.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you. The New Deal took effect in 2007. That's when we devolved the responsibilities for the communities to look after their capital purchases. A number of communities have taken us up on that, they've made some really good decisions on addressing some of their priorities. So in 2006, when the Member asked the question, we were still responsible for a lot of the capital that went into the communities and it usually had to wait in line to get through the capital process. Since the communities have the responsibility now, they are identifying a lot of their priorities, and if a fire truck is one of their priorities, then the communities do have the authority now to purchase their own pieces of equipment, their own infrastructure. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 447-17(5):
ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF
SAFETY WITHIN THE GNWT

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I raised the seriousness of our definite lack of safety culture and a clear failure of our Occupational Health and Safety Policy. Recently the Territorial Court, under presiding Judge Malakoe, drew public attention to the GNWT's offending behavior and levied significant fines under the Safety Act. Considering these facts alone raised concern of our own responsibilities as deputy

heads and government as a whole for the people we injure and to the overall safety of our public service, my questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources.

On November 28, 2013, almost one year ago, the Minister announced a significant milestone for the GNWT to fulfill its mandate and commitment to a safe, healthy workplace for all of our employees. Can the Minister update us as to what's transpired since that announcement? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. The Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Members can appreciate, this is a very complex issue with many employees scattered across the North doing many things, and many other people working for the GNWT that are not necessarily employees, but contractors, even down to people who are doing the custodial work in our buildings and so on. So, as I indicated, a complex issue.

The Department of Human Resources is working with all of the departments to strike occupational health and safety committees in the regions and in headquarters and are having regular meetings, trying to put as many safety programs on as possible through the GNWT training programs that we deliver across the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. The Minister is, indeed, right; it is a very complex issue and, interestingly enough, for a workforce of over 5,000 employees, the GNWT does not have a safety department, no apparent safety program, no safety manual, no training and no contractor management system.

Can the Minister inform the House by what tools or divine intervention, how does the GNWT support our Occupational Health and Safety Policy, our so-called safety program and, of course, our missing contractor management system? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you. Kind of a multifaceted question. The GNWT does have a website. We have various forms that are filled out by the staff that are taking courses. I indicated there are some committees in place. We have an orientation for new staff, we have safety meetings, guidelines, we deliver inspections on the worksites and then again with the contractors, another matter again. Contractors are required to have a safety program when they're on-site. There are various types of contractors that build for us, contractors that build roads and buildings and, like I said, custodian contractors. So each of those contractors are required to have safety programs. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: At the sake of not repeating all the findings of the recent GNWT guilty case by our territorial Judge Malakoe, can the Minister inform

the House, is pleading guilty the new cost of doing things these days, or in other words, is the GNWT's inaction deemed as an acceptable accounting loss? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: This particular case was a maneuver that had been performed various times by the contractors under the supervision of the Government of the Northwest Territories. The reason that we had received the lion's share of the fine was because we're the owner of the contract and that we also owned the ferry. They made a decision in the courts that only a small portion should be administered to the contractor because of the injury that was received on-site. Thank you.

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

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. The Minister and I both know they have more pending GNWT safety lawsuits before the courts, and I know asking him questions on them will just entice a response of no comment, so I won't ask him. But I will ask him this: Why, Mr. Minister, why, why didn't you just implement a proper safety program and why is there so much pushback and resistance from upper management? Thank you.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: There isn't pushback. The departments and the main contracting departments, DOT, Public Works, do want safety programs in place, and no one wants to be paying fines. We know what needs to take place. There are various sizes of contracts. As Members in the House can appreciate how many different contracts we have across the GNWT of varying sizes, so we do have contractors implementing safety programs. We have a safety orientation with contractors. We have a safety questionnaire with contractors when they are on-site. So, there is no pushback. There's an attempt to try to employ as many occupational health and safety programs as possible, not only with the contractors who work for the GNWT but also with the GNWT employees themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 448-17(5);
NURSING SERVICES IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, the community of Tsiigehtchic is preparing for freeze-up as the service of the ferry is cut off in the next couple of days here.

As I mentioned in my statement, it's been almost two years since the commitment from the previous Minister for a full-time licenced practical nurse in Tsiigehtchic. So, I'd like to ask the Minister, what stage are we at with that commitment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're always looking for ways to enhance the services that we provide in our communities. Currently, in Tsiigehtchic we have a public health nurse who comes in one day a week for the 40 weeks that there isn't a nurse located in the community. For six weeks at freeze-up and six weeks at breakup, there is a nurse actually located in the community to ensure some continuity of services.

Earlier this year, representatives from the department participated in a Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement collaboration round-table, which was held on May 29th and 30th, where staff learned about different best practices from other remote areas of Canada and other places throughout the world and explored those models. We are looking right now at the different models that were presented from the other jurisdictions to see how, if at all, they can be applied here in the Northwest Territories.

A review of the Integrated Service Delivery Model, medical travel, community health work training and the utilization of telehealth are also being incorporated into this review. The opportunities to support wellness and traditional healing in communities are being sought by the department's new Aboriginal health and community wellness division.

So, there are a number of things we're doing right now. We're doing the research and analysis that will help us bring forward new tools and new opportunities to enhance care in communities, including finding ways to get local people more involved in the provision of services and health care within their communities. So a number of things are happening at this time.

MR. BLAKE: When will the department extend the service of providing a nurse to Tsiigehtchic from up to five months to 12 months of the year?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, we're already providing a nurse in the community one day a week to provide general services, and we're always trying to find ways to enhance services in cases of emergencies. I've had the opportunity to visit a number of the small communities throughout the Northwest Territories, and what I've been told is one of the major concerns they had is emergency response. We are rolling out Med-Response as we speak. We are hoping to have it out shortly. Med-Response is going to be a tool that your CHRs and your CHWs can use to help focus response in emergency situations in all communities, not just the small and isolated communities.

MR. BLAKE: It all depends on the timing of the breakup and freeze-up months. It can be up to five months.

Will the Minister direct his department to double the funding provided to have a nurse in Tsiigehtchic from half the year to provide it for the full year?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'll continue to have dialogue with the authority as well as the community on how to best meet the community needs. But, as I indicated, we are exploring a number of different alternate delivery models that will benefit the community and we're also rolling out Med-Response, which is going to have a direct positive impact on delivery of services with communities like Tsiigehtchic. So, there are a number of things that are currently underway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 449-17(5):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
WELLNESS COURT

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the lead Minister of the Wellness Court, or the second lead. As I said in my Member's statement earlier today, the Wellness Court is a most welcome new tool in the justice and health systems toolbox. Why use a hammer when a minor adjustment with a wrench is what is required? I'm wondering if our justices feel there is sufficient medical and justice resources available for a successful Wellness Court.

So my question is: What new resources have been made available, through both Justice and Health and Social Services, to achieve the potential we know is possible through this new court? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. Minister of Justice, Mr. Ramsay.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Member for both his statement and his questions today and his support for the NWT Wellness Court, which rolled out... The first case was heard October 2nd of this year.

The question about resources, so far this year, \$305,000, and for next year we're looking at \$970,000. That's in '15-16 and ongoing. We aren't going to be successful with the Wellness Court unless we are continuing to work with our colleagues at Health and Social Services and Education, Culture and Employment on the rollout of the Wellness Court and getting the people the help that they need when they need it the most. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: Thanks to the Minister. I don't disagree with any of the comments. I assume those are Justice dollars and I had also asked about the

Health and Social Services dollars. The evolution of a program like the Wellness Court must be driven by results. Over a few years, the Yukon Wellness Court gained an astounding drop in the rate of recidivism from 90 percent to 11 percent for those who completed the program. In past I have not been able to get information on what our rates of recidivism are, let alone how they are changing.

What systems are now in place to gather the statistics necessary to measure the effectiveness of our Wellness Court to ensure that it stays on track and continually improves? For example, what is the recidivism rate prior to implementation of the court that we will use as a basis for future considerations and so on? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: The Member is correct; we are going to be taking stock of what happens with the Wellness Court. We're going to be keeping track of the recidivism, and we are going to be getting the people the supports that they need as they go through the Wellness Court. We certainly are looking forward to getting those numbers.

As I mentioned, the Wellness Court took its first case October 2nd, so we are only a few weeks into it, but my belief and the belief of the Department, and of course we have the support of the judiciary as well, is that the Wellness Court is going to make a difference and we're convinced that it will make a difference. We will just need some time to see what a big difference it will make. We should be able to get the Member some statistics, perhaps mid next year, that should indicate that our numbers are trending in the right direction. Thank you.

MR. BROMLEY: The Auditor General has continually pointed out how this government has failed because we fail to put evaluation systems in place. Obviously, it's getting too late to put an evaluation system in place. I had asked the Minister what systems he had put in place to ensure that information. This is very disappointing and, I would say, very irresponsible to be going forward with this program without those systems in place.

The Wellness Court is heavily dependent on other departments in the social envelope; for example, Health and Social Services and perhaps ECE.

What systems are in place to capture, compile and understand results from across these departments to evaluate Wellness Court programs and enable timely improvements, given that there is obviously none in Justice? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Mr. Speaker, just waiting for my light to come back on.

I'm not quite sure what the Member is getting at. We have systems in place at the Department of Justice. I can't speak for the other two departments, but we are not going to be putting the resources and the effort into establishing a Wellness Court here in the Northwest Territories without a way to

measure the success of it, measure how it is impacting people that are going through the court system. When we lay this out, those measurements are in place; they certainly will be looked at. All I was mentioning was that the court has only been established since October 2nd. It is too early to get the statistics the Member is talking about. That was my thought process there.

To the Member, we do have processes in place at the Department of Justice, and I want to assure the House and the Member that we do in fact have those in place. Thank you.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the additional information from the Minister. I wonder if the Minister would commit to providing that. I apparently misunderstood his earlier comments.

I think we all expect great things from this program, judging from the results we have seen in the Yukon.

Will the Minister commit to annually report back to this House as to the efficacy of the Wellness Court and its attendant programs in other departments, which are critically important as well? Mahsi.

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Yes, that would be something that we would look forward to doing. Again, we believe it will be very successful and we would like to share all that information with Members of the House and the public. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 450-17(5):
IMPLEMENTATION OF
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up with some more questions to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment because several things have been shared in the House since I asked my first questions, which create more questions.

The Minister referred to a survey that was being done. I would like to ask the Minister, will he table a copy of this survey in the House, and who exactly is being surveyed with respect to the Junior Kindergarten program rollout? Who is the survey for and what does the survey look like? Thank you.

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

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Part of the survey will be to find out what the 23 communities, if there is any major issues that we may have missed out on from the parents, from the community organizations, even as far as the regional centres and also Yellowknife, just to

share their perspectives. We may have missed out on various key initiatives that they may bring to our attention. I want to hear from parents as well. Those are just some of the discussions that we had over the weekend, how can we best reach out to those communities, and that's what we're doing. Mahsi.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Speaker, I was under the impression that there was already a survey that existed. So if the survey does not exist yet, I would like a comprehensive list of who is going to be surveyed and what the survey questions are going to be, because it's all about the questions you ask in terms of the information that you get back in.

I would suggest that not only parents of Junior Kindergarten-aged children should be surveyed, I think we should survey other parents in the education system, because when we met with our DEA in Hay River, we saw them struggling over what they would cut out of the kindergarten to Grade 12 program in order to accommodate Junior Kindergarten. They were talking about things like they need to look at the busing program, for example. The Premier says that our DEAs and DEC's are being over funded by the legislative standard by \$17 million per year, but I would like the Minister or the Premier to sit in some of the meetings of some of these DEAs and watch how they struggle to cover the initiatives that this government mandates them with, things like inclusive schooling, for example, for which there is also inadequate funding.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education if he would inventory, in the 23 communities where he says Junior Kindergarten has already rolled out only for three months, would he inventory in those 23 communities exactly what preschool, early childhood development programs already exist and report that back to this House? Thank you.

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: Mahsi. That is exactly what we're doing. My staff is currently meeting with YK1 and YCS, just through discussion on their overall budget as well. We are doing the same thing with South Slave school board as well. There are discretionary funds in there, as well, and there are various areas of funding that we found to be flexible. The flexibility is there that we can work with. At the end of the day, it is up to the school boards to decide if they can allow that to happen and so forth. My staff is diligently working with the school boards, whether it be Yellowknife and Hay River, Fort Smith, the South Slave district.

Yes, we're doing the overall inventory of the 23 communities, and obviously, we need to identify what programs are currently in existence and we've done the research, as well, and we've provided all that information to the board chairs as well. Those are the discussions that we need to compile, as

well, so I can share that with the Members of what we've compiled to date.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: It is indeed confusing. At first I thought the Minister was saying that he was going to inventory the preschool programs in the communities, and now he says they've already done it. If he's going to say he's going to do it now, I was going to suggest wouldn't that have been a good thing to do before you rolled out the Junior Kindergarten.

Anyway, the Minister last week referred to the specialized education that the teachers of children in early childhood development and Junior Kindergarten would require. The Minister indicated that that training had already taken place.

Again, could the Minister please tell me, in the 23 communities where Junior Kindergarten has already been rolled out, how many of those educators of those children have already received that specialized education?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: I believe I did share that with the Assembly here. I'll share that information again on the number of those individuals that were trained last spring and this past fall. That is continuous training with new staff that are coming on board, because we have to be prepared to deliver the qualified programming. It's a curriculum base. It's a play-based curriculum base, so we need to have those staff that are qualified to deliver that. There has been training that took place, so I will provide that list to the Member.

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

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what's wrong with me, but I can't fully understand everything the Minister is telling us. I guess this is my final supplementary.

Are there educators teaching Junior Kindergarten in the 23 communities today who are not qualified to do so by way of an early childhood development specialized credential of some sort?

HON. JACKSON LAFFERTY: When it comes to delivering Junior Kindergarten in the 23 communities, obviously the teachers will be teaching our kids, our children in our school system, and the teachers go through various university degree programs, and part of the programming, of course, is early childhood as part of their degree program. We may not have a specific early childhood specialist teaching our kids in our school system, but we do have qualified teachers in our communities that are teaching our kids.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. The time for question period time has expired. Mr. Beaulieu.

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm seeking unanimous consent to return to number five on orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

HON. TOM BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I'd like to recognize a couple of constituents of mine in the gallery, Paul Bushey and his son Davis.

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

MR. YAKELEYA: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to do this one early. I'd like to recognize two young students from the Chief Albert Wright School, Chris Kosh and Shannon McPherson, who are going to be serving the MLAs this week.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 149-17(5):
2013-2014 STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL
OF THE NWT ANNUAL REPORT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document, entitled "2013-2014 Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories Annual Report."

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 150-17(5):
GROWING FORWARD 2 –
A SUMMARY REPORT OF THE
SMALL SCALE FOODS PROGRAM 2013-14

HON. DAVID RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document, entitled "Growing Forward 2: A Summary Report of the Small Scale Foods Program, 2013-14."

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 151-17(5):
ACTION 2013-000272 – R. V. GNWT (DOT) AND
GRIZZLY MARINE SERVICES LTD., 2014
NWTTTC 17: REASONS FOR SENTENCE

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the Territorial Court of the Northwest Territories Action 2013-000272, between Her Majesty the Queen and the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as represented by the Department of Transportation of the Government of the Northwest Territories, Grizzly Marine Services Limited and Bill Prodromidis.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. Item 15, notices of motion. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Speaker, that's for item number 18, not the item that we have before us.

MR. SPEAKER: Sorry, Mr. Moses. I was getting ahead of myself there. Item 17, motions. Mr. Bromley.

Motions

MOTION 29-17(5):
EXTENDED CARE FACILITIES,
DEFEATED

MR. BROMLEY: WHEREAS the population of the Northwest Territories is ageing, with the proportion of seniors of the general population rising by about 8 percent annually;

AND WHEREAS the waiting lists in the NWT for extended care facilities are long and getting longer, with urgent current and future need for services for seniors in both large and small communities;

AND WHEREAS the numbers of seniors living in Yellowknife will triple by 2031, and the number of beds needed may parallel this increase here and throughout the NWT;

AND WHEREAS there is a projected shortfall in the NWT of 200 long-term care beds and 60 dementia beds by 2031, according to the 2013 GNWT Health and Social Services Continuing Care Review;

AND WHEREAS it is acknowledged that supports for seniors to age in place are beneficial to our society and will help in some degree to delay and reduce the need for long-term care, but will not relieve the existing deficit in facilities;

AND WHEREAS facilities in Norman Wells and Behchoko with 18 beds each are being constructed, and these projects are a step in the right direction but will again not address the territorial deficit and building need;

AND WHEREAS the Avens Society has a proven record of providing effective and efficient long-term care facilities to residents from across the Territories, with 52 percent of Aven Cottage residents and 18 percent of Aven Manor residents

from home communities outside of Yellowknife, at relatively low cost;

AND WHEREAS Avens Society is poised to begin construction of a 60-bed facility pending indications of government support;

AND WHEREAS the territorial facilities at Aven Manor were built in 1987 and are coming to the end of their useful service life, with critical electrical, structural and mechanical and systems upgrades needed;

AND WHEREAS Aven Manor was never designed to provide long-term care, with the consequence that there are significant occupational hazards with the continued use of the space by people who have high level care needs;

AND WHEREAS current NWT waiting lists for Avens Campus facilities are four to six years, and eight months for a long-term care bed;

AND WHEREAS Avens Territorial Campus plays a key interim role in providing care for NWT seniors, there is recognition that regional facilities must also develop to meet regional needs;

AND WHEREAS government financial support of facilities for seniors is crucial;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that the government develop a long-term action plan for the provision of the necessary long-term care beds, indicating the steps they will take in the areas of resources, facilities and timing to meet this urgent need for facilities for seniors, including possible partnerships to serve those seniors who have some financial independence, in both large and small communities;

AND FURTHER, that the government provide Avens Society with the assurance of support needed to enable construction of their proposed new 60-bed territorial facility and renovation of existing facilities to begin next spring;

AND FURTHERMORE, that the government respond to this motion within 120 days.

Mahsi.

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

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know my colleagues in the House are all aware of the changing age structure in the Northwest Territories and that as a proportion our numbers of seniors in the general population is increasing steadily from year to year. This has been a long-term trend and its slowly ramping up. The projected shortfall of 200 long-term care beds and 60 dementia beds by 2031 was a result of one study. In fact, the numbers of seniors in Yellowknife will grow at triple the rate of the rest of the Northwest Territories. I recall discussions in the past about the number of

seniors, the amazing proportion of the population who are seniors over 65 years of age in the Mackenzie Delta, for example.

The present projects in Behchoko and Norman Wells are certainly a step in the right direction and they are significant, but I think it's well-recognized that they are a step. They alone are not sufficient.

There are long waiting lists for Avens campus facilities. Again, I would say most people are aware of this and for long-term care beds. Four to six years for the cottages, eight months for long-term care beds and these are rising steadily again, along with the forecasts that we've been hearing about.

Avens Society, again, has a proven record, a long history for support to all territorial seniors, but Aven Manor was built in 1987 and is quickly coming to the end of its service life without significant renovation to meet codes and safety requirements. It requires extensive upgrades to the electrical, structural and mechanical systems, including, for example, replacement of roof and a boiler. Kitchen facilities have long been recognized as inadequate on that campus.

Avens, of course, was never really designed for long-term care. The society is now poised to begin construction of a 60-bed facility designed to meet modern standards and to serve all territorial seniors. However, it's no surprise that government support is crucial and must be in place for Avens project to proceed next spring. In fact, there is site preparation happening right now as we speak and I believe the Minister of Health and Social Services has been supporting that effort, if not with resources then through other means.

So I think there's a long standing reputation of this society. They set very high standards. We know that they have recently met the accreditation process, a very rigorous process to meet all standards of care and safety and so on and they've made it through that, this independent society with very high standards and very high percentages of success in the examinations that they went through.

The ongoing need for facilities for seniors with some financial independence continues to this day and I know the Minister is well aware of that. What can this government do to form partnerships with private enterprise to address this growing need? There is likely some other innovative ways of addressing this.

Retaining seniors I know is important to this House. The Minister of Finance has talked a lot about building our population and growing it by a couple of thousand over the next five years. One way of doing that is to provide appropriate levels of support for our seniors so they don't have to travel south to find those supports. Let alone the support is important to the health of our families, many of

whom are under certain levels of stress as they try and provide that support themselves.

The current infrastructure plan of Health and Social Services will not provide the needed facilities in time for people that are soon going to need seniors support facilities to be able to stay in the NWT, as I mentioned. Elders, after all they've contributed to society in the North, deserve some certainty that they will be safe and comfortable in the autumn of their lives, not concerned about whether their basic needs will be met, and that's beginning to be the case for many people.

Therefore, I and my colleague Mrs. Groenewegen are calling for a comprehensive and transparent action plan that recognizes all of these conditions and meets the needs identified for proper treatment of our seniors, meeting long-term and different levels of care in all of our communities, both large and small, across the Northwest Territories. This plan needs to improve what this government will do to work with private industry to provide facilities for those seniors who are financially able but still in need of care.

Specifically with respect to the Avens project to provide 60 new long-term care beds and essential renovation of existing aging facilities, we are urging the government to provide the support needed to realize that project that is already well-designed and, as I mentioned, site preparation taking place. That society has a record of pooling incredible resources from businesses and contributions from members of the public, amazing volunteer services and so on while it contributes to their efficiency and so on. I know that's the case in a number of our communities.

So I'll leave it at that. I think the need is very clear and transparent to all. I look forward to hearing perspectives from across the Northwest Territories as represented by Members of this House. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. To the motion. I'll allow the seconder to the motion to have remarks. Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank Mr. Bromley for taking a lead role in drafting this motion. Reading this motion you may think that a lot of it applies to the Avens development here in Yellowknife, but I think that it sets a template and it sets a precedent and sets a good model of how our government can respond to our seniors in the Northwest Territories requiring extended care and care in their later years.

The demographic of our aging population in the Northwest Territories is irrefutable. It's great news. People are living longer, people are living longer more independently, but certainly we need to, as a government, try to ensure as many options for as many different needs as possible that can be met here in the Northwest Territories in order to keep

our seniors, as Mr. Bromley said, retain our seniors in the Northwest Territories.

I think that with this increase in the number of seniors that we're anticipating over the next few years, it would really behoove this government to get ahead of this issue and to come up with, as Mr. Bromley says, a very transparent action plan to meet the needs of seniors. I think that we would be remiss if we thought, as a government, that we have it all within our power and within our financial means to address all those needs. That's why I think a very important part of this motion is that we look for opportunities to partner with NGOs like the folks that had the vision for the Avens complex here in Yellowknife. We need community involvement; we need NGO involvement; we need to harness the contributions of corporate entities in the Northwest Territories. I think we need to be very clear to the public out there that this is not something that the government can take on singlehandedly and do a good job of. We need to harness the volunteerism and the work of NGOs.

Yellowknife, like I said, Avens is highlighted in here, but there's no denying, as well, that Yellowknife is half the population of the Northwest Territories, and I think all of our communities, including the capital and the regional centres, do serve as centres for these types of services. It may be ideal to try to keep seniors in their own local and perhaps small communities as long as possible, but when that level of care goes to a certain degree and that's not available at the local level, then we need to think of all these aspects and different levels of care that are required.

When we look down south, we see all kinds of organizations that are involved in the provision of seniors housing, whether it be churches, you often see churches that get involved in this type of thing and in a lot of those instances the seniors themselves have the capacity to pay and we have to consider that option. I don't think you can think that the government is going to provide all these services at no cost. I think we, as a government, at some point need to consider people's ability to pay, their willingness to pay, especially based on what they may see the requirements as. If people have an expectation and if we can have joint ventures of public private partnerships, get the private sector involved, I think that our government needs to actively pursue what kind of models are serving seniors in other jurisdictions in Canada, bring that information home, and let's get ourselves well-prepared to make sure that we take care of our seniors in a comprehensive and the best way possible.

I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. To the motion. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting this motion as well. In our recent difficulties with long-term beds in Hay River, we also had lots of people from the community say, what's the future plan.

Obviously, we're going to need more. The aging population of the Northwest Territories is going to be a factor in Hay River and how do we... We were asking at that time for the 10 long-term care beds to be replaced that were out of the capital budget and now they're back in, but what are our needs coming forward? I know in November they did a continuing care review and that there are indications that there are strong demands out there, so now that we've done the review, we need to come up with a plan on how we're going to go forward and, as the mover and seconder talked about, there's need for partnership. So, obviously, we as a government are a small jurisdiction. There will be lots of pressures for us to solve this problem, and some of those problems have to come from the private sector as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this motion as well. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bouchard. To the motion. Mr. Moses.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank Mr. Bromley and Mrs. Groenewegen for bringing this motion forward before the House. I do understand, going through our capital budget, that there are a lot of projects on the go here. However, we also have to make decisions based on the needs and what we see as legislators as what's coming down the pike, whether it's education, in this case, or health or justice. But in this case it's dealing with the high demographic of our senior populations of the Northwest Territories and to address that, the lack of infrastructure, to meet these needs.

I understand that there is support for the Aven Manor here in Yellowknife, and even though it is in Yellowknife, they do offer beds to seniors in the small communities.

When I was thinking about this motion, like I said, there's the issue of lack of infrastructure in some of our regions, some of our communities. Obviously, I'll be supporting this motion, mainly because there is an increase in the seniors population, and we're seeing that over the years to come. But it goes beyond just beds, as I've mentioned before when we've discussed this.

A lot of our seniors go through things such as neglect. A lot of our seniors get abused in the small communities, whether it's emotional, financial, psychological or physical. Our seniors need to get out of these situations that they're in, and in some cases it's not even the hardships on the seniors in terms of abuse and neglect, but even on the

families themselves when there's no centre, no infrastructure for seniors to go to. Sometimes it does put a lot of responsibility on the families, which in turn affects their mental health, which in turn affects whether or not they can do their job fully. All those things need to be taken into consideration when we look at creating this infrastructure for our seniors.

That's one part of it, but another one is currently in our long-term facilities now we do have issues where we have patients that have dementia that are roomed with seniors that do kind of live a pretty independent lifestyle. That could be a stressful situation on those individuals as well.

Like I said, I thank Mr. Bromley and Mrs. Groenewegen for bringing this motion forward. I will be supporting the motion based on the fact that I would like to see more opportunity for some of our community seniors getting some of these beds and having the opportunity to partake in the facility and be able to get out of some of these situations that they are in in the small communities.

So, as I said, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you Mr. Moses. To the motion. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today here. I'd like to thank our mover of the motion, Mr. Bromley, and Mrs. Groenewegen for seconding it.

You know, the Avens concern is nothing new to this House and I'm glad today we're having a chance to finally discuss its importance. The crux of it is, the motion is very detailed but the motion raises the important issue of critical and a crisis that is pending. That crisis is that many of us in this room are reaching that critical age, some sooner than others, so I am hoping that this resonates loud and clear for those that are closer to that threshold.

With that, Mr. Speaker, there is a concern that we have been waiting on this side of the House for many opportunities to address this issue, and we've been very patient. We have waited for such things as Our Elders: Our Communities report which was tabled, I believe, on June 2nd of this year, and we were hoping that that would have laid some of the foundation of concern for dealing with the long-term care beds and dementia, but clearly, and shamefully, there was no targets or timelines, and I guess that was a disappointing factor.

We did wait for the Aging in Place Action Plan, which is a bit of a side issue in terms of trying to allow a senior to live in their places for a longer period of time, which I do agree with, but again nothing really substantial to formulate how we're going to make this happen. Then, of course, you heard from some of my colleagues about the continuing care review. Again, all great initiatives in

their own part, all speaking a certain sense of wanting to do something but, really, with no targets or timelines and with no financial commitment, it really is hard to come to grips that we do have a policy and a strategy moving forward.

Really, what are we looking at? The motion speaks to developing a long-term care plan, indicate the steps, the timing, and it enacts to include possible partnerships. These are all realities we live with today, and these are simple asks. We are not asking to build a rocket ship here; we are asking to design and develop something to which everyone will be in at a moment in time and, as I said earlier, some of us sooner than later.

I do support the motion. I believe that what we're looking for here is a NGO that is looking for our government's support. They have asked for a memorandum of the support, we have talked about this issue in our capital estimates last week, and clearly, even though it appears they have come forward numerous times to this government, we haven't been to the table or at least haven't been forthright in supporting them. I am hoping that through this motion, through this action, we are able to diffuse this situation that we have in the Northwest Territories and provide this territorial facility to allow a pressure relief, so to speak, with the aging in place concern that we have.

Again, I do like to thank Mr. Bromley and Mrs. Groenewegen for bringing this forward and I will be supporting this motion. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Dolynny. To the motion. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not be supporting this motion, simply because this is an infrastructure project. I think recently we have had a shift toward and trying to enhance and renovate the Stanton Territorial Hospital, so it's another large capital project that will be directed towards Yellowknife.

The other point that I wanted to make is, in the regional centres and community centres that we live in, there has been almost a shift away from the board that existed in the regions and communities so that people could have a voice. For cost efficiency, that is still under review and there is perhaps a trend to looking at a centralized coordinating body for health and social service issues in communities. Communities and regions, for that matter, feel that they don't have a voice, and in this instance I think their voice has to be heard.

Also, the point that I wanted to make is, yes, it has to be acknowledged that we have an aging seniors population and the figures and the production for a need for a seniors facility here in Yellowknife projects by 2031 we will probably reach a point of critical mass where it will necessitate the need for

more infrastructure, especially for specialized care. But at the same time, my faith is that the department, through its work, will look at and seriously examine the Home Care Program initiatives that we have, and I'm really hoping that could be enhanced. The Home Care Program provides care services for elders in their homes in small communities, and it would be really ideal if the department could identify registered nurses or nurse practitioners to be designated to those teams of people that can deliver those services to elders in their homes.

Not everyone in the communities wants to move to Yellowknife. They have very specific needs, especially First Nation elders that have a cultural tie to the community, extended families, there is also just the comfort of ensuring their independence, living in their home, being close to their grandchildren. Therefore, it is almost incumbent upon this to ensure that communities do have at least the opportunity to enhance their training and their capacity so that programs such as the Home Care Program can be enhanced. Designate, perhaps, trained professionals to work with the home care workers to ensure that those services are provided in the small communities. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the Motion. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank Mr. Bromley and Mrs. Groenewegen for the motion. As I look at the motion and study the motion, everything seems to be fine with it, except for the last sentence. That raises some concerns with me, where the motion speaks to having something start next spring.

We have a process here we have all agreed on. We have capital planning; we have capital budgeting; we have a process; and the last motion suggests that if we bring a motion to the Assembly, we could skip the queue. What happens to the other infrastructure projects in the Northwest Territories, such as what Mr. Nadli speaks about in our regional centres and our communities, schools, health centres and infrastructure that is greatly needed in Colville Lake or Deline or Tsiigehtchic, small communities? We have to look at this very carefully.

I believe everything in the motion, but the active members of the Aven Manor, and they are a very active group, there is a process that we need to follow, otherwise we are going to really, really need to be careful on the precedents we are setting here. Nothing needs to jump the queue, because we all agreed to the terms and these are the rules of the game here.

I believe that what they are doing is honourable, and as Mr. Nadli pointed out, we certainly welcome any type of infrastructure coming into our communities, into our regions. I believe that the

Aven Manor centre has a purpose in regards to some specialized care of our elders. We certainly want to keep our elders in our regions as close as possible in our communities.

These numbers may be true as to the increase in elders in the Northwest Territories in 10 to 20 years; however, as the motion is stated, I cannot support the motion because it's going to set a dangerous precedent for our capital funding expenditures.

If that could be changed, I may consider the support of this motion. I would like to state that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Yakeleya. To the motion. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As much as I would like to support this motion, I cannot support it. I am thinking of the capital projects that are scheduled in my riding for this coming year. There is no price tag attached to this, assurance of support needed. What kind of assurance that is, is not too clear. There is a possibility that if the government is forced to put money forward to this, our capital projects that are scheduled to be in place in the next year may be bumped, and that is something that I am very leery of. We have needs in our region, as well, in the Beaufort-Delta. If this motion was to have a similar type facility of this nature situated in Inuvik, then I would give my full support. As much as this is needed, elders in my riding would like to be within their own communities. If they can't be in their communities, they would like to be near Inuvik, for example. It is very challenging, especially when the elders are away from their families. For this reason, as I mentioned, we have a scheduled elders facility coming to Fort McPherson this year, and if I support this I feel that facility may be bumped off our upcoming schedule.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Blake. To the motion. Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess at the outset I should say that maybe I ought to declare a conflict of interest with this motion. However, I'm not going to.

I'd like to thank Mr. Bromley and Mrs. Groenewegen for bringing this motion to the floor. I think it's a very necessary motion. The whereas in the motion capture pretty much everything that needs to be said, and there are a few things that bear repeating.

I've spoken twice to this issue as we've gone through the capital budget. I spoke once when we talked about housing; I spoke again when we talked through the Health and Social Services capital budget. As I stated then, I am concerned that the government seems to be placing the emphasis on an Aging in Place Policy and not placing an emphasis on infrastructure and on either enabling someone to build infrastructure or us planning for

the government planning for infrastructure which is desperately needed.

Somebody, just in the last little while, stated that the crisis is going to occur in 2030 or 2031. The crisis is now. There are no spaces available at the Avens Centre. The Aven Manor is full. The Dementia Centre is full. As is mentioned in the motion, it's a four-year wait to get into the Dementia Centre. It's an eight-month wait to get into the manor. Unfortunately, pretty much the only way you get into the manor or the way you get into one of the other facilities up there is if somebody passes away and that opens up a space and somebody can move in off the list. That's pretty tough. That's not what we want for our residents.

With the two facilities that are being built in Norman Wells and Behchoko, it's going to take a bit of the pressure off, but those two facilities are going to be full pretty much when they're finished, and it's not going to make a big dent in the 200 beds, three times what we need. We need 200 beds come another 10 or 15 years.

When we talked about health, I said that I was dismayed about the lack of planning. We've just gone through the Health and Social Services capital budget and there was nothing in that budget that plans for long-term care facilities for our seniors, and at that time I said we know we need the beds, we know the spaces are required, we know we don't have spaces right now, and yet I just don't hear the words coming out of the Minister's or the government's mouth that says, yes, we're going to get on that and we're going to get on that not today but yesterday because we know it's an urgent need, and by that, I was referring to infrastructure.

We have someone who is willing to take on a project for us, and they are not asking for capital dollars necessarily. I've heard concerns from two Members that this is asking for capital dollars. There's nothing in this motion which speaks to a need for capital dollars. It asks for support, and the project can go ahead with support from this government that basically says in the future we will use your facility. That's all that they want. They want a guarantee that the GNWT will use the facility.

We've got somebody who is willing to take on the project who is innovative. They will use partners from within the community, from outside of the community. They will, as has been pointed out already, be able to build a facility cheaper than what the government can, and that, in my mind, is something that's a very positive thing.

The motion itself has two parts, and the first part I want to speak to is, as I've already talked about, the support. It's asking for the support. The construction next spring is a very ambitious project on the part of Avens. They want to start next spring because they know that the need is there for the

beds and they want to be able to say we're going to have beds in a two-year time frame, not a five or a six-year time frame. So, the support that is needed can be varied, and I want to state again it does not have to be capital support. I know that Avens is not asking for capital projects from other communities to be put back so that Avens can build their project.

The second part of the motion, it's actually the first part, but that the government develop a long-term action plan for the provision of the necessary long-term care beds. That's part of a lot of my concern, is I don't see, I don't hear that the department has a plan. It wasn't in the capital budget which we just reviewed. I haven't heard from the Minister that they have a long-term plan for long-term care beds, and it's known that we need it. It's known that it's needed in Hay River where they've just built a new hospital without extended care. It's known that we're going to need it at Stanton which is going to be built without extended care, and it's known that we need it in our regional centres, absolutely, and in many of our small communities. We need to get the Minister, the Health and Social Services department, the government to develop a plan for long-term care beds, and that's what this motion is asking.

I can't say much else that hasn't already been said. I am totally in support of this motion, and I would ask my colleagues who can't support the motion to reconsider, and if they can't support the motion maybe they will abstain and let this important motion go forward.

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

MR. HAWKINS: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this important motion, Mr. Speaker. Often I find myself at Avens talking to people who don't necessarily live there but they see one day that they may be there. But quite often what I hear from them is they just don't see the room available for them to retire in a particular place like Avens. This story or narrative could be applied anywhere really, I mean whether you live in Inuvik or Hay River or Fort Simpson, and even in places like Fort Providence or McPherson. I agree with the MLA for Mackenzie Delta that people in his communities probably want to retire or spend their final years around their family, their food, their language, and certainly their friends and loved ones.

I don't think that this motion is as complex as we're making it. I think the motion really speaks to the fact that we need a strategy. We can call it a vision. We can call it a plan. I mean, we can even name it after the Minister; I don't really care. But it talks about doing something useful and saying we need to know where we're going. As far as I'm concerned, we need to know where we're going because that will help define how to get there. If we don't know what we want to do for seniors housing, what do

you think the seniors feel about this particular situation? How do you think the elders in our communities feel about this situation?

Often I get told by these people who are seniors or elders or certainly good friends, I would definitely define most of them as very, very good friends, but they always talk about affordability every single time, access to an affordable place to spend their time. As they look down the path or the journey that they're going to be taking, they see affordability as a major hurdle. Many of them are working today. They will tell me they can't afford to retire. That's the reality. I mean, cost of living is no new subject line for this Legislature. It's an unfortunate situation, but I know many seniors who continue to work into the years that they really wish they could fully retire. They dreamt of retiring. One day their turn would come up. They were loyal to the system; they paid their taxes; they did their duty; they're good Canadians and they love their country. Now they're wondering: does anyone love them as they struggle to find a way to spend those special years without having to go to work if you're 60 or 65 and, in some cases, even older? There are many cases where I talk to seniors who are just simply, their health is running down and they shake their head and go, we just can't afford to retire and this is our only option to live, is to work.

I call that an undignified way of treating our special people that we care for very much. I mean, there isn't a day that doesn't go by that I hear people talk about how important our elders are, how important our seniors are, how important and we should always keep them in the forefront of our mind. I was listening to Chief Joachim Bonnetrouge the other day and he talked about spending more time with elders and how important those things are. I mean, the point that I'm raising here is the fact that we always have to make sure they are foremost on our minds and we are certainly taking care of them to the best of our abilities.

At Avens in particular, but this could apply anywhere in the Northwest Territories, whether it's Fort Smith, and soon-to-be Behchoko, it may someday be Fort Providence, a senior or an elder should not think it's like they hit the lotto if they get in. They should know that their turn is coming, and they will wait. I know the elders in our territory are so respectful and they will wait and they will bide their time. But frankly, many cannot wait, and many will never see a list that big.

In Yellowknife in particular, there's a waiting list of 50 people. Three are from out of town and the rest of the applicants are spread across particular units, whether it's the Aven Court, the Aven Ridge, its subsidizer markets, even the dementia centre. Many people want this opportunity to be taken care of, but they want to be part of the solution as well. I don't want to think of how many seniors have to

struggle just to survive day to day. They're looking for a fair opportunity and this motion really sets that into motion, as a matter of fact. This motion says that we need a strategy or a vision and we need to find our lens. This is one particular partner, such as the Avens folks.

I mean, there could be different combinations, different ways, whether it's with a community government. I encourage all community governments to come up with solutions for their seniors and elders. That is the way it gets done. I mean, it's going to be a long time for us to sit here and wait for the GNWT to do everything. It's just impossible to imagine. I could make light of that, but that is the fact; it's going to be a long time before the government solves these problems. So, partnership is the only solution and the only way that should matter because it is the only way that does matter.

I'm going to finish by saying that there are so many people who have led the charge for us, who have blazed the path, taught us many things and they certainly deserve our support. What I'll say is up until now, they certainly deserve better. Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've had an opportunity to look at the motion and the different whereases and we agree with the intent of what the Members are trying to say here today. In fact, we know that there's a problem coming. Our continuing care report articulated clearly the need for beds in the Northwest Territories and this is something that we're trying to address.

To that end, we have come forward with Our Elders: Our Communities, which I acknowledge Members have made it clear that this is not an action plan, and I agree, this isn't an action plan. It's a strategic framework that will help us form and articulate an action plan.

During business planning the deputy minister of Health and Social Services indicated to committee that we hear them and that we are going to take those additional steps to develop the action plans necessary both on aging in place and on long-term care. This is work that is currently underway and I rearticulated it last week during Committee of the Whole. Rather than developing one single action plan to address all the elements of this strategic framework, we will focus on the different priority areas, the different pillars for aging in place and long-term care. That is work that is currently underway. It's going to take a bit of time. It is a significant amount of work, but it is being done.

Having said that, we continue to move forward and try to address the needs of our seniors, who are obviously an incredibly important segment of the

population here in the Northwest Territories. We are moving forward to try to support our seniors living or aging in place.

I've had an opportunity, as I'm sure many people have, to talk to different seniors throughout the Northwest Territories and one of the common things that I hear is: I would like to stay in my home for as long as possible; if I can't stay in my home, I'd like to stay in my community as long as possible; and if I can't stay in my community, I'd like to stay in the region in which I am from for as long as possible; and if I can't stay in the region, if I get to a point where I need the additional care, then I will go to a territorial facility like the Aven Dementia Cottages. So we're working with the people to do that.

To do that, there are a number of things that happen. For a healthy individual to stay in the home, one segment, seniors living in public housing, we provide a rent cap for seniors living in housing of \$90. The Housing Corp is a great partner in trying to address housing for seniors. We also have home heating subsidies for seniors to help them stay in their homes and afford to live in their homes for as long as possible. For individuals who are in public housing or even individuals who own their homes, there are other programs like the CARE program for healthy individuals to do home repair. We've got a visible design aspect of the CARE program which I think is innovative, which has helped individuals when they need to upgrade their homes so that they can include wheelchair ramps or other things so that they can maintain access to their homes. It's there. The Housing Corp is a great partner. They're doing incredible work.

We've also got the Housing Corp providing funding for preventable maintenance for things like furnace repairs. Right now seniors are the largest group taking advantage of this. We do know or, rather, on top of that, the Department of Health and Social Services is working with our valuable partner, the NWT Seniors' Society, to identify things we have been doing in communities to help people stay in their homes, things like programs to help people shovel walks or get groceries or do all these different things to help them live in their homes for as long as they can.

But we know that individuals may eventually have to leave their home. We want them there as long as they can. They want to be there as long as they can. When it's time to leave their homes, obviously people want to stay in their communities as long as they can, and we are working with the Housing Corporation to make that possible.

The Housing Corp, in the current capital and I think last year's capital, as well, is moving forward or has already completed or is in the process of building five independent living units in the Northwest Territories: Whati, Fort Liard, Fort McPherson, Fort

Good Hope and Aklavik. The Housing Corp has worked with Health and Social Services closely because it's going to take more than one department to address these problems. It's going to take the partnerships that the Members are talking about. In these facilities, they have actually incorporated a room where the Department of Health and Social Services could run some programming out of and bring professionals like home support workers and others into those buildings to provide care to the residents of those independent living units so we can keep them in the communities for as long as possible. Eventually, unfortunately, it may become true that individuals do, in fact, need to leave their communities and receive a higher degree or grade of care, and those will be provided in long-term care facilities throughout the Northwest Territories.

We have long-term care facilities. Once we're done in the Sahtu, we'll have long-term care facilities in every region of the Northwest Territories. The last one is Sahtu. The Sahtu will bring 18 beds that don't exist today and the Behchoko facility will bring eight beds that don't exist today. Based on working with our colleagues across the House, we've been able to maintain 10 beds that we almost lost in Hay River for long-term care.

Eventually individuals are going to have to move or get a higher degree of care. That's where Avens has been such a great partner in the development of the Aven Cottage for the dementia facility here in the Northwest Territories, an incredibly valuable service.

We want to keep moving forward. In addition to continuing to strengthen home and community care services, we obviously need to review and prepare for the increasing demand for a facility-based long-term care, including dementia care, extended care, and to improve and enhance supports for respite care, palliative care, geriatric assessment and restorative care. Long-term care facilities are designed to meet the highest level of care needs for people who cannot live independently, even where there is home care available.

We recognize that sometimes seniors will require a higher level of care than can be provided in their home or in an independent living unit. To meet this need, we're expanding our complement of long-term care facilities so that this service is available in every region, allowing our seniors and elders to be closer to their families and their homes, which we have heard is what they want.

Over the past eight years, the GNWT has invested heavily, developing and expanding long-term care facilities to a total of approximately \$86 million. Today there are a total of 173 long-term care beds. I hear the Members; it's not enough. We know it's not enough and we need to do more.

Recently completed and current projects include the expansion and renovation of the Northern Lights Special Care Home in Fort Smith; the Woodland Manor extension, which is maintaining the 10 beds; the construction of the Norman Wells Health Centre, which is 18 beds, which includes the long-term care facility with the 18 beds; the expansion and renovation of the Jimmy Erasmus Long-Term Care Facility in Behchoko, which is the nine beds; and the construction of the Aven Cottages and the Territorial Dementia Facility, which opened four years ago.

When current projects are completed in Behchoko and Norman Wells, the total number of beds available in the Northwest Territories will be 201.

As I mentioned previously, we completed a continuing care review in November 2013. The review identified a number of priority areas for action to provide equity of access to services and address the needs of our aging population. To guide those actions, we developed Our Elders: Our Communities, which is the strategic framework. Based on the recommendations from Members during business planning, we will use the recommendations of the continuing care review to plan for the enhancement and improvement of home and community care services so we can better support seniors as they age. As I indicated and confirmed last week, part of that is a long-term care review and a long-term care action plan. That action plan will be a longer term action plan for the provision of necessary long-term care beds. It will highlight the areas of resources, facilities and timing in order to meet the oncoming needs, the needs for facilities for seniors. It will identify possible partnerships to serve those seniors who have some financial independence in both large and small communities. To that end, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing today stopping somebody from building an independent, non-government funded long-term care facility to meet the needs of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

The plan we are working on is a plan that will take us to 2031 and beyond. It is exactly what the Members are asking for, and regardless of how the vote goes today, it is something we are committed to doing, it is something we are doing and we will continue to move forward with the development of that plan.

I look forward to working with Members, our important partners like the Housing Corp, seniors' societies from across the Northwest Territories and Avens. We know it needs to be done and we are going to do it.

Where we have a problem with this motion is that it recommends or suggests that we need to enable construction of the proposed 60-bed territorial facility, the Avens facility, by next spring. We are working closely with Avens. We are their partner

and they are our partner. We are partnering with Avens on the pavilion expansion, which is the construction of 29 to 30 new beds and the refurbishing and upgrade of the additional beds that are currently in the facility, which is 29 or 30. It is not 60 new beds in the Northwest Territories. It is 29 new beds and the refurbishing of the existing, to take us to a total of 69 beds in the Avens complex.

We have given Avens \$25,000 to participate on a steering committee to help quantify what their ask is. I heard Ms. Bisaro mention that all they want us to do is confirm that we are going to use the beds. We have been working with Avens for a while on this project and they have come to us with a number of different asks. One of them was to guarantee beds. We are certainly exploring that, but right now, the last conversation I had with Avens was, they want us to build it, they want us to pay for the construction of this building and they also want us to pay for the O and M. If this building is built, regardless of whether or not we participate in the construction and capital costs, we are going to be paying the O and M, which we know is about \$3.6 million a year.

So we need to do the planning. We need to understand what we are getting ourselves into as we move forward with our important partners, Avens. But to suggest that we will be ready and they will be ready to begin construction in the spring is jumping the queue. We need to work with our partner. We need to identify clearly what their ask is. We are doing that, we are working with them. The first step is to retain and consult and review the data that they have come forward with and that we have as well. We know the end of life of the existing facility is coming; we know there is an urgency. I as Minister of Health and Social Services and a resident of Yellowknife, am committed to making this happen, but we cannot commit to doing it in the timeline specified by this motion.

We have a capital process and we will continue to follow the capital process. I will continue to work with Avens; the staff of the department will continue to work with Avens; we all want the same thing and we will get there, but it would be impossible for us to begin construction or work with them to begin construction in April without actually knowing what their plan is. They have come to us with a large number of plans. We will work with them. We will find a solution. This facility will get built. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just quickly to the process. We have a rigorous capital planning process that has been refined over the decades to where it is today, and we all know that it is fully subscribed to and that we have probably a \$3 billion infrastructure deficit that we are working hard to try to address.

We are well through this upcoming year's capital planning process. Every penny has been accounted for. When I look at this motion, be it 60 beds, 30 beds and a full-scale renovation, I would suggest that we are looking at well over \$50 million, a motion that is put on our table as we are probably two-thirds of the way through our capital planning process for this year to start this spring, six months hence. It's not a realistic motion. It does pose a big problem of queue jumping and they need to do more thorough planning.

In terms of protecting this process and respecting this process, I would suggest that this motion, at least the last part where they want to build within six months, is not doable. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. To the motion. I will allow Mr. Bromley to have closing remarks.

MR. BROMLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to all of my colleagues for your comments on this motion. I think it has attracted a lot of thoughtful consideration.

I would like to start by mentioning, of course, that when you look at the capital plans, we are finishing up a couple of facilities in the regions, but that's it. Where are they? It's not that we've just started talking about our capital facilities, our facilities for seniors.

What this motion is, it's a call for a plan. It's a call for a plan because there is no plan right now. We had government report after government report; no plan is in place. I know the Minister has heard the Members' call for getting ahead of this looming deficit with a plan that shows, in fact, what steps will be taken, what resources are required. Let's see that capital plan, let's see a timeline, one that clearly lays out all of those things and, in particular, the partnerships.

I think Avens is profiled here because it has demonstrated what can be achieved. As the Minister and others have said, when there are incredible partnerships, when the community plays a role and when business plays a role, when everybody gets together, non-government organizations and so on, and discusses there is a real urgent need, let's move forward, and they have done that with government participation and on a timeline that recognized the need and not government's continual delaying and lack of planning to get things on the capital plan.

I think that what we're really talking about is respectful treatment of our elders, recognizing that, as some have said, it goes beyond just beds. It goes into the areas of addressing elder abuse and the desire of our seniors to participate in the benefits of the facilities wherever they can, wherever those facilities may be, be they territorial facilities in Yellowknife or locally.

I think three of my colleagues have mentioned concerns that this is a Yellowknife project and doesn't recognize the community needs. If that's the case, then I take that as my fault, because I read this as territorial. The elements here describe the territorial situation and it calls for a territorial action plan in both small and large communities.

It does indeed address Avens, which is, again, a project that has had amazing community participation and partnerships with business and so on and, because of that, is actually doing some site preparation, again with support of this government, at least philosophically, to get that work started.

We can spin this every way we want, but the thing is, there is great need. There is an amazing bunch of people who are ready to move, committed to seniors. Their focus is seniors. Their respect is for seniors, and they are going to come up with a process to get it done. They see the need. They are serving seniors from all over the Northwest Territories.

But this motion is not meant to just call for that. This motion is to address long-term care. Everybody, every Member in this House wants their constituents who are seniors to have the ability to access facilities to the extent possible as close as they can to home. That is a given. I don't operate on any other basis and I know the Minister doesn't either. So let's put a plan in place, let's get this addressed.

The Minister mentioned seniors housing. I am not aware of seniors housing in Yellowknife, other than Avens of course. I think there is essentially none here, despite the fact that we have so many seniors and they are rising at triple the rate of the NWT. We've called for this motion to address those sorts of things.

I appreciate the Minister's recognition of the need for this plan and I would say a commitment to get it done already. I appreciated his recognition that we can't rely on Aging in Place to get what we need done. We need to recognize that, in fact, even if we are wildly successful with that, there will be huge needs for these facilities.

The Minister mentioned there's nothing stopping anybody from providing for seniors facilities, private enterprise. Obviously, something must be because it hasn't happened yet and this motion calls for the Minister to assist society in whatever measure is needed to get that done. I agree that private industry should be playing an important role in this area, but we aren't down south. The Minister knows the cost of living, the cost of operation and so on. So there are some real issues that the Minister could play an important role in.

Again, this was not meant to be a Yellowknife-centric motion. The Avens facility is a territorial facility. This motion is meant to get a plan in place

for throughout the Northwest Territories to address the needs our seniors in terms of long-term care beds in a very respectful way.

I, again, thank my colleagues for all of their comments and I look forward to a recorded vote. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Bromley. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Bromley, Mrs. Groenewegen, Mr. Dolynny, Mr. Bouchard, Mr. Hawkins, Ms. Bisaro, Mr. Moses.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those opposed, please rise.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Yakeleya, Mr. Blake, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Miltenberger, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Ramsay, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Nadli.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. All those abstaining, please rise. Results are seven in favour, 10 against. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

Item 18, first reading of bills Mr. Moses.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 33:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE
ELECTIONS AND PLEBISCITES ACT, NO. 2

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 33, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act, No. 2, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 33, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act, No. 2, has had first reading.

---Carried

Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act; Bill 27, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2014; Bill 29, Human Tissue Donation Act; Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act; Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act; Committee Report 7-17(5), Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and

Mineral Development Strategies; and Tabled Document 115-17(5), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2015-2016, with Mrs. Groenewegen in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole to order today. There are a number of items as listed by the Speaker that are before Committee of the Whole. What is the wish of committee? Ms. Bisaro.

MS. BISARO: Thank you, Madam Chair. We would like to continue consideration of Tabled Document 115-17(5), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2015-2016, with the Department of Natural Resources and the Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, committee. We'll commence with that after a brief break.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): I'd like to call Committee of the Whole back to order and the department up next is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I'd like to ask Minister Miltenberger if he would like to bring witnesses into the Chamber.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Yes, Madam Chair.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. With me is the deputy minister, Ernie Campbell; and head of forest fire operations, Bill Mawdsley.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. General comments on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Bouchard.

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just have a few statements concerning the biggest project on this budget, which is the purchase of the 802 air tanker fleet replacement. I guess coming into this Assembly, I know they talked about these

replacements for a while, so it's kind of a process of us new MLAs starting and looking into the process of replacing these units. It's replacing an older fleet that I think we got for minimal dollars. I guess the high cost associated to the purchase of these newer planes, and I know the department's been looking at this for years because I know the department did some tests in Hay River, I want to say half a dozen years ago, maybe six or seven years ago where they did some water tests between the 215s and the 802s. I think this was some of the basis of some of the assessments of these 802 new bombers that we're looking at, these smaller bombers we're looking at purchasing.

I guess my questions are concerns with the capacity of them. They're quite a bit smaller. Their volumes are quite a bit smaller. I guess I'm concerned with the deep canopy penetration of the units. I know we have used them in some of our firefighting these last few years because I saw them in Hay River, I think, as a tactic with other units, I guess, other bigger units. So I think those are my initial concerns. I guess the Minister has expressed to us in committee meetings and stuff like that, that they have justification of the purchase of them.

I guess my concerns also in that area is they are, you know the budget item there, they are territorial units, I do believe, and I see them down as Fort Smith here in some of the documents we've gotten. I just have a little bit of concern on that. I'm just wondering where we're going to locate them and what the costs are on that one. When we have newer units, is there going to be additional cost to housing?

I guess some of the justification is that we've looked at the operating costs and maybe some of the potential revenue. Because we're buying new aircraft, we might be able to lease them out. Have we looked at the potential of that revenue in the future? Those are some of my general comments, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Member indicates, I think this is our third year to have seen the 802s operate under full forest fire operating conditions, under extreme forest fire operating conditions, especially last summer. They have performed admirably. The 802s would equal the impact of the four 215s that we do currently have. The four 215s, which I point out are probably 60 years old, roughly, burn fuel that is going to become obsolete in the not-too-distant future. There's three years left on the current contract. We have at least two instances and one near incident where we actually ran out of avgas in communities, in Norman Wells and Inuvik to be specific, where the 215s were stranded on the

runway and we had to work to find other aircraft to come in and assist.

The cost of operating the new units would be considerably less than the existing fleet. It's around \$4 million a year right now to keep the 215s in the air and operational.

The fuel consumption is probably one-third and it's Jet B versus lead-filled avgas, and the operating costs, because they're newer planes, would be considerably less. But I'd ask the deputy if he wants to add any further detail to the Member's concerns, or Mr. Mawdsley. Let's start with the deputy, Madam Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll just add a couple of things. The 802s compared to the 215s for flying time roughly are the same, just over four hours for both types of aircraft. As the Minister mentioned, fuel consumption, the 802s burn around 300 litres an hour compared to the 900 litres an hour for the 215s. Also, on the capacity, the work we've done in the past, the 802s with just over 600 gallon tanks compared to the 1,200 gallon tanks for the 215s, you would need two 802s to match one 215.

We've found in the Northwest Territories, with our different fuel types and canopies, that if you double up on the 802s, they do penetrate the canopy and they are efficient in the Northwest Territories. I just thought I'd add that, as well, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Deputy Minister Campbell. General comments. Anything further, Mr. Bouchard?

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Madam Chair. The other general comments that I had, we've been kicking around some of the ideas. One of the ideas is: Has the department looked at, as far as the 215s, what the plan is going forward with them? Are there discussions of selling them off? Are there discussions of maybe keeping them until we have operation? The Minister talked about three years left in the contract, but is there discussion of maybe operating the two newer units along with the 215s for a period of time this year or next year and what our capacities are? My understanding is we don't get a whole ton of money for these older 215s but we might want to look at a mixture. On busy years like we had, the cost of running those, maybe, versus us having to hire bigger planes or the newer 415s from some other jurisdiction. Has the department looked at what we're going to do with the 215s, and is there an option to keep them and keep them operational for a few more years to see the mixture between them and the 802s? Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Madam Chair. The option of selling the planes – as you know, they are not worth an enormous amount of money – is definitely one that we're seriously looking at. On the assumption that if the budget is approved for these planes, the orders would be put in and that we anticipate that we'd have all 802s ready to go for the fire season of 2017. Until that point, we would be continuing to maintain and keep the 215s. We would start on the fire season and then, once we have the new fleet on line, we would look at what kind of disposal is in our best interest as a government.

The issue of keeping both fleets going is one of cost. So, we spend \$4 million a year, roughly, and those costs are going to continue to rise as maintenance costs go up and avgas becomes scarcer for the 215s, so we'd have to keep that in the budget plus get... I could ask the deputy for the number, but the operating costs for the 802s would have to be added to that if we are going to look at keeping all the planes on as part of the fleet, which would be very expensive and I don't think very cost effective in terms of the money. If we had the 802s and we needed additional air support, we would probably be far better off to bring in, as we have this last summer, available planes through our MARS Agreement, 415s and turbos or 215 turbos that are operational. Up to the end of 2017, we will have the 215s fully operational. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mrs. Groenewegen): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Anything further, Mr. Bouchard? General comments. Next I have Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYUNNY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to welcome the Minister and the department here today. I do appreciate over the course of the better part of the year, I know the Minister has been diligent on providing much of the technical and financial assessment to committee in preparation for today. I do appreciate a lot of the background. But for a lot of people tuning in, this is a lot of new information and we're going to be throwing a lot of technical data here at them. With that said, I think we need to go through a bit of an exercise, because I think we are embarking on a new format when it comes to fire suppression.

We know that the current fleet of CL-215s, these were planes that we inherited for, I believe, a very minimal amount of money. I heard that the transaction was a \$1 bill from the federal government, and we maintained the operations of these 215s over the years. But really, by virtue of this capital process, we're actually now getting in the business of actually buying new planes for the first time ever, when you think about it, so I think it's important that we do the due diligence here to make sure that if this is indeed what we want to do as a government. Do we want to be in the business

of owning planes? Do we see what the economic benefit is and what the strategic advantage is for us to be the owners of very technical and expensive pieces of equipment?

Now, I know Mr. Bouchard went and talked a bit about the technical aspect, and I do have some concerns that may have not been mentioned and that I think need some response to. These 802s or amphibious air tankers, otherwise known as the fire boss, are definitely a smaller plane. Anyone who is able to Google it will be able to see online this is a very small plane and a very small payload capacity in comparison to the 215s, and I'll talk about the 415 in a second. The concern I have, and I think Mr. Bouchard kind of mentioned, is given the nature of the fire season that we had last year, and, hopefully, we don't have a repeat, but quite frankly, we don't know. We know that we had one of the worst fire seasons, if not the worst fire season in the history of the Northwest Territories, and I would caution to say we probably had one of the worst fire seasons in North America vis-à-vis any other jurisdiction in Canada. So we literally have the prime situation where we could test a lot of these planes, and I know a lot of these planes through our MARS program did come up and help us fight those fires.

My concern is whether or not the 802s would stand up to the rigours of the type of fire that we had last season and dealing with that first attack mode given the smaller plane, smaller payload capacity, the fact that these planes are more susceptible to wind and wind shear, and we know very clearly that fires create their own atmosphere, fires create their own climate, and with that a lot of my dialogue with pilots who actually fly these planes have clearly indicated that the 802s, given the ferocity of a fire and the climate that a fire creates, could serve to be problematic given the type of fire we had last season. I want to at least point that out, that there are obviously advantages and disadvantages for every one of these planes that we look at.

The other concern that I do have is the ability for the 802s that when they're flying, they're flying by visual only and they do not have the capabilities of doing instrumentation flying, which then limits, I guess, the amount of time that these planes could be in the air fighting fires. It also could hamper the ability of these planes to go overnight, if need be, to other locations. They would have to fly during daytime only, so where, I believe, the 215s currently and a 415 counterpart do have the ability to fly what is referred to as VFR.

Going back to my original issue without getting more into specifics of the specs, I'm still a little bit on the fence here as to why the GNWT feels that we have to own these planes outright, that we're not able to consider any type of private operation or private ownership. The department and Minister

have clearly embarked on many P3 initiatives for other investments in the Northwest Territories, such as the fibre optic line and the Stanton project, but yet it appears that this project here, we want to do it in house. I have a hard time deciding when we do a P3 initiative or when we don't do a P3 initiative. But more importantly, what are the economic and strategic advantages for us to get into this business. Given the fact that we are entering close to our debt wall, we do not have the luxury of other jurisdictions to get in this business, and so I would probably like the Minister to comment on that as well.

Finally, Mr. Chair, with your indulgence, I'd like to spend just a second to talk about the planes that aren't on the list today, and I know these are more expensive planes, but given the climate that we live in here and given the fact that we faced literally the most vicious fire season in the history of the Northwest Territories, the 415 aircraft is really the plane of choice when you look at it. This is the industry benchmark in amphibious aircraft, and really, if you talk to anyone in the industry and you read any brochure, you read any factual sheet in the fire suppression world, the 415s are the backbone of the firefighting missions around the world. I'm not saying that I want to spend a lot of money on them, because we don't have the luxury. But it would be nice to hear whether or if we indeed do not have the money for a 415 plan of action, what is the strategy for potentially looking at a private company, private ownership where we're leasing a 415 to deal with literally a very problematic climate and we're dealing with large distances and, as I said, without putting a lot of technical issues on the floor, we are hampered by design specifically and technically with an 802 fleet.

I know I was kind of a little bit on both sides of the equation here, and if need be, I can go more into detail, but it was more of the general comment of concern. I believe the 802 is a general plane. I want to rest assured and let the people know this is a solid plane. It might be, in my humble opinion, a bit too light duty for the type of fire and fire seasons that we could face in the near future.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll go through the list and I apologize if I missed anything. To the issue of are the 802s up to the task, we've battle tested these planes now, not only us but other jurisdictions, but we've seen them firsthand in the Northwest Territories. It's our third season, and they've handled everything that Mother Nature and forest fires could throw at them. They are nimble. They can operate in turn and maneuver very, very well. They are powerful. They have the distinct added advantage that they can go to shallow lakes that the 215s currently can't.

Whereas a 215 may have to trundle off 20 minutes down the way or half an hour down the way, there are many, many times when the 802s are already back in action picking up water, hitting the fires, picking up water, hitting the fires, because they have that capacity to operate in shallower lakes.

The issue of VFR versus...instrument flight rating versus visual flight rules, sorry, it's very rarely that it has ever been an issue. Of course, one of the key factors is the good fortune, I suppose, that during fire season we have just about 24-hour daylight, so it very seldom gets dark, and if, in fact, the visibility is bad enough because of the smoke, then nobody flies because of the risk. I'll point people back to the '70s, I think it was, in Smith, as a matter of fact, where we had a collision in mid-air of water bombers and there were about four people killed, and they were in circumstances where there was almost no visibility, so it's very problematic.

The issue of private ownership versus public ownership, we've laid it out for committee. The dollars, the math is very clear that in the North if we were going to look at using northern business and we wanted the northern business to pick up the \$30 million and bill us back that we would pay a premium in the millions of dollars over the life of a contract so that they can, in fact, the private owner could go to the bank and get money knowing that they have a 10-year contract and over that 10 years we would have to pay back, for example, the \$30 million. We demonstrated, we showed that we'd save literally millions of dollars in interest payments by us buying the planes and then putting it out as we do now, by tender or contract, to maintain and operate the aircraft without the burden of having to pay the interest payments and the paydown in the principal cost to the airlines of the airplanes. So we were of the opinion if by that approach, then every northern business that's up here that can bid would be in a position to bid and not disqualified because it had to carry the burden of \$30 million costs as part of the contract that would disqualify potentially a lot of northern participants.

If you're going to buy a new 415, it would cost you \$40 million. I don't disagree with the Member that if money was no object we might have two 415s and four Air Tractors or some other configuration, but the reality is we need to look at the economics and how do we best protect the interest of the people of the Northwest Territories in a way that's affordable. We believe, after extensive work, that the 802s are the best way forward and then if we have greater needs, we look at using the capacity under our MARS agreements, our mutual aid agreements with all the other jurisdictions, to bring in other aircraft as required.

In terms of the land-based aircraft that we have, for example, we've been leasing aircraft, as the Member suggested, because the northern aircraft

haven't been available. So the DC-6 Electras, which are a critical land-based component, we have two built into the contract. We've been making arrangements to try to lease those from the South until we can get our own northern land-based planes operational and that is a very expensive proposition, but those are critical missing pieces at this point from our northern arsenal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe I've touched on most of the issues. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we'll have general comments for Environment and Natural Resources. Next on my list I have Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. As has been said, the big issue on the capital acquisition for the Department of ENR is these 802s. It's difficult to talk about them in great detail because, of course, it's a very technical topic and one that's very specialized. I'm sure the department has done a fair amount of research into the 802s and the suitability of them for the type of work that we seemingly need to do every year here in the Northwest Territories in fighting fires. I don't dispute that it is time to add to what we have available here to fight fires. We hope we don't get future years like we had this past year, but it's not something that's out of the realm of possibility.

I think that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure has spent a great deal of time talking with the department about all the pros and cons and has covered this topic very thoroughly and, as Mr. Bouchard indicated earlier, there's been a lot of testing and a lot of trial that's already been done with these aircraft. So, I don't think that I have an issue with the acquisition. I'm supporting the acquisition of these aircraft with the model that is proposed by the department of the GNWT to own them and to contract for the operations and maintenance of them.

However, I do have some concerns about the department's eventual plans to dispose of the 215s and I think that the 215s and the 802s have very, very different capacities and different roles that they could play depending on the location of the fire, the size of the fire and I know it all comes down to a matter of money. I don't think that the 215s are probably necessarily, on any given day, worth a lot of money on the open market and I don't know why we wouldn't want to, if we could, and if we could afford it, have the option of using the 215s where it's appropriate, even if they were on standby and the 802s were the main aircraft we would use to fight fire. But I'm sure the Minister will have some good reasoning for that and I guess that I'd like to hear what that is. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mrs. Groenewegen. Minister Miltenberger.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like every other arm of government, we are very aware of the fiscal constraints that we operate under. When we looked and we did years of work mainly with Meyers Norris Penny, looking at all the planes and it came down to also having the hat of the Finance Minister on, and as I was looking at this, what can we come forward in good conscience to tell the Legislature to make the case of what is the best way forward. The discussion was very quickly that the 802s could meet our needs at a fraction of the cost of getting four 215s or four 415s, three times, four times more for a plane that has a season that's three months, four months long and what would meet our interests and what would we afford, what could save us money if we bought them, what's easier on gas and what is able to do the work.

So we know that we'll be able to keep the fleet of 802s in the air for less than what we're currently paying to keep the 215s in the air. If we were going to pay, and it comes down to money, if we're going to pay for the 802s and keep the 415s operational, flight ready, forest firefighting ready, then it would be if not the \$4 million, it would be probably well over \$2 million to \$3 million a year that we'd have to add to our base budget.

Back to the issue of if the 802s are overextended as they would have been this year, or the 215s were this year, then we would be invoking the clauses in the MARS Agreement with the other jurisdictions and we would look at bringing in equipment and planes like we did from BC, Alberta, Alaska, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, wherever they were available.

I guess the other thing to keep in mind, as well, the 802s, if we have a mild fire season, we would be able to put to use wherever they're requested. Right now the 215s that we have in operation for us are so old and so behind the times in terms of liability and risk management that we can't export them because the other jurisdictions do not want to have the issue of things that may go wrong, plus the access to avgas. So they're not exportable for us, to us in Canada. So they're basically stuck here, so standby would be a very expensive proposition. Thank you.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Thank you. When the Minister says that it would cost \$2 million to \$3 million to keep them on standby, that doesn't seem like a very big price to pay for their usefulness. I mean, it has been what has served the Northwest Territories all these years. That doesn't seem to be a very big price to pay in light of the almost estimated \$60 million that it cost to fight fire this year, which was an extraordinary year, no doubt, but \$2 million or \$3 million to have this capacity and this ability at our disposal doesn't seem like that much in view of the recent fire season.

So, if we're not going to retain the 215s after 2017, well, maybe it is too early to say what we would do with them. Let me ask the Minister if he's aware of any other type of use within the realm of government responsibility that the 215s could be outfitted or used for. Thank you

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Just a comment first about the 215s. They have had a long and honourable history in protecting the interests of the people of the Northwest Territories. If they were a horse, we would be talking about...

---Interjection

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: I was going to suggest being put out to pasture. They are over 60 years old. Being over 60, I can tell you, keeping up with the guys in their twenties is very, very tough, if not downright impossible, to be completely frank, in the confines of this Assembly, just amongst ourselves.

Are there other uses for the 215s? There could be. The Member and I have talked a bit about this and I have heard this from the owner of Buffalo Airways, his vision of a fleet of pollution-fighting aircraft that could respond to spills and be there if they are needed. In fact, there were discussions with ENR at one point, but there never was a formal proposal put forward. That would be an opportunity for a private sector person if they were interested, I would suggest, to look at getting these very reasonably priced, when they come up for sale, aircraft, especially if they have a bunch of parts of their own that they could keep them in the air and convert to that type of function where they could, in fact, have a lease arrangement with oil companies or whoever would require that type of backup for maybe their environmental licence or their project licence, especially if it's located on bodies of water.

If you're getting into the ocean area, then you are looking at, of course, a different jurisdiction. But the flight time of both the 802s and the 215s is about four hours and if you are going to be out in large bodies of water, you have to be very cognizant always about... If you only have four hours of fuel, you don't want to go out two hours and fifteen minutes because on the way back you could be gliding the last fifteen minutes, hopefully back to land. So, there are lots of things to look at, but I think there are some options out there. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Miltenberger. Committee, we are on general comments for Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Yakeleya.

MR. YAKELEYA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to weigh in, also, to the 802s, the fleets. It looks like we are getting some brand new mustangs, or stallions at least. The Minister is talking about horses and the old Clydesdales will be put to rest, the old work horses.

I wanted to follow up with Mr. Dolynny's observation about the government getting into the aviation business. Certainly, when you have these new fleets coming in, there is going to be spin-offs as to the hangars, having staff who are seasonal. These aircraft are going to be situated in a community in the Northwest Territories and there is going to be crews and office space and hangars there and a whole bunch of other things to maintain a fleet of aircraft. That's something I wanted to ask the Minister: what use, after the season, are these fleets are going to be used.

I also wanted to ask about the effectiveness of these fleets versus the ones that we had. Given that in the past couple of years we cut fire suppression crews in our communities and we certainly need a balance to have people on the ground fighting the fires along with some air support, and I would like to see that we reinvest into the communities that were cut from the fire suppression crews in our smaller communities around the North, even to how much are we going to rely on the air bombers.

In the Northwest Territories, in the southern part here, I would like to have a review as to where the fires were fought and were these fires strictly bomber use all the time. Down south fighting fire is different than fighting fire in the Sahtu where there are no all-weather roads. Some of the fires were far away, yet they were fought. The use of heavy equipment, such as Caterpillars, there were lots of lines cut. How many hours were used on Caterpillars, and are those going to be reclamation areas where you put the cat in for the firebreak? Even for our tour operators, is there something in the infrastructure or within government that if a tourist operator is going to renew their licence, is there a FireSmart type of licence for them to give to the department, because that's infrastructure, the hoses that go to these tourist operators. Before they get their licence, there should be some strategic planning there as to what happens if they have a fire season like last year in the southern part of the Northwest Territories.

I have a lot of issues around there, even with the infrastructure on having these FireSmart kits. There are a lot of questions for me coming from the Sahtu on these bombers, Caterpillar operators, cabin owners, values at risk, even the areas that could be back-burned saving cabins in the area, things like that.

The fleets themselves, are they effective, are they going to be efficient? I hear the Minister talking about the avgas. There was some shortage at the airports in Inuvik and Norman Wells. These are now different type of flights in regards to will they have the operational capability, say, to be staged in Norman Wells or Inuvik, if there is a situation that calls for them? Do we balance that with fire

suppression crews that are in the Sahtu? What will it cost to have the fire crews in operation and is there a different type of standards for fighting fire in the Northwest Territories?

Down here we see almost every fire. They are far away but they are fought and the water bombers are at them. But last year in the Sahtu, we had to watch them. So, are there different standards of fighting fire? I can see that. That's one of my concerns.

The other one is that I am happy to see in the budget that Deline is going to get some support in the region.

My last concern is the promise by one of the elders in Fort Good Hope. I talked about a regional laboratory to test our fish and our water. I know the Minister, earlier in the Assembly, talked about monitoring the water in the Sahtu and doing some baseline studies. What the elder is really talking about is having a laboratory where we take samples of the fish, caribou, moose, beaver, the lynx, the muskrats and check for them to see if it's okay to eat.

I see his point that with the amount of water that Imperial Oil licence is asking for over the next 10 years is not in the millions but it's in the billions of litres that's going to be put back into the Mackenzie River. The elders in Fort Good Hope are very concerned over the years of accumulated effects of Imperial Oil putting back that water into the Mackenzie that flows down to Fort Good Hope where they get their water from. The elder was talking about over the years, if that's the case, then shouldn't the federal government or Imperial Oil be assuring us that it's okay to drink, number one, and if the food that they get from the Mackenzie River is okay to eat. Maybe consider it a laboratory where they can sample animals at random so they could tell the people, your food is still okay, the water is still okay. We don't really know the true nature of the damage in BC or Alberta or the production of development that flows into the Mackenzie River over time. That's what the elder is asking for, is a proper laboratory in the Sahtu region to ensure that their food and their water is going to be good in the years from now to 20 years. That's what he was requesting.

Can I say that I've wanted to tell the Minister that with the Deline district in the community, the Minister has seen, along with his staff, the condition that the wildlife officers work in and it's similar to the one in Colville Lake? They have a small little cabin there. It's a cozy little cabin but I think it needs to be looked at and considered, the same as in Fort Good Hope. They've taken some pictures – I'm pretty sure I gave them to Mr. Miltenberger – as to the condition of the wildlife officers working in these extreme conditions up in the Sahtu.

Those are my concerns. The big one, along with my other colleagues, is asking about the fleets that you're asking us to approve a budget for millions of dollars, and it certainly is a concern to see if we can look at some areas that would satisfy our people in the Sahtu. Is it not possible to have a private contractor look at these fleets, or is it more beneficial for us to get into the aviation business and take on that responsibility? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't think any jurisdiction leaves firefighting up to the private sector when it comes to deploying the air resources, land resources, the heavy equipment. What we have right now is a contract with a private contractor to manage and operate the 215s, for example, and we have a contract for some land-based. That equipment becomes available to the Government of the Northwest Territories for us to deploy where it's needed. So they are there and they are sent to where they're needed, same as our fire crews that we have with the communities and our own fire crews are deployed where they're needed and on an as required basis.

Fighting fire is like a military campaign. There are a lot of variables. There's the fire, there's the terrain, there's the wind, there's any precipitation. Is there wet ground nearby? Are there cutlines? What do you need to do to back burn? There are all those things that the Member talked about. It's very, very fast moving, so you need a type of command and control that is very nimble and versatile, but still have the big picture, and planes are a critical part of that.

We need to ensure that our folks on the ground, if they had no aircraft, they would be extremely disadvantaged. Not only disadvantaged, I would say that they would be at risk because they wouldn't have air support to come in to help them where they may be caught or there may be circumstances that they can't control just by on the ground.

When we talk air services, of course, we also spend a lot of money on rotary wing helicopters and those are privately owned and they are costing thousands of dollars an hour, \$3,000 or \$4,000 an hour depending on the size of the helicopter. We try to make sure that we spare no expense when it comes to protecting the interests of Northerners and making sure that our folks on the ground, the thin line of really hard work on firefighters, men and women, that they have all the backup they need, so they can in fact be like the infantry and the Air Force and then the armored division, which would be the heavy equipment. They all play their critical roles to win a battle.

I think if you look at Kakisa and those other places, it was a tremendous job that they will probably study that fire to see now as a textbook example of how you fight fires. What happens if a community FireSmarts themselves, which Kakisa did, what role that played in protecting their own community.

The Member asked if there are different levels of protection depending if you're in the north or in the south. I would tell you unequivocally that there's not. I will tell you that when a community is threatened, it doesn't matter if it's Inuvik, Tulita, Deline, Kakisa, Yellowknife or Fort Smith, we pull out all the stops. We spare no expense and we bring our forces and every other place that we can beg, borrow or steal air support and ground support to come in, incident commanders, firefighters, planes, to assist us. The Member can well remember not that long ago in his community that some of them were threatened. We look at moving people. We evacuate. We do everything we need to make sure that we protect Northerners.

Regardless of where you are, people should know and sleep with comfort at night knowing that if they were in need, the forest fire division will be there and will be there like the cavalry. We will be there with everything we have to protect them.

But we are a huge territory. We had over 300, almost 400 fires. We fought about 150 or so, 130 of them, so it was physically impossible with 3.3 million square hectares under fire to fight all the fires. There are those in the hinterland and those that are near values at risk that were allowed to burn because we had to pay attention to those values that were most imminently at risk.

We had one fire crew in the Member's riding that was disbanded at the request of the group in Norman Wells, but we've trained an additional, I think, 400 firefighters last summer to fill in the gaps. This is something that we're very, very committed to. The 802s will be a critical part of that going forward. That is some of us more long-in-the-tooth folks going out to pasture maybe, if we don't run again, so too the 215s' time is reaching the same point in the cycle and there's a newer, younger generation of equipment there to make the life of the firefighters safer and more productive.

As it comes to the issue of water monitoring, we are ramping up, as the Member knows. I rattled off all the monitoring stations. The issue of a lab to test and do the tests on the fish and random tests on wildlife, we don't have that physical capacity yet. We are working on doing some of it. We sent out samples. So the Member's request is not unreasonable as we move forward here into the future.

In regard to office space, specifically, I will mention Deline. That the community is very interested, as the Member well knows, in a combined pooling of resources with ENR and Public Works and

Housing, and I think the community government, to see if we can build a common compound that would have work space, garage space, office space, and allow us to put all of our scarce capital dollars together to build one energy-efficient, coordinated, integrated facility. We are seriously looking at that. I'll ask the deputy to speak a bit further to the other office space in Colville and Fort Good Hope and maybe fill in any of the other gaps that I may have missed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to add to Colville and Fort Good Hope for office space, I know Fort Good Hope in particular is on our list for the following year; however, for Colville, though, I'll have to check into that facility there. I am aware and have visited that smaller little office in the centre of town. Their nice little place, no doubt, but going forward, again, I'm not aware of it at this point and I can look into that.

Just on fighting fires in the Northwest Territories, the Minister did identify there is very little difference here except, of course, we're all aware of the access issues and where there are areas where the road system is in and it's easier access, yes, we do take advantage of other equipment and we did use a substantial amount of heavy equipment this past summer in the southern part of the Northwest Territories. Of course, with that is a lot of reclamation work. We're underway with the reclamation work and my understanding is that we're very close here to completing working with the Lands department and completing the reclamation work and some of the work of the heavy equipment.

Also, I just want to point out on the command system and all the different angles and support and the processes that are underway, a lot of times a lot of people are not clear that eventually the people that put out the fires or when we call a fire out or under control that it's our firefighters and as result of their work. I know there's that misconception that's out there that the tankers put our fires out. Well, they're retardant aircraft. They retard the growth of the fires, and to get control and put the fires out it's definitely our fire crews that do that.

On the capacity, we do have where we had 29 crews, one community felt that they couldn't fulfill their contract, so we have 28 fire crews, but part of the review this year that we're undertaking now is to assess whether that amount of crews or that configuration of five-man crews is the right mix here for initial attack and fire suppression, especially in light of the extreme season we had and we definitely have to look at that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, deputy minister. Committee, we're on general comments

for Environment and Natural Resources. Committee agrees we'll go to detail?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): We're on page 17, Environment and Natural Resources. I'll defer until we consider all the detail. Page 18, Environment and Natural Resources, conservation assessment and monitoring, infrastructure and investment, \$1.498 million.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Page 22, forest management, infrastructure investment, \$8.720 million. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions I have with respect to the air tanker fleet again. Because it is on this page, I want to ask a little bit more specific in detail how does the department plan to amortize this equipment when it indeed comes into our fleet. I know this year, I think there's a smaller amount that's going into the capital budget, and I know at the end I think the Minister did throw a number around of \$30 million. How will that \$30 million be amortized on our books as we deal with public accounts?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Dolyunny. Mr. Mawdsley.

MR. MAWDSLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The schedule of the purchase of the aircraft is there will be a down payment paid in April 2015 and then there will be progress payments over the next two years until April 2017 when the aircraft will be finally delivered. The cost of the aircraft will be amortized under the government's financial practices and procedures over the life of the aircraft. The projected amortization is at least 20 years. I trust that answers your question, sir.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Mawdsley. Mr. Dolyunny.

MR. DOLYNNY: The reason why I asked that question is because, according to our policy, I believe airplane or air fleet is not indicated, I believe, in our Financial Administration Act, and so I needed to know clarity given best practices in public accounting standards. We can ask that question when we get to Public Accounts, but I'll need to know that number specifically when we get there.

With respect to the fleet itself, when the fleet does arrive in the Northwest Territories, do we have any indication where this fleet will be located primarily from an operational base standpoint?

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is going to be the forest management programs in Fort Smith. The tender to

operate and maintain will be let. In all probability, it will be one of the large operators in Yellowknife. We will build in the requirements for storage during fire season. As with the 215s, they are stationed as on an as anticipated need basis, some in Yellowknife, some in Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells, depending on where the project need is or if there are some active fires there, and that is always changing. The Members will remember over the years flying out of Yellowknife, you'd see the fleet parked on one of the aprons here covered in snow for eight months of the year. I'll ask the deputy to talk a bit about what we anticipate in terms of the new planes whether we're going to require covered storage. I'll ask the deputy to respond.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Deputy Minister Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister points out, going forward with these new aircraft, that will be a requirement in the contract for storage. We believe by going to an O and M contract that there will be a number of northern companies that would be interested and a number of northern companies that will have the capacity to address not just the O and M with their facilities but the storage as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Dolynny.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the deputy minister responding, but from that response I have a hard time figuring out exactly where these planes will be located. We heard Fort Smith at the Fire Centre. We've heard maybe Yellowknife. We've heard many other bases throughout the Northwest Territories. There was some mention that this would possibly go to an operator base, whether or not it would be RFP'd or not I didn't quite hear that and that there would be an operations and maintenance contract associated with that, again not knowing if this would be an RFP type scenario. So I might want to get clarity with that. But in addition to that I'd probably like to ask, we know that the primary manufacturer, I believe it's Conair, and Conair, by virtue, will control the parts and the availability of parts and possibly some of the proprietary rights around these new 802s. What security or reassurance do we have that potential people, organizations or companies will have that if we do go down this route of purchasing these 802s that Conair will play nice in the sandbox, so to speak, and work with northern contractors? What reassurances do we have that this will indeed transpire?

Again, if we can get some clarity as to this future company or companies that would be involved with the O and M, the location of fleet. Is this indeed something that will be an RFP, or has the Minister or department predetermined where these planes

are going to be stationed once they do arrive in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

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

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At the start of the season, the practice has been the 215s, and we would anticipate following with 802s, that you'd have right now two to start the season. Two of the 215s are stationed in Yellowknife, and the other two are on the ground in the South Slave at the base in Fort Smith. Then from there they're deployed as required. Conair is not the manufacturer; they're the Canadian supplier for Air Tractor. The planes are manufactured in Texas I believe. We have a letter of commitment and we've got that point clarified, at the request of committee, that if we proceed with the purchase, Conair will sell us the planes and there's no strings or caveats on them getting the contract or not, getting us parts, unless we do business with them or anything of that nature, and that letter was shared with committee. Thank you.

MR. DOLYNNY: Thank you. So, again, I appreciate the Minister mentioning a letter. I wish I could have, but unfortunately, I'm under the convention I'm not allowed to talk about correspondence that committee receives. So I'm glad that this letter has now been mentioned by the Minister.

The letter in question did give some reassurance and I'll underline that word that Conair would work with any northern contractor, but again, what safeguards do northern contractors have or any specific caveat that would reassure business owners here that Conair will work in conjunction with northern providers to provide the operations and maintenance contract in its wholesome format? Thank you.

HON. MICHAEL MILTENBERGER: Thank you. I guess there are a couple things. There is the portrayal of a deep and abiding suspicion of the motives of Conair. They're in a business and one of their functions is that they're the supplier of an aircraft, and the only supplier. They've told us in writing that in fact there are no caveats, that we can expect full support, and if we want more of their services, they'd be happy to have those discussions, but it's not contingent upon us getting the planes, that they won't sell us the planes unless they're given all these other considerations. They pretty clearly and categorically say that, and I've talked to the president and the vice-president myself.

Now, we also have a letter here from Air Tractor itself in Texas where they say that Conair has been their representative for many years and has established themselves as one of our reliable customer service-oriented dealers and we are sure that they will serve you well and that they are the

exclusive dealer for Air Tractor in Canada. So we believe we have the assurances that we need. I suggest we don't write to Ford Patel that they give us this kind of comfort or any other major supplier of equipment, but we have it and we are confident that it gives us all the protection that we need. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): Thank you, Minister Miltenberger. Next on my list is Mrs. Groenewegen.

MRS. GROENEWEGEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that we report progress.

---Carried

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Bouchard): I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister. Thanks, witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out of the Chamber. Thank you.

Report of Committee of the Whole

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

MR. BOUCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Tabled Document 115-17(5), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2015-2016, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

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

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Speaker, there will be a meeting of the Priorities and Planning committee at adjournment today.

Orders of the day for Tuesday, October 28, 2014, 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
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 33, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act, No. 2
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Education Act
 - Bill 27, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2014
 - Bill 29, Human Tissue Donation Act
 - Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Public Service Act
 - Bill 32, An Act to Amend the Pharmacy Act
 - Committee Report 7-17(5), Report on the Development of the Economic Opportunities and Mineral Development Strategies
 - Tabled Document 115-17(5), Northwest Territories Capital Estimates 2015-2016
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, October 28th, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:56 p.m.