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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Monfwi)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, February 13, 2019****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 141-18(3):
A ROUNDUP OF ROUNDUP 2019

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories has world-class mineral potential that could bring economic benefits to the residents of the Northwest Territories, industry players, and Canada.

In fact, nearly \$1 billion of our economy comes from mining and exploration. It is the primary generator of wealth in the Northwest Territories and the reason why our government has made the commitment to support mineral exploration and the mining sector by implementing the Mineral Development Strategy, capturing opportunities to build transportation infrastructure that enables resources to get to market, closing the skills gap in the mining sector, implementing the Mining Incentive Program, developing and introducing a Mineral Resources Act, and supporting Indigenous governments to build capacity in dealing with the mining-related activities.

Mr. Speaker, last month our government was represented at the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver and used our attendance there as an opportunity to promote the importance of mining and the benefits mining brings to the residents of the Northwest Territories, industry players, and Canada. This was also an opportunity to increase awareness, knowledge, and understanding of our world-class mineral potential and to profile our partnerships with Indigenous and community governments.

Today, I would like to share with Members some observations about the trip, a "roundup of roundup"

if you will, and why I continue to believe that our attendance at this annual event is critical.

Mr. Speaker, I was joined in Vancouver by some of my Cabinet colleagues, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Indigenous leaders and representatives, Government of Northwest Territories staff, Yellowknife Mayor Rebecca Alty, and a number of other representatives from the Northwest Territories organizations and businesses. Our enhanced presence at roundup left no doubt that our territory stands united in support of mining and I have the full confidence that the message was received throughout the event.

The Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup is an excellent opportunity to showcase just how much is going on in our territory, celebrate some of our successes, and generate interest in the Northwest Territories as a great place to invest in mining. It gave us the opportunity to meet with investors, exploration companies, and industry leaders. It also connected us with six junior exploration companies, some who have already begun work in the NWT and others who are seeking more information.

Mr. Speaker, the rich potential of our territory was confirmed early in the week with good news from Evrim Resources and Newmont Mining regarding surface sampling results from their Astro gold project, a discovery that could result in an entirely new gold deposit type for our territory and establish a new gold district in the Sahtu.

Our government was also able to share news. The Socio-economic Agreement signing that took place on the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup tradeshow floor between the Government of the Northwest Territories and Fortune Minerals marked an important step on the road to the NWT becoming home to Canada's first primary cobalt mine.

The Impact Benefit Agreement between NorZinc and the Nahanni Butte Dene Band was another well attended event and demonstrated how, together, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Indigenous governments, and industry can achieve mutually beneficial success.

Avalon Advance Materials' announcement of their small-scale project with a new partner Cheetah Resources PTY Ltd. was also welcome news.

At NWT Night, I was happy to announce the Government of the Northwest Territories' intention to partner with the Government of Canada to market the Mactung deposit and Cantung mine, as tungsten prices are on the rise. Together, they offer as close to a turnkey project as exists in our northern territory. I look forward to getting this project off the ground and finding the right partner to help us get there.

Mr. Speaker, our attendance at the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup is just one way our government is working together to seek out opportunities to meet with mining and financial companies to increase awareness of the Northwest Territories' significant mineral potential and investment opportunities. With guidance from our Mineral Development Strategy, our government executes a full suite of marketing and outreach activities to tell our story on the global stage.

While many jurisdictions have immense mineral potential, few can boast the holistic, inclusive approach we take to managing and encouraging responsible mineral exploration and development in our territory. This means that, when we tell our story, we get to say our territory offers a low-risk investment jurisdiction that is setting the bar for Indigenous partnership and contributes to improved outcomes for northern communities and meaningful opportunities for Northerners.

As I've said before, it's a good story, one that the mining market is increasingly seeking when making decisions on where to invest.

I will continue to use every possible opportunity to share our story and demonstrate that, when responsible developers invest in our territory, they can have the confidence in moving world-class projects forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 142-18(3):
CANADA GAMES AND THE YOUTH
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from February 15 to March 3, 2019, athletes from the Northwest Territories will be representing our territory at the 2019 Canada Winter Games in Red Deer, Alberta. This event is an important celebration of Canadian sport and culture. It will be the largest event of its kind ever hosted in Red Deer and central Alberta, and one of

the largest in Alberta since the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

During the past year, our northern athletes have been preparing themselves physically and mentally. Our athletes will be competing in archery, badminton, biathlon, cross-country skiing, curling, figure skating, gymnastics, hockey, judo, short-track speed skating, squash, and table tennis. All 93 athletes have spent countless hours training hard in preparation to compete in what will be one of the formative moments of their sporting careers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the hard work and long hours put in by the athletes and coaches in preparation for the Canada Winter Games. Not only will our athletes represent the Northwest Territories on the national stage, but they are also outstanding healthy-lifestyle role models for the entire North.

I would also like everyone to recognize that Team NT's athletes could not reach the Games without the "behind the scenes" effort and support from members of their communities. The hours of preparation, fundraising, organizing, and encouragement from family, friends, and communities are critical to our athletes' successes.

In addition to Team NT, Municipal and Community Affairs will be supporting 32 Youth Ambassadors and staff from 13 communities as they travel to the Canada Winter Games. I have full confidence that our Youth Ambassadors and their chaperones will be exceptional representatives of our territory throughout the event. The Youth Ambassadors will be placed in many different roles to help support our athletes at the Games.

As ambassadors, they will demonstrate that youth from across the North have incredible strength, great character, and will be strong future leaders for their communities. Our youth will benefit greatly from this unique experience. Friendships will be formed, and our young people will return to their communities with many lasting memories.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the efforts of Chef de Mission Bill Othmer and Assistant Chef de Mission Damon Crossman, along with their mission staff, responsible for supporting Team NT leading up to and during the Canada Winter Games. These two individuals and the mission staff work with the Sport North Federation and the territorial sport organizations. They are responsible for selecting and managing their respective teams. The efforts of these individuals are significant contributions to a healthy future for the Northwest Territories.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is proud to support members of Team NT and the Youth Ambassadors, as part of our

commitment to supporting healthy lifestyles for youth and promoting a healthy, stronger North. As Team NT and the Youth Ambassadors prepare to travel to Red Deer, it is my great pleasure to recognize Team NT's 149 athletes, coaches, managers, and mission staff, who will be participating in the 2019 Canada Winter Games. To all of those behind the scenes, the volunteers, parents, staff, schools, and community governments, we acknowledge your contributions and thank you for supporting our athletes' success at the games. On behalf of the government and residents of the Northwest Territories, I would like to wish our athletes a safe and successful Canada Winter Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 143-18(3):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the Members that the honourable Glenn Abernethy will be absent from the House today due to a personal matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. I am pleased to recognize a delegation from Ontario, the Ontario Legislature interns, who are here with us today. They are here this week to learn more about our consensus-style government. Forgive me if I mispronounce your name, but bear with me. We have with us today Jad El Tal, Janessa Duran, Braelyn Guppy, Linda Bui, Nikki Romano, Clara Pasieka, Hudson Manning -- this is a bit tricky, here -- Piotr Supierz-Szczyglowski, Nishani Chankar, and Chandradai Munisha Basiram. Masi for joining us here today. Thanks for being here with us, and welcome to the Northwest Territories. Masi. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES SUPPORT FOR YELLOWKNIFE
WATER LINE REPLACEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The community of Yellowknife was forced to rely on the Yellowknife River as a safe and clean source of water due to arsenic contamination from local mining operations, particularly the Giant Mine. The federal government confirmed its liability for these expenses when it paid for the 1968-1969 construction of a pumphouse and a submarine

water line from the Yellowknife River to another pumphouse south of Yellowknife. The Yellowknife River pumphouse also serves the Yellowknives Dene First Nations community of Detah.

The submarine water line is in need of replacement. The City of Yellowknife tried unsuccessfully to have this issue addressed during the environmental assessment of the Giant Mine Remediation Project from 2008 to 2013. The federal government and the GNWT would not provide any assistance.

After much discussion, the city contracted a detailed evaluation of two source-water options, replacing the current line or using water from Yellowknife Bay with additional treatment capability. The evaluation considered the possibility of an accidental release of arsenic from Giant Mine, at least until the chambers are completely frozen around 2050.

A set of weighted criteria were developed with city council to evaluate the two options, and these criteria included susceptibility to raw water quality changes, constructability, reliability of water supply, ease of operation, and 25-year life cycle costs.

Thirteen different scenarios were evaluated, and, in nine of them, the Yellowknife River source with a replacement water line came out on top. The Yellowknife River with pipeline option would cost \$33 million, and the Yellowknife Bay water source would cost about \$18.2 million. The recommendation is to go with the Yellowknife River and a water line.

The city has approached our government for funding and support. I will be asking the Minister of Infrastructure about these matters later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ENTERPRISE LAND TENURE

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government is very proud of its support for the "Big E," the economy, of the Northwest Territories, and yes, diamond mines and new roads are important, but, from the small community perspective, the situation really is "no business, as usual."

Let's take a look at Enterprise. It is a small community right on the highway into the NWT from the south. It has always been a business community, and there is a strong "enterprising" spirit.

On the other hand, our government is fostering economic uncertainty by neglecting the community.

Residents are interested in commercial land to expand or start businesses, but they just can't get it.

This is a long story, Mr. Speaker, a tale of bureaucratic to-and-fro, frustration, and woe that goes back to at least 2009. I will spare you the details. The bottom line is that the hamlet wants to be able to approve commercial leases of land within Enterprise and enable residents to obtain title to the land that they live on.

Half of our Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, visited Enterprise in May of 2018, and all seemed well. The Minister of Lands promised to reply within two weeks to concerns raised about uncertainty related to land use, leasing, and title. Since then, no land has been turned over to the Hamlet of Enterprise.

Meanwhile, a major industrial project for wood pellet manufacturing has been fast-tracked by our government. Aurora Wood Pellets' application for 350 hectares of land took less than a year from start to finish. There was no consultation with the Hamlet of Enterprise.

I raise this because it shows our government's zippy service to big business and zip for service to small local business and community aspirations. My understanding is that Enterprise has met the terms of applicable legislation and done all that the GNWT has asked of the hamlet. Government officials have been invited to council meetings. Since last October, the community has been unable to get a representative from the lands department to explain the process of turning over land to the hamlet or the residents.

In the three years of the 18th Assembly, many of my colleagues have spoken about the importance to small communities of a few jobs and a little bit of business. What we are trying to say is that this is a big problem, not a small problem. This is the Northwest Territories' problem.

We need to change our ways, Mr. Speaker. Let's start by making some land available in Enterprise. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABORIGINAL SPORTS CIRCLE COACHING
AWARD – JONATHAN TSETSO

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the NWT Awards Program is to recognize and give credit to exceptional community members in the NWT sport system. The individuals who have continually shown dedication and hard work and have made significant contributions will be honoured for the

positive difference that they are making in their respective communities.

A yearly awards dinner is being held to celebrate the awards recipients' involvement in a number of categories. One of those categories is coaching.

The award is presented to an individual who demonstrates the commitment, success, and dedication necessary in the development of their athletes and program, at any level of competition in the NWT.

The 2018 award winner was Jonathan Tsetso. Jonathan is a coach from Fort Simpson who is deeply involved in the Fort Simpson Minor Hockey program, as well as being involved with the recreational hockey program in his community. John is the recipient of the coach award due to his continuous commitment to the youth of the community, encouraging them to participate and practice on a regular basis. Jonathan constantly exhibits his passion to help the youth by running quality youth hockey programs.

Jonathan is always looking to improve his coaching skills so that he is able to provide his community with the best program. Jonathan is reliable, hard-working, and always happy to be there. Along with the skills of the game, Jonathan also implements and is a huge proponent of fair play and sportsmanship in his coaching style. He has a strong desire to create a fun and safe environment for everyone.

Jonathan has played a major role in revitalizing the Fort Simpson Minor Hockey program. With his assistance, Fort Simpson has been able to send teams to the Fort Smith hockey tournament for two years in a row for their first time in over a decade.

As a grandparent, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that Jonathan has left on the youth as their coach and mentor. I am proud that the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the Northwest Territories recognized Jonathan with the 2018 Coach Award.

Congratulations to Jonathan. Your efforts with our youth do not go unnoticed. Thank you for the positive mentorship that you provide to the young people of our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SPCA
STABILIZATION FUNDING

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the welfare of animals in our communities. Specifically, I want to

talk about the NWT SPCA, an organization that serves 31 communities in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, most of us have had pets in our lives. Dogs, cats, and other animals become part of your family, an integral part of our lives. I got my dog, Hogan, from the SPCA almost 10 years ago, and, of course, he has been an important part of my life ever since.

Mr. Speaker, it concerns me greatly that the NWT SPCA, an agency dedicated to the humane treatment of animals, has to regularly plead for financial support. It employs nine to 12 people. It spends \$30,000 a year providing dog food and straw to NWT communities. It spends \$50,000 a year on medical supplies. It fundraised to buy its own piece of land and build its own new facility. It relies heavily on volunteers, including its board members, people who volunteer their time because they care about the welfare of animals.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, the NWT SPCA receives no ongoing financial support from this government. The City of Yellowknife supports the SPCA to the tune of almost \$20,000 per year. Individuals and businesses contribute thousands of dollars per year. However, our government, despite numerous appeals, has only been able to provide a small one-time grant, and, when the SPCA appealed for support last fall, the Minister's reply was simply that "we don't see any fit" with funding programs. I suggest that this isn't a good enough answer, Mr. Speaker.

MACA has a program to offer stabilization funding to NGOs, but, to qualify, the NGOs have to already be receiving \$50,000 per year in government funding. The SPCA isn't, so it doesn't qualify for the stabilization funding.

Mr. Speaker, 31 communities count on the services that the NWT SPCA provides. The demand is growing. The more they do, the more services people want. Without them, problems of canine overpopulation, strays, neglect, and inhumane conditions would become much worse, but its essential work is just not sustainable with current funding.

The SPCA has achieved a lot, and we need its services, but it is warning us that it can't continue. Our government needs to step up and help relieve the burden.

At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of MACA. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RESOURCE AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION (REDI) SESSION IN NORMAN
WELLS

MR. MCNEELY: Mr. Speaker, Resource and Energy Development Information, or better known as REDI, the promotional initiative and developments of our NWT resources through this marketing publication: Mr. Speaker, on February 21st, next week, in Norman Wells, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is sponsoring a REDI session, an open-house engagement to better understand public awareness of resource and energy development.

This, Mr. Speaker, is truly the first step in community and regional consultations for all stakeholders to develop meaningful discussions on regulatory and co-management issues.

Mr. Speaker, 32 percent of our NWT economy is driven by the resource development. This realizes the revenues for public and private sectors. Complementing this economic sector means collaboration with community stakeholders on a fair and transparent regulatory regime.

Mr. Speaker, the devolution agreement, which sees the transfer of resource responsibilities from the Government of Canada to the Government of the Northwest Territories, is real and now in the process from mirrored legislation to a made-in-the-North, new Mineral Resources Act.

Mr. Speaker, after decades of negotiations with our federal counterparts on the issues of independency over responsible resource development, we arrived at our destination.

Mr. Speaker, since the 2008 Neil McCrank report on regulatory reform and after the latest "what we heard" consultations, committee is tasked with the responsibility on legislation community engagements.

Mr. Speaker, as mentioned, as legislators, we look through the lens of legislation and policy. It is my sincere hope that our previous deliberations and publication reflect the collective wisdom of all stakeholders who were consulted while drafting a system of efficiency, effective, and responsive.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge the hard work of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and the public's valued involvement. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
APPLICATION OF MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS
POLICY

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the Business Incentive Policy, which states:

"The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to encouraging local production as a foundation for the Northwest Territories economy and will, when purchasing goods, services or construction, provide an incentive in favour of NWT-manufactured products." Further, the Manufactured Products Policy has the stated objective to "encourage local production as a means to diversify the NWT economy; and foster and maintain the investment, jobs, and income produced by local manufacturing."

These policies are very clear. Yet, our research shows that, when it comes to housing, the GNWT has not had the most successful record of keeping NWT tax dollars in the territory. Local manufacturers have been awarded contracts where scope and required cash reserves would be better suited for large companies from Toronto or a multinational. With these expectations that any one company here in the NWT can be sitting on larger amounts of cash to be able to float the whole manufacturing process, labour costs, delivery, and an inevitable mountain of paperwork associated with GNWT contracts, it is no wonder that we find ourselves in this situation now.

Many who have reached out have expressed the hope that the GNWT would split up the deliverables to accommodate for our smaller manufacturing capacities here. This would also help alleviate the limited cash flow that many businesses deal with to help keep locals employed and money flowing throughout our territory.

We have been made aware of a recent RFP where only one internal component of the requested industrial modular structure was awarded to a single Northern company, with the rest going to out-of-territory manufacturers. Northern business owners have pointed out that the inconsistencies between policy, legislation, and the reality of how this contract went out to tender. I wonder: will the policies and legislation be updated to reflect the standard operating procedures of the GNWT concerning procurement, or will this government continue down the path of awarding RFPs at its own discretion, ignoring the approved NWT Manufactured Products Policy?

Mr. Speaker, there is a policy in place to help ensure GNWT-collected tax revenues stay in the North and help to boost manufacturing and our local economy. I wonder if the Minister responsible for Infrastructure will be able to explain the

reasoning as to why the Manufactured Products Policy was ignored in this specific case and if the government has proposed changes that I and our manufacturing community are unaware of. I look forward to his answers later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
WOLF HARVEST INCENTIVE POLICY

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, throughout the Northwest Territories, the wolf population has exploded. This has taken an effect on our caribou populations as one wolf kills on average 35 caribou per year. For all we know, this may also be the reason why the Porcupine caribou are mostly staying in Alaska and the Yukon. It is difficult to say because we don't have people living on the land throughout the fall and winter like we used to.

At the moment, the Department of ENR is doing a pilot project with a wolf bounty to help the Bathurst and Bluenose-East caribou herds. Hopefully, we have interest in the incentive program.

Mr. Speaker, this fall, in all three communities I represent, we have had problems with wolves killing dogs, and we even had one wolf attack on one of my constituents in the community. It is pretty clear we need to open up the bounty at the same level as it is here around Yellowknife.

We also have many wolf packs in the Delta and the Richardson Mountains. Let's act now to bring down the wolf population throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGAL SYSTEM

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for members of the public, dealing with government can be a very frustrating experience. The government is generally designed and operated with a focus on ease of administration rather than end-user experience.

However, Mr. Speaker, no segment of government can compete with the legal system in terms of its opaqueness, inaccessibility, and dizzying complexity, particularly in regards to civil- and family-law matters. While it is convenient to blame everything on Cabinet, I have to admit that the Kafkaesque nature of this system isn't their fault.

The system of common law that we adopted has taken hundreds of years to tangle itself into a procedural and administrative equivalent of a pile of wire coat hangers.

My heart always drops when a constituent comes to me for assistance navigating the legal system, especially when children are involved, because I know the uphill battle that they are fighting. I am not even referring to the battle for a resolution to the case. I am talking about the difficulties they will face simply understanding how to make their way through the system.

For example, not long ago, a constituent came to my office because she was told by a court worker that, to begin an action, she needed to file an originating notice. She didn't know what that was and surely didn't know that to find it she had to look in the Judicature Act, then make her way to the rules of the Supreme Court made pursuant to that act, then navigate to part 2, then look in annex B, then find form 4, and then fill it out and hand deliver it to Yellowknife.

In many instances, the only one who can navigate this system are lawyers. If you are unlucky enough to need a lawyer, you could easily rack up a bill in the thousands or tens of thousands of dollars. However, just finding a lawyer has become a tricky proposition. Today, we have lawyers in Yellowknife and Hay River, but at one time you could also find them in Fort Simpson, Inuvik, and Fort Smith. All across Canada, the days of small-town lawyers are coming to an end and access to justice is diminishing. As the world changes and the situation becomes increasingly dire, the need for government action intensifies.

I will give credit where credit is due. The GNWT offers generous legal-aid coverage in comparison to other jurisdictions, and it funds a spectacular legal-aid outreach clinic. Unfortunately, more is needed. There is no reason that accessing a government service should be so complicated or costly that it is out of the reach of much of the public, especially when it is such a fundamental service.

I will have questions for the Minister of Justice at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (reversion)

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my constituent assistant, Corrine Ferdinand; and Adele, best known as Adele Tatti;

and the page, Jon Tatti, joining us here today. Mahsi.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize Adele Tatti. Adele Tatti was one of the bridesmaids at our wedding here at the Legislative Assembly. Welcome to Adele. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two of my pages, Colton and Kobe Alexie. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly, and I hope you are having fun this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 556-18(3):

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SPCA SERVICES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I spoke about the NWT SPCA and the critical and vital services that they provide to 31 of our communities in the Northwest Territories. I'd like to start by asking the Minister: does the Minister understand the degree of these services and believe that the NWT SPCA plays a critical role in providing these services to 31 communities in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and yes, I do agree with that statement and that the SPCA does play an important role throughout the Northwest Territories in managing dog control. In Inuvik, we have a very active SPCA group as well that does a lot of good work in the region and for the communities. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I do have to say that I do believe that our community governments also have to play a very important role in terms of managing dog-control issues that are local to the communities and that we all have got to work together to address the issue that the Member has raised in his statement.

MR. VANTHUYNE: I appreciate the Minister's comments, and most certainly every community government has a responsibility to manage dog control and loose pets. I'm not sure that that actually falls onto the responsibilities of any SPCA

organization. That said, Mr. Speaker, the NWT SPCA has had a number of repeated attempts to apply for funding to the Government of the Northwest Territories, and it seems like they've been either rejected or we can't find a spot for them every time. I'd just like to ask the Minister: why does the SPCA continue to get rejected for support?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As the Member noted in his statement, the GNWT has provided the SPCA with one-time funding back in 2018. I appreciate the Member bringing this up, and we did respond late last year in terms of some of the questions that he's bringing up again today. I am not aware or certain of any of the areas or departments where the SPCA has applied for funding. Unfortunately, through my department, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, we don't currently offer any funding programs that would either offer core funding to the SPCA, nor do we currently see any fit with other application-based programs that we offer funding for any kind of one-time funding.

MR. VANTHUYNE: The SPCA was told last year that, in order to qualify for NGO stabilization funding, an NGO based in Yellowknife had to already be receiving \$50,000 in government funding. What kind of funding would that be? What departments might that come from? Can the Minister maybe suggest programs that the SPCA might qualify for to unlock that funding? I mean the SPCA might be happy to receive that funding and not require stabilization funding if they knew where it was and how they could access it.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: In most cases, the organizations that do apply for and receive funding through the NGO Stabilization Fund are receiving core funding through social envelope departments such as the Department of Health and Social Services, in some cases Education, Culture and Employment. Really, in most cases, these are programs aimed at providing direct support for our residents across the Northwest Territories, through my department, Municipal and Community Affairs. As I mentioned, right now, we don't see any type of funding programs that would offer any type of core funding to the organization in question.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You can clearly see now the reason why I'm trying to bring this to the floor and draw a little bit more attention to this because, with respect, it just continues to sound like the organization and/or this government is finding a way to say no again to this organization. It's clear that the SPCA needs support to sustain their services. As the demand grows, so does its operating costs. The city and businesses and individuals are all making contributions, but the

GNWT does not. Will the Minister commit to finding funds to support the operations of the NWT SPCA?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I really appreciate the work that the SPCA does throughout the Northwest Territories as well as our local SPCA groups in the communities where they do the work. I've also mentioned this is also the responsibility of our community governments, our municipal governments. We will be working with them. I can be prepared to provide my support in terms of speaking with the NWT Association of Communities. We will be having a meeting coming up this month, and I know this has been an issue for the Member and the SPCA, as well. I will make sure that this topic will get addressed at the next NWT Association of Communities, and I would provide my support for the SPCA to look at getting support from our municipal and community governments at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 557-18(3):
ICE CROSSINGS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to follow up on questions that my colleague from the Mackenzie Delta was asking the Minister of Infrastructure about ice bridge construction. Before this session, I met with a number of delegates from the community of Nahanni Butte, and they spoke about the lack of employment opportunities in the communities. One of the concerns was why weren't local residents and the community's equipment used to build the Nahanni bridge crossing. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister explain the process that is used to build the ice crossing at Nahanni Butte? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think this is going to be an interesting discussion because the Nahanni Butte ice crossing is flooded, dredged, and profiled by the Nahanni Butte Dene band. They already do that work. I know our department brings in the heavy equipment, the Sno-Cats and plow trucks, once they get that up to that speed, and we work with the community on providing their local labour, employments benefits to the community as much as we can.

MR. THOMPSON: I greatly appreciate the Minister for that answer in explaining that the community gets it going, but my understanding is that the government takes over. Can the Minister explain: does the GNWT staff, after this road has been built, does their staff look after it afterwards?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I said, the community is responsible for the construction of the ice crossing through a service contract that they have with the Government of the Northwest Territories. Once an ice crossing is constructed and ice thickness can handle heavy equipment, specialized ice road construction equipment, such as the Sno-Cats and plow trucks, are brought in either from Fort Simpson or Fort Liard. The reason we do this is because the Nahanni Butte Dene band doesn't have this equipment in place. We're there to help them if they were to go out and purchase this type of equipment, that we would certainly look at handing over this portion of the contract to them.

MR. THOMPSON: I appreciate the answer from the Minister, and I understand that. The community has come to me and said that they are willing to do this. Will the department look at having the community build and maintain the ice bridge in the future years?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I've said, we're willing to work with the community if they're willing to go out and purchase equipment. We're certainly willing to hand over the rest of the contract to them to employ their local people and get the most benefit that they can out of it, as much as they can from their community. We're also working with them around their financial management of their contract, as well, and encouraging them to submit invoices in a timely manner so they can recover their costs on a faster basis to be able to help them move this along.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I greatly appreciate the Minister and the department willing to work with the community. It's great to hear, and as always a little bit of work for these small communities has a huge impact on them. The Minister talked about equipment and that, so will the Minister be willing, or his staff, to meet with leadership, discuss this issue, and tell them what they need to do and maybe work with them to see if there is excess equipment out there available for them to take that on so they can continue to work on this bridge?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I can do better than that. I actually had a chance to meet with the Nahanni Butte leadership down at Roundup and we had a sidebar conversation about economic opportunities in their community. We've already decided that, when they're in Yellowknife, they're going to set up a meeting with me to discuss a number of issues, and I will certainly bring this up as part of our conversation with the leadership and try to help them through it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 558-18(3):
CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE WATER LINE
REPLACEMENT

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Now that we have the Minister in such a helpful mood, I might as well go ahead with my questions. In my Member's statement, I raised the issue of GNWT's support and assistance with the replacement of Yellowknife's potable water line. I'm sure the Minister has received the January 10th letter from the mayor of Yellowknife. Can the Minister of Infrastructure say whether he or his staff have had any discussions or meetings with the City of Yellowknife, and describe the outcomes? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I can one-up that. Myself and the Minister of MACA actually met with the SAO and the mayor of Yellowknife and had this discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Well, while we're on a roll, the municipal funding review conducted in 2014 shows that the City of Yellowknife is underfunded by the GNWT to the tune of about a million dollars a year, based on its needs and size. This is apart from the proposal for the replacement of the existing Yellowknife River water stores pipeline. Has the Minister of Infrastructure had any discussions with his colleague, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, about Yellowknife's potable water needs, and if so, what was the outcome of those discussions?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: At that meeting we had discussions with the mayor and the SAO, and the department and ourselves have had some conversations since. We know the City of Yellowknife, and our department actually has helped them do their application to Infrastructure Canada for the Federal Disaster Mitigation Fund. I believe they had that submitted sometime in January, if I remember correctly the date. They have submitted that, and we have helped them with that.

The departments have talked to each other a little bit. I know the Minister of MACA was off to another federal FPT and was going to have brought this up at the FPT, table some discussions to try to bring back some more information on how we can work with the City of Yellowknife and what other options are available for the City of Yellowknife's water line replacement with the federal government.

MR. O'REILLY: The Minister is just full of good news today, and I sincerely thank him for all of this. I'll keep pushing him a little bit harder. Our government, we're always bragging about how many federal infrastructure programs are out there, all the applications we've got in, and so on, and thanks to the Minister for his assistance with the application that the city has submitted, but can the Minister tell me: are there other federal infrastructure programs available to the city and/or our government to help assist with the cost of this water line replacement?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As far as I know, the Disaster Mitigation Fund is one of them. I don't think the federal government has come out with round two of the Clean Water and Waste Water Program yet, but I don't know if that would even be able to meet the expense that this would be, because this is in excess of millions of dollars. I think it needs \$28 million, if I remember the number correctly, to replace this line.

As I have said, the Minister of MACA was going to look into other opportunities, what the city could do. One of the things that was discussed briefly is the YK Dene is tied to this situation, if there are other opportunities with the federal government around what their involvement would be and what kind of federal dollars would be available if they were included in this process.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Minister again for that. To help refresh his memory, it's \$33 million for the water line. As almost half of the population of the Northwest Territories is served by the Yellowknife River water system, can the Minister commit to continue to work with the City of Yellowknife and maybe even submit its proposal for a new water line as part of our infrastructure submissions to the federal government? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: For sure, I will be working closely with the Minister of MACA and following up with the mayor and the SAO of Yellowknife. This is an important issue for them going forward. We know this is something that needs to be replaced in the near future, if not sooner than later.

The big thing about chasing federal dollars, and one of the things that both of us, between myself and the MACA Minister, are going to have to do, is they have a certain lens on different types of applications and we're going to have to see whether this can actually dovetail into those opportunities that may lie out there, and we will certainly be

chasing those for this particular project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 559-18(3):
ENTERPRISE LAND TENURE

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I talked about the process of accessing residential lands and commercial lands in the community of Enterprise, so my question is to the Minister of Lands: what is the holdup in turning over lands to the Hamlet of Enterprise for residential and commercial development? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been meetings, of course, between Lands staff, and I know at least one of our senior people has been over there many times to meet with the community. They have been attempting to arrange some other meetings, and I understand that it has been somewhat difficult to arrange a firm date, but hopefully dates can be arranged in the future.

The Member will know that one of the prerequisites to turning over the land was the community plan that was worked on and has now been approved by MACA, so hopefully we're going to be moving ahead in a staged process to complete this matter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I would like to thank the Minister for providing some encouragement. I really hope that something will come out of the discussions, and at least some mutually agreeable dates on a future meeting. What will the Minister do to bring some certainty to residents and businesses that need land in Enterprise?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned earlier, there was a delay in this pending the completion of the community plan, which has been approved by MACA. Lands has been attempting to set up times that they could meet with the hamlet. I am encouraged by the information that I have been provided that there have been several attempts. We realize sometimes in the smaller communities there are capacity issues, but we're hoping that there will be a meeting shortly, or perhaps in March. We realize the citizens of the hamlet do need certainty, and we are working towards that.

MR. NADLI: When applications are made for land in Enterprise, will the department make sure they are consistent with the hamlet's community plans and bylaws? The Minister stated that the community plan was approved by MACA.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I have mentioned, a prerequisite to the transfers which have been spoken of by the Member opposite was the community plan. That was required before we moved to this next step. We are now moving to that next step, and there will be a staged approach so that the land that we are planning to turn over will be turned over to the Hamlet of Enterprise.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am curious as to this staged approach that the Minister has stated and whether that staged approach is more likely the condition or perhaps the approval of the industrial project that is on the brink of coming into reality, which is the Aurora Wood Pellets. How long will it take the Minister to resolve this matter? Mahsi.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: When I was in Enterprise last year and in speaking to the Member for Deh Cho, I realized that this is an important issue for the Hamlet of Enterprise. We are going to be moving as quickly as we can to resolve these matters because, as I said earlier, we realize how important they are to the community.

We realize that, in smaller communities, sometimes there are issues of capacity, so we are moving ahead on a staged approach, which, in the circumstances, we would think is the best way of moving ahead. I can't give a firm date, but I do know that our staff is eager to meet with the community. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 560-18(3):

APPLICATION OF MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS POLICY IN PROCUREMENT

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that there is an apparent conflict in the Manufactured Products Policy that this government operates. There was a tender put out. It was very specifically applied to registered manufacturers under the policy, and it seems that certain details of the policy were not followed. I have a question for the Minister. Have there been any changes to the approved NWT Manufactured Products Policy in the past year? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Manufactured Products Policy still does exist, but, as the Member knows, we are in

the process of engaging or have engaged with the Northwest Territories Manufacturers' Association in the public engagement sessions, and we are working on that. We will be tabling that strategy probably in this sitting, but the policy still exists as it has.

MR. TESTART: On that basis, then, the approved NWT Manufactured Products Policy says that a product that is from an approved manufacturer must be made a term of any contract that it applies to. Yet, on a recent request for tender, the form that was publicly issued said "whenever possible" it would be using NWT products. Can the Minister speak to this inconsistency between the policy and what is being issued on the forms from Infrastructure on procurement?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I don't know the exact specific tender that the Member is talking about, but I suspect, the way the process works, that if there was a procurement for an NWT manufactured product, that would be put out to all compliant northern manufacturers for a bidding process, and, if there were no compliant bids, then it would be going out to public release. That would change the wording of the document.

MR. TESTART: What I heard is the Minister confirm that the policy still applies, whatever the language of the document says. That is a good thing because, in this case, there were three registered manufacturers, and the policy quite clearly says that they have preferential treatment in this case. Now, I will share the details of this case with the Minister, and he can look over it, but will he undertake to correct this deficiency between what forms are going out and what the policy clearly states, so that we can have certainty for our manufacturers and continue to support them?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I will gladly have a look at the documents that the Member has, but, as I have said, if there was a tender put out to these three manufacturers or something that these three people have qualified for, if there were non-compliant bids that came back, then we would put it out to the public and the wording of that document would change. I will gladly look into this particular tender he is talking about.

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

QUESTION 561-18(3):

EXPANDING LEGAL AID OUTREACH

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier, I spoke about the complexity of our legal system, particularly in regards to family and civil law, and the difficulty that the members of the public have engaging with this system. This isn't

the first time that I have raised this with the department. I have had a number of constituent issues that the Minister is aware about. I have brought this to their attention during our business planning process, and I have walked down the hall and sat with the Minister and his staff and discussed this. I don't think the government should provide everything to everyone, but, because it has an authority over the legal system, it must ensure that the system is accessible. It is already providing some good services that could be expanded to make the system much more accessible.

One of those is the Legal Aid Outreach clinic operated out of Yellowknife. The outreach lawyer offers up to three hours of advice to anyone who needs it and can act as a pathfinder to help people navigate the system. I personally think that this work is invaluable and should be expanded, but the government always wants data to back up their decisions, and I understand that the government has been collecting data to understand what outreach services are needed and what are being used. Could the Minister please give us an update as to the status of that work and when we can expect to see this data? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member opposite is quite correct. The outreach program has been a success. They have been visiting many of the communities, and a proposed policy for the outreach clinic has been drafted and will be going to the Legal Aid Commission in the coming months.

I can advise, however, that we are looking at the amount of use that the outreach clinic has, knowing that it needs to fill that gap between the legal aid programs that we have that provide assistance to those in criminal court and family matters and the private bar. We realize that there is a gap that does need to be filled.

MR. SIMPSON: I know it is being utilized by a lot of people, because, when people call to get an appointment to speak with the lawyer, it is usually quite far in advance. Not everyone, however, needs to speak with a lawyer necessarily, and the department has announced plans to make public legal education materials more available on its website. It also needs to do more work with things like a Facebook page for the Legal Aid Outreach clinic. What is the status of these efforts to get this information out there to the public and make it more accessible online?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: There is no dedicated Facebook page at present, and, although that has been discussed by the department and communication staff, it's not an option immediately

available. However, the outreach clinic will advertise on the GNWT Facebook page instead. In some ways, in my view, the best advertisement is the trips that the outreach clinic lawyer makes to the small communities, which I assume are well-advertised. We are bringing the law to the people.

MR. SIMPSON: If that is the best way to advertise, then I would like the Minister to advertise more and get the outreach worker out to the communities more. The reason that I talk about a Facebook page is because I wasn't aware that the Legal Aid Outreach clinic lawyer was coming to Hay River. I found out by happenstance. There was no Facebook page to advertise this.

We need to get this information out there so that we can inform people. If the best way to get the information out there is to have the lawyer travel to the communities, will the Minister commit to increasing the number of visits that the lawyer makes to the communities?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: In the last number of years, the outreach lawyer has been to most of the communities, and I can advise as follows to the upcoming plans. There are community visits planned to Deline, March 4th; Tulita, March 5th; Fort Good Hope, March 6th; and Norman Wells, March 7th and 8th, with monthly community visits to Ndilo, Detah, and Behchoko to continue. The outreach clinic is proposing visits to Fort Smith, August 5th to 8th; the Inuvik region, August 27th to 13th; Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk by road; Aklavik by air; and potentially, Fort Simpson and Fort Liard. There has been a lot of work in visiting the communities outside of Yellowknife. That will continue.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like there is not going to be anyone in the office to answer the phone when people call. Can we get a commitment from the Minister to look at hiring another lawyer to stay in the office while the other lawyer gets to travel around and engage with the community in person?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I can't commit to adding a second lawyer, as any additional resources would have to proceed through the budgetary process, but certainly we do want to look at the level of activity in the office. I am open to considering issues that, if the office is overworked or there is too much work, we may have to add staff. I will be open to that discussion, but again, it has to go through the budgetary process. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 562-18(3):
RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR ASSOCIATE
DEPUTY MINISTER OF POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in May of last year the Aurora Collage Foundational Review was completed and it recommended, among other things, that the department hire an associate deputy minister of post-secondary education. In September, on September 7th, in fact, the government announced that they were hiring an executive search company to find this associate deputy minister of post-secondary education. Here we are, five months later, without having heard a result of that search. What is the result? My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later on in the session, actually, I'll be doing a Minister's statement on where we are with post-secondary education, so I'm going to be a little bit careful about what I'm saying. Currently, we are right in the middle of the process of the hiring of this associate deputy minister at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: We were told that this individual would be in place by the beginning of this year. It is now almost the middle of February, so what is the new date for this individual to begin work?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do have to take responsibility. I was a little bit more optimistic and hopeful that it would be in place at the beginning of the new year, forgetting that people do take Christmas holidays, and even forgetting that I had to take some vacation, myself. I realize that it's a little bit more delayed, and I'm not happy about that, but like I said, we're in the middle of it. We have just done the interviews and we're looking at the reference checks, so as soon as possible, once we make the offer. I can't make a firm date, though. The problem is that, depending on who we offer, if they have employment, there will have to be a notification, but my commitment is to get the best person in the country to help move us into a polytechnic university.

MS. GREEN: Can the Minister tell us how many qualified candidates Boyden Search Company turned up for this position?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: That, I don't know offhand. I do believe that we are interviewing three people, but if the Member would like, then I can confirm that, how many people were actually recommended.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would appreciate that information. Can the Minister tell us whether anyone has been offered the job and has turned it down? Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, at this time we're just in the middle of the interview process. I don't know if an offer was put out and if it was turned down. I am hoping, like I said, that we get the best person. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 563-18(3):
WOLF HARVEST INCENTIVE PROGRAM

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister of ENR. I mentioned how we have a huge wolf problem throughout the Northwest Territories. I've even heard it from my other colleagues throughout the Mackenzie Valley. I'd like to ask the Minister: will the Minister encourage his department to open up the bounty to the same level in the Beaufort Delta as it is here around Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Wolf Incentive Policy was designed to assist with the declining caribou herds in the southern part of the Northwest Territories. We have a Wolf Incentive Area in place right now, and that is where the incentive would apply. However, throughout the Northwest Territories, any wolf that is harvested, they can bring it to their local office and they get \$200. I think the Member is quite aware of that. If the wolf is skinned out, they get \$400 plus \$50 for the wolf skull, and then if it goes for a prime fur bonus, theoretically they can come out of it with \$800 just throughout the Northwest Territories.

The Wolf Incentive Program is just for the Wolf Incentive Area, which is the wintering grounds of the two caribou herds that are in decline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Our moose and woodland caribou populations are also being affected in my riding. I'm sure the Minister has travelled around and noticed the big packs of wolves we have in our territory. Will the department take action and raise the level of the incentive in my riding?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Just based on the numbers of wolves that have been harvested over the last 10 years, the harvesters in the Beaufort Delta are actually very proficient hunters. We would almost have to go for a supplementary appropriation, if we were to raise the incentives. If you look all across the Northwest Territories, the bulk of the wolf harvest is in the Beau-Del region by quite a large margin, so they take advantage of the incentives that are offered now.

This is a pilot project, so if there were to be a decline in some of the wildlife out there because of the population of wolves, then, working with our co-wildlife partners or co-management partners, it is probably something that we would have to have a serious look at, but for this particular incentive that we're offering now, it is designed for the declining caribou herds in this part of the Northwest Territories. We heard from the tour that I did in the Monfwi a couple of weeks ago that wolves are one of the major problems, so this is one way we thought we could address it, along with a number of other initiatives that we're working on.

MR. BLAKE: You know, just to be fair, I think we should have the same price throughout the Northwest Territories. Everywhere I've travelled throughout my riding, there are wolves everywhere. If you go 10 miles out of the community in each direction, there is a pack of wolves, so it's pretty clear that we need action. I know there is a good incentive we have now, but just to be fair, to bring it up by \$700, I know we may have to ask for a little more funding through the department, but I believe that that is a good investment because that is to help with the populations of moose, woodland caribou, and also Porcupine, which is healthy at the moment but, you know, if we don't take action now, I'm sure we'll see a big decline there. How soon can we see an increase in the incentive to bring down the wolf population in the Mackenzie Delta?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: It is not something that we're looking at right now. Again, we are concentrating on the wolf harvest incentive areas where the declining caribou numbers are. That's what we're looking at right now. As far as the rest of the Northwest Territories, we do have a bit of an incentive for them to bring their wolves in and collect the money. One of the reasons we put this in place and one of the reasons we have the wolf incentive area in place is, in the past, there were people who brought in garbage-dump wolves, we call them, that were really no threat to the caribou herd. So we thought we'd have a Wolf Incentive Area, and the wolves that were harvested in that area would receive the incentive.

Across the rest of the Northwest Territories, that's another conversation we need to have. I hear the Member's point on the Porcupine caribou herd, and

those numbers have been pretty stable for the last number of years, and I would like to think one of the reasons those numbers are stable is because of the number of wolves that are harvested up in the Richardson Mountains by the boys from Aklavik, the hunters from Aklavik. I would like to think that is one of the reasons. Again, that is another conversation we need to have. For now, we are concentrating our efforts on the numbers of caribou that are declining. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 564-18(3):
EXPANDING LEGAL AID OUTREACH

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have some more questions for the Minister of Justice. Earlier, I asked about the Legal Aid Outreach clinic and about getting information out to the public.

I see our guests are leaving here. I was worrying they were going to fall asleep. We don't have the sort of action they are used to in their party-based parliaments.

Mr. Speaker, I have some more questions for the Minister of Justice. Not everyone only needs legal information. Some people actually need a lawyer. You know, by having a lawyer, it actually helps the government. I think it helps bring down costs. It will shorten timelines. It will reduce a number of self-represented people in court. I would like to maybe get the Minister's take on this from what he knows about legal aid lawyers. If we increased the number of legal aid lawyers and maybe added another legal aid clinic in the territory, would those lawyers be busy or would they be sitting around, twiddling their thumbs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a hypothetical question, of course. I am sure they wouldn't be sitting around, twiddling their thumbs. I think they would be working very hard because there are a lot of clients out there who really do need the assistance of lawyers, legal aid or otherwise. The amount of work, I don't think, is likely to decrease. In fact, it is likely to increase. I think if we added more lawyers or clinics, it would be sufficiently busy to justify their salaries. Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: That is what I expected, especially given that, like I said earlier, the number of small-town lawyers across Canada are disappearing. You know, they are retiring. They are finding second careers in politics. I would like to know: would the Minister be open to actually looking into this and seeing if the need is justified and that perhaps we

could take concrete steps toward adding an additional legal aid clinic?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I guess I am part of the problem in this area because, as the Member across has mentioned, there is a problem. There were more lawyers, I think, in the smaller towns up here several years ago, active lawyers doing general practice, than there are now. Certainly, I am willing to look at this issue. Of course, adding a clinic or additional lawyers would involve additional expense, so we would have to proceed through the budgetary process. I am aware of the problem and am concerned and willing to look at it.

MR. SIMPSON: I appreciate that. The Minister said he would be willing to look into it. I would like a commitment from the Minister. Will the Minister commit to looking into adding an additional legal aid clinic in the South Slave?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Again, of course, there is the budgetary process that we would have to go through. I do recognize the issue and will make the commitment to look into it.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that commitment by the Minister. Let's go one step further. Will the Minister commit to looking into the viability of the Legal Aid Outreach clinic in the South Slave and an additional Legal Aid Outreach clinic lawyer in the South Slave?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: This might be an issue that the transition committee might look into because I don't think anything could be done in the very near future. Certainly, I am willing to look into this issue. Again, as I have said numerous times before, increase in cost would have to go through the budgetary process, but I am willing to look seriously at this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. Member for Kam Lake.

Replies to Budget Address

MR. TESTART'S REPLY

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reply to the final operations and maintenance budget of the 18th Legislative Assembly. When this sitting of the House began earlier this month, I recognized the opportunity this budget represents to put the NWT economy on the right footing to face the challenges we all know are on the horizon. The diamond mines

that are the real drivers of our economy are set to close far sooner than any one of us would like. Our aging workforce and persistent outmigration of skilled labour challenges our available labour supply while our cost of living continues to rise faster than the national average. Our communities still suffer from high rates of crime and substance abuse, systemic issues born of the legacy of colonization and intergenerational trauma.

I know these are not the words of "sunny and happy days" nor hopeful optimism that some of my colleagues would prefer we occupy our time speaking in this Chamber. However, in my opinion, the time has come for rose-coloured glasses and double-speak to end. Without an ambitious plan to grow the economy, invest in northern potential, and realize the long-awaited opportunities present in our territory, future prosperity will always remain out of reach. Many MLAs have shared the same sentiments, encouraged bold moves and big thinking to solve the challenges we face together as Northerners, only to be met with the same old lines about sticking to long-standing processes and status-quo strategies that quite simply aren't working to move anyone forward.

Before the honourable Members of this House had the privilege of their seats in the Legislature, they were candidates in the 2015 election, and some served in elections before that. I can almost guarantee that each one of us ran on promises of reducing the cost of living and making life more affordable for Northerners. It was easy to make these kinds of promises, and has been even easier to overlook them. I believe this is the case with the current Cabinet who has made their fiscal strategy the driving force behind their leadership of the GNWT.

Departments have experienced cuts, band-aid solutions pasted together, all in an attempt to save cash or reduce debt, and this government stalled on a collective agreement for over three years, which nearly plunged the NWT into the first-ever public service strike affecting 4,000 employees of the territorial public service. Jobs lost, many workers put into precarious job situations, unsure of their future while the constant mantra of "fiscal restraint" beats down from upon high. Northern-owned and operated businesses deprived of crucial capital, while towering infrastructure megaprojects largely favour southern firms and gobble up the majority of government infrastructure dollars instead of investing them in local businesses, people, and communities.

It is no wonder that the people are frustrated, and we have lost some of the optimism that Northerners are so well known for.

Economic Outlook

Mr. Speaker, doing more with less isn't a workable plan if the right strategies aren't put in place. Restraint impedes the government's ability to function and undercuts the precious funding dollars that our people and their communities need to thrive and create new opportunities for themselves and their families. Austerity measures and belt-tightening exercises please the banks and our creditors but starve the economy. Cabinet spends a great deal of time talking up their fiscal strategy as the silver bullet to solve all of our challenges, but it has failed to create growth or prosperity over the last four years. The NWT has fallen behind. The Canadian economy has outpaced us and recovered from the bad years of recession. Through new develops in the mineral resource industry that will make our sister territories of Yukon and Nunavut the economic growth leaders for our entire country at 4.7 percent in 2019 and 4.5 percent in 2020. By comparison, the NWT is forecast to contract at an average annual pace of 1.6 percent between 2019 and 2025. That's right, Mr. Speaker, zero growth for the next Assembly and for the communities that we serve.

We have ignored these warning signs for too long. The time to invest in our future is now. When I turn my eye to the details of this current budget, I look to how it will get our economy back on track and counter the trend that has been persistent since Cabinet launched their fiscal strategy. I am reminded of a basic rule of economics that has served us all well since the Great Depression: When in a recession, governments need to invest in the economy; when in times of plenty, that is the opportunity for governments to get their fiscal houses in order, pay down debt, and make adjustments to spending priorities.

Mr. Speaker, these concepts are not rocket science; in fact, they are basic economics. In 2016, I characterized the fiscal strategy as an austerity measure. I maintain that position today, not based on my own personal opinions, but on the state of the current economy and the recession that is predicted to follow in the wake of this Assembly. We must do better and realize that the responsibility of our government is not only to manage its finances wisely, but to use our spending power to reinforce the prosperity of our territory.

The Honourable Premier and Cabinet cannot be solely responsible for the internal economy and financial health of the GNWT. They must also be mindful of their fiduciary responsibility to build a strong and stable economy outside of the public sector.

Budget Process

Mr. Speaker, the Regular Members have tried to bring this message home many times. In our unique

form of consensus government, MLAs have unparalleled access to budgetary documents and processes that make us the envy of Ottawa, provincial backbenchers, and opposition Members alike. We call this the business planning cycle, and it is an opportunity each year to spend a few weeks reviewing departmental business plans and offering advice, praise, criticism, and, perhaps most importantly, providing the government with advance and intimate knowledge of the needs of our constituents and the communities that we represent. The recommendations of Regular Members throughout the business planning process are then supposed to be incorporated into the government's financial plans and used to improve upon the final budget documents.

Much work goes into this process. In this year, the 2019-2020 business plan review, approximately 450 hours of the legislative research branch were spent in advance of the review. Fifteen days of committee meetings were required to review the plans, which amount to approximately 600 hours of committee hearings for Regular MLAs. In addition to this time, the time of support staff required is approximately 30 person days, 240 hours plus about 60 hours of preparation for individual meetings. That is a grand total of 1,350 person hours.

The business planning process is one of the most significant parts of the job of MLAs on both sides of the House, and the entire process happens in secret and behind closed doors. The public only hears about it during times like these, when the budget is made public in the formal session and Members are allowed to speak to what has been presented.

After 1,300 plus hours of review, what role is the public in the budget process? None. Everyday Northerners have zero input into the budget, save the concerns brought forward by us, their public representatives. This is a choice, not a rule. The current Minister of Finance has refused to undertake any budget consultations since taking on the role in 2015. Previous Assemblies have done public budget consultations, and many provincial legislatures and the House of Commons continue to engage citizens in pre-budget consultations on an annual basis. We ought to be doing this as well and enhancing the public's right to know, either by producing a draft citizen's budget in plain language for public feedback or opening up the business planning process completely and allowing the broadcast of our committee deliberations.

This comprehensive and thorough business planning process is, again, a unique feature of the consensus system and ought to bring together the different viewpoints of the Legislative Assembly of the day to build a stronger, more inclusive territorial

budget. In my experience, that has not been in case.

In 2016, Regular Members identified \$6.5 million in unacceptable reductions proposed for the 2016-2017 budget. In 2017, Regular Members opposed reductions and proposed strategic investments for a total of \$19.9 million in the 2017-2018 budget. In 2017, Regular Members identified \$3.5 million in additional expenditures or reductions that they wanted cancelled in the 2018-2019 budget.

In all of these examples, the hundreds of hours of time spent in each business planning process failed to produce a mutually acceptable budget when first introduced into the House. Instead, what followed was weeks of departmental deferrals, behind-the-scenes negotiations, and on-the-floor questioning.

As I have said before, this budget process is notoriously secret. The government continues its practice of tabling two budgets a year and claiming surpluses, when, in actual fact, this year's budget is running a cash deficit of \$7 million. This practice serves the interests of the big banks, but does not meet the standards of transparency that our government should be aspiring towards. The byzantine nature of how the government produces its budgets does not end solely in their presentation, but also to the aforementioned process inherent to the business plan cycle.

I have come to the conclusion that this process is less a feature of the openness and collaboration that is supposed to be a part of consensus government and, rather, is a means to limit public understanding of the most significant financial decisions of the territorial government. It is a way for those with power to ensure their vision is the only one that counts and differing opinions are left out in the cold, unheard and unresolved.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is no different. Regular Members identified a mere \$2.4 million in both opposed reductions and new investment requests, including a new safe house pilot project, a budget for multi-sport games, addressing vacant public service positions, an increase to the Small Community Employment Strategy, and a plan to address the municipal funding gap.

In a budget that totals nearly \$2 billion of spending, \$2.4 million is a drop in the bucket, and yet, these concerns remain unaddressed. Instead, the Premier and Cabinet added more than \$20 million in additional spending after the business planning process, based on the immediate needs of the GNWT and not based on the modest and reasonable requests of MLAs representing the wishes and ambitions of their constituents. We are still waiting for the Cabinet to act on our requests.

2019-2020 Main Estimates

This brings me to the detail of the budget before the consideration of the House. The 2019-2020 Main Estimates propose to spend \$1.87 billion, based on available revenues of \$1.93 billion. Total debt will increase to \$1.1 billion, leaving \$200 million of available borrowing capacity before the government hit its debt wall, and the Government of Canada will need to make a decision on our public debt provisions in the NWT Act. I know that the Minister of Finance has begun these discussions, and I thank him for that proactive step and look forward to being given more details in the future.

On the face of it, this budget proposes more status quo spending, with certain financial increases to areas of the public service that have only seen recent concern by the public and Members. Other spending commitments follow through from previous years' initiatives that involve multi-year funding strategies. It is neither good nor bad; it is more of the same. It continues to leave many issues unaddressed in a significant way, but maintains support for some priorities that we all share. It is status quo with some incremental change in the right direction, but simply does not go far enough. We have mere years to get back on track, not decades, so more ambition is needed to make the changes that will be felt throughout our communities and in the pocketbooks of our constituents.

For example, while I welcome the addition of \$3.3 million to support new positions in Child and Family Services, I am concerned that this money has come without first completing a full cost accounting of programming and operational needs for the division. This is something that the Office of Auditor General has recommended for many years and still remains unrealized.

In the last budget, \$600,000 of the appropriation for homecare workers was lapsed, unspent because the Minister could not staff the new positions. This amount of money is now being used for the proposed Child and Family Services positions, without the aforementioned plan called for by the Auditor General and by the committees of this Assembly. I do not want to see lapses again in the public accounts and a return to the treasury of these desperately-needed funds simply because the proper prior planning was not first put in place.

Housing remains a key issue for many Northerners, and I am pleased to see more than \$100 million invested in the housing portfolio. This investment continues to exceed what most provinces spend per capita on their housing needs and shows the commitment of this government on making a difference in affordable and available housing. It is a sound investment, and I support it.

Investments in needed infrastructure continue in this budget, with an additional \$2.1 million to support the capital budget passed last year. I support this investment, but I, too, as others of my honourable friends have mentioned, am concerned of excessive carryovers that limit the impact of these funds. This government must do a better job of following through on deployment of capital dollars in a timely fashion instead of lapsing and carrying over major capital projects year over year.

The budget address makes a strong case for economic diversification. Unfortunately, the budget does not. Diversified investment remains weak. I recognize and support the addition of \$1.2 million to support tourism, the NWT Film Commission, and territorial parks. These are welcome new items, as are the continuing investments in the Great Slave Fishery.

However, government support of manufacturing remains unclear, with an incomplete strategy and no new funding announced. A wage subsidy for manufacturers and companies employing skilled tradespeople would go a long way to growing our labour capacity and expanding this sector of the economy, but that's not in this budget. Neither are strategies or plans to expand cannabis retail opportunities, provide capital to entrepreneurs, support strategic innovation in existing and new businesses or break open the rules on beer and spirit manufacturing that could compliment the local tourism markets in Yellowknife and other communities in the NWT. Support to these local industries may not replace the prosperity of the diamond mines but they provide resiliency when resource markets are soft and mineral exploration is flat.

On the topic of innovation and diversification, I applaud the government for bringing forward a costed knowledge strategy in the amount of \$375,000. I still feel the strategy is too inward-looking and primarily focused on the government, but this is a complex area of public policy and must be properly understood before full investments in it are realized.

While there has been some movement on the knowledge economy, there is no new money for postsecondary education. I am not sure how anyone can be convinced that this Legislature is taking post-secondary development and a new northern polytechnic seriously when funding levels remain the same. The long demand for an adequate campus in Yellowknife to support our students is also not addressed in this budget. A planning study in partnership with the City of Yellowknife should be a priority.

Speaking on the cities, towns, villages, hamlets, and all of our communities, the municipal funding

gap remains a major concern for our residents. With only \$1.8 million added to the funding this year, there is still \$33 million unaccounted for, and this figure does not take into account the roughly \$2 million in inflation since the gap was first identified. Investment in our communities represents money that stays in the North and supports the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our residents. This gap is the sole responsibility of the GNWT, not a broader national issue that needs the intervention of the federal government to take action. \$8.2 million over four years in simply not going to cut it as inflation eats away at the value of those dollars. This government must commit to either closing the gap with new investment or rebalancing the funding formula to something the GNWT can support financially. There are no other options.

Northerners expect public services of the highest quality and client-oriented access to those same services. Many of our residents enjoy the support of government service officers or GSOs. GSO and single-window service centres are award-winning examples of smart, people-driven public policies that the GNWT is rightfully proud of, and I see no reason not to expand this important part to the rest of the public service in all of our communities. For several budgets now, Regular Members have called for a pilot project in regional centres and the capital of Yellowknife. Unfortunately, there is still no money in the budget for this pilot project, and Northerners living in larger communities are forced to navigate the sprawling GNWT bureaucracy without access to a single point of service delivery or single point for direction. This needs to change.

This budget is really the last opportunity for this government to live up to its mandate commitment of lowering taxes on small businesses. It is a great disappointment to me that no such tax cut is present in the main estimates. This amounts to a broken promise from this government and an incomplete mandate item. I acknowledge that the Minister of Finance has publicly stated that a tax cut isn't in the best interests of the business community, but I wholly reject that assessment. Has he consulted on this tax cut proposal? Has he spoken with the NWT Chamber of Commerce or Community Chamber of Commerce about reducing the tax burden on small business? No, he has not, and on this issue the Minister and I remain completely opposed. It represents a break from the mandate and makes me question many of the other commitments that the government insists it will fulfill in the next six months.

While there may be no tax break for small business, Northerners will have a new tax imposed on them by the government with its carbon tax initiative. We will have the opportunity to debate the carbon tax in the coming months, but I remain unconvinced in the government's design. The new tax is projected to

raise \$16.2 million, with \$12 million being returned to taxpayers and industry in the form of rebates. "Revenue neutral," however, does not mean "cost neutral," and this proposal places the burden of the tax on the shoulders of everyday Northerners and their families. Nunavut and Yukon have chosen to accept the imposition of this tax from Ottawa, and the so-called "federal backstop" that has been enriched in recent months in rebates to become a far more generous proposal to individuals and their families than what this government is offering. I do not support this tax in its current form. Since doing more research and hearing from my constituents, I am skeptical if a carbon tax is even in the best interests of the NWT. The Honourable Premier and finance Minister have both shared this skepticism in the past, and yet have still signed on to impose the tax and been resistant to the suggestions of Regular Members on how to improve their proposal. I hope we can make changes to the proposal or even that the Minister will take action on his personal opposition to the tax by joining the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario in refusing this new burden on the basis of our unique Northern circumstances. Nearly anything would be better than the current proposal before us now that will further increase our cost of living, limit revenues, and growth opportunities for Northerners.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, I am quite concerned about the priorities of this government, but, when it comes to this budget, I will be in support of it and I hope that we can make improvements. It doesn't go far enough, but we can't change course now. There's simply not enough time left in the term, and this money needs to get out the door to support our communities, support our public service, and get the mandate completed. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Replies to budget address. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREENS'S REPLY

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, this year's budget address was pushed to the side temporarily while we discussed more immediately pressing issues. Even before the Minister of Finance finished his budget address last Wednesday, the Union of Northern Workers announced it had served a strike notice. My email inbox filled up with messages from constituents and other NWT residents. In almost every case, their rationale was fear of lost earnings. They are living paycheque to paycheque, and they can't afford to be without income for even the briefest period of time. This situation is not unique to government workers. In fact, a couple of months ago, a local bank manager told me he estimated 80 percent of the local population live hand to mouth. Part of the issue here is the spending choices

people make, but another part is the high cost of living in the North. I decided to take a different approach to my budget evaluation this year, looking at what the government is doing to address the high cost of living for working families.

In our mandate, we made lowering the cost of living one of our central priorities. We all agreed to take action on affordable housing, food security, childcare, investments in cost-effective and renewable energy, and promoting federal investment in reducing the cost of living for Northerners. Budget 2019 represents our last chance to deliver on that promise to lower the cost of living.

First of all, how do we measure the cost of living? There are many possibilities, but the one I am going to use is the living wage. The living wage is simply this: the amount of money someone who is working full-time requires to pay for the basics. The living wage budget doesn't include owning a home, paying down debt, or saving for retirement, among other things.

Mr. Speaker, the living wage is calculated using the nationally recognized standard called the Canadian Living Wage Framework. The standard ensures inputs are consistent across the country, and the results are comparable year over year and among jurisdictions. Rates are calculated for many different family types, but the one I'm going to focus on is the family of four. It is the most common family type in the NWT. There are two adults, both working full-time, with one child in school and one in licenced daycare. According to the November 2017 calculation, a family of four living in Yellowknife needs a gross annual income of \$92,158, or \$20.96 an hour per adult. Let me put that hourly wage into context. Almost a third of the NWT earns less than \$20.00 per hour according to Bureau of Statistics numbers for 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the greatest expense for most working families in Yellowknife is shelter. The affordability of market rentals is a serious problem. That last community housing survey revealed that one in seven households are paying more than 30 percent of their gross income on shelter. The response of Budget 2019 to this problem is inadequate. The budget makes \$600,000 available for the Transitional Rent Supplement Program, a figure that hasn't changed in three budgets. More than 1,000 households in Yellowknife and another 700 across the territory face affordability problems. Even if every household qualified for the program, each would only receive \$333 for a year, not a month but a year. I'm sure families would appreciate the support, but, clearly, it's not enough.

Another possible solution to affordability is to increase the stock of public housing where rent is

geared to income. No luck for most Yellowknife families, unless they are homeless, because of the long waiting list. In 2019, the Housing Corporation plans to build just 32 public housing units, most of them to rent to seniors. While the increase in public housing for seniors is very welcome, it won't help working families. We have yet to see any plan for how the federal infusion of housing dollars will improve the supply of them. Another solution, probably even less palatable, is to consider rent control. In our mandate, we committed to address affordability. The mandate tracker is confusing about the government's success on this point. It shows both that this commitment has been fulfilled and that it is in the planning stage. Either way, affordability is still a big problem. On the issue of affordable housing, I am giving budget 2019 an F.

Mr. Speaker, home ownership is usually not possible for one-income and low-income families, especially when the costs of heat, utilities, taxes, maintenance, and insurance are added in. All of those costs have gone up during the 18th Assembly, and as I mentioned earlier, the living wage of \$20.96 an hour contains no provision to save for a down payment, so people are forced to rent.

When it comes to alleviating operating costs for owners of rental properties, or for the very few low-income homeowners, territorial government contributions to energy savings programs delivered by the Arctic Energy Alliance have been constant over the last three years. The federal government has picked up some of the slack with a planned contribution for the next fiscal year of \$2.5 million. On the mandate commitment of supporting the use of energy-efficient technologies in the residential sector, budget 2019 gets a B, thanks to help from Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, the second largest expense families have in Yellowknife is childcare. According to research on the living wage, with reference to the family with two children, full-time care for one child, along with afterschool care, professional development days, and summer camp for the older child, will set families back more than \$16,000 a year. The fact is that childcare is unaffordable, even for parents with two good incomes, particularly if they have multiple children in care.

Childcare is also not widely accessible. The largest licensed childcare provider in Yellowknife has a waiting list of over 150 children. Eleven NWT communities do not have licensed childcare at all. Budget 2019 does absolutely nothing to change this situation. The investment in program grants and operator subsidies is exactly the same in the next fiscal year as it is in the current one.

Budget 2019 does nothing to improve accessible and affordable childcare, although, in fairness, the

introduction of junior kindergarten has lifted some of the burden of childcare expenses from working families when their children reach four years of age.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many reasons for the GNWT to invest in universal, affordable childcare. The first is the benefit to children in terms of their development. Second, it enables women to choose whether to remain in their paid jobs or stay at home with their children. The NWT Bureau of Statistics estimates that the economic multiplier for childcare services, a type of return on investment, is 9.86 jobs for every \$1 million invested. Universal childcare would create jobs in every community, including those where there is high unemployment. Finally, parents who return to the workforce, as well as the additional childcare staff, are both paying taxes and spending. Yet, there is no additional money in Budget 2019 for this pressing problem.

In terms of the mandate, we started this Assembly agreeing to institute universal, affordable daycare within four years. Midway into the term, we backed that off to simply having a plan for achieving that goal. Here at the end of the Assembly, we are nowhere on these commitments. For childcare, the Budget 2019 earns an F.

Mr. Speaker, the third largest expense for most households is food. Again using the living wage calculation, the cost of food for the family of four has increased by 10 percent between 2015 and 2017 to just over \$13,000 a year here in Yellowknife. The premise of the living wage calculation is that the family earns enough money to afford to buy good food for themselves without resorting to food banks or soup kitchens. Yet, according to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, most families struggle without these supports. One in five residents of the NWT aged 12 and up experience food insecurity. That means they don't have enough to eat, and they skip meals, or it might mean that they make compromises about the quality and quantity of food that they eat. Many students have breakfast and lunch programs at school.

The budget 2019 response to food costs is disappointing. There is \$650,000 for the Healthy Foods for Learning program, the same amount as there has been in the last three budgets. There are very few mentions of food in the main estimates, and most relate to developing food production on a commercial basis. While those initiatives may help residents in the long run, buying food from your local grocery store is a daily challenge of adequacy against quality and quantity.

On our mandate to improve food security, I am going to score budget 2019 as a C, by giving programs now under way to improve local food production the benefit of the doubt. The most recent

food security numbers are from 2014, so let's hope that they have started to go down.

The Minister of Finance promised no increases to existing taxes, but the new carbon tax is coming our way on July 1st. The GNWT estimates that the impact of the carbon tax will be between \$300 and \$360 per household per year, anticipating increases to the cost of housing, utilities, and food. The government is offering a new cost of living offset benefit to reduce the impact of the tax. It estimates that there will be a net benefit to families of between \$400 and \$450 a year from this initiative. We won't know the real impact of the carbon tax on the living wage family until it is introduced, but I understand that families are apprehensive about their cost of living increasing because of it.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has increased the Northern Resident tax deduction, a tangible way to reduce the cost of living. Issues with Nutrition North remain. While the GNWT has signed bilateral agreements with Ottawa on housing and childcare, it is difficult to see how these agreements are going to benefit individual families. The childcare money is being spent on workforce development rather than increased subsidies. It is unclear how the housing money will improve affordability and availability of additional public housing units. On the mandate commitment of promoting federal investment in reducing the cost of living for Northerners, I am giving budget 2019 a D. Yes, there is more money, but it is unclear how it is reducing the family budget for its major expenses: shelter, childcare, and food. For the working family, this budget unfortunately gets a failing overall grade.

Mr. Speaker, that is the spending side of the ledger for the living wage family. On the revenue side, labour income increased by 2.8 percent over the first nine months of 2018, compared to the same period in 2017. Yet, disposable income rose by only 1 percent. Average weekly earnings have been steady for several years at \$1,400 a week.

Working families are eligible for the NWT Child Benefit. The NWT Child Benefit is available on a pro-rated basis to families with an income of less than \$80,000 a year. This benefit is not indexed to inflation, and its budget remains at \$2.2 million, the same as it has been since 2017. It is worth noting that the living wage family would not qualify for the NWT Child Benefit if the two workers together earned \$92,000. It is time for the government to raise the income eligibility for working families and to index the benefit to inflation, as the federal government has done with the Canada Child Benefit.

Mr. Speaker, these changes represent an investment in families, families who make the NWT

home, pay taxes, and count in the calculation of the territorial financing formula. It is an investment worth making. The living wage family would also receive a GST credit and the Canada Child Benefit to supplement their income. The benefits all tolled are \$4,300 a year. They would pay taxes, of course, at \$14,700 a year, so their net income for the year would be about \$82,000. I think most of us would agree that making a go of it for a family of four on that amount of money would be extremely challenging and would require some excellent money management skills.

Mr. Speaker, the greatest risk to working families in the NWT today is job insecurity. Unemployment increased by almost 1 percent from 2017 to 2018, and that is even after 2,800 people moved out of the territory, for a net loss of 911 people, the largest since the recession in 2007. The NWT economic outlook is for modest growth at best.

Budget 2019 reports that mineral and petroleum exploration will be lower this year than last, primarily because of weak commodity prices. Despite all of the government's efforts to promote mining, it is again offering just \$1 million for the Mining Incentive Program. I realize that mining companies can access incentives from the federal government as well, but the territorial government needs to put its money where its mouth is. Mr. Speaker, there will be a decline in public- and private-sector construction jobs now that the new Stanton Territorial Hospital and the Gahcho Kue mine are complete. The overall picture shows our best days are behind us, at least for now.

The budget says, and I quote: "Despite solid economic growth for 2017, the NWT economy remains 10.3 percent smaller than it was in 2007 before the global financial crisis." It's worth noting as well that full employment is 11 percent below those pre-recession levels. As I said last year and I say again now, it is the time to redouble efforts to diversify the economy. The budget papers acknowledge the importance of spreading risk among a number of sectors, yet ITI's economic diversification budget is up by a paltry \$125,000 this year, although I realize there are modest investments in specific areas, as well. Clearly we need to do more to secure a robust economic future for working families.

I'm going to take a small detour here. It's interesting to me that the budget papers report on the performance of what are called "other sectors." These other sectors include commercial fisheries and trapping and hunting. These two sectors together earned \$1.5 million last year. Yet tourism, a sector that earned \$203 million last year, is not part of GDP data. It's time to change that. It's important to report on one of the bright spots, the only bright spot, in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, each year during my budget address I have spoken about the need to increase revenue. Obviously, it's an ongoing issue. I am, of course, happy to see the rebound in corporate tax and royalties. I understand these revenue sources are the most variable in the budget, and often for reasons that are beyond the government's control, but that does not mean we are powerless to increase revenue in other areas. The problem is leadership.

Mr. Speaker, the 2016 revenue options paper lays out several possibilities to raise more money. A tax bracket for high individual income earners would net \$2 million a year. A 1-percent increase in the payroll tax would bring in \$20 million. A 1-percent increase in corporate tax would yield \$5 million. The revenue options paper dismisses all of these options because they would increase the cost of living, the cost of doing business, and/or generally make the NWT a less desirable place to work. There is no evidence presented to support this conclusion. It is simply a Department of Finance mantra.

Mr. Speaker, a report commissioned by the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment concludes there is "a significant opportunity for the NWT to benefit more from mining." I remain puzzled about why the Cabinet won't look at royalty rates. According to the budget papers, diamond production increased by 83 percent last year. I'm going to say it again, 83 percent last year, mostly thanks to Gahcho Kue. During the remaining years of diamond production in the NWT, why is government not looking at this possibility? I consider this a serious lapse in the duty of stewardship and fiscal oversight this Assembly was elected to perform. The refusal to even evaluate the adequacy and sustainability of revenue generation is not acceptable. This evaluation needn't have been tied to one sector under the Mineral Resources Act development. Because this is the last budget of this Assembly, we are not going to see any improvements in revenue, unless they are unforeseen. I strongly encourage Members of the next Assembly to renew their efforts to increase revenue based on evidence rather than received wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, as I have in other years, I again want to talk about the tremendous amount of time departmental staff, the executive council, and Regular MLAs put into budget development. This is time that could be spent on another of our roles that has been neglected in this Assembly, reviewing and improving legislation. Now the anticipated backlog of legislation is about to arrive. We have been talking about the budget since September. Mr. Speaker, I recommend that Regular MLAs study alternatives to the way we now produce budgets, with input from stakeholders of all kinds, including

our colleagues on the other side of the House. If there is a way to free up time to make the budget process more efficient and to find more time to work on other legislation, then we should take it. Mahsi Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Replies to budget address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 338-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CORONER
SERVICE 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 339-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LAW FOUNDATION
35TH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
ENDING JUNE 30, 2017

TABLED DOCUMENT 340-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LAW FOUNDATION
36TH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
ENDING JUNE 30, 2018

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Northwest Territories Coroner Service 2017 Annual Report"; and, pursuant to section 55(2) of the Legal Profession Act, I wish to table the "Northwest Territories Law Foundation 35th Annual Report for the period ending June 30, 2017" and "Northwest Territories Law Foundation 36th Annual Report for the period ending June 30, 2018." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Minister of Infrastructure.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 35:
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL
DESIGNATION ACT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 35, Supply Chain Management Professional Designation Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

---Carried

Bill 35 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement; and Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main 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 now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

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

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

---Carried

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

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement, and Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do we have a seconder? Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Masi.

---Carried

Masi. Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Ball): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 14, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements

4. Returns to Oral Questions
 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
 6. Acknowledgments
 7. Oral Questions
 8. Written Questions
 9. Returns to Written Questions
 10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
 11. Replies to Budget Address (Day 7 of 7)
 12. Petitions
 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
 14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
 15. Tabling of Documents
 16. Notices of Motion
 17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
 18. Motions
 - Motion 32, Extended Adjournment of the House to February 20, 2019
 19. First Reading of Bills
 20. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 35, Supply Chain Management Professional Designation Act
 21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement
 - Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020
 22. Report of Committee of the Whole
 23. Third Reading of Bills
 24. Orders of the Day
- MR. SPEAKER:** Masi cho, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 14, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

