



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2nd Session

Day 43

18th Assembly

HANSARD

Friday, November 4, 2016

Pages 1385 – 1402

The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Government House Leader

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister Responsible for the

Workers' Safety and Compensation

Commission

Minister Responsible for Seniors

Minister Responsible for Persons with

Disabilities

Minister Responsible for the Public

Utilities Board

Mr. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

(Range Lake)

Minister of Municipal and Community

Affairs

Minister Responsible for Northwest

Territories Housing Corporation

Minister Responsible for the Status of

Women

Lead Responsibility for Addressing

Homelessness

Ms. Julie Green

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of Executive

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and

Intergovernmental Relations

Hon. Robert McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Finance

Minister of Environment and Natural

Resources

Minister of Human Resources

Lead Responsibility for Infrastructure

Mr. Daniel McNeely

(Sahtu)

Hon. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Minister of Education, Culture and

Employment

Minister Responsible for Youth

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Mr. Herbert Nakimayak

(Nunakput)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Hon. Wally Schumann

(Hay River South)

Minister of Industry, Tourism and

Investment

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister of Transportation

Hon. Louis Sebert

(Thebacha)

Minister of Justice

Minister of Lands

Minister Responsible for the Northwest

Territories Power Corporation

Minister Responsible for Public

Engagement and Transparency

Mr. R.J. Simpson

(Hay River North)

Mr. Kieron Testart

(Kam Lake)

Mr. Shane Thompson

(Nahendeh)

Mr. Cory Vanthuyne

(Yellowknife North)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Principal Clerk, Committees and Public Affairs

Mr. Michael Ball

Principal Clerk, Corporate and Interparliamentary Affairs

Ms. Cayley Thomas (Acting)

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Mr. Glen Rutland

Ms. Alyssa Holland

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	1385
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	1385
109-18(2) – Skills 4 Success Four-Year Action Plan (Moses)	1385
110-18(2) – Economic Potential of the Yellowknife Airport (Schumann)	1386
111-18(2) – Update on Advancing Government Openness and Transparency (Sebert)	1386
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	1388
Relocation of Residents from the Community of Rocher River (Beaulieu)	1388
Commercial Fishing in the Arctic Ocean (Nakimayak)	1389
Reflections on the First Year of the 18th Assembly (Testart)	1389
Recognition of Constituents' Achievements (Thompson)	1390
Government Strategies and Projects for Capacity Building (McNeely).....	1390
Reflections on the First Year of the 18th Assembly (Vanthuyne)	1391
Aboriginal Head Start and Early Childhood Education Programs (Blake)	1392
Recognition of Lois Phillip, Recipient of the Indspire Award for Leadership (Nadli)	1392
Disabilities Action Plan (Green).....	1392, 1393
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	1393, 1400
ORAL QUESTIONS.....	1393
TABLING OF DOCUMENTS	1400
MOTIONS	1401
28-18(2) – Extended Adjournment of the House to January 31, 2016 (Green)	1401
ASSENT TO BILLS	1401
ORDERS OF THE DAY	1402

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Friday, November 4, 2016****Members Present**

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

The House met at 10:00 a.m.

Prayer

ELDER NANCY PEEL: Good morning. Maybe we can have a brief moment of silence to remember all of those people out there that we're serving, and then I'll do a short prayer.

Let us pray together. Gracious and almighty God, thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve the people of the Northwest Territories, the opportunity to work together in peace and harmony and to do the best thing for our people in the Northwest Territories, enable us to feel the suffering of those who are homeless and having a difficult time, and help us to make wise decisions together. We ask this through our creator. Amen.

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Masi. Good morning colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 109-18(2):
SKILLS 4 SUCCESS FOUR-YEAR ACTION PLAN

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to take steps to close the skills gap using the Skills 4 Success Strategic Framework. I am pleased to advise Members that later today I will be tabling the Skills 4 Success Four-Year Action Plan 2016-2020, which outlines what we will do to improve employment success for the people of the Northwest Territories. This is an important milestone in meeting our mandate commitments.

The action plan aligns with the Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework and contains four goals related to skills development, streamlined supports, NWT workforce partnerships, and labour market information. Together, these will help us achieve the vision that NWT residents have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes for employment success. We have focused the Action Plan 2016-2020 on jobs that are in demand, to prepare NWT residents

for the many employment opportunities that exist today and will be needed in the future. Mr. Speaker, we want Northern residents to be first in line for jobs in the NWT. We also want to help build and expand a skilled workforce to meet our future labour demand. To do this, we must ensure that our education and training system keeps pace with the changing dynamics of our labour market, so that NWT residents gain the necessary education and skills required to be successful in their employment pursuits.

Mr. Speaker, Action Plan 2016-2020 will do just that. It contains a manageable number of planned actions for the next four years. We chose these actions based on extensive research on adults and postsecondary education and training, feedback from informed stakeholder engagements, and evidence contained in the comprehensive up-to-date labour market information for the NWT. This combined evidence shaped our decisions and provides a solid path to identify and implement appropriate programs and supports to prepare residents for future employment opportunities.

We have reached this milestone with the support of many stakeholders who have provided their input. Our work involved a series of public engagements and regional focus groups, a territorial symposium, meetings and online surveys. We captured feedback from more than 1,000 residents and organizations, including educators, trainers, students, apprentices, job seekers, employers, employees, policy makers, and retirees. During the course of the action plan's development we heard a call to build a strong culture of education that is linked to employment. This is reflected prominently in Action Plan 2016-2020.

Through all our engagements all partners expressed a willingness to continue working together. I cannot stress this more emphatically, Mr. Speaker, for this is the key to successfully implementing Action Plan 2016-2020 and achieving the strategic framework's goals and priorities. The action plan places priority on growing the NWT workforce through partnerships. I am encouraged by the support that the department received when we proposed collaborating with partners, to reduce duplication and focus resources for improved

education, training and employment outcomes for NWT residents.

Skills 4 Success builds on a continuum of education strategies that are essential for education and employment success in the NWT. Over the next four years we will continue to take the steps necessary to support NWT residents so that they have the skills for success to be first in line for employment opportunities in this territory.

Our success will be measured by how well we work together to implement the actions in the plan, and I call on all partners with an interest in improving our system to join us in this work. I am confident we can accomplish our goals when we all pull in the same direction. Mr. Speaker, I think we are on a solid path with Action Plan 2016-2020 and I look forward to working with Members to implementing it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 110-18(2):
ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THE YELLOWKNIFE
AIRPORT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, today I would like to provide an overview of the Department of Transportation's efforts to capture economic opportunities at the Yellowknife airport.

The department is taking steps to make the Yellowknife airport financially self-sufficient. By running the airport more like a business, we will be able to make capital improvements, create jobs, and explore opportunities to drive economic growth across the territory. The Yellowknife airport is crucial to the territorial economy and creates 1,000 direct and 2,000 indirect jobs. We need to be sure we are capturing these opportunities for the people and businesses of the Northwest Territories.

The department has undertaken extensive engagement with stakeholders on the proposed changes and improvements to the Yellowknife airport. We have actively sought and received feedback about ideas for improvements to the airport and ways to increase economic opportunities associated with it.

We've learned that people are looking for increased business services, expanded food and beverage options, more parking options, streamlined check-in, a better sense of place, improved de-icing capabilities for on-time performance, more direct flights to more cities, and a commercial plan to drive business at and around the Yellowknife airport. Safety, of course, will remain our number one priority.

The department has prepared a draft business plan for the Yellowknife airport using this feedback and input from experts in the aviation industry experienced in airport commercial development. This plan has been shared broadly and is available for public review and input. The improvements identified in this plan will help to ensure a safe, secure and efficient facility, making the overall travel experience more enjoyable for visitors and residents.

To make these changes possible, the department is proposing to increase fees, with all revenue collected at the airport being deposited into a revolving fund. The revolving fund will ensure that all revenues collected at the Yellowknife airport will only be spent on the Yellowknife airport. This fund is separate from general GNWT revenues and would allow management to make the improvements noted in the draft business plan. The airport would no longer require a subsidy from the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Across North America, airports are important economic drivers and play a key role in generating additional economic growth, creating jobs, and providing an enjoyable travel experience for residents and visitors alike. As we move forward in this process, we look forward to working with all stakeholders to gather additional input on how these improvements will unfold. Mr. Speaker, improving territorial transportation infrastructure will remain one of the priorities of this government, as part of our commitments to support business and employment opportunities, and maximize opportunities to realize our economic potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 111-18(2):
UPDATE ON ADVANCING GOVERNMENT
OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, openness and transparency are fundamental principles of democracy that contribute to government accountability. These principles underpin our debates and discussions here in this House, where government plans, policies, and budgets are presented for examination and approval by the public's elected representatives. Every day during session, Members ask Ministers to explain government proposals, decisions, and actions in a public forum open to anyone who wants to attend or watch our proceedings on television.

We see the commitment to openness and transparency in the Guiding Principles for Consensus Government in the Northwest

Territories, which state that the business of consensus government should be carried out in public and that public meetings should be the rule, not the exception.

We also see it in the GNWT's Communications Policy and its requirements that we:

- ensure that the public is informed about government policies, activities, initiatives, and programs and services;
- take public concerns and views into account in establishing priorities, developing policies, and implementing programs; and
- ensure that the government is visible, accessible, and answerable to the public it serves.

Yet, while openness and transparency have always been important principles for the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories, we recognize that policies and procedures need to evolve over time to keep up with changing expectations.

During the last two Assemblies, for instance, MLAs adopted increasingly public and transparent processes for setting priorities and choosing the Premier and members of the executive council. During his candidacy speech, the Premier made several commitments around improved openness and transparency, including the commitment to hold meetings with Cabinet in NWT regions and naming a Minister to take the lead on developing an open government policy.

In its mandate, the Government of the Northwest Territories made several commitments responding to the Legislative Assembly priority of improving accountability, transparency, and collaboration, including:

- maximizing citizens' ability to access government;
- establishing an open government policy;
- improving public visibility and accessibility of Cabinet;
- improving opportunities for meaningful public input into government decision-making;
- making residents aware of mechanisms to appeal government decisions;
- improving awareness of government programs and services; and
- developing Ombudsman legislation.

The Premier's mandate letter to me as Minister of Public Engagement and Transparency instructed me to:

- establish an open government policy;
- publish an open and accountable government document;
- advance the principles of open data;
- enhance awareness about how to access GNWT programs and services;
- enhance awareness about how to serve on territorial boards and agencies;
- promote gender equity on boards and agencies;
- identify standards for public engagement;
- promote awareness about information government accountability;
- support the review of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and
- develop Ombudsman legislation.

Today, I'd like to update Members on some of the progress that the Government of the Northwest Territories has already made to improve its openness and transparency.

In response to a commitment made by the Premier in his candidacy speech in the Territorial Leadership Committee and repeated in the GNWT mandate, we are improving the visibility and accessibility of Cabinet through regional open houses. Over the past several months, Cabinet has held open houses in five communities; Inuvik, Norman Wells, Hay River, Fort Simpson, and Yellowknife. We are currently making plans for an open house in Behchoko, and the Premier has also committed to a second round of open houses in Fort Smith and some of the smaller communities in each region.

In response to our commitment in the GNWT mandate, we also held a meeting of the Economy and Environment Committee of Cabinet in public and are planning meetings in public for other Cabinet committees in the new year.

To help improve public understanding of Cabinet's role in the consensus system and how it makes decisions, we have published on the GNWT website all of the ministerial mandate letters issued by the Premier. We have also published the Members of the Executive Council Handbook and the terms of reference for each committee of Cabinet. To advance the GNWT commitment to

establish an open government policy, I will begin public engagement sessions to ask NWT residents what open government means to them, what kind of information they want from their government and how they would like to access it. We expect to hold public sessions in at least 14 communities across the Northwest Territories, and we are also looking at some targeted sessions for selected stakeholders, including media. I look forward to updating members on our public engagement sometime during the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

To promote awareness about information on government accountability, the government is launching a new mandate reporting website later today. This website will allow any member of the public to quickly find out what progress the GNWT has made on each of its mandate commitments. Citizens will be able to see milestones for each commitment, quickly gauge progress, and drill down for more detailed information.

We are also making progress as a government in expanding the volume and accessibility of government data available to citizens. These initiatives include a new public board appointments website with searchable vacancy data that will be launched in the coming weeks. We will also be launching a new website for reporting on Ministers' travel and on meetings between Ministers and outside parties. Instead of quarterly PDF reports, information will now be sortable online and published monthly. We expect to go live with this website within the month.

To improve the accessibility of information that we are already publishing, we are planning to publish data on government sole-source contracts in an open-data format. This will also be making the GNWT's Contracts Over \$5000 report available in an open data format. Mr. Speaker, improving government openness and transparency is a responsibility that all Ministers share. While the Premier has assigned specific tasks to me, all Ministers are responsible for taking steps within their departments to live up to the government's obligations and the expectations of our residents. I look forward to updating members again on our work in this area in the next sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RELOCATION OF RESIDENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY OF ROCHER RIVER

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [Translation] today I would like to talk about Rocher River and Rat River. Since 1959, the school had burned down and, since that time, the people have been dispersed away from the community. Some moved to Fort Resolution. A lot went to Hay River, Fort Smith. The people moved to the south, even. That's what I want to talk about today. [Translation ends.]

During 1959, the small Dene community of 200 to 300 people and about 50 residents just 24 miles upriver at a place called Rat River were relocated from their established communities. The Dene were displaced to Fort Resolution, Yellowknife, Fort Smith, while others moved out of the territories totally.

Mr. Speaker, ironically, the people were forced to relocate after the local school burned down on New Years' Day 1959, a new beginning of a year that was far from celebratory. In fact, the government of the day made no attempt to rebuild the school. This small community was called Rocher River and was located on the Taltson River, a few miles from the mouth.

By 1964, most residents of Rocher River had moved to other communities and only a few continued their lifestyle, living off the land. Of these, some stayed in Rocher River, some at Rat River, and some up other parts of the Taltson River. The Government of Canada built the Taltson River hydroelectric dam without consulting the people of Rocher River because they were relocated. The same dam was built to generate electrical power for the Pine Point Mine. This process took people away from their homes and their traditional lifestyles. Mr. Speaker, my family was one of those that were displaced. My mother told me that Rocher River went from a place to build a prosperous living to nothing after the dam was built.

The Taltson River dam created an irreversible situation for the people that depended on the land to make a living. You see, unstable water fluctuations during the winter months discouraged trapping and hunting along the river. The impacts of these changes are still felt today. Younger generations have been deprived of opportunities to grow in their rightful knowledge of the land.

Without adequate consultation with the affected people of Rocher River, the people's way of life was destroyed and their community is hardly known by many residents of the NWT today. But Rocher

River should not be forgotten. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I want to remember what happened there and commend the residents' story into a permanent record of the House. Marci cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON COMMERCIAL FISHING IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, change in the ice coverage and the longer open water season means greater potential for commercial fishing in the Arctic. Ten stakeholder countries gathered in Iqaluit this past summer to negotiate measures for sustainable fishing in the Arctic Ocean and address dangers of unregulated and reported fishing that could deplete the fish stock.

Mr. Speaker, currently international law says that anyone can fish on the high seas. Mr. Speaker, for those who don't know what the high seas are, the high seas are waters 200 miles off the shoreline. The area most likely to be fished in the central Arctic Ocean in the near future would probably be adjacent to the Beaufort Sea. The ice there has been opening up more and more over the course of the past five or six years. Any offshore fishing that takes place in that region has the potential to affect fish stocks in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, Canada, Denmark, Russia, the United States, Norway and Denmark have been meeting on the issue since 2010. This year, negotiations expanded to add delegations from Iceland, China, Japan, South Korea, and the European Union. ICC was part of the Canadian delegation. I had the privilege of attending the sessions in July representing Canada.

One of the successes of this conference was ensuring that Inuit local and traditional knowledge is a key factor in working alongside scientific knowledge as we move forward. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier this sitting, to the people of the Arctic the ocean is our grocery store. Protecting the interests of Indigenous people in Canada's North is a big part of the negotiations, as well as incorporating traditional Inuit knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, over 200 species of fish thrive in our ocean, and we need a binding agreement on Arctic fishery that's broad enough and strong enough to stand up internationally. It was encouraging to see all 10 countries around the table willing to work

together to address the issues of unregulated fishing and to cooperate on research and science. Traditional and scientific knowledge is essential to making the best decisions for the Arctic.

Mr. Speaker, despite the complexity of the negotiations, good progress was made this summer. Right now, the US is pushing for a legally-binding agreement. I am optimistic that all parties can reach their goal of finalizing a draft very soon. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST YEAR OF THE 18TH ASSEMBLY

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, it is almost to the day that I and all honourable Members of this House were elected to the 18th Assembly, and I simply cannot put into words the honour felt when the confidence of Kam Lakers was bestowed upon me on November 23, 2015, to represent them here as a Member. I imagine that the feeling is shared by all my colleagues in the 18th Assembly, for politics is the art of the possible, and those who are fortunate enough to be in public service must always remember why we decided to stand up and run for office: to assist in the continuance making of our society better.

When I went to the doors during the election, I offered Kam Lakers a costed platform with key priorities such as supporting the natural resource industry and small business sector while also supporting the developing of a diverse and knowledge-based economy; taking action on poverty, homelessness and addictions so we can live in healthier communities; and also looking at innovative and practical ways to achieve that within the life of this government.

Doing all within my ability to make government more open and transparent while protecting the public's right to information is a huge priority for me, because, Mr. Speaker, the people should always know how their representatives are doing their jobs. All these priorities are common-sense concepts that can easily be accomplished by this Assembly and this government, and I'm proud to say we are well on our way to making many of these commitments happen.

Mr. Speaker, an essential aspect of the role of being a Member of the Legislative Assembly is holding the government accountable, and though the honourable Members of Cabinet and I do not always see eye to eye, I do believe that we have the best interest of Northerners at the forefront of our efforts to build a stronger NWT.

To the honourable Members who sit with me on standing committees and the seats opposite Cabinet, I congratulate you all in the way you've conducted yourself as Members of this House over the last year. We have proven to work hard for our constituents and to work together in solidarity to ensure that our government doesn't lose sight of the people we serve. I urge all of us to keep pace and to carry on with the good work that we have been doing to date.

Mr. Speaker, when I first stepped into this Chamber I was struck with the awesome responsibility that has been placed on me by my constituents. I again want to thank the people of Kam Lake for this amazing honour. I will continue to serve their interests as my top priority, and will continue to work to deliver on the promises I made during the last election. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll see you next year.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF CONSTITUENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to just do a couple of acknowledgements. First of all, I'd like to thank all my colleagues both here and on both sides for a great sitting and the work we are doing for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take my time to recognize a few individuals in an organization in my riding. Mr. Speaker, the first person I'd like to recognize is Kathie McLeod. Ms. McLeod is the Echo-Dene School secretary and I know her personally, and I find her to be an amazing individual.

Mr. Speaker, after receiving her residential school common payment she decided she had to do something for her community with this money. After thinking about it, she organized and offered a community feast and a drum dance. She covered all the costs for all the food and prepared the meal. The community covered the cost for the drummers from Fort Providence and the hall rental. When asked why this individual did this, she said, "because I wanted to."

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the community of Fort Simpson held a community event for the National Skills Trades and Technology Awareness Week. The regional Department of Education, Culture and Employment service centre hosted an Apprenticeship Trade and Occupational Certification for top awards to promote careers in the skills trade and technology.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize William Blyth from Fort Simpson, a second-level electrician, and Al Harris from the Hamlet of Fort Liard for the community works foreman for receiving their award, as well as the companies in the hamlet and community band organizations for the support of all workers.

Mr. Speaker, the third person I would like to recognize is Jennifer McInnis-Wharton, who won the BMO Financial Group's first art award. This event was an individual student art competition. She was selected as New Brunswick's winner, where she was going to College of Craft and Design. Mr. Speaker, Ms. McInnis-Wharton submitted a piece entitled "Home," a tribute to her father. Ms. McInnis-Wharton won a national prize and a trip to Toronto for the opening of the first Art 2016 Exhibition in November. Mr. Speaker, I'd like unanimous consent to finish my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the Fort Simpson Historical Society on their work towards the new Heritage Centre. If everything goes well, we'll be opening this March. Mr. Speaker, the society spent years of planning and fundraising to start the project in August 2014. There were a few challenges to the society during the construction period, but they were getting closer. It is great to see this project almost come to completion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we come to our last session day of this calendar year, I've come to realize and see government's operations from a different and more positive perspective. I'm not saying that, Mr. Speaker, I just got up, I'm only saying I'm waiting for my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, as elected Members of this 18th Assembly, starting with the selection of our representation back in December 2015 and January 2016, understanding of the operations and deliverance of programming gives me confidence in our mandate. This deliverance can be seen by the developments of the strategies that each department has initiated as their focus of need and aspirations of the people we serve.

Sure, Mr. Speaker, we don't always agree; geographically, our areas are very much different, and every circumstance. The one largest challenge we have is our fiscal inheritance. However, our managers from the other side will guide us in the right direction, hopefully, while providing certainty and confidence in our investment community.

Development on directions can be seen by the listed strategies; I highlight a few, Mr. Speaker:

1. NWT Climate Change Strategy
2. Agriculture Strategy
3. Northern Manufacturing Strategy
4. National Housing Strategy
5. Anti-Poverty Strategy
6. Mental Health Strategy
7. Early Childhood Strategy
8. Lands Integrated Risk-Based Strategic Plan
9. ENR Strategic Plan 2015-2020
10. Skills 4 Success
11. Oil and Gas Strategy
12. NWT Mineral Development Strategy

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Aside from the strategic directives, projects under way for capacity building, just to name a few, are:

- Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway
- Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line
- Stanton Hospital

Mr. Speaker, there are other projects to come. As my colleague across the way once said, "the best social program is a job," and I totally agree.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I recognize the efforts and dedication of the departments and the executive staff and their pledged after-hours work duties. I will remain a supporter for accountability and transparency of maximizing our public funds returns, and I look forward to working with this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST YEAR OF THE 18TH ASSEMBLY

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by taking this opportunity to once again thank the constituents of Yellowknife North for putting their trust in me. Mr. Speaker, the 18th Assembly has almost completed its first year. We are 25 per cent of the way through this term. It's a good time to take stock and reassess.

We can proudly point to some significant accomplishments. Leading the way was a new mandate, the commitment to our people. We've made significant progress toward transparency and openness. We approved an operational and a capital budget that staved off major program cuts and job reductions, and found some new program money. We adopted a plan for a mid-term review, and updated our consensus government principles. We achieved unanimous agreement on moving forward with junior kindergarten.

Just in the last few weeks, standing committees have made significant steps towards public access to their proceedings. Ministers have made significant announcements in this House, signaling progress on mandate issues.

Mr. Speaker, there's still work to be done. We have a commitment to bring forward Ombudsman legislation in the next year. Demand for 911 services is not going away. The dark cloud around power rates and electricity services still hangs. What does made-in-the-North, post-secondary education look like? Maybe most importantly for our health, education, environment and economy, is the work that needs to be done on unsettled land claims.

Mr. Speaker, our successes were achieved by working together in the true spirit of consensus government. That doesn't mean that these 19 people will always agree. We have differences. We have been willing to collaborate and, when necessary, compromise. In that spirit, and recognizing that we must be responsible stewards of the public purse, I suggest that our mandate calls on us to make investments in our future.

Residents heard our commitments. Now they want to see us expanding educational opportunities, providing better health care, supporting small business and advancing exploration, developing partnerships, and creating infrastructure. These are steps that will support real economic growth, and create good jobs.

Yes, we face challenges in this great territory. However, we promised to invest in our people, and that's what we must do; follow the mandate, invest

in growth, and bravely move ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABORIGINAL HEAD START AND EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over these past few weeks Members have spent much of our time in this House talking about the importance of empowering parents, children, and communities to actively participate in how their children's education unfolds. This means empowering parents to choose language education classes for their children, whether Gwich'in or Inuvialuktun. It means empowering parents to choose which pre-kindergarten program best suits their child, whether junior kindergarten, Aboriginal Head Start, or another.

The junior kindergarten motion that we carried in this House on the 26th of October shows our commitment to choice and access to the best possible programming for NWT parents and children. This motion calls on the government to recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach won't work for all communities, especially communities with current and thriving programs, but smaller populations. Fort McPherson, for example, has a long-running and successful Aboriginal Head Start program, run by fully trained staff.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the department's recent study of junior kindergarten found that many program providers, including the teachers and experts who run Aboriginal Head Start, felt that their program had not been valued or respected. Before this sitting ends and we return to our ridings, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure, that these early childhood educators know Members do value their important work with children in the NWT and I will continue to defend it in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RECOGNITION OF LOIS PHILLIPP, RECIPIENT
OF THE INDSPIRE AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely proud to rise and stand in the House this morning and recognize a constituent. Lois Phillipp has worked in Deh Gah Elementary and Secondary School since 2005. Later this evening, in Toronto, Lois Phillipp will be receiving an Indspire Award. Indspire Award for Leadership states, "First Nation, Inuit or Metis person who consistently takes on a

leadership role in the educational community that fosters achievement amongst K-12 students."

Mr. Speaker, Lois Phillipp has been a principal at the Deh Gah Elementary and High School for 11 years. Her colleague, Margaret Thom, respectfully states about Lois, "I've spent days at the school and have seen Lois having a deep passion in her job, her students, and her staff; making sure she's creating a safe environment for each and every person coming into the school. I've seen her work with people and get them out of their comfort zone. Lois is a huge part of Fort Providence; she goes above and beyond and gives it all she's got."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend congratulations to Lois. Lois, you are an amazing and wonderful person and a great principal. You continue to provide stellar leadership and inspiration for our youth and community. Mahsi for all you do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DISABILITIES ACTION PLAN

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in March of this year I raised the issue of the dormant NWT Disabilities Action Plan, completed in 2008 but apparently forgotten until the NWT Disabilities Council resurrected it in 2015 with questions about its implementation and status. Their evaluation contained a number of recommendations, all based on the principle that we have all the information we need on current supports, or the lack thereof, and that we now need to move on to action.

I attempted to move this process forward through a motion, which was adopted by this House and supported by my colleagues, and supported by the Cabinet, as well. It called on the government to work with the NWT Disabilities Council and other stakeholders to develop a new action plan, including measurable outcomes and ongoing evaluation.

In June, the government replied to that motion. Government said it would first of all complete an updated inventory of the disabilities supports in place. The work would identify gaps in those services and assess the barriers to providing services in the right combinations. Key to the effort would be a collaborative process, including both service users' and service providers' input.

I understand that a working group including government and stakeholder representation has been created and they are hard at work. Detailed service and gap information is being assembled, with government members showing good effort to

collaborate across departmental lines. Next week, departments and stakeholders will gather again to review that disability program review and set plans for completing a new action plan that relies heavily on accountabilities and evaluation. In the reply to our motion, the government has promised that plan will be in place by the end of this fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, I seek consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent denied

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to recognize my wife, Judy McLeod, who has joined us today in the gallery. Welcome.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take an opportunity to thank all the pages who have been working with us over the last couple weeks. They provide us a great service, and we really appreciate everything they do. In particular, I wanted to recognize one of the pages who happens to be a resident of the Great Slave riding, Ethan Aumond. Thank you so much for everything you've done.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to see our constituents from the communities in the Chamber, here. I would like to recognize one of my constituents from Inuvik Boot Lake, Ms. Judy McLeod. Welcome. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we've missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for joining us. It's always great to have an audience in this part of our proceeding. Masi. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to go back to Members' statements so that I can conclude my statement, please.

---Unanimous consent granted

Member's Statements (Reversion)

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES ACTION PLAN

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. Representatives of the NGO sector are reporting positively and hopefully on the efforts with the disability action plan, but the test here will be whether this new plan suffers the same fate as the last. Clear deliverables, regular evaluation and reporting, and, above all, adequate resourcing will be essentially for making progress on helping persons with disabilities make the most of their potential. We'd like to see an end to the resolution of disability access cases through human rights complaints and settlements, as reported twice in recent media. It's time to get out in front of complaints with proactive delivery of services. I'll have questions for the Minister about the road ahead. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 462-18(2): SPORT, RECREATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REVIEW FINAL REPORT

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs tabled a report, and it was done by The Sutcliffe Group. In looking at this report, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please advise how this organization or company was selected to do this report? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs selected the contractor for this project through the standard request for proposal process, so that means we put out a call for proposals that was publicly distributed. The Sutcliffe Group was the only respondent to this request for proposals, but their bid matched the criteria that we were looking for in the request for proposals. Therefore, we awarded the contract to this group. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer. In looking at the report, there were a number of recommendations. Can the Minister advise this House if any of these recommendations have been implemented at this date?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: At this point, the department has begun to implement a couple of recommendations. The main one is that we're looking at undertaking the work that's involved to establish a Western Canada Lottery Commission within the department.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer. Can the Minister please explain why it only seems that the recommendations for nongovernmental organizations are being affected by this implementation?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The department actually reviewed and considered all of the recommendations contained within the report. At the moment, we are working on the implementation of the most critical ones, so right now we're looking at establishing in our legislation a special fund for the lottery operations. We are also in the process of calling together our five partnering sports organizations. The purpose of that will be to review the sectorial-wide policy, and, also, we will be looking at all of the recommendations within the report, to obtain their feedback on where we should be moving forward.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. I'm looking forward to that work. I think it's a very positive step. Can the Minister make a commitment to this House to report on the recommendations and see exactly where they are by the next sitting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, I will make sure that we actually give the Members an update during the next session. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 463-18(2):
DEVELOPMENT OF ARCTIC FISHERY

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about arctic fisheries, and my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: how is the GNWT monitoring the development of an agreement on the arctic fishery? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to advise the Member from Nunakput that the Government of the Northwest Territories has been monitoring the development of an arctic

fishery. We do this by our ongoing engagement on this file with our federal colleagues in Global Affairs Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and also we do so by being actively engaged in other forms, like the Arctic Council.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Any offshore fishing that takes place in that region can potentially affect fish stocks in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. My second question, Mr. Speaker, is how does the GNWT work with the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans in areas such as fishery where there is some overlap in the resources that we manage?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In the early days, we were involved, before the creation of Nunavut, with the Arctic fishery getting its early start. Since then, the Government of the Northwest Territories has a positive working relationship with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and every GNWT department interacts with DFO in one way or another. For example, our officers of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, through an agreement with DFO, have enforcement and administrative responsibilities under the Fisheries Act. Also, we as a government have written to the Federal Fisheries Minister requesting devolution of Fisheries' responsibilities to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: The concerns around managing commercial fishing in the Arctic are ultimately linked to climate change. My question, Mr. Speaker, is how is the GNWT incorporating traditional knowledge into work being done to create the NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Department of ENR, as well the Government of the Northwest Territories, has been very active in seeking the input of MLAs, Aboriginal governments, stakeholders, and residents as part of its work on developing the Northwest Territories' Climate Change Strategic Framework. We have incorporated those comments and concerns into the Climate Change Framework. Traditional knowledge has an important role to play in both the development and implementation of the framework, and our work will reflect that once it can be released.

I should also point out that the Government of the Northwest Territories has had a Traditional Knowledge Policy for over 25 years now.

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

QUESTION 464-18(2):
IMPLEMENTATION OF JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a couple of questions for the Minister of ECE. As the department develops the junior kindergarten implementation plan that reflects the recent motion, how will they communicate ongoing developments to current program providers and to communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As we move forward into the implementation of junior kindergarten and some of the recommendations that were made out of the motion we'll continue to engage with child day homes, day care centres, as well as Aboriginal Head Start in making sure that the transition to junior kindergarten is moved in a good manner, and that we share all the information moving forward. We do understand some of the concerns that are coming specifically out of the Member's region and we're trying to work on addressing those.

MR. BLAKE: Going forward from today, what avenues will current program providers and communities have to approach the department with their questions and concerns about junior kindergarten?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned, Aboriginal Head Start in particular is one that we've heard some concerns. Our staff has sat down with the managers and the staff on numerous occasions. We've also had the superintendents of the Beaufort-Delta Education Council work with the schools and Aboriginal Head Start to make sure that it's moving forward in a good manner and the working relationship is good.

We continue to do those consultations with Aboriginal Head Start, as well as all our other early childhood providers. As I mentioned, on August 24th we met with the Canadian Public Health Agency of Canada to inform Aboriginal Head Start that their funding is not going to be affected with the implementation of junior kindergarten. So any concerns that Aboriginal Head Start has in terms of implementation in 2017-2018, we still want to have those engagements and have those concerns brought forward to the department and we'll continue to share that information and have those dialogues.

MR. BLAKE: There are a number of people in my riding that have a lot of questions. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would be willing to travel to the communities to do a tour, whether it's in January or

December. I know he's very busy, but if the Minister has time, would he accompany me on a tour?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned on many occasions, since I've been in the position I've been to 20 out of the 33 communities in the NWT. We've seen some successful junior kindergarten programs in some of the regions that have been implementing them, whether it's the first year or even the third year. So I'd be more than happy to join the Member on a community tour and look at the programs, early childhood programs, in this community.

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

QUESTION 465-18(2):
EXTENDED HEALTH BENEFITS COVERAGE
FOR PROGRESSIVE AND TRI-FOCAL LENSES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's been recently brought to my attention by a few residents or constituents of Yellowknife North and, frankly, others, that there are concerns with regard to eye care, in particular, insured coverage. The challenges are that progressive lens and tri-focal lenses appear to not be covered within the Blue Cross coverage that these folks pay for. I'm wondering if the Minister of Health and Social Services can, in fact, clarify whether those types of lenses are covered or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, this has actually come up a number of times, and I understand the frustration that residents of the Northwest Territories, in particular seniors, who are accessing our extended benefits have with respect to these lenses. Progressive lens and tri-focal lens are a common lens; it's a lens that many people use. In fact, it's preferred by most individuals. Unfortunately, in order to not have a two-tiered health system here in the Northwest Territories with respect to what we're providing by way of coverage, our extended health benefits match exactly what is offered through NIHB; and to date, NIHB does not provide coverage for progressive lenses or other lenses like the tri-focals. As a result, we provide the same level of coverage that they did.

It has come up. I agree that it is frustrating. I've made a commitment during our negotiations with the federal government on NIHB; we intend to raise this as an issue and we hope that they would modify their formulary to include things like progressive lenses so that we can ensure that our residents, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, young, old, seniors, are getting the lenses they need.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I guess the question is: can the basic coverage be applied to the tri-focal and the progressive? Is there the opportunity to negotiate that portion of our agreement sooner rather than later to at least have the basic coverage applied to those types of lenses?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I wish, but, unfortunately, no. But to the Member's point, the negotiations have actually started already. We're in early stages of discussions, figuring out how the negotiation is going to move forward. I've made a commitment to our Aboriginal partners and governments that during these negotiations we want to make sure that our Aboriginal partners are engaged. The Aboriginal people are telling us the same thing around progressive lenses; that the seniors who are accessing our extended health benefits are saying, I can't say that we will win that fight, but it's a fight that we're undertaking now.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. It's good to hear that we're in negotiations in this regard. Can the Minister give us a potential timeline as to when he expects the negotiations to conclude, and that we can give Northerners what they deserve as it relates to their eye care coverage?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We deliver NIHB on behalf of the federal government. It is a federal government program, and the timing of the negotiations really depends on the speed that they wish to move forward. We're already engaged. I, unfortunately, can't tell you when these negotiations conclude. The end date is somewhat mobile or somewhat flexible, based on the intensity of some of the negotiations.

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

QUESTION 466-18(2):

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've seen a number of proposals for some infrastructure projects that are going as P3s. These partnerships have often been criticized. Notably, in 2014 there was a report from the Ontario Office of the Auditor General that indicated there could be an awful lot of savings if government handled the projects themselves. As we're looking towards P3s, I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance why we are pursuing a P3 options, what the advantages are over government capital projects. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we like to think there is a

number of advantages, one of them being the risk. There is a risk that goes onto the proponent through a P3 process. There's value for money. Before we determine whether we're going into a P3 process or not, we do have a deputy minister's committee that reviews it. Then the Minister will make a recommendation to the FMB, whether there's some merit going to P3 or not, once you do the balance of the positives and the negatives going towards a project rather than a traditional procurement process. But we think that it's a direction that more larger projects might go in the future. We've heard one of the directions that Canada would prefer, the jurisdictions as well. So there's a lot of value to it, and we'll continue to share all the information we have with committee as to some of the benefits of the P3 process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: One of the challenges of being a territorial government versus a provincial or the federal government is we have a debt limit that's controlled by Ottawa and is capped. How do P3s interact with our debt limit? Can we find more flexibility through P3 financing through our own borrowing?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: In a P3 project is just what we bookmark for the project that goes towards our debt limit. So, for example, if the project is worth -- let's use \$100 million as an example. If we have to put in \$50 million, well \$50 million would go toward our debt limit. If we go through the traditional procurement services, then all the money that's bookmarked for that particular project will go towards our debt limit.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. It seems that we do need to explore other options to suit our unique circumstances as a territory. If we're going to invest in infrastructure today, we need to look up those options so we can free up more time for investment. So it sounds like the Minister is doing that, and that's great, but how are we ensuring adequate oversight of P3 projects? Can the Minister provide honourable Members with some examples?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We find that this is a way to have our infrastructure dollars go further, and some of the risk being on the proponent. So I think there's some value there. As far as oversight, I'll used the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway for an example. We have an Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Oversight Committee that meets regularly and gets updates on the highway. So that type of oversight will continue for any of the other projects that we go through a P3 process; we get updated on Stanton quite regularly, we get updated on the Mackenzie fibre optic link quite regularly. So we have an enormous amount of oversight in these committees, and we feel that, in the future, this is the direction

to, as I said before, stretch out our infrastructure dollars a lot more to get more projects for the residents of the Northwest Territories. It's something that we would continue to pursue, unless we have a compelling reason not to.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for obliging. I raise these questions because members of the public do have concerns about these P3s. So is there a way we could make P3s more transparent? I was really encouraged by the Minister of Public Engagement and Transparency's statement today. Is the Department of Finance working on a way to bring more of this information to light and allow the public to have a better sense of why we use P3s and why it's an effective tool for this government, and that they are being held accountable for the millions of dollars we're investing in them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we do have a P3 policy that's readily available online. We might have to make it a little more accessible or put it right on the front page, because sometimes you have to navigate your way through the system to get at number of these policies. So we'll ensure that the policy itself is readily available if people want to have a look at it. But I think their big concern is not so much the policy, but the fact that this government wants to stretch our investments out a little further, get more projects for the communities across the Northwest Territories, because a lot of these people want to work. So, you know, we'll continue to do what we can to allow our infrastructure money to go a lot further.

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

QUESTION 467-18(2):
DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW DISABILITIES
ACTION PLAN

MS GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As I said in my Member's statement, I understand there's some good work under way developing the new Disabilities Action Plan. My questions are more by way of an update. Can the Minister confirm the status of the actions reported on in the reply to our disabilities motion, and whether we're on track to have a new plan in place by March 31st? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in March there was a motion that all Members of the House supported, including Members on this side. We have moved forward, we have begun the development of the plan. We intend to have it done March 31, as originally indicated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that reassurance. Of course, having a plan is one thing; but if the plan is not to suffer the fate of the last one, we'll need deliverables, evaluation, and reporting. Can the Minister commit that no plan will be produced without these features, including a mandatory annual reporting to this Assembly and an evaluation framework?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: That is the intention. We intend to have a plan outlining the services and whatnot that are provided today and identifying any gaps in services we need to provide, as well as an opportunity to have mechanisms to evaluate as we move forward.

MS GREEN: To break out one of the multiple questions there, could the Minister commit to annual reporting to the Assembly on the Disabilities Plan once it is delivered?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We'll certainly work with committee. We will keep them updated both with the review and the report, as well as moving forward.

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

MS GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Finally, on this point, I'm wondering whether the Minister will deliver with this plan a costed implementation plan and the assignment of the resources needed to deliver on it. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I knew the money question was coming. The Member has asked pretty much for money on every initiative that we're working on, which I appreciate, and obviously we would love to put money into these initiatives. The problem is, we have an expenditure versus revenue challenge here in the Government of the Northwest Territories. Any money that we put into new initiatives, new programs, is going to cost money, and that money has to come from somewhere.

As I've committed on the other questions the Member has asked, we're going to look carefully at how we're spending our money to make sure that we're getting maximum benefit for the dollars. If we have to re-profile how we're spending the dollars in order to get maximum benefit, we're prepared to do that. Once that's done, if it turns out we need some additional dollars, I'm prepared to work with

committee and Members to try to find those dollars from within existing resources so that we can make appropriate investment, but it's going to take the will of both sides to find areas to reduce in order to invest in new areas. So I'm not going to commit to having a fully costed plan at this point, because I think we have to have a lot more discussion on where our future investments are going to go, but I'm prepared to push for it.

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

QUESTION 468-18(2):
MEDICAL TRAVEL POLICY AND NON-MEDICAL ESCORTS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A couple of days ago I was asking the Minister of Health and Social Services some questions about medical travel, and I'd like to follow up with a couple of questions that I didn't get to ask that day. With the different authorities, with Hay River and Behchoko or Tlicho, does the medical travel policy still apply to that community, the ones that the department has developed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not sure I understand the question 100 per cent. If a resident of the Northwest Territories is given a referral to a community outside of their home community for a service, if they are required to go to another community to receive services, whether it's somebody going to Fort Resolution for an appointment or somebody from Simpson going to Edmonton or Yellowknife, medical travel will apply, and if there is a legitimate need for an escort, those needs will also be met. So I'm not sure I understand the question 100 per cent.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for the answer. He kind of answered the question. What I was asking, though, was: is that policy, the medical travel policy developed by the Department of Health and Social Services, applicable across the territories? I think the Minister answered the question, saying it does.

So my second question, and maybe he can answer this one. I shouldn't say can, I know he can. In regard to non-medical escorts, when people move from a small community to a larger centre, sometimes they lose that support system. So what is the process to allow people to get non-medical travel that are not in that community? So if I move from Fort Simpson to Hay River and I don't have the support system there and I need a medical escort, what is the process so that people from the

community that they live in can help support that patient?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This does happen from time to time. But to be clear, a medical escort, non-medical escort, still needs to be referred or supported by a practitioner. It's not a choice that the individuals get to make; they still have to have support. If there's a legitimate need, an escort will be provided.

I understand the situation the Member is describing. If Jane Doe lives in a community, has to go to Edmonton, but their daughter, spouse, whatnot, happens to live in a different community, how do we get the right people together? It's usually done through an exception request. This is something that an individual can request. It usually has to be escalated up further than the administrators who are actually doing the day-to-day administration of the program. But it is something that happens; it is an exception request.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for clarification on that; that's very helpful. Now I can work with the people in my riding that may be moving. That's very helpful.

The other big question, from what I've been hearing from the patients, does the department have a policy or a process that ensures that their information from the doctors or from our regional health centres are to the doctors down south? Or vice versa, the information is brought to the patient so they make sure they have everything there, so that, you know, it's not a waste of time, but so they get the treatment they needed? So can the Minister please explain if they have a process and how it's followed through?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories we have a Health Information Act that dictates how we protect an individual's privacy and share information with individuals involved in a circle of care, and there's certainly information that may not need to be sent out to a southern practitioner. It's usually done through the protocols that have been established that allows the information that's relevant to the particular situation that someone's going down for a doctor's appointment, so not necessarily everything would have to be sent.

In the Northwest Territories we have electronic medical records that allows practitioners to be involved in the circle of care, regardless of what community they live in, can have access to the files. Some of these things are still rolling out. We're still streamlining and making sure everything works perfectly, but we are moving forward with folks on respecting our residents and ensuring their

information is kept private and confidential where appropriate.

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

QUESTION 469-18(2):
WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION FOR PUBLIC
SERVICE EMPLOYEES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister responsible for Human Resources what the intention is for providing whistleblower protection for our public servants. Previously, the department has committed to both standalone legislation and to updating the Public Service Act to contain this provision. So what is the intention? Are we going forward with a standalone Whistleblower Protection Act, or are we simply making changes to the Public Service Act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Human Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: That legislation will be part of the Public Service Act.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for clarifying. When can honourable Members expect to see a legislative proposal or some work on that? I, of course, assume that will go to committee, but when can we start to see progress on that? I think it's very important that we allow our public servants to feel protected when they see concerns, and also that they can speak their minds to elected officials whenever they have a concern.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: It's a massive piece of legislation, and we can expect to see that, the LP, during the third quarter of the 18th Assembly.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Just for clarification, was the Minister referring to the third quarter or the third year of the Legislative Assembly?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: It's the same thing. Yes.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, and thank you for the clarification. Given that this is a massive piece of legislation and this is a really important step in the transparency commitments this government has made, is there any way to split this work out and move it ahead on its own?

I'm concerned that, if there is a legislative delay, sometimes these very large bills take a lot of time from our government and are delayed until future Assemblies. So is there a way to expedite this process by moving the whistleblower protections

out into their own legislation, and is the Minister willing to -- sorry, that's two questions, so I'll just go with that. Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: As far as splitting it out, the legislation is all connected. So we can do it quickly or we can do it right, and we want to make sure that we do this right. We will come forward to committee with an LP probably by about the third year of this Assembly, and they will have an opportunity to review it and we'll go forward from there.

If the Member is concerned about the safe disclosure, my understanding is there is a Safe Disclosure Policy that was done, I think, in concern with the UNW, so that is there. So we'll continue to work on the LP, and when we have it ready to go then we will have a conversation with committee and seek their input as well.

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

QUESTION 470-18(2):
CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make full use of question period today on our last day. I have some questions for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. A letter was tabled by the honourable Member for Frame Lake from the City of Yellowknife that indicated that the department is now working with the City of Yellowknife on forming a work plan for making the necessary legislative amendments to various pieces of legislation. Can the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs update honourable Members on the progress made to date and when that working group or that work plan will be completed?

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last evening, ironically, I just met with the NWT Association of Communities and they also had some concerns regarding the recommendations from the City of Yellowknife, so I have agreed to also work with them. So at this moment we are just in the process of pulling together a meeting so that all communities' municipal governments have a say in where we're going with the recommendations from the City of Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. TESTART: When will this meeting occur?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Since the meeting that we had last night was my first meeting with the

NWT Association of Communities, we never actually set a date. We did agree that we would meet, and so as soon as I know more when the date is confirmed, I will let the honourable Member know.

MR. TESTART: Has the City of Yellowknife, who was previously told work plans are being developed, they would be full partners in this work, have they been informed the plan has changed or are they still expecting the department to come back and work with the City on these amendments?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Unfortunately, the mayor for the City of Yellowknife was not at the meeting last night. We are still committed to working with the City of Yellowknife; however, we have an obligation whenever we make any legislative changes that we actually consult with all of the concerned parties, all of the municipal governments concerns. So we will abide by that.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know it's important to consult with our stakeholders, but it's also important to make decisions here in this House, and I know a number of honourable Members who have raised this concern that we want to see these amendments roll forward. So is this more delay from the department, or are we still committed to getting these changes done before the end of our term? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do recognize that the Members have issues that they want to ensure that I push through during this Legislative Assembly, but the Members have also asked for transparency and accountability. So within that, in trying to honour the wishes around transparency and accountability, we need to do due diligence, and that does mean consulting with all stakeholders when any major legislative changes are to be made.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm seeking unanimous consent to return to item 5 on the orders of the day.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the House for not paying attention to the orders close enough, but thank you for giving me the opportunity to recognize some people that have been working with us. I'd like to recognize the two interpreters from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Mr. Tommy Unka and Mary Rose Sundberg, and I also would like to recognize Caitlyn Beck. Caitlyn Beck's ancestors are from Rocher River, the place that I spoke of earlier, and her great grandmother came all the way from Louisiana and settled in Rocher River. That's where a lot of the Becks come from and she's part of that family. She's Grant Beck's great-great granddaughter. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. It's always great to hear the history of where people come from. Masi. Item 5, recognition of visitors in gallery. Item 12, reports of standing and special committee. Item 13, reports on committees on review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 235-18(2):
SKILLS 4 SUCCESS 4-YEAR ACTION PLAN
2016-2020

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled "Skills 4 Success 4-Year Action Plan 2016-2020." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

TABLED DOCUMENT 236-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HERITAGE FUND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2016

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Northwest Territories Heritage Fund Financial Statements for the Year Ended March 31, 2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

TABLED DOCUMENT 237-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled

"Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Annual Report 2015-2016."

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 401-18(2): Slave Geological Province Transportation Corridor." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

TABLED DOCUMENT 238-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO
ORAL QUESTION 401-18(2):
SLAVE GEOLOGICAL PROVINCE
TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Motions

MOTION 28-18(2):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
JANUARY 31, 2017,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave Lake, that notwithstanding Rule 4 when this House adjourns on November 4, 2016, it shall be adjourned until Tuesday, January 31, 2017;

AND FURTHER, that at any time prior to January 31, 2017, if this Speaker is satisfied after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly that the public interests requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called.

---Carried

Masi. Motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration of the Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters. Item 21, report on Committee of the Whole. Item 22, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, will

you ascertain if the Deputy Commissioner of Northwest Territories, the Honourable Gerald W. Kisoun, is ready to enter the Chamber and assent to bills.

Assent to Bills

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Mr. Kisoun): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good morning. Quyanainni, qaiqqafi, hai cho, shiik kut.

I would like to take a moment to encourage all residents to honour the proud service and sacrifices made by current and past members of the Canadian Armed Forces, as Remembrance Day is next Friday. It is important to acknowledge the recent passing of several long-term prominent Northerners and to note that, when we lose these elders, we have lost an important part of our northern history. It is up to us to remember and honour their wisdom, their lives, their varied contributions to our territory and to our country.

As this session comes to a close, I wish the Members of this House good health, happiness, and prosperity as you enjoy the coming Christmas holiday season with your loved ones and continue work in your constituencies. I wish you all safe travels on the land, on the ice, in the air, and on our highways, even as you work for the betterment of all Northerners. Now, as Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Vital Statistics Act
- Bill 6, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2016
- Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act
- Bill 11, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 1, 2016-2017
- Bill 12, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 2, 2016-2017
- Bill 14, Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2017-2018

Thank you. Hai cho. Quyanainni. Merci beaucoup. Mahsi cho. Koana.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. Colleagues, before we adjourn today I would like to extend the appreciation of the House to the Deputy Commissioner, Gerald W. Kisoun. It was a pleasure having you in the House today. I would also like to thank all the pages who have helped us throughout

during here, this sitting. You all have done a great job and have been present in the Chamber during some of the important discussions here today and in the previous weeks. I hope that we see all of you again soon enough; maybe attending as one of our youth parliamentarians. In addition, I'd also like to thank all the interpreters throughout our session. You have served us well. Without you our language would be lost; for that I'd like to thank you.

We can't forget our elders, the prayers before we start our sessions and at the end of our sessions. Those that offered prayers in the House, you've given us guidance and direction for us to move forward, and for that I'd like to say masi on behalf of the House. Colleagues, seeing you all wearing poppies in the Chamber these past weeks is a wonderful tribute to Remembrance Day and to those who have served and continue to serve in the Canadian Forces. I encourage all NWT residents to take a moment wherever you may be on November 11th to pay tribute to the courage and sacrifice of these men and women.

Colleagues, I know that the work of government, no matter what side of the House you sit on, does not end when we conclude today. I know that all Members will continue to meet during the next few weeks, few months, but we will not meet again formally in the Chamber until the New Year. So with that in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and also your loved ones, Members, as well as all residents of the Northwest Territories a healthy, safe, and happy holiday season.

Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, January 31, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

12. Petitions
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, January 31, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 11:37 a.m.