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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
Thursday, October 25, 2018
Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 113-18(3):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES 2018 EMPLOYEE CAMPAIGN
FOR UNITED WAY NWT

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories are dedicated to the work that they do and are committed to the success of their communities. Hundreds of employees spend countless hours giving back to their communities through volunteer work during their personal time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to recognize all of the employees who volunteer in their communities. How we take care of one another is what shapes the character of our communities and what makes the North unique and special.

In addition to their volunteer time, every year, employees have the option to have donations for United Way NWT automatically deducted from their paycheques. Last year, employees contributed \$150,000 to the United Way NWT through this campaign, which I am honoured to co-chair with the Union of Northern Workers president, Mr. Todd Parsons.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the start of the 2018 United Way NWT Employee Giving Campaign. The United Way NWT is a not-for-profit organization committed to building strong and healthy northern communities. Its role is to match community resources through these payroll contributions and to help get those funds to our territory's areas of greatest need.

In many ways, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the United Way NWT share the same goals: we want to improve the lives of our people, build stronger communities, and create positive social change for the residents of our territory. The United Way NWT ensures that employee contributions stay in the territory and contribute directly to our residents and communities.

Every day, employees work to build a better territory. They show this commitment in their work, but also in their generosity through our workplace campaign. Through the employee payroll plan, employees, including myself and many of the people in this room, are doing their part to create caring communities by contributing to the United Way NWT and to the organizations that they support.

Some of the organizations who have benefitted from contributions from employees include the Inuvik Youth Centre, Dene Nahjo, the Hay River Soup Kitchen, the Rainbow Coalition, NWT Breast Health, Children's First Society, and the list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, to put the power of this collective effort into context, one employee's payroll contributions of 50 cents per workday was able to feed over 50 people at the Hay River Soup Kitchen in one month. A \$2 per workday contribution of another employee allowed Yellowknife Cares to create weekend meal kits for 30 children in need.

Investing in the health and well-being of our people and communities and building prosperity in the Northwest Territories are priorities of the United Way NWT and the mandate of this government. These goals are shared by many non-governmental organizations in our territory and by our employees. United Way NWT is working to achieve these goals through investment in three areas of focus, which are:

- From poverty to possibility;
- Healthy people, strong communities; and
- All that kids can be.

Next year, the United Way NWT is investing \$170,000 to support non-profits in our territory to improve lives and build community in these three areas.

Mr. Speaker, I comment the efforts of United Way NWT and their board and volunteers for all their hard work as they continue to make a positive impact on the lives of many of our residents in need. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Government of the Northwest Territories employees for their continued generosity which is making it possible for the United Way NWT and our communities to achieve great success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 114-18(3):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2018-
2019 TO 2021-2022

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to ensure the effective supports and programs were available for persons with disabilities. Our government believes that every person living with a disability has the full right to citizenship and opportunity which is why we have been working with our partners and stakeholders to advance plans that will effectively guide our efforts to support this goal.

In March 2016, our government initiated the Disability Program Review and Renewal Project to look at the status of current services and identify gaps and opportunities for improvements through the development of a new strategic framework, programs, and services inventory and action plan.

Mr. Speaker, in February 2018, we released the Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion, and Participation: NWT Disability Strategic Framework: 2017 to 2027, Disability Matters: A Companion to the NWT Disability Strategic Framework, and the GNWT Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities Inventory.

Our action plan, which will be tabled later today, builds on the priorities established within the NWT Disability Strategic Framework to ensure our work supports outcomes that are person and family centred; supports inclusion and accessibility; promotes and supports awareness, education and training; and ensures timely coordination, evaluation and reporting.

The action plan represents a shared vision and partnership between the Departments of Health and

Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Justice; Finance; Municipal and Community Affairs; Infrastructure; and the NWT Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, this work was guided by the results of extensive engagement with our non-government organization partners in the disability sector. Our partners provided valuable input as to what is needed to support persons with disabilities and their families. We will continue to engage with them to ensure that our actions are meeting their intended outcomes for persons with disabilities.

We know that there is a growing demand on disability services, driven by an increased incidence of physical and cognitive disabilities, a growing seniors' population, increased rates of disability associated with aging, and the need for caregiver supports.

We want to improve the lives of NWT residents with disabilities by focusing on five objectives: increasing income security and reducing poverty, building awareness and knowledge through education and training, improving transition planning and options, encouraging universal design and living options, and improving access and quality of caregiver supports.

The action plan will help our government pursue new avenues and resources available to promote more equity, accessibility, and inclusion and help us support the participation in all aspects of economic and social life of persons with disabilities in the NWT.

We will be accountable to persons with disabilities and all residents on the progress on this action plan. Each department will report on the status of their action items, and the Department of Health and Social Services will coordinate and monitor the reporting of the individual actions within it.

I want to thank all of my colleagues and their department staff for supporting our government-wide approach to improving services and programs for persons with disabilities. I also want to thank our disability NGO partners, including the NWT Disabilities Council, Yellowknife Association for Community Living, the NWT Seniors' Society, Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities, and the NWT Foster Family Coalition for their input and their support. It will require that we all continue to work together in order to deliver on action items.

We are looking forward to implementing the GNWT Disability Action Plan, which will guide the work required to advance our vision to make the NWT an inclusive and accessible territory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 115-18(3):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the honourable Wally Schumann will be absent from the House for the remainder of this week to attend both the federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of internal trade and the federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of innovation and economic meetings in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF
CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – 2018:
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT – CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES – DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AND HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wept when the Office of the Auditor General reviewed its latest findings of the Child and Family Services audit. They concluded for the second time in four years that Child and Family Services is failing children in care; not just failing them, but sometimes putting them at risk of even greater harm than the circumstances that brought them into care in the first place. A child has been assaulted. Another was missing from a treatment program.

For example, health authorities must investigate a report of a child in a potentially unsafe situation within 30 days. The auditor found that a quarter of these investigations weren't completed on time. In a third of investigations, the required interview with parents, the child, and others with information didn't happen. In three-quarters of cases, long-term risks weren't assessed. All of these indicators have increased since the last audit four years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that everyone involved in the lives of children in care wants them to be safe. The problem isn't intention; it's resources. The auditor found that the authorities are overburdened with changes that were not well resourced and which helped produce worse results. It is clear that the focus needs to be on the children themselves rather than on the systems that manage their circumstances.

A key recommendation in this audit is that the Department of Health and Social Services and the health authorities must perform a detailed assessment of the financial and human resources to deliver child and family services. The same recommendation was made four years ago and by Cindy Blackstock in her review of child and family services in 2009, and by the Child Welfare League of Canada 18 years ago. Until this work is done, we won't know why Yellowknife has twice as many child-protection workers as the Tlicho Community Services Agency when the size of their caseload is similar. The department's response to most of the recent recommendations focuses on things like team design and streamlining business processes. My fear is that children will again be pushed further to the margins while the department prioritizes its systems and ensures its liability is covered.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Social Services was a member of the standing committee that hired Ms. Blackstock, and he has been the Health Minister for seven years.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, that means the Minister has heard this call to identify the resources needed to provide these services at least three times, and the problems not only persist, they are getting worse. The children who needed his help nine years ago are now adults or well on their way. It's worth remembering that these children, all children, have but one childhood. Our priority must be to help children not only survive it, but to thrive in safe and supportive environments. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CARBON PRICING

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says we are already seeing the consequences of a 1-degree Celsius increase in global warming. There is more extreme weather and diminishing Arctic sea ice among other changes. Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius would require "rapid, far-reaching, and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society." Ninety-one authors and review editors from 40 countries prepared the report with more than 6,000 scientific references cited.

The good news is that some of the kinds of actions that we would need to take to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius are already underway

around the world, but they need to accelerate. On May 24th, I urged the federal government to reject Cabinet's Climate Change Plan. This was based on the unrealistic 44 percent greenhouse gas reductions from the expansion of Taltson Hydro, the back-end loading of emission reductions, misdirection of efforts on electricity production, rather than motivating large, industrial emitters, and a failure to address the leadership deficiencies noted in the Auditor General's report on NWT climate change.

The Cabinet response to the committee review of this audit tabled earlier this sitting fails again to adopt any changes in accountability or authority to ensure that there's adequate climate change leadership. Cabinet's approach on climate change falls far short of how we need to respond to the IPCC imperative of far-reaching and unprecedented changes.

The Minister of Finance finally announced Cabinet's approach to carbon pricing in July. While individuals and families will get some of the carbon tax back through the adjustments to the cost of living allowance and child benefit, industry, the largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions, can actually get all of the carbon tax back that they pay. It will be individuals, families, and small businesses that will subsidize the GNWT initiatives under the energy strategy, not the largest emitters which include the diamond mines. This hardly seems fair or balanced.

The Minister of Finance has been silent on the issue of how the carbon tax will be managed and accounted for. It's not clear whether the reporting will try to link carbon tax funds collected with investments into renewables and any reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

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

---Unanimous consent granted.

MR. O'REILLY: A real carbon pricing system for the NWT can help us in fighting the climate change emergency that faces us.

We must pursue legislative and policy changes to ensure climate change leadership and an energy strategy built on renewables that doesn't masquerade as an infrastructure funding demand. As other regular Members have indicated, I cannot support Cabinet's Carbon Tax and Climate Change Plan. The federal government's back-stop approach on carbon pricing is starting to look a lot better. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, a young Indigenous woman went into Stanton Territorial Hospital complaining of extreme pain. The pain was so bad that, in the emergency room, she doubled over in agony and was curled up in the fetal position crying. It was then a nurse told this young woman that she was being dramatic before calling a security guard over to force the woman to stand up.

Medical records reveal staff indicated her unnecessarily hyperventilating and dramatically yelling. Only after this humiliation was the young woman diagnosed with 8.3-millimeter kidney stones, as well as strep throat.

Mr. Speaker, this experience was shared with me by one of my constituents, but, sadly, she's not alone in her encounters with cultural bias in the NWT health care system. Indigenous residents from across the NWT have raised similar concerns and shared similar horror stories. Only this morning, I heard tell of a common treatment prescribed to Indigenous patients complaining of illness in the smallest of our communities, "Take an aspirin, and the problem will go away," leading some to call it the magic pill, used as a catch-all for any medical issue raised in the community.

We, as a government, have an obligation to ensure the health care system and all government services are free from prejudice, racism, or bias. It's disheartening to hear about the instances of misdiagnosis and neglect. All too often, Indigenous peoples are labelled as intoxicated, which is, yes, symptomatic of alcohol consumption; however, the symptom is shared with the following medical conditions: diabetes, hypoglycemia, epilepsy, brain injury, Alzheimer's, Wilson's disease, multiple sclerosis, stroke, hypothermia, and hypoxia, just to name a few, Mr. Speaker.

Misdiagnosing these patients due to their cultural background is an example of what researchers call implicit or unconscious racism, rather than intentional racism. We must avoid the factors that ensure these problems continue from generation to generation.

Breaking the cycle of racial and cultural bias is the best path forward, and we can do it together. We must ensure that frontline government workers have appropriate training, not triage nor to diagnose, but to be aware of the complexity of symptoms and the full range of possible causes, as opposed to jumping on our own deeply held preconception and bias.

In June of this year, the Honourable Minister of Health and Social Services agreed with these concerns and promised changes are coming to the public health care system in the NWT, including cultural training for healthcare workers that was slated to begin this fall.

Mr. Speaker, I want to believe this government is taking the actions to fix this problem, and I will be asking the Minister of Health and Social Services to help me believe. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RANNEY HILL TRAIL

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share a good news success story. It's a story of collaboration between government, the private sector, and non-profit groups. It benefits many sectors: tourism, education, recreation, mining, and culture, and, notably, it didn't need structure, process, or even regulation.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1930s, prospectors came north seeking gold. One of them was Winslow Ranney. In his search, he opened what became known as the Ranney Hill Trail just a little bit north of here. Years later, as gold mines closed and Yellowknife became a government town, exploration trails were adapted for recreation. The Ranney Hill Trail became known for its excellent examples of geology that built Yellowknife.

In 2013, TerraX Minerals acquired the area as part of its ongoing Yellowknife city goal project. Later, TerraX partnered with ITI, the NWT Geological Survey and Mine Society, to offer a prospecting course in the Ranney Hill Geological Interpretive Trail. The course offers people from around the territory their prospecting licence, and it sells out every year.

In 2017, a working group was established to consider ways different groups could use the trail. It was led by NWT Parks and Recreation Association and included ITI's tourism and minerals directorate, TerraX, and the NWT Geological Survey. They funded independent consultations and studies for the multiple uses of the trail.

This past summer, the Mine Training Society led the implementation plan, and new partners joined the team. Fifty directional sign posts were installed, disorienting flagging was removed, parking at the trail head was expanded, and the trail surface was maintained. Most of the work was done by volunteers from recreational groups.

Next year's plan includes boardwalks to protect wet areas, benches, and interpretive signage, and an interpretive phone app will be launched.

Mr. Speaker, now this trail is easily accessible to families, students, and tourists. It's becoming increasingly popular with youth groups and tour operators.

Mr. Speaker, the evolution of this trail facility is a great example of what can be achieved through collaboration. Many different community groups now have a facility that serves their specific needs, all without complex administration or bureaucracy.

I'd like to express my appreciation to all the groups, organizations, and individuals who contributed their time and energy to this valuable community project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC HOUSING UTILITY RATES

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, public housing tenants in my riding are troubled by changes in their power bills. For a little bit of background, the NWT Housing Corporation is in the third phase of its mandate commitment to development options to rationalize public housing utility pricing structures to promote self-reliance. Over the past three years, the Housing Corporation has been slowly reducing its subsidy of power rates for public housing tenants. The government's goal is to increase energy conservation and tenants' self-reliance, and to conserve corporation funds, all through bringing tenants' power rates in line with power rates of other residents.

Mr. Speaker, these are good goals. Still, I'm troubled by the way this has all rolled out. Change is never easy, and, when change means higher power bills for low-income tenants, many of whom are already on income support, there's going to be confusion, worry, and distress. Some of my constituents haven't been sure how much their power bills will go up or how it might affect their ability to pay other things they need, like food, clothing, gas, and other items, for themselves and their families. There's another inkle, tenants using income support programs are wondering how income assistance will adapt to these new costs. I know that this is something that the Housing Corporation has been working on for a while now, but to bring this initiative to the finish line.

Mr. Speaker, there are questions that still need to be answered and clear and open communication with affected tenants will be critical. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll have questions later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EXPANDING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak on two ideas I have for post-secondary students in the NWT. On February 7 and again on May 31, 2018 a Member states turning the idea of the old Stanton Territorial Hospital into a nursing school as it transitions into a long-term care facility for seniors. Mr. Speaker, this idea is still relevant today and remains to be an idea which contains a lot of potential for the NWT. This is also an idea where I get more and more positive feedback as I talk about it. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, today I would like to reiterate some previous comments I made on this topic as well as some new ideas I'd like to share on expanding post-secondary education in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, creating a nursing school at NWT has all the ingredients needed to foster employment across our territory. This would happen because we would create a facility which houses long-term care patients and will in effect serve as a school for students in and outside of Yellowknife. That would make it possible for seniors in all 33 communities to remain in their own homes. This would make it possible thanks to the newly trained nurses and homecare workers that would return to their communities to work in the field.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, looking forward into the future, I think the Department of Education, Culture and Employment should consider expanding the scope of the current science curriculum being delivered in Aurora College in Fort Smith. My vision for what the main changes might look like includes an implementation of a fully-fledged school for conservation and environmental studies. Mr. Speaker, such an investment in education would long serve the people of the NWT on a number of fronts: firstly, northern students who study this topic would acquire the option of remaining in the North during the entirety of their studies; secondly, the NWT would become better positioned to employ new students right out of post-secondary into a field of environment and conservation. Currently, Mr. Speaker, the federal government is investing in conservation across Canada. They put \$1.3 billion in over the next five years as it has become the most significant investment in nature conservation in Canadian history.

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

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Now we have an opportunity to engage the federal government and other non-governmental organizations to make a school such as this a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EUNICE NASOGALUAK - ACTIVE ELDER
AWARD RECIPIENT

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NWT Recreation and Parks Association's Active Elder Award was recognized to one of my constituents, Ms. Eunice Nasogaluak from Tuktoyaktuk, which recognizes an elder who is physically active. Mr. Speaker, Eunice has lived in Tuktoyaktuk for the past 52 years and enjoys being a part of the community. She gives back in so many ways, through music, teaching, sharing her language, and volunteering at community events. Mr. Speaker, Eunice has been part of the Walk to Tuk challenge for the past few years, keeping active and encouraging others to do the same. She is also an active singer, dancer, and drummer, and is always ready to share her skills with the youth. Mr. Speaker, she has raised money, written proposals, and organized trips for the dance group to Nome and Barrow, Alaska; Edmonton; Haines Junction; Whitehorse.

Mr. Speaker, Eunice enjoys playing the bass guitar for old-time dances and community gatherings, and volunteering with the End of the Road Music Festival in Tuktoyaktuk. She's also an excellent seamstress, who always joins in for local sewing projects. Eunice takes advantage of every opportunity to share her language and culture with young people in the community. She brings traditional foods such as geese and caribou to the school so students from junior kindergarten to grade 9 can learn how to process meats. She shows the students how to clean, cut, and prepare their foods, while also teaching them the different parts of Inuvialuktun. Mr. Speaker, Eunice has taught Inuvialuktun for many years in the community. She encourages graduates to continue their Inuvialuktun language. She's also a strong proponent of education supporting youth and young people to go on to college or university, as they are the community's future leaders. At every event or opportunity, she's there to cheer on and encourage the youth.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like you to join me in commending Eunice Nasogaluak, who's an inspiration to many elders, youth, and youth in her community in the territory and around the country. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF
CANADA TO THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY – 2018:
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT – CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES – DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AND HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I always advocate for my constituents, and, when a constituent brings an issue to me, I always give them the benefit of the doubt, knowing that there are at least two sides to a story. I'll admit, when I've heard issues regarding my constituent's dealings with Child and Family Services, I used to think that perhaps the emotional aspect of the situation made the interaction seem worse than it was. Well, Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that. I've been set straight by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, which just released its audit of the Child and Family Services. It's a follow-up audit to the one performed in 2014, which exposed such poor performance that it demanded to be revisited.

The Office of the Auditor General has concluded, Mr. Speaker, that things have actually gotten worse since 2014 and that it's "deeply concerned" by its findings. I tried to craft a statement with a level of outrage that this situation warrants, but I couldn't. There's no way to adequately express the anger that everyone should be feeling right now. We should all be ashamed, Mr. Speaker, for being part of a system that treats our most vulnerable in this way. If we can't put in the effort to get this right, then what? How bad is it, Mr. Speaker? Here are some of the findings. One-fifth of the time that someone contacted a regional health authority with concerns about the safety of a child, there was no response. Nine out of 10 times, the minimal level of contact with a parent and a child subject to a plan of care was not maintained. There were no systemic background checks on potential guardians. The list goes on and on and on.

After the last audit, the department's response was to introduce complex administrative changes into an already over-burdened and over-bureaucratic system instead of actually assessing whether or not it has the resources to do its job. Spoiler alert, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't. I also have to add, Mr. Speaker, that 95 percent of the children engaged in the system are Aboriginal. Is this what reconciliation looks like to this government, Mr. Speaker? I don't think that the Minister is insensitive to this issue or the departmental staff doesn't care about the children, but, after seeing what happened since 2014, I'm terrified about what the future holds. This

is an unacceptable situation, and the Minister and all of us in this House need to act or move aside for those who will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
PASSING OF RITA BETSEDEA

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on October 3, 2018, Rita Betsedea passed away. She was born on September 16, 1962 at old Fort Wrigley, to Baptiste and Alice Betsedea. She was one of 12 children. Growing up, she was daddy's favourite girl. Her favourite times were when her dad came home from trapping with beaver meat full of fat. Family always remembered her little chin just dripping with fat. Her nickname was "Little Doll." She brought a lot of joy to the home. She loved the outdoors and being with her family. At nighttime, she asked her Abba to sit outside. When she was asked why, she would always reply, "I want to look at the stars." As a child, Rita attended residential school at Lapointe Hall in Fort Simpson. She didn't talk much about it. Throughout it all, Rita held her own language and traditional lifestyle.

Her son Keith remembers all the hunting trips Rita came on. He recalls their time on the river as some of the happiest times in their life, with lots of good food, stories, and laughter. Jonathan remembers one particular trip to Willow River, when his Uncle Tony wanted to go for a skidoo ride. Harley, the youngest daughter, begged her mom to let her go out, and off she went. Once they were past the falls, they stopped for a rest. Harley quietly told Jonathan, "Look, there are two moose crossing the river." Tony shot one, and Jonathan got the other. When they got back home, Harley ran into the house and yelled, "They got two moose!" Jonathan said his mom came out and said she was very proud of them and couldn't stop smiling.

Harley remembered her mom as always being "the fun mom." She would play games and play jokes on them. One time, when she was playing tag with the kids, they were all running around and laughing until Rita stepped on a rake just the right way. Next thing, she was screaming, "I raked myself! I raked myself!"

Miranda said her mom was always there for her. No matter what she asked, her mom made it happen. She had a big heart and was always helping people.

She loved her grandchildren with all her heart. She spoiled them all with her love and attention, but would protect them as fiercely a mama bear.

Rita was known and loved far and wide by many. She will be missed deeply by all of her family and friends. Her quick wit and infectious laugh will sadly be missed. She was famous for saying, "Let's dance," and that is how people have chosen to remember her on this day.

Mr. Speaker, I have been asked to wear this lapel by the family in recognition of her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to recognize representatives of United Way NWT that are here in the gallery. In attendance today, the chair of the United Way NWT, Tracy St. Denis; United Way NWT board member, Matt Spence; also Gayla Thunstrom, the first vice president of the Union of Northern Workers; Frank Walsh; and Jennifer Wright with the Union of Northern Workers, who are partners in United Way NWT.

Also, I would like to recognize three Pages from Yellowknife South who have been here for the four weeks of this session, Ayush Bhanot, Nigel Curtis, Tyson Clarke, and also recognize all of the Pages for all of the good work that they have done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today, I will be tabling the GNWT Disability Action Plan, so I am very pleased to have the following people joining us today from the NWT Disabilities Council: Terry Hawkins, the chair; Cornelius Van Dyke, the vice chair; Kim Tregidgo, the board member from Hay River; Christopher Aitkens, board member from Hay River; Denise McKee, executive director, and thank you all for being here and being so supportive of the work that we are doing to support persons with disabilities. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to recognize a couple of board members of the NWT Disabilities Council from Hay River, Mr. Christopher Aitkens and Ms. Kim Tregidgo. Mr. Aitkens is also the president of the Hay River Soup

Kitchen that the Premier mentioned earlier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Nunakput.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier on in my Member's statement, I mentioned Ms. Eunice Nasogaluak, who is an elder from Tuktoyaktuk. Mr. Speaker, Eunice is married to my relative, the late William Nasogaluak, and seeing her presentation yesterday was actually very uplifting. I just want to thank Eunice for all the hard work that she does within the community and around the region with her culture and traditional knowledge. Keep up the good work, Eunice. Thank you. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Matt Spence, Tracy St. Denis, Frank Walsh, and Susan Fitzky as constituents from Yellowknife North. Welcome, and thank you for being here.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to recognize Matthew Spence and Tracy St. Denis on their contributions to the North, in their private life, and their career, as well. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a Page from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, April Sangris-Hardisty Beaulieu, and, also, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize our interpreters that are from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, Maro Sundberg and Tommy Unka. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being here with us. It is always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi.

Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 444-18(3):
ACCESSING MEDICAL SERVICES IN FORT
NELSON, BC

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the past few sittings, I have had the opportunity to ask the Minister of Health and Social

Services a number of questions about having the residents of Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte access to medical services via medical travel to Fort Nelson, BC. Can the Minister advise this House if the department has been able to make some movement on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely. Staff from the Department of Health and Social Services did visit the community of Fort Liard, as well as Fort Nelson, to meet with residents of Fort Liard, but also staff of the health system in Fort Nelson, to discuss, first off, what services are actually provided in Nelson.

I think there has been some confusion over the years about what capacity Nelson has. They certainly aren't providing all of the services that are offered here in the Northwest Territories, the services that are required by residents of the Northwest Territories, but they certainly offer more than is being provided in Fort Liard. We did reach out to them. We had some discussions about some things that we might be able to do for our residents in Fort Liard, things like mammograms and other diagnostic tests that Fort Nelson may be able to provide for us.

We did meet with the MLA. Myself and staff from the department met with the MLA in September. We agreed to go to Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte to talk to the residents about what we have learned to help us formulate our next steps. We are hoping that we can put in some Memorandums of Agreement on some of those diagnostic tests, but also figure out how we might be able to provide some additional services or, rather, have our residents receive services from Fort Nelson in a way that still fits within the NWT Health and Social Services system.

We have made progress. We are not all the way there, but we are on the right path. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: The Minister has kind of answered a lot of my questions that I had here today, but that is great to hear. I am very happy to see that. That is a positive step, and I have to applaud the department and his staff for reaching out to Fort Nelson. We look forward to it.

The Minister talked about a couple of those -- mammograms and, I forget the other one, lab work, but also, with pregnancy, can the Minister explain or provide information if this opportunity is available as well?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There are services that aren't provided in Fort Nelson right now. I am

actually not 100 percent sure about pregnancy, but my suggestion would be that having individuals come to the boarding home here in Yellowknife or to services here in Yellowknife or Hay River might be more appropriate. If there were any complications, we can deal with them within this existing system.

If somebody is receiving services in Nelson and there is a complication, they could end up going into the BC system where we wouldn't necessarily have access to health records or history of the individual, which could provide some additional complications. Given that we do bring people in quite a bit early, I am sure we can find ways to support those residents to come to northern locations where appropriate.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for explaining and clarifying that because it is very important for residents to understand that not all services are going to be available, but some are, like he said, mammograms and lab services.

Can the Minister advise us when they could see potential opportunities for this service to be implemented, going to Fort Nelson?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Right now, residents from Liard and Nahanni can go to Fort Nelson, if that is where they choose to receive services. We do have reciprocal billing agreements with all provinces and territories in this country.

Our challenge, and I think the Member understands this, is that, when somebody uses their facilities without a referral in, they aren't necessarily covered for things like medical travel. There is also no ability to seamlessly share information where appropriate. What we are looking to do is actually fix that problem and find a way to refer people into Nelson so that they can take advantage of things like medical travel and so that our doctors in the North can work seamlessly with those doctors in Fort Nelson to make sure that our residents receive seamless care.

That work is underway right now. We are going to Liard and Nahanni in November. From there, we will figure out what our next steps are after we talk to the community about where we are and what we've learned, and then we will be engaging with Fort Nelson again.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister making the commitment to come in, in November, and he's worked with his staff. Can the Minister please advise this House, when he goes into the community, what's going to

happen? What is the department going to present, and who is going to be coming in with him?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It is the Member's meeting. I am going with the Member. I anticipate he will be helping set up those meetings. We are bringing the staff who have been working and negotiating with Nelson so that they can explain our findings, help the communities, both of them, understand what services Nelson provides and what services Nelson does not provide. Once again, I think there is some belief that Nelson can do everything, and they are limited. There are certainly services they don't provide there. Then, talk about next steps, how we can work together with the community to make sure that those services that can be provided in Nelson are properly set up so that our residents can have more timely access to services.

By way of example, we know that they are providing mammogram services in the community. It's a much shorter drive for residents to drive there, to Nelson, for services as opposed to getting on a plane, flying to Simpson, getting on another plane, flying to Yellowknife, spending a couple of days in Yellowknife, and then flying back. These individuals can get down there and back same day, if not, one night, as opposed to many. There's lots of opportunity here, and this is a good-news story. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 445-18(3):
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. When he was a member of the Social Programs Standing Committee, he and his colleagues made 70 recommendations on the Child and Family Services Act. The committee report says: "We also recognize that some of our most important recommendations will require investment. The committee believes very strongly that the future of the NWT children and families warrants this investment." That was nine years ago. What happened to those recommendations? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm actually quite proud of the work that we did on the 16th Assembly on that report. Tom Beaulieu, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh was the chair of that committee.

When I became the Minister of Health and Social Services five years ago, not seven as the Member

has indicated, one of the first questions I asked is: where are we in implementing the recommendations from the standing committee? I was deeply saddened to realize that no progress had been made on any of the recommendations.

At that time, I made it a priority for the department to begin moving on those recommendations, moving forward on all those recommendations, which is where we came up with Building Stronger Families, which in retrospect is consistent with all the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation respecting children in care. It is a prevention-based system as opposed to an apprehension-based system.

Over the last number of years, the last three-and-a-half, four years, we have made significant changes to legislation as per the recommendations in both the Auditor General's report, as well as the report from standing committee. We have set up changes on the information systems that we heard clearly from our staff that our CFI system was garbage and was not functional and not useful. We have brought in the Matrix system. We made significant legislative changes to include the ability for youth beyond the age of 18 to receive services. We have resources. We have put money into the systems that we've put in place.

I anticipate the Member's question is going to the fact that we haven't increased our staffing complement, and the Member is 100 percent right. The audit was clear. In my opinion, we have done the right things with respect to the system we put in place, but we have failed to adequately resource. There's no question. To that end, I will be proposing an increase in positions in the next business-planning cycle to address the most underserved areas. The Member has identified some of them in her statement. In addition, we are going to do more analysis on whether or not we have the right types of positions in there for a longer term ask, which will be necessary in order to meet the needs of children and families in the Northwest Territories.

The findings of the audit were incredibly disappointing and of significant concern to me and to others. We are committed to making the improvement, utilizing Building Stronger Families, working with our staff, and properly resourcing these services.

MS. GREEN: The Minister can't have it both ways. He can't say that he's doing everything possible to help Child and Family Services, and then at the same time acknowledge that the Auditor General has again come up with another 11 recommendations that address children in jeopardy. These are not lightweight issues. They are the most, as my colleague from Hay River North said, "the most vulnerable people in our society." Many

of these recommendations have been repeated. Why are we waiting another four years for the Minister to do what he already said he would do, to the Auditor General, in 2014?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I'm not arguing with the Member. I've acknowledged that we need to do better. We need to do more. I do encourage the Member to read the Auditor General's previous report. It was a far broader audit and actually included significant recommendations to actually improve accountability and to improve the system. They didn't audit those portions of the system this time, and I can say that we have done those foundational pieces. That's where a lot of our attention was put. We did those while at the same time expecting our employees at the front line to evolve but also continue to providing services. Clearly, we spread them too thin. There's no question.

Nowhere have I said we're planning to make these changes in four years. That's the Member's statement. We're planning in the next two years to bring about profound changes in the delivery of Building Stronger Families that will meet the needs of our residents. There will always be risk. Our job is to mitigate and reduce risk as much as possible, and we are committed to doing that, and we have already started. Our internal audit has shown many of the same things as the Auditor General's report. We've been working on making these improvements over the last number of months. We can actually show some of those improvements now, and there will be things rolling out in the next couple of months, as well over the next two years, to bring about those changes that the Member and all Members and residents of the Northwest Territories want. We're committed to getting it right.

MS. GREEN: I think there's a misunderstanding here. The Minister knew about these problems in 2009. He knew about them in 2014. He's been reminded about them this week. My question is: when is the Minister going to show leadership on this issue? It is he who fights for the budget and argues over the spending priorities. Why, over all these years, has he been unable to make the business case to adequately finance Child and Family Services?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The system that existed before was purely an apprehension-based system that did not actually focus on building families or supporting the residents of the Northwest Territories. If a child was at risk, they were taken. That is not what the residents of the Northwest Territories told us they wanted. They wanted a system that supported families and help build families. That's what we put in place.

Again, we acknowledge that we did not necessarily get it right as far as roll-out. We spread our staff too thin. We have invested millions of dollars in this change initiative to bring in the tools that our employees told us they must and need to have in order to do the work of Child and Family Services, which includes bringing in the system. The Member's assertion that nothing was invested in here is completely unfounded. Where we did not nail it, where we did not get it right, was providing our staff with the available resources. We are struggling in two ways. We have massive turnover, which is incredibly frustrating. This is a very high-burnout profession, and our employees are feeling the pressure of being spread too thin. We are working with them to address that.

I've already indicated we are intending to increase the number of positions through the next budget cycle. We have put in a proposal to do that, which is going to come to this House for all Members to see. They can see the actions in front of them. They know what's coming, and we are prepared to invest more. We are prepared to get it right.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't have a firm grip on the timeline in which these changes are going to take place. What we've heard, in 2014 we heard it, in 2009 we heard it, in the year 2000, from the Child Welfare League is that these changes need to be made urgently. Children's lives are impacted by the decisions that are being made by the Minister and his officials. Given the urgency that is repeated yet again, how is the Minister going to ensure that, this time, the needs of children are going to be met? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Member is going to have an opportunity, as will all Members, to sit down with the department staff and go through the action plan that we are proposing.

Many of the actions have already begun. When I saw the results of our own internal audit, one of my directions to the department was to begin anticipatory hiring and put in a more aggressive recruitment campaign to get out and get as many people into the pipe as possible, start getting these people in and trained up, so that they can provide these services, to the point where we are prepared to double-fill some positions until such a time as new positions can be established. We know there is going to be turnover. We want to mitigate the harm caused by the revolving door of professionals.

Having said that, these professionals are amazing. They are doing important work. They are doing it in a very difficult time of change. I have talked to many of the social workers, and I haven't felt

opposition to Building Stronger Families, but I have felt frustration and lack of resources.

I agree with the Member. We are doing it. We are taking action. On December 12th, when the committee meets with the deputy, as well as the auditors, they are going to see the plan. I am looking for their input as well, Mr. Speaker. This is a territorial issue. This is an Assembly issue. We are going to get it right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to remind Members that we have only gone through two Members, and it has been 15 minutes. I would like to remind Members to keep their preamble short and, also, answers from the executive as short as possible. We still have nine Members to go through, so just a caution.

Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 446-18(3):
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to keep most of this short. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services on children in care. Mr. Speaker, children who are in temporary and permanent care are extremely vulnerable in every aspect of their health and well-being, where the development is extremely dependent on the adults who control them and their environment.

The Auditor General report has found that children were not consistently monitored and/or interviewed. Mr. Speaker, what can the Minister do for these children, if they are not being regularly contacted by Health and Social Services, and to ensure that the views of children in this system are known? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did work very closely with the Auditor General during this report, and in a number of situations, they did identify files and individuals where they thought there was some immediate risk. We dealt with those immediately. We reached out with our staff to engage with those people that were in immediate risk.

In addition to that, we have also conducted some of our own audits. We have seen those things. We have been reaching out to residents across the Northwest Territories to make sure that we are actually meeting those standards now. In many cases, we are. We are still struggling in some jurisdictions where we have low staff numbers, which is one of the reasons that we are working

hard to fill some of these positions, recognizing that we also hope to increase the number of positions through the next budgeting cycle, should that pass in this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response. Mr. Speaker, earlier in this Assembly, I mentioned that Health is such a massive department; I think we need to look at something just for children and for elders, for that matter, so that issues like this don't reoccur.

Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the extreme dependency children have on the adults that they are surrounded with, and it is an injustice when children don't know their own rights. Mr. Speaker, what can Health and Social Services do to ensure children and guardians are well aware of child rights so that they are protected in mind, body, and spirit?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Unfortunately, this is one of the areas where the auditor said that we aren't doing as good as we need to do, and we aren't having as much follow-up with our residents. That includes both the families as well as the children as we need to. We are stepping that up. We are making sure, moving forward, that there is regular contact. Part of our requirement is to help people understand their rights under the legislation, but also the services that are available to them.

We are trying to move away from the apprehension system more to a prevention system, so we are also working with families on a voluntary basis. We have had a significant increase in the number of voluntary files; we have seen a decrease in a number of permanent apprehensions.

In some areas, we are moving in the right direction, but when it comes to the individual contact with those kids, we need to do better.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I believe it is an important aspect of everything. Sometimes we work around the system, but the system needs to focus more on human beings.

Mr. Speaker, I know a woman in my riding who had to give up her child in order to help her escape the mother's impoverished circumstances. In foster care, foster parents are given a rate in order to meet the child's basic needs. Mr. Speaker, when guardianship is transferred to a relative, why aren't the relatives given the same foster rate to meet the child's basic needs?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: This is one of the issues that came up in the review of Child and Family Services that the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh and I participated in. We have made some changes within the system so that, if a family member wants to foster the child and become their

caregiver, we can actually facilitate that and help them and provide them with a foster fee. If they were to adopt the child, that would become a familiar relationship, and it wouldn't necessarily get some coverage.

Once again, the system we are putting in place is about building stronger families and supporting families through these periods. Even if they were to take a child on and adopt them and then start experiencing some difficulties, they could still come to us on a voluntary basis and look for the supports they need on a short-term basis to help them get back to where they are, which is providing the care they need to for their adopted children.

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

QUESTION 447-18(3):
TRAINING AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES
FOR AURORA COLLEGE

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about a couple of possibilities that I have been thinking about for post-secondary education in the NWT. I recognize that one of the ideas that I have around turning the Stanton Hospital into a school has a lot of logistics to it, and it would take a full department or several departments to work on it, but I would like to ask the Minister of Education questions on what is possible in Fort Smith.

In the foundational review, it was contemplated to move a lot of the programs out of Fort Smith. I would like to ask the Minister if she could start to look at the possibility of changing some of the programs from what currently exists to programs for the students who will be studying environment and conservation programs, I suppose. Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to clarify that at no time was it my intention to move programs out of Fort Smith. My vision is to actually expand and strengthen programs in all campuses. It is not about one community or another.

I do want to also talk about the idea of ENR and what the Member had talked about. Yes, that is part of our visioning exercise that we need to do, is going throughout the territory and looking at the strengths that we have to offer and getting that from all of the communities, all of the people, so that when people identify one of the strengths, ENR, I see, is one of our strengths. Then, from that, we work on the visioning exercise for the college to be

able to actualize the territorial vision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: I mentioned the investment that the federal government will be making in conservation, and I agree with the Minister that ENRTP program is a good program and produces lots of good officers that are valuable to the communities.

We also have other areas of land that need protection, with some of the work that we are doing in this House about improving some legislation for protected areas. I would like to ask the Minister if the Minister could start working with Indigenous governments to maybe look at the Indigenous guardianship programs, the Canadian Rangers, or even park officers, for that matter, where Fort Smith sits at the edge of probably the biggest national park in the country, and there are a lot of park officers there that could maybe get educated in Fort Smith. I would like to ask the Minister if she could look at the people involved in all of those areas, work with the people involved in all of those areas.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, it is definitely important. This is a territory-wide issue. Our future for post-secondary is bigger than the people in this House, so it is important that we work with all levels of government, our municipal governments and our Aboriginal governments, for two reasons: to find out how we can best support the students; and the second one is to look at our vision and look at the strengths and identify areas that we can grow on. So, yes, I am seeing that part of the vision exercise is that we would be consulting with Indigenous governments to see what their vision is, as well.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, staying in the area of education, but not something that I mentioned in my Member's statement, is the research centre in Inuvik that's also part of Aurora College. I'd like to ask the Minister if she would look at what is possible for research. It appears as though Inuvik is blessed with probably the best fibre links, the best Internet connections in the world, and there's a research centre there. I'd like to ask the Minister if her department could work with the research centre to see how they could expand that to increase the studies and make Inuvik Aurora College into a world-class research institution.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do have to say I really appreciate the questions today because the MLA has actually pointed out a lot of the vision things, a lot of our strengths, a lot of the areas that we need to work with. The reason that I'm really promoting to move into a polytechnic university is because that research money is leaving the Northwest Territories. We have hundreds of universities coming across the world up to Inuvik to

study our issues, and we're not tapping into that money because we're still a college.

So moving into a polytechnic university will allow us to not only access that money, but it keeps the knowledge in the Northwest Territories. It has a lot of potential, and I am certainly going to expand on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Lastly, I guess, is the more difficult of all of the tasks that I think we should be working on in post-secondary education, and that is the nursing school in Yellowknife, here, for the old Stanton. I realize that the Department of Health has other uses for that, but I still feel that there's room for that place to become a good nursing school for homecare, that has so much potential for our communities and our elders. It is also a great way to keep the elders in their home as long as possible and save a lot of money in the system by not having them go into long-term care. So I'd like to ask the Minister if she would continue to work with the Department of Health and Social Services to see what's possible there.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Currently, our nursing students do actually utilize the Stanton Hospital for their practicums. That is very important. Hands-on learning is critical within any university, certificate, diploma, or degree programming, so we will continue to work with Health and Social Services on utilizing that. I do note I hear the Member who is saying: can we make the school there? That, I cannot promise. What I can say is that the campus in Yellowknife has outgrown its current headquarters, and that has to be looked at. At this point, I can't say whether it would be part of the old Stanton Hospital or if it would be a new building, but what I can promise is that we will continue to work with Health and Social Services to make sure that we have the best practicum opportunities possible for our students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

QUESTION 448-18(3):
NORMAN WELLS DAY CARE CENTRE FUNDING
APPLICATION

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, my questions are directed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, the current Norman Wells daycare center is fully furnished, and the power remains hooked up. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Minister for the previous letters of support submitted to the new daycare society. I'm very encouraged by this new society of young parents,

and their new energy to get this centre up and running. My first question is: the society has submitted to the department an application for start-up funds. When can they receive a reply to that application? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really want to start with saying that I'm really excited about Norman Wells' daycare. One of our mandates is to get daycares in every community, as many as possible. There is lots of research. I could go on and on about the amount of research that says early intervention is the best intervention for children to ensure that they are successful in life. So Norman Wells is one that we've been watching closely. We're working closely with that community. I know that they have submitted their application. There are a little bit of processes: they need to get a fire and a health inspection. We are willing to work with them, and then, once those inspections are done, we're hoping that they'll be able to start to provide services to children.

MR. MCNEELY: I'll ask the question again: when can they receive a reply to the submitted application from the society?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As a commitment, I know that there are processes, but, if it makes the MLA feel better, then I can commit to, by the end of this week, we will phone Norman Wells' daycare society and actually help them to give them an answer and tell them what they need to go through. It is a process. They need to apply for the health and safety, they need to apply to the fire marshal to get those inspections. It's not as easy as just one department taking this over, but we are willing to work with them as much as possible to make this a reality.

MR. MCNEELY: Now we have a deadline for a yes or a no. My next questions is: because the society has limitations, will the Minister's regional office assist the society in working with the Department of Infrastructure to certify the building, as the Minister mentioned earlier, for the assistance

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I've said it, and I'll say it again, that we are committed to making this a reality. We will do whatever we can to support the daycare. I'm not even sure what they're called, but the daycare center in Norman Wells. So, if that means working with Infrastructure, if that means helping them to fill out the applications, if that means walking into offices, we will do what we need to do to make this a reality.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Sahtu.

MR. MCNEELY: I'm very encouraged by the energy of the Minister's statement to assist the society. You can imagine, the society, I know the individuals, they're young parents. They don't know the difference between a two-by-four and a building code, so I'm encouraged by the Minister's statement to help the young parents. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. I'll take that as a comment. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 449-18(3):
ADDRESSING CULTURAL BIAS IN THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH CARE
SYSTEM

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, further to my Member's statement, there was a prominent case of cultural bias in the Northwest Territories, in the death of Hugh Papik, an elder in Aklavik. A subsequent report made 16 recommendations to improve services delivery. Can the Minister of Health and Social Services give an update to this House on the progress the department has made in implementing those recommendations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's completely inappropriate for any Member in this House to be talking about an individual.

I can say that there was a review done of a situation a number of years ago that resulted in some suggestions and recommendations on how to move forward to address systemic racism that exists here, in the Northwest Territories. The Member should be aware because I am pretty sure he was in the House when we tabled, in November 2016, Building a Culturally Respectful Health and Social Services System, which is our commitment to building a Health and Social Services system that is culturally safe and respectful of all patients and clients across the Northwest Territories.

A key component of that document was the requirement for an action plan, which we intend to release this fall, with a number of recommendations and programs to move forward with training our staff here, in the Northwest Territories. We have cultural safety programs and training that have basically been developed. We're looking at piloting here before the end of the calendar year. We'll make revisions based on what we hear, and we will roll out on a territorial level for all Health and Social Services staff starting in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. We have made significant progress in this area.

MR. TESTART: That case and other cases are well-convassed in the media, including the case of my constituent that I mentioned earlier. I think they are subject to discussion in this House. The cultural safety and training piece is probably the largest part of these recommendations. Can the Minister speak to some of the details of the cultural training program that is being developed by the department?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I appreciate the Member's comment, but, because other people breach those confidentiality and talk about things, it doesn't mean we in this Assembly should. I appreciate that the Member is ultimately talking about cultural safety, and I appreciate that conversation, but it's inappropriate to use people's names in this House.

We have done a significant amount of work to develop cultural safety training here, in the Department of Health and Social Services. We have an Indigenous Health and Community Wellness division who have actually worked with different Indigenous governments and individuals across the Northwest Territories to develop this meaningful training. We are about to pilot that. We are intending to pilot it between now and the end of the calendar year.

From there, we anticipate that we will have to make some tweaks here and there, based on what we hear from the staff who are going through it. Our intention is to finalize this fiscal year and begin rolling out for all staff over the next couple of years. It will be training that's available for new staff as they come in, as part of their orientation. Refreshers will be available, as well. It is probably going to take us a bit of time to ensure that all Health and Social Services staff have the training because we also have to keep providing services while we're getting this training done. This is well on its way. The action plan will be out in the next couple of weeks. Training is happening, and we are moving forward.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister. I would like to know: what is the total budget allocation to this training? Do we have those details yet for the pilot program?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In 2017-2018, the department allocated about \$970,000 which came from the federal government under the Health Services Integration Fund. This included about \$476,000 in carry-over funding from the previous year to help us actually develop these programs, test these programs, reach out to other people throughout the Northwest Territories to make sure we are getting a proper cultural component, to make sure that it's relevant to the people in the Northwest Territories, recognizing that it may be

slightly different in Fort Smith than it might be in Paulatuk.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, finally, one of the issues is ensuring there's a process to respond to patient and family concerns related to issues that they hear from front-line medical services is a process to register those complaints and deal with them. Has that been established in the health authority?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, we have put in some quality assurance mechanisms within the territorial authority, Hay River as well as Tlcho. Where individuals have concern with the care they are provided or anything, any of their engagement with the authority, they should reach out to our quality-assurance staff. They will be best to investigate the situation, find out what happened, and, where appropriate, make recommendations so that we can fix those challenges in future so future people don't experience them, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 450-18(3):
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my earlier statement about the recent Auditor General report on Child and Family Services, I have some questions for the Minister of Health. The report notes that, over the last 10 years, there have been about 1,000 children a year engaged in the system. We know there are not 10,000 children in the last 10 years who have been engaged. Does the Minister know how many individual children in the last 10 years have been engaged in the system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on page 13 of the directors' report that I tabled late last week, there is a chart that shows a number of individuals who are receiving services in any given year. For instance, in the 2017-2018 year, there are 815 unique individuals who are receiving support. If you look at that chart, it will also show that there are multiple years. Many of those kids are in the system for many years. It is not like you are in one year and you are out the next. It is sometimes the case but not always. I do not have the total number of kids that received services over the 10 years. I'm not

sure that it breaks down to that detail, but I will check to see if it is available.

I will note that we have seen a decline in the number of kids in permanent care, also contained in the report. In 2008 and 2009, there are 244 kids in permanent care in the Northwest Territories. In 2017 and 2018, we are down to 152 children in permanent care.

MR. SIMPSON: The reason I ask that is because we know there are not 10,000 children. Are there maybe two- or three-thousand children that have been in this system that has been failing them for that long? When you look at it that way, you realize, this is a major impact on these people's lives.

The OAG staff was quoted in a recent article saying, "Despite multiple commitments to do so, the department has still not assessed whether the financial and human resource levels it allocates to authorities are enough to deliver the required services for children and families." Earlier, in response to the Member for Yellowknife Centre's questions, the Minister once again made a commitment to do just that.

How do we know that he's going to do that? How can he assure us that he is finally going to do what the department has said they were going to do for years?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I appreciate that Members think that nothing has happened, but a significant amount has happened. In fact, we did contract with the Child Welfare League of Canada to help us do the exact work that the Member is asking us to do again. At that time, we were optimistic that they were going to provide us with a formula that would actually allow us to adequately resource the system because, clearly, we feel that it is not.

We did not get a report from the Child Welfare League of Canada that said, "This is how many positions you need." What we got was, "Here are some things you need to consider when you are actually doing the evaluation to determine how many positions you need." We are taking their recommendations and their parameters, and we have started to apply those to help us determine what the appropriate number is but also the appropriate make-up.

One of the challenges they expressed is moving away from an apprehension system to a prevention system. It changes the make-up, and there really aren't any solid prevention systems out there. We are leading the way in many ways.

Having said all that, we hear you. We have already begun the work to help us identify, and I will be and have proposed, new positions starting next fiscal

year. I have already directed the department to start moving with anticipatory hiring to fill these positions. That's step one. We need to continue to do the work that Members are describing to break in and look at the types of positions we need, recognizing that we have changed from an apprehension- to a prevention-type system.

MR. SIMPSON: To clarify the Minister's statements, I didn't think anything. That wasn't my thought. I quoted the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, who said that the department hadn't done what they said they were going to do.

When the Minister completes this work and determines how much resources are needed, will he commit to share that publicly so we can see exactly what needs to be done?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Absolutely.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a CBC article today, the Minister spoke about the difficulty in retaining social workers in the territory. It's a tough job. I mean I don't think I could do it, and so I understand. Yet, we have a social work program at Aurora College that is being cut, and I haven't heard anything coming from the Department of Health saying: no way; we need social workers here.

Could the Minister please explain what work has been done by his department to engage ECE and engage Aurora College to try to build up the social worker program so we can develop social workers here, in the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are running about a 25 percent vacancy in this area, so we lose about a quarter of our employees every year, which is deeply troubling, obviously. I am a firm believer that we want to recruit and train Northerners to do the important work that is needed in the Northwest Territories. I am a very big supporter of Northerners developing the skills to be social workers, which, if you don't have a previous history or previous background, would require a degree in social work.

The social work program that exists now, unless you choose to go south for the second portion, doesn't give you the degree. I have shared my needs with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, both of them. They know the demands we have. The demands for social workers is clearly articulated in Skills4Success. I don't think you will find anybody in this building who doesn't want to support or feel the need for a degree-based social work program here in the Northwest Territories.

What we need to do is make sure we get it right, and I think the foundational review that was done and the direction put forward to move forward is the right direction and will lead us to having a high-quality social work degree program here in the Northwest Territories, so that our residents can pursue that education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

QUESTION 451-18(3):

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CARBON PRICING

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Finance, who is in charge of carbon pricing.

The Minister has said that we haven't quite signed onto carbon pricing by stating that a memorandum of understanding is yet to be completed. Can the Minister explain what this memorandum of understanding is all about and whether there is a deadline for its completion? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal government has proposed that there will be an MOU signed with the three territories. It turned out the MOU is largely applicable to our sister territories because they were using the federal backstop. The federal government had indicated just recently that they are not advancing the MOU with us, as what would be included has already occurred. With the release earlier this week, the federal government has confirmed their agreement with the proposed NWT approach to carbon pricing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. I would be interested in seeing the written confirmation about how the feds have agreed to our approach.

The Minister released a plan for carbon tax in July. That approach would see large emitters getting all of the taxes back. It may involve some spending on greenhouse gas reduction measures, but while individuals, families, and small businesses will get some of the carbon tax back, the remaining amount is what will be used to subsidize GNWT investments into the Energy Strategy, including Taltson Hydro Expansion.

Can the Minister explain why large industrial emitters will not be contributing to investments in energy for communities and households?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The proposed approach for us is to rebate for fuel use, for heating and electricity generation, for the large emitters. 75

percent will be rebated back to them. The other 25 percent will be put into a trust that they can use to make investments into reducing the greenhouse gas emissions.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for confirming that the large emitters are not going to be contributing towards energy investments for communities and households.

Regular MLAs and the public have been waiting patiently for the costed action plan for the Climate Change Strategic Framework, and that is a key part of our climate change plan. That includes carbon pricing. We have had an action plan for the Energy Strategy since May. Can the Minister tell us when the Regular MLAs and the public will get a costed action plan for the Climate Change Strategic Framework and why this is so out of sync with the work that has already been done on the Energy Strategy?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I did not confirm that about the large emitters. What I confirmed was that 75 percent would be rebated back to them, and the other 25 percent would be going to their investments into greenhouse gas emissions. You could look at it another way. With all the corporate tax that they are paying, they are funding a lot of the programs that we offer across the Northwest Territories. They do make a contribution to that as well.

To the Member's question, the draft action plan, we shared that with committee, Indigenous governments, and organizations for a four-week review commencing at the end of October. Once the feedback is received from the parties during the plan engagement period, ENR will lead the finalization of the action plan. We want to go out there and have a conversation with committee and members of the public on the action plan, and then we will do the finalization of that action plan.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Minister. I look forward to seeing this draft action plan.

The carbon tax plan released by the Minister in July does not contain any information or analysis of other scenarios or approaches, including the federal backstop. The federal government just announced how funds will be redistributed in jurisdictions that do not have a federally approved scheme. It is not clear to me whether our government has actually done any analysis on the federal backstop.

Can the Minister explain whether the work on an NWT carbon tax considered other scenarios,

including the federal backstop, and can he share this information with the public and Regular MLAs? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: When we released our planned approach in July of 2018, we also released the results of the engagement process. A lot of the background material is available on the Department of Finance website. We did share what the analysis of the federal backstop would be, and we know that it was going to cost residents of the Northwest Territories a lot more had we just gone and used their backstop.

It is noteworthy that the federal approach to offset in other provinces where the federal backstop is being used is quite similar to what we announced in July. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 452-18(3):
POWER RATES FOR PUBLIC HOUSING
TENANTS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister: what is the exact dollar amount, and what is the impact of these changes on the average tenant's power bill? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Member's opening comments, in his Member's statement, he is right that, over the past three years, public housing tenant power rates have been gradually increasing to adjust in line with what other households in the NWT communities are paying under the GNWT's Territorial Power Support Program. The impact from the last base rate adjustment would be approximately \$36 per month for the average household, and then it was about \$87 per month, considering all base rate adjustments over the last three years.

Mr. Speaker, we do face a challenge here in the Northwest Territories with the NWT Housing Corporation and the increased costs to run our programs, but utilities are a big cost of that. We are trying to find ways that we could address that, and I really appreciate the Member's comments, that these are all good goals moving forward, in his Member's statement.

I think we are on the right track. We want to work with communities' leaders so that they can be more

self-reliant, be more energy conservative with how we do programs in the communities, but also ensure that we are able to sustain a lot of our housing programs and not just continuing to pay our tenants' power rates. We also have other programs that we do need to sustain throughout the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: The Housing Corporation also intends to conserve corporation funds through this initiative. Has the corporation calculated to what extent costs have simply been passed to income security programs in the Department of Education, Culture and Employment?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We always try to work closely with our partners, especially within the department. We keep them apprised of how many housing tenants we have and let them know of the programs that we are doing, especially with the tenants. When these programs came into place, we directly contacted the tenants to let them know what was going on. Our local housing organizations also give that information on what we are doing moving forward, but we do keep a good communication with all of our departments right across the government with our programs and how it can possibly impact their programs that they run as well.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister answered my next question, but I have one more here. In addition to adjusting power subsidies, what other actions is the Corporation taking to encourage energy conservation and reduce energy consumption in public housing?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Since we've put some of this particular program in since 2015/2016 I think it's really a positive note to say that power consumption has declined by about 8 percent in the communities. That means our tenants are becoming more aware of their usage as well as, like I said earlier, trying to be more conservative on their energy and also a little bit more self-reliant, but also understand that we've got other programs that we've got to sustain within the NWT Housing Corporation.

I do have a list of some of the programs that we have done in this area: we invest in energy efficient building practices, and that's well-known with the work that we've done with IRC as well as other Indigenous governments over the last couple years; alternative energy products, such as solar panels in some of the communities; solar hot water; district heating; LED lighting; home ownership programs that do promote energy efficiencies. As we look at constructing new homes, we always look at making them as energy efficient as possible. So we've taken a turn and we're going to continue to do that with future bills and also promote that with our

partners as they're looking at building infrastructure in their communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 453-18(2):
RIGHTS-BASED CABINS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the last couple days, I've been asking the Minister of Lands some questions about the process here. So, in this House, he talked about IGOs can identify which cabins are rights-based cabins. Can the Minister please advise what he and the Department mean by "rights-based cabins"? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, there are many structures on the public lands that are administered by this government. That's why we're engaging with Indigenous governments at this time to determine how we can find out how many there are and on what basis the claims that they are rights-based are made.

MR. THOMPSON: I think I've heard that a number of times. I've asked the Minister: what do they mean by "rights-based cabins"? That's all I'm trying to ask. What's their definition, or how are they getting this information out there? I'd like to know what that means.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned earlier, there are a great number of cabins and camps out there, rights-based ones, that would be ones that are associated with an Aboriginal right to have the cabin or camp, so that's what we're looking into at this time. We really don't know how many there are out there. That's why we're engaging with the Aboriginal groups throughout the Northwest Territories.

MR. THOMPSON: That really didn't answer my question; it says how many cabins out there, and they're looking at it, and that. Again: does the Department have a definition that they can use that says "rights-based cabins" and how they check it off and say, yeah, it's used for hunting, it's used for trapping, is it used for this. Do they have a definition of how they make that decision?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We are dealing with this exact issue in our consultation with Indigenous groups throughout the Northwest Territories. Some of the conditions that we might see as important are Indigenous ownership located within an area where persons of that heritage have established or asserted rights, an assertion by the owner of the

cabin or camp of his Aboriginal rights. So those are some of the basic things we're going to be looking at as we engage with Aboriginal groups throughout the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I greatly appreciate the Minister's answer in helping us understand it a little bit better. So, my last question here is: once these cabins are classified as rights-based cabins, I believe this is stage 1 or whatever stage it is in, is this the end of the process for Indigenous cabin owners? They're fearing that they're going to see their cabins be targeted for potential lease fees in the future.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Those are issues that certainly will have to be determined. Once we find out how many of the cabins are actually rights-based, we will be dealing with those additional issues, also. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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. Item 12, reports on standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 266-18(3):
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES DISABILITY ACTION PLAN
2018/19-2021/22

TABLED DOCUMENT 267-18(3):
NORTHERN PUBLIC AFFAIRS, VOLUME 6,
SPECIAL ISSUE #1 2018: THE PAN-
TERRITORIAL ON-THE-LAND SUMMIT

TABLED DOCUMENT 268-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ORAL HEALTH
ACTION PLAN 2018/19-2020/21

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled, "Government of the Northwest Territories Disability Action Plan 2018-2019 to 2021-2022," "Northern Public Affairs, Volume 6, Special Issue No.1 2018: The Pan-Territorial On-the-Land Summit," and the "Northwest Territories Oral Health Action Plan 2018-2019 to 2020-2021." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 29:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ACCESS TO
INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY
ACT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Monday, October 29, 2018, I will move that Bill 29, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Member for Frame Lake.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 24:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ELECTIONS AND
PLEBISCITES ACT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act, be read for the first time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. The motion is non-debateable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 24 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 27:

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,
2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 27, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2018-2019, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. The motion is non-debateable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 27 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 28:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES),
NO. 3, 2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 28, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2018-2019, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. The motion is non-debateable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Bill 28 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 27:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,
2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 27, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2018-2019, be read for the second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for infrastructure expenditures for the Government of Northwest Territories for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Bill 27 has had its second reading. Second reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 28:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2018-
2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 28, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2018-2019, be read for the

second time. Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations for operations expenditures for the Government of the Northwest Territories for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Bill 28 has had its second reading. Second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process; Minister's Statement 103-18(3), Marine Transportation Services; and Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital Estimates, 2019-2020, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Committee would like to take into consideration Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital Estimates, 2019-2020, and to consider opening remarks for the capital estimates in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Lands, and the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will consider the document after a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital Estimates, 2019-2020.

We are going to do things a little differently than we have done in the past. Just so that everyone knows what is going on, we will have opening comments from the Minister of Finance, and then we will have general comments from committee, at which time

the Minister of Finance will take the witness table with some witnesses. As we move into the departments, the Ministers will switch out, if necessary, and new witnesses will come in. Traditionally, we have just had the Minister of Finance at the witness table for the entire capital estimates. I just want to get everyone up to speed.

First, I will turn to the Minister of Finance for opening remarks. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am here to present the Government of the Northwest Territories' Capital Estimates, 2019-2020.

The Capital Estimates, 2019-2020 totals \$325 million, of which \$94 million is being funded by the federal government. The Capital Estimates includes \$199 million for Tangible Capital Assets, \$74 million for Infrastructure Contributions, \$50 million for Public Private Partnerships, and \$2 million for Deferred Maintenance.

Consistent with prior years, the Capital Estimates, 2019-2020 do not include appropriations for housing infrastructure proposed by the NWT Housing Corporation in 2019-2020. The appropriation for these investments will be sought during the Legislative Assembly's review of the 2019-2020 Main Estimates. The NWT Housing Corporation's 2019-2020 Capital Plan, totalling \$18 million, is included in the Capital Estimates as an information item for review and comment.

Major highlights of the Capital Estimates include:

- \$118 million for highways, winter roads, bridges, and culverts across the NWT. This includes funding of \$49 million for the Tlicho All-Season Road project, \$22 million under the National Trades Corridors Fund, and \$34 million for Building Canada Plan projects;
- \$42 million towards energy projects under the Investing in Canada Plan, which includes \$18 million for the Inuvik Wind Project;
- \$62 million for health facility replacements, renovations, and equipment, which includes funding of \$25 million for long-term care facilities in Hay River and Inuvik;
- \$29 million to continue to provide funding to community government for their infrastructure needs;
- \$17 million for new education facilities and renovations to existing facilities, which includes \$12 million for the major retrofit of the Mangilaluk School in Tuktoyaktuk and \$3 million for the replacement of J.H. Sissons in Yellowknife;

- \$9 million for deferred maintenance and energy upgrades to existing GNWT assets; and
- \$8 million for new and enhanced information technology functionality and upgrades.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I would be pleased to answer any questions Members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Would the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the Minister's witnesses into the Chamber? Minister, you may take your seat at the witness table.

Minister, would you please introduce your witness to the House?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have with me Mr. Sandy Kalgutkar, who is the deputy secretary to the FMB. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will open the floor to general comments from committee to the capital estimates as a whole. If there are detailed questions, please hold them until we get to the detail contained within the document.

Any general comments from committee on the capital estimates? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I note that this is the biggest ever, apparently, Infrastructure budget, the bulk of which is going towards roads and the bulk of which is being driven by the federal government's shared-cost projects that are going on at the moment.

I recognize that these projects are an important generator of labour income in communities throughout the NWT, but it is not clear at all how much of that labour is NWT labour, especially given the scope and size of these projects. I wonder, as well, given that, whether it would make more sense to spread the money out. It seems as if this is a similar situation that we got into with the mines, where they were all developed at once, and so the NWT labour pool wasn't large enough to supply labour to all three. I wonder if the same thing will happen with these large infrastructure projects. We do know that there have been considerable carry-overs year-to-year because of the amount of spending to be done and the relative lack of contractors.

What I see, as well, in this budget, is that much-needed investment in new schools is being pushed off into the 19th Assembly. There are key school projects that need to be completed, where schools are inadequate for the size of the student

population, or they are inadequate because they have become in need of a major retrofit. What I see is that that investment has mostly been pushed off to the 19th Assembly.

I also note that there are no new investments in building new housing, although we know that more housing is needed, especially for seniors. There are huge waiting lists for rent-g geared-to-income housing, affordable housing, here in Yellowknife, and we know that Mary Murphy seniors' home is aging and will need to be replaced. We also know that the Rockhill Apartments have burned down, and there is hope for a replacement of that building, and also, of course, a replacement for the Hay River Family Support Centre. It is important to note that that is not the only Family Support Centre that is in dire need of replacement. Of course, that particular building has been torn down, but it is my understanding that the family violence shelter in Tuktoyaktuk is not in very good shape either.

There are, of course, more projects in the queue, and roads seem to be taking a disproportionate amount of space here.

The other thing I wanted to mention of projects in the queue is an investment in tourism is required above and beyond what is mentioned in these capital estimates, specifically in a visitor information centre for Yellowknife, another in Tuktoyaktuk, and for park expansions in both places, where the parks in the Yellowknife area have become very full, and in Tuktoyaktuk, there are very limited tourism facilities, and more are needed now that that road is open.

I realize this is a capital budget, but I really do think that we need more money for the operating budgets, and we don't have to look any further than today's debate about resourcing the Child and Family Services area of Health and Social Services. Clearly, it is under-resourced. It has been under-resourced for many years, and there is more money required in that operating budget.

There are other budgets that we have discussed, operations and maintenance, departmental budgets, where we have identified a need for more spending to keep up with the demand for services, let alone introduce new ones.

With that said, I am looking forward to debating the details of the capital budget when we get into the particular departments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Next, I have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to see that we have the capital budget before us. I do appreciate that this is a significant

capital investment for us, a little bit more than what we normally see on a year-to-year basis in capital.

I appreciate that the federal government, this year, is aligning themselves to make significant dollar-matching contributions. A good portion of this year's capital budget, we are going to be able to expand on it significantly because a number of our dollars are going to be matched by federal dollars to the tune of 75 cents for every 25 cents of ours. That is a welcomed partnership and relationship with the federal government that is going to lead to critical pieces of infrastructure that will continue to build strong and, of course, sustainable territory and necessary infrastructure that we need in many aspects.

Something I wanted to allude to was that, while investments in highways and roads are significant, and that is just the nature of those types of projects, we are also making significant headway in a number of other areas. I think it is worth noting that \$42 million towards energy projects is a very significant investment.

We continue to make very good investments in upgrading and replacement of health facilities. We have been doing that for a number of years, but we are also continuing on our Deferred Maintenance Program, and that also includes a number of energy upgrades to GNWT-owned assets, to the tune of about another \$9 million. Given the size of our jurisdiction and our population, I am rather impressed with the investment that we are making in capital dollars towards energy upgrades and energy initiatives for our size of territory.

That said, though, I do have an underlying concern. Capital dollars are dollars that are often spent outside of the city of Yellowknife, and are expended in a number of the remote and smaller communities and allow for significant increase in employment opportunities in those regions. As we have heard before or just heard earlier from my honourable colleague from Yellowknife Centre is that carry-overs remain a concern. I am hoping that the Department of Finance can find some solutions to the challenges of which I know there is no easy solution, and that there are a number of facets involved as to why projects can be difficult to deliver upon, but that there needs to be some considerable effort put towards reducing our annual carry-overs.

In our last couple of capital budgets, we have seen instances where almost 50 percent of that year's budget has been carried forward, and now with the capital budget that is one of the largest that we have seen in a number of years. This remains a concern. I am hoping that we can hear from the department on some of the aspects that they are hoping to undertake in order to overcome that challenge.

That is it for now. I don't really have any specifics until we get into department-by-department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next on my list I have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to see a large infrastructure investment being brought before the House. I think infrastructure is the easiest way to create growth and jobs in the short term, and, if the projects are targeted in a good way, they can be a strategic investment in the future of all our communities and the future of our economy.

My only real concern is actually the large size of this budget, and my colleague the honourable Member from Yellowknife North spoke well to this point. If you look at the percentage of infrastructure carry-overs from 2002-2013, the average was 32 percent of all funds carried over into the next year. If we apply that percentage to this proposed budget, that is \$103 million. From 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, the carry-over percentage was 46 percent, \$130 million of \$270 million in the total appropriation. My concerns are primarily around that. I would love to see all this appropriation get spent and directly invested, but it does seem like the government struggles at times to move all of the infrastructure investment out the door. I know the Minister has given this some thought, and has some ideas on how we can improve this. If we are looking at nearly 50 percent of this appropriation not being spent in the year it is supposed to be, I think we have to really ask ourselves: are we doing the best job we can in investing in the economy and investing in critical infrastructure? It is a big territory, and I know many of my colleagues have issues with the large percentage of capital spending on highways, roads, bridges, and culverts, but, given the size and the geographical remoteness, I think those investments are just a necessity of life in the NWT now.

I think we have to do the best job we can in this last term to make the biggest impact on the economy, and I think this budget is headed in the right direction, but I would appreciate if the Minister could alleviate some of my concerns around these large percentages of carry-overs that we see year and year again. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Do you have further comments, Mr. Testart?

MR. TESTART: No, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. What we will do is we will do a round of

general comments, and I will give the Minister a chance to respond. Next, I have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I do have some general questions for the Minister, so I would like to start with whether there have been any calculations done to ensure that the capital budget fully complies with the fiscal responsibility policy. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, it does. Sorry, I was cut off guard there. You said we were going to do a round and then have the Minister respond to all concerns at once, but yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly threw a wrench in our plan here, and he had specific questions. He has nine minutes of specific questions for you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm not sure I have nine minutes of questions, but I like the idea of wrenches. If the Minister has done those calculations, is that something that can be shared with the public? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I don't see why not, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I look forward to the Minister then finding a way to make that information public, whether he tables it in the House or posts it on the Department of Finance website. Those are my two suggestions.

I've heard some concerns from Regular MLAs, and I too have concerns about the amount of carry-overs. Can the Minister tell us: is there a percentage of the capital budget that really represents carry-overs or a dollar amount that would allow us to understand what the carry-overs are from previous years? Can the Minister provide that information? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in all fairness to some of the previous speakers that had some concerns with carry-overs, I think I may as well address that issue right now. The Members are correct. There is a significant amount of carry-overs. Last year, I believe it was a little over \$100 million in carry-overs. It could be for different reasons. Projects could be in the planning

stages; the money is appropriated for a particular project. It could be in the planning stages. Contracts could not be let; contracts could just be assigned. That could be some of the reasons for the carry-overs.

I have had discussions with my Cabinet and FMB colleagues, and I have asked them about the amount of carry-overs and that there was a concern with the amount of carry-overs, and, if the projects were sitting in the hopper for too long, then maybe it's time that we reallocated that money if there hasn't been any significant movement on some of the projects. I will be monitoring that quite closely to be sure that we don't have too many projects sitting in the hopper for a couple, two or three years, and if there is an opportunity to use that money elsewhere, to the Member's second point.

I hope that addresses some of the Members' concerns with the amount of carry-overs we have. There are different reasons for carry-overs. Maybe this is an item that I need to sit down with committee and give them a good briefing on it with some of the numbers that are involved. As for the Member's other question, I'm going to ask Mr. Kalgutkar to reply to it, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Kalgutkar.

MR. KALGUTKAR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In terms of the funding that is being requested for the 2019-2020 budget, there are no provisions for carry-overs in the 2019-2020 Capital Estimates. These are the funding that we are anticipating to spend in 2019-2020. The carry-over amounts usually come forward via the supplementary process for carry-overs in the 2019-2020 Capital Estimates. This is the funding that we are anticipating to spend in 2019-2020. The carry-over amounts usually come forward via the supplemental process, so you'll likely see the carry-outs for the 2019-2020 fiscal year in the first supplemental in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, if I wasn't confused before, in any event, the Minister indicated that probably in the neighbourhood of \$100 million on a capital budget of maybe \$230 million of our own money. I don't have a calculator. That's 40 percent. It's carry-overs from previous years. That's a very significant amount of money that's being carried over. I appreciate that the Minister has said that he's going to monitor this more carefully. I hope that he can find a way to report that, as well, to us as Regular MLAs.

In the tracking that's done, it's going to be very important to understand the cause of the delays. Is the cause of the delays within the departments that are supposed to be spending the money, or is the cause of the delays within a department like Infrastructure that takes care of procurement? Because they may not have enough resources to get the contracts or tenders out the door, so then the department that was going to spend the money gets penalized. That's what I'm concerned about, so can the Minister tell us what kind of tracking system he's going to put in place and how he's going to prevent departments that want to get projects done from being penalized if there are capacity issues within a department like Infrastructure that takes care of procurement? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Can the Minister clarify whether the carry-over amount is included in this capital budget? I believe he said it was going to be included in the supplemental, so this \$324 million is all new money? It doesn't include any carry-overs? Can you first confirm that? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: You're absolutely correct, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Now, can you answer Mr. O'Reilly's question? Mr. O'Reilly asked what the issues were in getting the money out. Minister.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I did state before one of the first things that I did to try to monitor this is to put the departments on notice, my colleagues on notice, that I will be monitoring this. I'm sure, as we gather the information, we'll have a fairly good indication of why some of the projects are late. Maybe the specifications haven't been done. It could be a number of different reasons. I can't sit here and start to speculate on what some of those reasons are.

I have made a commitment that we would monitor this a lot closer to make sure that the money that's been allocated goes out the door. If there's a bottleneck somewhere or there's an issue with the department, itself, or whoever is administering the contracts on their behalf, then I think we'll have an opportunity through the monitoring to identify that and take steps to address it. If it's resources capacity, then we'll have to deal with it at that particular time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Now that the clock has almost run out, I do have some bigger-

picture concerns with the capital budget that I think have been articulated by some of my colleagues, as well. There's an overwhelming focus on roads again, and I understand that some of this is related to federal funding, but I notice, and I've said in the House, that our sister territory Nunavut has found ways to support public housing to a greater extent than we have through federal infrastructure funding. I'm concerned about the local government funding gap, the municipal funding gap, that we had identified over a number of years and how much progress we're going to be making on that, and I'll raise that at the appropriate time.

I've heard about the lack of tourism investment in Yellowknife and in Tuktoyaktuk. I think that's all I can squeeze in, Mr. Chair, for now, but I appreciate the commitment that the Minister has made on tracking and reporting on carry-overs, and I hope that he can find a way to share that on a regular basis with us on this side of the House. In future, capital estimates, if he can find a way to document compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy, as well, that would be helpful. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Next, I have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too support this capital budget, and think about the remote area connections with the capital investments, keeping in mind the receiver of the capital budget allowances for these various initiatives would be the creation of income for various families that are looking forward to some of these projects coming on stream, and also being mindful that this government has exhausted and created a partnership with the federal counterparts. So it's good to see that. I'm also mindful that it's hard to be a solution-provider to anything and everything when you consider the large area we have and the logistical challenges of supporting projects. So, certainly, there's going to be a carry-over. Most areas are seasonally accessible, so, given that principle, it creates carry-over. So, in short, I like the energy that went into this large capital initiative, and I look forward to going into the detail. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm trying to be as short as possible because the Minister has heard a number of our colleagues talk here. So my big concern is the municipal funding shortfall. We're talking about \$20-million-plus, and that seems to be a huge issue that we still haven't dealt with. If we're having this carry-over year after year after year, maybe that's something that we need to be looking at as putting funding into the municipal governments to help them deal with their capital

needs and issues as we move forward. So that should be addressed.

I do have some concerns with housing and some of the challenges there, but, again, I know it's just information here, but I'd just like to make sure the Minister is aware of that. At that point, I guess my other big issue is the infrastructure, and we talk roads, but again, it's the isolated, small communities in the riding I represent that need some work done, and, when I'm talking about work, we're not talking about chipsealing; we're talking about being able to utilize the roads. That's what I'm hearing from the communities. I hear from three in particular, Jean Marie, Samba K'e, and Nahanni Butte. They're just trying to access, whether it's seasonal or all year round, and they need some work done to those roads, so I'm hoping that the government can look at that and move forward.

I do have to give the government credit. This is the biggest capital investment that seems to have hit the Assemblies here, so I do have to thank the government for looking at that, but, again, there are some shortfalls in some areas, and I'll have questions for the particular departments as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. There's no one further on the list, so I will give the Minister up to ten minutes to respond to the general comments. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the committee for some of their comments, and we hear their concerns. Members are absolutely correct. This is probably the biggest capital budget this territory has ever seen, and, with some of the carry-over, I think that increases it even more. This is much-needed investment in a territory where things are very slow now, and we see the importance of a lot of the capital investment across the Northwest Territories.

There were some concerns with the money that was going into roads, but you have to be without a road to understand the importance of having a road. I think we have to look no further than the ITH and the benefit it has brought to the people up there.

If you can leverage \$0.75 on the dollar and use \$0.25 of your own dollar to move your projects ahead, I think that is a wise use of money. That allows us as a government to reinvest some of the money that we may have invested into these particular initiatives somewhere else. I was just asking Mr. Kalgutkar what our normal capital budget was, and I think it is in around \$200 million, maybe just under \$200 million. With the significant amount of the investment we have had in the federal government, we would be able to increase

that to \$325 or \$340 million. It is a welcome investment. We hear the concerns of the Members.

The carry-overs, I spoke a bit to the carry-overs before. Building new housing, I am sure the Minister of Housing has heard your concerns. You will have more discussion when you get into the housing information item. There is some challenge with the housing.

I think the Member for Nahendeh raised the investment in the community money. The \$29 million we are investing into this particular capital budget is an increase from the \$27 million in capital infrastructure money that has been part of the community budget, I think, almost since the new deal in 2007. That number has finally gone up this year. It is \$29 million.

The funding shortfall that Members speak of is more on the operations side. There is an opportunity for the communities. My understanding is that they are able to use five or up to 10 percent of the infrastructure money to help deal with some of the operation challenges because communities are much appreciative of the investment in infrastructure.

One of the things in my time as Minister of MACA that I heard from the NWT Association of Communities is: they have all this capital money. They are putting it toward a lot of their capital projects. On the operations side is where they were concerned with so many capital projects coming on stream. They didn't feel they had sufficient operation. There was a lot of work done a few years ago to try and address that. I think in the last couple of operations budgets, we've made investments into trying to address the funding gap. It is still a large gap. There was a lot of good work that was done, I think, at the end of the 16th Legislative Assembly.

On the Child and Family Services, you heard the Minister say before, in responding to questions, that they were looking at bringing forward their work, doing some work right now. They are looking forward to bringing a proposal to the FMB to see if there is more money that could be had for some of the programs that they offer.

Energy projects, I appreciate the comments from the Member from Yellowknife North. There is a lot of money being invested into energy projects, and that is the way of the future. One of the things in my time here, in the Assembly, and having travelled all across the Northwest Territories, visited every community, my time as Minister of Housing, I had an opportunity to visit a lot of the local housing authorities, and I was always quite impressed with the proactive steps they were taking and already starting to invest into a lot of energy projects.

We were dealing with climate change and the high cost of living before it was big news. We were dealing with it. Now that it is out there, we have been able to leverage a lot of investment into many of the projects that we want to see go forward. I know our folks have been doing a lot of work out on the front lines, trying to address it and dealing with climate change and houses getting awfully close to the bank. The federal investment is quite welcome.

I think it was the Member from Yellowknife Centre who talked about such a large infrastructure budget and the fact that we may not have the capacity or the labour force to do it. In some of the work that we have done, we are thinking that this has the potential to create up to 1,200 jobs, I think is the figure I have seen somewhere. Of course, there is going to be concern with such large infrastructure projects. Some may be awarded to firms from the south. We don't know that. Some may have to bring in some people from the south. Hopefully, like a lot of people, they fall in love with the North and just decide to stay here.

If you notice, a lot of this money is in the regions and in some of the smaller communities where we would like them to take advantage of the local labour force that they have in the communities, which would be a benefit. Again, I use the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway for an example because that created close to 600 jobs. Eighty-five percent of those jobs were people from the Beau-Del and other parts of the Northwest Territories.

I have seen the fact that income support payments had gone down and housing rent collections had gone up. That, I think, was just a benefit of having that project go ahead. Now, you see. I talked to folks from Tuktoyaktuk a lot up in Inuvik. They drive in and they are very pleased with the road and the benefits that it has brought to them. As I said before, you have to go without a road to appreciate the value that a road brings to your area. If we can use federal money to help leverage \$0.75, if I can use \$0.75 of your money and put in \$0.25 of my own to buy something, why not? It is just good business, and it is beneficial.

There were a number of other areas that were touched on. I hope I responded to most of the major issues that were raised or all the issues that were raised. Again, we do have a very significant capital budget. I believe at this time, it is a much needed investment with the economy slowing down in some parts of the Northwest Territories and where the work that is come from the government through the capital budget would be fairly welcome. I think I have addressed a lot of the concerns.

As we go into each department's capital budget, I am sure Members will have more detailed questions that the Minister of that particular

department will be in a better position to answer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Committee, we have agreed to, first, consider the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I will thank the witness for joining us. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witness from the Chamber. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses back into the Chamber. Committee, we have before us Minister McLeod but this time in his role as the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Minister would you please introduce your witnesses to the House?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, to my right, I have Dr. Joe Dragon, deputy minister of Environment and Natural Resources. To my left, I have the well-dressed Dennis Marchiori, director of Corporate Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Committee, Department of Environment and Natural Resources begins on page 16 of the Capital Estimates. As always, we will defer departmental total until after consideration of the activity summaries, the first of which can be found on page 18, Environmental Protection and Waste Management. If committee has comments or questions about this item or the associated information item on the next page, now is the time to get those out. Seeing none, I will call this item. Environment and Natural Resources, Environmental Protection and Waste Management, infrastructure investments, \$140,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to page 20, Forest Management. There is an associated information item on page 21. Comments or questions? Seeing none, I will call this item. Environment and Natural Resources, forest management, infrastructure investments, \$1,149,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to page 22, water management and monitoring. There is an information item on page 23. Comments or questions? Seeing none, I will call the item. Environment and Natural Resources, water management and monitoring, infrastructure investments, \$125,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Wildlife, on page 24. There is an information item on page 25. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a basic question I am trying to get a little bit of an understanding on. We see in here a couple of line items with regard to some new patrol vehicles. Is it possible for the department, maybe, to just give us a little explanation on how they undertake their fleet management and describe for us a little bit about how the life cycle of vehicles is managed, in this instance, by the department of ENR, but even in the general context would be appreciated. I am just trying to understand the degree of the fleets that we use in our departments and to what extent we are rotating them out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Dr. Dragon.

DR. DRAGON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Various trucks, depending on what they are used for and in what capacity, we have trucks that go on winter roads and require heavy duty vehicles, suspensions that are going on winter roads, that sort of thing.

The items mentioned here in the budget are actually patrol trucks that we replace on a ten-year rotation. If they have to be rotated before then, then we do, but these trucks typically are all-terrain. They have heavy duty frames and suspensions. They are typically three-quarter ton vehicles, and then they have the associated winches, light bars, headache racks, and radios. This is why they are a little bit more expensive, but typically, we have them anywhere from five to ten years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you for that. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response. I know, for sure, Mr. Marchiori is very familiar with this line of questioning. In my past position as a city councillor, we often grilled him with regard to our fleet management, but one of the things that would be nice to see, somewhere in the budget, the department's list of fleet so that we can kind of get a sense of the lifespan of each one of these kind of vehicles and what kind of rotation they are on, just so that we get a better perspective from a budgetary perspective, I guess, on how we manage our fleet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If that is the type of information that committee would like to see as we go before committee, debating the capital budget before we get to the floor, maybe we

can provide that type of information rather than having it here, if that would be the wish of committee. That way, they will have a general idea of the life cycle during the debate of the capital estimates before we bring them on the floor, if that works for committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Seeing nothing further, I will call this item. Environment and Natural Resources, wildlife, infrastructure investments, \$1,009,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please return to page 16. Environment and Natural Resources, total capital estimates, \$2,423,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. This concludes our consideration of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. I want to thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Minister, you may take your usual seat.

Committee, we have next agreed to consider the Department of Lands, which begins on page 55 of the capital estimates. I will turn to Minister Sebert for any opening comments. Actually, you know what? We are not doing opening comments; I just remembered. I will ask Minister Sebert to take his seat at the witness table. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left, I have Brenda Hilderman, director of finance, and to my right, Willard Hagen, deputy Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Committee, we will defer the departmental total until after consideration of the activity summaries, the first of which is on page 56, Informatics Shared Service Centre. First, I have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the effort that we are putting in with regard to the enterprise licensing and permitting, but we can see here that this is going to be a cross-departmental initiative. Maybe the department can start by explaining a little bit about Lands' role in particular in this, and is it strictly a Lands budget line item, or are all of these other departments also contributing to this enterprise licensing and permitting?

Then, also, where will it be centred? Is this going to be something that is going to be an online thing that is accessible to the public? Is this just interdepartmental improvements? If we can get some elaboration on this particular line item, it would be appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Just so everyone is on the same page, it is page 57 that contains some of the details that Mr. Vanthuyne just referenced. I will turn to the Minister. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This information system project is a collaborative effort between several departments, including Lands, ITI, ENR, and Finance, and the enterprise licensing and permitting system will use common components to enable them to implement business processes.

Perhaps, with respect to the other portion of the question, I could turn it over to Ms. Hilderman. Thank you.

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

MS. HILDERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Informatics Shared Service Centre is one of the activities within Lands and provides services, as the Minister mentioned, to ENR, ITI, and Lands. Initially, this information system capital project was appropriated originally in our 2018-2019 capital estimates, and this is for year two of the two-year project. It is a common platform for licences and permits. Initially, hopefully in this fiscal year, they will implement ten licences and permits, and then another 30 within year two of the capital project, 2019-2020. Once those are in place, it then is a common platform that they will build on that and provide services for other departments to the public through this same common platform. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister, you'd like to add something?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. The whole purpose of this of course is to reduce costs of maintaining separate systems across departments, and there was a mention of licences and permits. There's quite a number of them from fishing licence to pesticide business permits, so, hopefully, this will lead to a more efficient and less costly system. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the insight with regard to the enterprise licensing and permitting contribution that we're making. Let's just then for a moment jump down for some clarification purposes to "Land Tenure

Optimization System." It notes that this is to rationalize five systems that currently handle the land tenure information and processes, and it's going to create a single platform. Can we get a better understanding of what the five systems currently are and how this single platform will manage these five systems? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. The five systems that we currently have do have support challenges, and this system will address this risk by providing a common platform that will support several territorial lands surface, Commissioner's lands surface, oil and gas subsurface, the Mining Recorder's Office subsurface, and the Forest Management Division's surface. Hopefully, this will be at a lower capital cost, addressing issues of cost, and will be a more efficient and less costly system.

Also, I understand that it's a mandate item that we will improve collaboration for easier access to the government programs and services online, so this is part of our Mandate Commitment 533, apparently. So this makes sense quite apart from being a mandate item, makes sense from an economic and user point of view. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Seeing nothing further, I will call this item. Lands, Informatics shared service centre, infrastructure investment, \$698,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to page 58, operations. There's an associated information item on page 59. I'll call the item. Lands, operations, infrastructure investments, \$234,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. There's nothing on planning coordination, so we will return to page 55 to consider the total. Lands, total capital estimates, \$932,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. I want to thank the Minister and the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we have next agreed to consider the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, found on page 61. I will ask the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Minister Moses, to take a seat at the witness table. Sergeant-at-

Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber.

Minister Moses, would you please introduce your witness to the House.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's Mr. Robert Tordiff, the assistant deputy minister for MACA. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the witness. Committee, we will defer consideration of the departmental total until after consideration of the activity summaries, the first of which is on page 64, with an associated information item on page 65. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as the Minister is well aware, the NWT Association of Communities and a number of its members have identified shortfalls year over year as it relates to an undertaking that we took back in 2014 to identify community needs. I think, at the time, it was about a \$40-million-a-year shortfall. That was back in 2014. The City of Yellowknife claims to have received an annual shortfall of about \$11 million. Of course, the City of Yellowknife is just weeks away from going into its budgetary process, and they're naturally going to raise this issue again, and they're going to point the finger to our government as it relates to not making the commitment to try to lessen this gap.

So, you know, on page 64 this is where we see the contribution. It's \$29 million and it's to all of the communities. I just want to know from the department if they're doing some work as it relates to lessening the gap. If they are, what is that? If they're not, then what are some of the ways in which we can potentially strive towards overcoming this significant gap? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did hear the Members' comments, all of them that made general comments to the Minister of Finance's opening remarks. We do know this is a concern, and I did hear it when I did become Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, when I did sit with the NWTAC's executive. This year, there is a small increase in the funding for O and M as well as, I believe, water and sewer services. Since, I think, 2014, there has been small incremental increases each year. This funding really is used for core needs of the community, and I know we need to find ways to address that. As you heard with the Minister of Finance, we try to allocate some of our dollars, and some of the communities actually use some of their CPF funding to try to leverage federal dollars, as well.

Some of the agreements and federal funding that we are looking for and looking at is obviously the new Building Canada Plan, Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan as well. So we're looking at opportunities that we can look at closing some of the gaps through trying to leverage some of that federal funding.

As we all know, there's been new elections that just happened, and we are committed to sitting down with the new membership, looking at addressing this by developing a strategy. As Members know, during business planning session I did mention we have put that strategy on hold until the elections were done. Hopefully, we should have that strategy in place in the early new year. We will share it with the NWTAC as well as committee then.

Through you, Mr. Chair, maybe I can ask my assistant deputy minister if there's any other further information he'd like to share with the committee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Tordiff.

MR. TORDIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In response to the question with respect to what is MACA doing to help address the issue, we have seen an increase in the capital budget that we allocate to communities. In addition to that, we have implemented a number of programs that are designed to help extend the useful life and the time for replacement for much of the communities' capital infrastructure, including increased efforts around capital planning and the implementation of a new asset management program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to be genuine in respecting and appreciating the department's efforts. I think they undertook some really good work, with the NWTAC and some community members and what-have-you, back in 2014 when we underwent the evaluation that ultimately identified this gap.

I am convinced, and this is going to be more of a comment, that the government, given the pressures that we have on our budget and the stretch dollars that we have, that we really, in fact, are never going to be able to overcome this, because the demands for capital projects within the communities is, as was mentioned, growing, but then, so is the rate of inflation on all of this stuff. Based on what allocations we have available and how all of us in this House realize how tight this budget is year-over-year, I just don't ever foresee how we are going to remove this infrastructure gap or this funding gap.

It is my belief that the only way we are going to be able to do that is if we -- and I will be raising this in a number of different ways over the next little while, but the Territorial Formula Financing agreement that we have with the federal government has to be renegotiated with, and it is with the purview of these kinds of shortfalls in mind that we have to renegotiate that. I don't think, on a per capita basis, that we need to request more money, but we certainly need to give consideration to, when we generate our own-source revenues, that it doesn't get clawed back by the federal government. They need to recognize that these are the kinds of gaps that we need to fill and that that is a process that we have to go through and have a heart-to-heart.

I recognize that TFF, I think, is up for review in 2019. Although the federal government has given early indicators that they are going to maintain status quo, I would argue that that is not satisfactory, and this is a primary example as to why we have to renegotiate that, or we will never fulfill this gap. Those are my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. There were comments. Would the Minister care to respond?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: No, I appreciate the honesty and the comments made by the Member. As I mentioned, one fund that we are looking at is the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program that would help address some of the water and possibility sewage needs some of our communities.

The little increase that we did get in this budget will look at priorities of which municipalities need their infrastructure upgraded. We are going to be looking at that when this budget passes, but I really appreciate the Member's comments. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, along the same line of the previous Member, I am trying to sort out how the whole system works. Is there a situation where, when you are trying to fulfill the capital deficit in the municipalities that have capital deficits, you are removing money from other communities that are not considered to have a capital deficit? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The easiest answer is no.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: At least, I guess, in communities that are considered not to have accumulated deficit, the money stays the same? I am going to take the answer "no" as meaning that.

My question is: when you accumulate a capital deficit, it is based on depreciation, I am assuming. I am going to ask the question, though: is the capital deficit accumulation based on the depreciation of the assets you have? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Tordiff.

MR. TORDIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The calculation for capital is based on the core needs of infrastructure in a community and the estimated life cycle for that infrastructure.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. I will just remind the witness to indicate when you are done talking with a "thank you," just so that the technical team knows to change the mics. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: [Microphone turned off]...turned capital, but I could also say infrastructure. Now, if there is a community, such as Yellowknife, which has lots of infrastructure, and there is a depreciation on that infrastructure, then, every year, when they replace water lines, I know that there is little depreciation the first year, but as soon as it goes into use after one year, there is a depreciation. That depreciation would be considered a deficit in the infrastructure. That is what I am trying to get at.

In the small communities, we have very little infrastructure, a few warehouses here; most of our roads are gravel; we have no running water. We have water trucks that haul things around and so on. They depreciate as well, but they are very minor items. If you write a water truck off over 10 years versus trying to write off a water system over 50 years, I mean, I realize that some of the systems in the city last longer, but, Mr. Chair, what I am trying to get at is that we, in some of the small communities, don't appear to have huge infrastructure deficits because we don't have the infrastructure that we need. Not all of our streets are chipsealed. We don't have piped water systems. We don't have the swimming pools, arenas. I mean, we do have some arenas, but not something, certainly, like what some of the larger centres have.

I have always been concerned about the way that infrastructure deficits are accumulated. It looks like the people that have the most have the greatest deficits. The greatest amount of money goes to the people that have the most infrastructure, and the communities that have very little infrastructure are

having very little accumulation of appreciation, if I can use that term. It is kind of an oxymoron, but there is an accumulation of deficit to determine the infrastructure deficit.

I am wondering if the Minister has looked into that system that they have employed since 2014 to see if it really is a fair system in determining infrastructure deficits. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As you heard before, we are developing an asset management program. When we do look at the deficits, we really do look at the core infrastructure. As I mentioned, a lot of this money goes to core needs for the communities, and we do base it on service life rather than market price at the time. I think this asset management program that the department has been developing is going to help identify some of the things that the Member has mentioned. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am kind of understanding the core as, like, maybe this is the basic infrastructure that would maintain the city or maintain a town or a hamlet. Maybe I could just get the Minister to give me an example of what would not be considered core infrastructure. I don't see the difference between core infrastructure and infrastructure, period. I was wondering if maybe I could just get that explanation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Just for clarity, is that what the core needs are in the community, or what is outside of it or just the core needs? Sorry, I missed part of the question there.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Some clarification, Mr. Beaulieu?

MR. BEAULIEU: Like, when the Minister referred to core infrastructure, I was wondering what that included. For me, core infrastructure are all the roads, ditches, dumps and docks -- no, not docks, maybe trucks and heavy equipment. Just a clarification of what would be outside of core infrastructure?

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of those would include roads, as he

mentioned, water, sewage services, solid waste sites, some of the main things that you would see in almost any other community. Maybe I will ask Mr. Tordiff if there was anything that I might have missed. You mentioned some other ones earlier, such as other facilities such as garages for the community for storage and things like that, but maybe through you, Mr. Chair, I'll ask Mr. Tordiff if he has anything further he can add.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Tordiff.

MR. TORDIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister has a pretty good summary of what we would consider core infrastructure. Communities of course have the discretion to invest in whichever capital they choose, if they choose to build a swimming pool or so forth. We fund the core infrastructure, and that structure is like roads, water treatment plants, water-delivery truck. That type of equipment is what we would consider core. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I understand. Swimming pools and things like that, I recognize are outside of the core. I am beginning to understand what that is. When the department does infrastructure deficit, they are looking at the core and they are comparing apples to apples. That's what I want to hear. Thank you for the explanation to the Minister, and that is all I have for now, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to follow up on the municipal funding gap review that was done jointly between MACA and NWTAC some time ago. One of the commitments in our mandate reads, "We will develop a strategy to close the gap in funding levels to meet municipal core needs." Can the Minister tell us when that strategy is going to be ready and made available to the Regular MLAs and the public? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I mentioned, we are looking at working on it again. We put a delay on it since there was an election coming up. I would say, probably the earliest that we might be able to see it, I would say, is in February.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that. I look forward to getting the document in February. Can the Minister tell us whether the gap itself has been recalculated? Obviously, as we move forward in time, infrastructure changes, cost of living increases and so on. Does the department actually recalculate this on a regular basis? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Tordiff.

MR. TORDIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We were able to have a good idea of the inventory in the communities through the asset inventory that communities maintain as well as other filings with their insurance program.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's interesting. Is the gap, the funding gap, actually recalculated on an annual basis? Has it ever been recalculated? Is there a cycle for that? Can someone tell me whether it's actually recalculated? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Tordiff.

MR. TORDIFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I believe that that will be a component of the new strategy, the recalculation of the deficit. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Okay, so we are going to have a recalculated figure. That figure, can someone tell me how it is actually calculated? I know there is some sort of an inventory that the department has prepared, a condition of buildings and infrastructure changes over time. Presumably, somebody's going to have to go out and look at some of that stuff again. Can I get just a bit of a general explanation of how that figure is arrived at? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't have that level of detail right now, but we can get that information for the Members and committee for future references. Just for clarity, while I'm talking about the funding gap, we will be bringing out the strategy within February. It is focused on the O and M budget. I know that a lot of our communities, when they build the infrastructure, the O and M is sometimes one of the challenges, that they have to keep it maintained. For that specific

question for the Member, we'll get that information, and we will get it back to the Member. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Maybe I'm mistaken here, but I understood that the funding review was done, when it was done, part of it was an O and M issue or problem, part of it was also a capital deficit. Am I hearing, then, that the Minister says that the document we are going to get in February is really only going to deal with the O and M side; it's not going to deal with the capital, the infrastructure deficit? Thanks, Mr. Chair. For our local governments. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The strategy that you will see before you is going to be also through the O and M. We will also be looking at that in the O and M budget. What we have right now is, all we're talking about is, capital. When we recognize the capital, it is on a quarterly basis. As I mentioned, one of the ways we are trying to adjust that is through some of our federal funding agreements to try to offset some of those core need infrastructure in some of the communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, okay. The document the Minister is going to give us is only going to deal with the O and M side. I will double check myself, but I understood that this gap also was on a capital side, and that's why I'm raising it here. I know some folks don't want us to talk about O and M, but I am talking about capital. As I understood, that municipal funding gap review also had a capital component. I look forward, if the Minister can clarify that when he provides the additional information, that will be much appreciated. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Agreed.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to just ask questions directly to the capital side. The O and M is coming up here, but I think I brought this up here last year, as well. On your supply management inventory requirements, if you use the water treatment plant there, in some of the communities, I'm hoping that, if it is being supplied

by this company called Cortex (ph), so, if it is in fact in the contribution agreement between the department and the local government encouraging them to deal strictly with similar suppliers and making it a lot easier to interact and supply and support each other on, say, filters, for example, for the water plant.

If Deline runs out, well, then they can borrow from other neighbouring communities. Those kind of factors come into play when you have one supply chain management for the same product. Economies of scale come into factor, as well, just being more mindful of efficiency on the expenditures side of the capital that is being built in these communities. That is more of a comment that I brought out last year, and I will bring that out again.

My next comment: I agree with the Member from Yellowknife North on having arguments for our depreciated infrastructure in preparation for the next round of TFF negotiations to see if there are substantial arguments to get our gap filled with increased contributions coming from our bank or the federal government. Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the Member's first comment there, when it comes to, I guess, like, some of the, I guess it would be, O and M materials, we do go by standard design. We work with the NWTAC. When we look at purchasing, we do group purchases so that it is available should something happen. I take the Member's comments that, when we are looking at negotiating with federal government, that we do take everything into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Next, I have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I guess the first comment is about the glossary. When we talk about "core," could we in the future just get that put in there, in the appendix, so that we have a clear understanding of what "core" is when it comes to municipal governments? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can put something in there, a definition of what the core needs are and how we use it to look at doing our funding to the communities and some of the questions that have already been asked. Yes, we can definitely do that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for providing that. Next question is: how much money are we receiving from the Build Canada Fund, which is going to the communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister Moses.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have that detail. I can provide it, though, to the Member. It is increased funding, and it is addressing some of the core needs that I had mentioned earlier: the roads, solid waste, those kind of things. I will get that information for the Member. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If the Minister can just get it to P and P so the group can understand that, that would be very grateful and helpful. The Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh talked about asset management there and, I heard, you know, talked about the core. With the core, would office buildings be part of the core or is that just something else? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We will get a definition of all the core infrastructure in the communities. We will share it with Members. I do believe that office buildings are part of that core, as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Minister clarifying that. I am looking forward to that information. I guess my next question that I do have is: if municipalities decide to, you know, build recreation facilities, pools, libraries, does the government put funding towards those type of projects? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The municipalities get separate O and M funding, and they are free to use that for any special projects that they want to do outside of what the core needs are. That is really up to the municipalities when they go through their capital budgets. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister advise: is this part of the gas tax that they receive? When we talk O and M, that is O and M, the operation and maintenance of facilities. I am trying to better understand this. If the Minister can clarify exactly that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of that is the CPI funding that they do receive as well as the gas tax. They can use either or look at any kind of special projects that they do. Our main focus is to have those core needs in place, the water, the sewage, the solid waste, for the health, wellness, and safety of our residents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I appreciate the Minister's answers for that. Can the Minister explain why, when they talk about, you know, safety and health of the community, that recreation facilities would not be one of the cores? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With the presentation that we had given to committee a while back, I know that there is some possible federal funding that we can utilize. As we bring that definition forward, we will be able to see. I can't say right now if it is a core need. I will look into that, and I will get back to the Member.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: That will be all. I would like to thank the Minister and the witness for providing the information here today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Nothing further from committee. I will call the activity. Municipal and Community Affairs, regional operations, infrastructure investments, \$29 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Please turn to page 61. Municipal and Community Affairs, total capital estimates, \$29 million. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Committee, do you agree that we have

concluded our consideration of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Department of Lands, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witness from the Chamber. Thank you to the witness for appearing before us. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that the chair rise and report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is in order, non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion is carried.

---Carried

I will rise and report progress. Thank you, committee.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SPEAKER: May I have the report, Member for Hay River North?

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital Estimates, 2019-2020, and would like to report progress, and Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Do we have a seconder? Member for Yellowknife North. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Masi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 27:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,
2018-2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 27, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2018-2019, be read for the third time, and Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Member has requested for a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 13 in favour, zero against, zero abstentions.

---Carried

Bill 27 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

BILL 28:
SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT
(OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2018
2019

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 28, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2018-2019, be read for the third time, and Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Member has requested for a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

RECORDED VOTE

COMMITTEE CLERK TRAINEE (Ms. Franki-Smith): The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife

Centre, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, and the Member for Yellowknife South.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote: 14 in favour, zero opposed, zero abstentions.

---Carried

Bill 28 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, October 26, 2018, at 10:00 a.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
 - Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Act
 - Bill 26, Statistics Act
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act

20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process
- Minister's Statement 103-18(3), Marine Transportation Services
- Tabled Document 215-18(3), Capital Estimates, 2019-2020

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 Friday, October 26, 2018, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

