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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Monfwi)

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(Great Slave)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, February 21, 2019

Members Present

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, 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 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. R.J. Simpson): Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 148-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES REGIONAL
WELLNESS COUNCILS

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Regional Wellness Council members are a critical part of our health and social services system. They are change leaders in their communities and a voice for residents in their regions. They champion the ideas and concerns of residents and are passionate about using that information to shape and improve our health and social services.

Mr. Speaker, as Members know, we have six Regional Wellness Councils across the territory, representing the regions of Beaufort-Delta, Deh Cho, Fort Smith, Hay River, Sahtu, and Yellowknife. Each council has six members and a chairperson.

Council members advise me, as Minister, on their council activities. They also provide advice to the Northwest Territories Leadership Council on the priorities for the health and social services system and play an active role in the promotion of health and wellness. Council members also seek out opinions and information from the public on local health and social services.

Regional Wellness Council members help to ensure our health and social services system is responsive to the needs of Northerners and their communities. They also provide input to guide the development of the territorial health and social services strategic plan to meet our goals for health and social services. They discuss and make recommendations on how to improve the delivery of services and better meet the needs of residents in their communities, based on local input and feedback. They also play an important role in guiding primary

healthcare reform, community wellness activities, quality improvement, and other community-based initiatives. Council members have an opportunity to raise important community issues with the Health and Social Services Authorities through the Leadership Council and to communicate back to residents on those issues.

Appointments to Regional Wellness Councils are for terms of up to three years, and every year about one third of the appointments expire. Many council members apply to be reappointed, but we always have a few vacancies.

This year I am issuing several calls for nominations to fill vacant and expiring positions. I would like to encourage residents to consider applying to serve on our Regional Wellness Councils when nominations open. I would also like to invite my colleagues and fellow Members of this Legislative Assembly to nominate residents for any vacancies in their regions.

For those who are interested, the criteria and a handbook of responsibilities are listed on the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority website. Information on vacant council positions will be advertised and also posted on the Health and Social Services website.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome residents who are interested in these positions and in serving their communities, regions, and our territory to look at the information on our website and apply to become a Regional Wellness Council member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 149-18(3):
NATIONAL HOUSING CO-INVESTMENT FUND

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a few months ago I had the pleasure of signing the bilateral agreement between the Northwest Territories and Canada on the National Housing Strategy. One of the first funding allocations that Canada proposed under the strategy was the Northern Housing Fund, which brought \$36 million in funding to the Northwest Territories. However, this is just a starting point.

Through diligent work by both the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, another agreement was reached that better reflects the housing needs in the Northwest Territories. The federal government saw that there was an opportunity under the National Housing Co-Investment Fund to expand the partnership between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The National Housing Co-Investment Fund is application-based funding. The approach that we negotiated involves a dedicated "carve-off" of \$60 million under the fund for the Northwest Territories. This \$60 million is ours and ours alone. We will not have to compete with other jurisdictions or entities that have greater access to resources and a greater competitive advantage to see if we get approved for projects.

In addition, the federal contribution to a project in the Northwest Territories can be up to 75 percent. Further, we are still able to compete for funds above and beyond the \$60 million at the national level, and if we are successful, we will still be eligible for that 75 percent contribution from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this arrangement recognizes northern needs, and it is unique. No other province or territory will receive a "carve off," with the exception of Yukon, and provinces only qualify for a federal contribution of up to 40 percent for approved projects. Through the life of the National Housing Strategy, which expires in 2028, this \$60 million "carve off" and the co-investment fund as a whole has the potential to bring significant investments into communities all across the Northwest Territories, working in partnership with all governments, private market investors, and non-governmental organizations.

Now that we have the deal finalized, it is time to take advantage of it. We are already reaching out to stakeholders and have put forward a small number of initial projects. We are promoting this fund with our stakeholders, including community governments, Indigenous governments, and other partners. We are also working very closely with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to help stakeholders develop proposals for the co-investment fund. This outreach is critical so Northerners can make the best use of funds such as this co-investment fund.

Mr. Speaker, as we make progress with other initiatives such as the Community Housing Plans, we will be identifying opportunities for investment. The National Housing Co-Investment Fund allows our communities to bring their own assets to the table and partner with us and the federal government to meet local housing needs.

I cannot overstate the opportunity this fund gives us. This money will help address all aspects of housing in the Northwest Territories, from homelessness to affordable homeownership. Everyone will benefit, from businesses in communities to residents who need housing. I am very proud of the work that led to this new agreement. I am looking forward even more to the work ahead, as we endeavour to make the most of this fund and build new and innovative housing projects across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ministers' statements.
Minister of Infrastructure.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 150-18(3):
TLICHO ALL-SEASON ROAD

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, securing funding to advance planning and construction of new transportation corridors is a key commitment in this government's mandate. These transformative projects help to connect communities, support employment and training opportunities, increase our resiliency to climate change, and create new social and economic opportunities.

Today, I am pleased to provide an update on the Tlicho all-season road project, an exciting new 97-kilometre highway that will provide year-round access to Whati from Highway No. 3.

Mr. Speaker, the new road to Whati is being developed as a P3 project, much like the Stanton Renewal Project and the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link. As a performance-based structure, public-private partnerships are an effective way of delivering essential infrastructure projects by bringing private-sector expertise and accountability to the process while preserving government ownership of core public assets.

As part of the P3 approach, a request for proposals was issued in December of 2017. Our government then announced in November of 2018 that North Star Infrastructure was selected as the preferred proponent for this project. North Star Infrastructure is a consortium that consists of Kiewit Canada Development Corporation, the Tlicho Government, Peter Kiewit and Sons, Hatch Corporation, and Thurber Engineering Limited. Mr. Speaker, in February, the GNWT signed an agreement with North Star Infrastructure to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the Tlicho all-season road. Construction is expected to start this fall and will take approximately two years, with the official opening expected to take place in 2022.

In signing this agreement with North Star Infrastructure, we have agreed to contractual requirements that will increase economic and

employment opportunities. Minimum thresholds for construction and operations and maintenance will ensure significant involvement of Tlicho workers and businesses during both phases. These commitments will help to maximize benefits for Tlicho communities and will facilitate capacity building within its communities.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to our focus on local jobs for this project, we're also committed to protecting the environment. With the environmental assessment now complete, the project has submitted the required land and water licence applications to the Wek'eezhii Land and Water Board. The GNWT anticipates that permits and licences will be granted by September of 2019.

The Tlicho all-season road will bring many benefits to the region and the Northwest Territories. It will help us to reduce the cost of living for the region and create new social and economic opportunities and is expected to attract investment from industry in the exploration and development of natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to work closely with our stakeholders, including the Tlicho Government, through all phases of the project. Together, we will continue to build a safe, efficient, and resilient transportation system that meets the needs of Northerners for generations to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LOCATION OF A FUTURE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last month the City of Yellowknife released its university feasibility and benefits study. The purpose of the study was different than the Aurora College foundational review. It had a more general focus that looked at which post-secondary model would be most feasible for the territory and what benefits it could provide for the city.

The city study endorses the polytechnic university as a better choice for the NWT than a college. Some of the advantages are greater academic and governance independence, access to a wider pool of teaching talent, the ability to maximize enrolment by offering both theoretical and applied learning, and lastly, a better alignment with northern labour needs.

That is not all. Polytechnics have higher graduation employment rates than colleges and universities generally and attract more international students, given comprehensive marketing. All of these benefits would reverse the trends of declining enrolments and graduation rates that Aurora College is experiencing right now. A polytechnic is not only feasible; it is the best way forward.

Mr. Speaker, the elephant in the room is the question of where the main polytechnic campus will be located. Both the foundational review and the city study recommended that the campus be built in Yellowknife, because it has the greatest range of services. Of course, Fort Smith does not want to give up its place as the headquarters of Aurora College, along with all of the employment it provides.

In an effort to collaborate, the mayors of the three communities with Aurora College campuses issued a news release last month, endorsing the creation of a polytechnic university in the NWT. They also asked the GNWT not to make a decision that would be detrimental to any NWT community.

Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a challenge. There may be distance learning options that make a large central campus less relevant, but at the end of the day the new institution's administration and support services need to have a physical location. That means government has to make a choice, a political choice, and the stakes are high. It's my view that, the sooner this choice is made, the better. It's difficult for communities to plan their future, create additional housing for students, and for the territorial government to seek funding if the location of the polytechnic is unknown. I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, am going to go down the path of the polytechnic.

Mr. Speaker, the future of education in the Northwest Territories lies in providing more options for our young people. I support the establishment of a polytechnic university, Mr. Speaker, but my reasons are not about new jobs and development, the investment, or the economic boost for Yellowknife. Yes, those things are certainly beneficial, but a polytechnic university represents so much more.

Mr. Speaker, what are the broad influences that will shape our territory over the next generations? We are an Indigenous territory on a journey toward self-determination. That requires all Northerners to take part. We need an economic engine that allows our communities to thrive and flourish while supporting diversification of our economy. We are no longer in a little glass bubble. Globalization is upon us, and we are affected daily by circumstances that play out around the world. Innovation and technology will bring forward numerous opportunities while also creating challenges and disruptions. Of course, climate change will continue to impact our lives in perpetuity.

We know these are the forces that will act on our society. How must we respond? Building our education system is about establishing our values as a society and infusing them through our system, including the post-secondary level. Our youth must have the greatest opportunities to succeed on a personal level and to contribute to society as they enter into the workforce that so desperately seeks northern-educated talent.

A polytechnic university will not only benefit our own residents, Mr. Speaker; an institution like this will establish a place for us in the growing field of circumpolar academic research and technical discovery. It will attract people from around the circumpolar world, coming to study, research, and teach. It provides us a foothold to participate at the frontlines of globalized knowledge and about the northern world.

Mr. Speaker, establishing this institution is about our self-determination as a territory, creating the kind of society we want the Northwest Territories to be. This is how we will truly realize our goal of a robust diverse economy. This is how we will make innovation possible and achieve authentic excellence. This is how Indigenous communities will set their own direction and flourish.

A polytechnic university may not hold the answers to every question facing our society, Mr. Speaker, but it will help prepare us to create inventive and original responses to the many challenges we face. Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC TRUST AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, we privileged few in this House face no small amount of public scrutiny for the decisions we make, which is a fundamental feature of our democratic traditions. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that we all uphold the

high standards Northerners expect from us in the decisions that we make.

Mr. Speaker, politicians as a whole never tend to poll well, except for a handful on election day. Earlier this year, a survey asked Canadians which jobs they trust and respect the most. While firefighters and nurses came out on top, politicians were found to be the least-respected jobs in the country for the third year running. Judges, on the other hand, consistently maintain a great deal of trust in the public's eye despite the fact that they are appointed by the same politicians who rank at the bottom of public opinion.

I wonder why this is, and the answer seems clear: a fair and transparent appointment process that is vetted by local experts who ensure that politicians make honest decisions about these appointments based on merit and experience, rather than patronage, favouritism, or ideology. In short, Canadians and Northerners tend to trust the judicial appointment process, even if they don't trust the politicians making the appointment.

Mr. Speaker, this now brings me to a recent appointment made by the Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission. The workers' advisor is a political appointment made by the Minister who helps workers understand the workers' compensation system and is entirely independent of the commission. This is a very important and well-compensated position with a six-figure salary. In the past, Ministers have put the position out to the public in asking for an expression of interest from Northerners who wanted the job. That was not the case in this most recent appointment. Instead, the Minister appointed his long-time political aide to the post without any form of public process.

Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the kind of circumstance that make Northerners question the trust they place in elected officials. Important political appointments like this are entirely at the discretion of the Minister, but that does not mean he should ignore established processes. I want to be clear that I am in no way questioning the merits of the appointment or the person who occupies the position. I am questioning the appointment process and why an individual so close to the Minister's personal political career was selected without any concerns of personal conflict or a chance for a public expression of interest.

Later today I will have questions for the Minister, and I hope he can answer them satisfactorily. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SENIORS' HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past December and January, I had the opportunity to visit the communities in Nahendeh to discuss various issues and concerns, including the Seniors' Home Heating Subsidy program.

Mr. Speaker, elders from my riding have serious concerns regarding a recent change to this program. It is my understanding that the department is now issuing a fuel subsidy in a dollar amount, as opposed to litres. In 2017, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment conducted a review that examined all aspects of the program, including income threshold zones, fuel allocations, and levels of support.

The review included meeting with the NWT Seniors' Society. However, in speaking with the elders in Nahendeh, they do not remember being consulted about the change. As a result of the program review, ECE immediately implemented changes to the program effective April 1, 2018, which includes increasing eligibility thresholds, extending the program to seniors who rent, and changes for the fuel allocation program to a monetary-based subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, consequently, changes from litres to monetary amount caused many elders to run out of their allotment by February, resulting in having additional costs to themselves. This is why more seniors are beginning the next season with an empty tank. This one change equates to elders going through their allocation subsidies much earlier than they would if they were issued a subsidy in litres. Given the increase in fuel prices, this is a serious concern.

Many of the elders are currently struggling financially and are now finding themselves having to pay for heating and fuel costs on their fixed income. This finds them struggling to find the funds to heat their home, as allocation amounts will not last to March 31st.

If you look at the subsidy, Mr. Speaker, in Fort Simpson, it is \$2,700 in cash, which works out to 2,143 litres. That is a difference in the 2,800 litres.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe our elders would agree this new change is something that they agree is a good way to save the cost of living. Later, I will have questions for the Minister of ECE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
TRADITIONAL ECONOMY

MR. MCNEELY: Mr. Speaker, traditional economy. Mr. Speaker, traditional economy is a significant contributor to the northern economy, especially in smaller communities. Traditional economy has sustained many generations of not only Northerners, but people of many races and creeds from around the world. Traditional economy was, in fact, the original economy in place well before the advent of wage and income economies. Traditional economy has been and continues to be widely practised in many countries throughout the world, and is often referred to as part of the agrarian economy.

In terms of the Sahtu, food that would otherwise be purchased that is being displaced by the traditional economy is estimated to be in the range of \$1.6 million per annum, or almost \$2,000 per capita.

Mr. Speaker, barter and now cash are becoming increasingly important in traditional economy. Since the introduction and emergence of the snowmobile and outboard motors, cash has become more and more integral to the mobility and productivity of traditional harvesters.

The positive effect of automation on traditional economy is increased opportunities, change, and output. The downside of automation is the burden of operating and capital expenses.

What is the traditional economy? Mr. Speaker, a system of production for both use and exchange, consisting of natural resource, harvesting, hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, and processing activities by which people provide for food, fuel, other material household needs, as a means of subsistence and source of material for trade.

Mr. Speaker, economic evolution in the NWT has not been equally applied across all communities. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regional centres are viewed as hubs of government and businesses, and occasionally industry. Employment and income opportunities are realized for those who are positioned to take advantage.

As we proceed with our fiscal responsible budgetary process, I look forward to balancing our support for the current and traditional economy. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
RESOURCE ROYALTIES REPORTING

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On October 31, 2018, I asked a written question of the Minister of Finance requesting the value of annual production by individual non-renewal resource commodities extracted in the Northwest Territories from 1999 to 2017, along with royalties collected on such production by individual commodities. On February 12, 2019, the Minister tabled the production figures as requested, based on publicly available information compiled by Statistics Canada. The royalties collected; however, were only supplied for 2014 to 2017 and aggregated by oil and gas and then by minerals for 2014 and 2015. The figures for 2016 and 2017 were a total for all royalties collected on all non-renewable resources, with a note that the "values are suppressed due to confidentiality requirements." No explanation was provided as to why earlier figures were not given and why royalties were not broken down by commodity type, as requested.

Last week I tabled excerpts from a privately published book by a former GNWT deputy minister and devolution negotiator that shows royalties and other fees paid to the federal government for oil and gas and minerals from 1980 to 2009. It is not clear why the Finance Minister did not provide similar information in response to a written question from a Member of this House when a retired GNWT deputy minister has the data at his fingertips.

Mr. Speaker, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was started in 2004. It is a partnership among governments, companies, and civil society. A global standard to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas, and mineral resources has been developed and adopted by 51 countries.

The standard requires the disclosure of information along the extractive industry value chain from the point of extraction to how revenues make their way through the government and how they benefit the public. The initiative and its standard seeks to strengthen public and corporate governance, promote understanding of natural resource management, and provide the data to inform reforms for greater transparency and accountability in the extractives sector. Canada is a supporting country, along with others, such as the US, UK, Scandinavian countries, and other European states. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to my colleagues. The corporate sector also supports the Extractive Industries Transparency

Initiative, and those supporters including Anglo American and Rio Tinto, which are owners and operators of two of the three NWT diamond mines. Private multinationals seem more committed to transparency than our Cabinet.

What democratic government doesn't support openness and transparency in public reporting of resource royalties? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Finance. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
DENTAL SERVICES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, a wide range of dental services are covered for First Nations and Inuit people. This includes diagnostic services like x-rays, preventative services like cleanings, and restorative services like fillings, as well as more specialized care like root canals, gum treatments, dentures, and orthodontics. Why, then, are good dental services so hard to come by in our small communities?

In Fort Providence, there is no resident dentist or dental hygienist. Local dental services are provided when dental teams contracted by the GNWT visit and operate out of the Snowshoe Inn Centre. Residents tell me that these visits are often inconsistent, brief, and poorly advertised, making people miss opportunities to have their teeth cared for locally. I have also heard that residents struggle to schedule set appointments with these teams, making care even harder to plan for.

The alternative is to make private arrangements to travel through Yellowknife or Hay River, but for many, that is just not feasible. An elder recently visited Yellowknife alone to address a problem tooth, but was mistakenly reported missing by his family. Another resident was told by health centre staff that he would have to travel to Yellowknife on his own. This person does not have his own vehicle or disposable income for travel. Is he supposed to wait until he gets so sick that he needs a medevac?

I am not exaggerating, Mr. Speaker. Medical research shows that gum disease is linked to increased risk of heart disease and that dental infections and tooth loss can also lead to serious health problems, not to mention the pain and lowered quality of life that come with poor oral health.

Our governments have a fiduciary responsibility to deliver dental services to First Nations people, who have a right to get the care that they need promptly and, as much as possible, in their own home

community. Not only that, it is also clear that providing good dental services is an important step in preventative care. It just makes good business sense.

I have previously written to the Minister, urging him to take steps to address the community's issues with dental services. Some residents have also suggested that services could be delivered from Yellowknife rather than Hay River, as is currently in practice. Whatever the decision, the community must be involved. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi, colleagues. I don't want to be a sore tooth, Mr. Speaker, but if there is one thing that I know for sure, it is that toothaches point to problems that need to get fixed as soon as possible. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SMALL-SCALE MINING AND VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to talk about the benefits of small-scale mining and value-added processing. Small-scale mining developments are increasingly being seen as the best way to develop new technology materials and specialty material deposits, such as those found in the NWT's rare earths and lithium resources.

Mr. Speaker, new demand for clean technology is creating new uses for traditionally un-mined materials. Investors in spin-off industries are very intrigued by the potential opportunities that are associated with unlocking new rare earth minerals. However, in order to secure long-term funding commitments with high-tech investors, resource samples will be needed to confirm product compatibility and consumer confidence.

Mr. Speaker, some advantages to small-scale mining include much smaller capital expenditure requirements compared to a larger-scale mining operations. The cost differential amounts to tens of millions of dollars versus hundreds, or millions, or even billions of dollars for large-scale mines.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the smaller the scale, the smaller the environmental footprint. Small-scale development allows for progressive remediation strategies to be implemented right from the start-up. This enables the site to be fully rehabilitated upon mine closure. Furthermore, local Indigenous businesses can be equity partners in development

due to the nature of capital requirements for small-scale operations.

Mr. Speaker, the known subsurface resources at Nechalacho are highly suitable for this type of small-scale development approach. This technology does not require the use of water or hazardous chemicals in extracting the minerals for economic interest.

Mr. Speaker, this sustainable development approach, particularly in partnership with Indigenous groups, represents the future of the mineral industry. At this time, the NWT holds a great opportunity to demonstrate this new model and become a North American leader in the sustainable production of clean technology materials. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN TSIIGHEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the community of Tsiigehtchic, we lack many essential government services. During our January tour of the Mackenzie Delta, voices were echoed regarding the lack of services that we have in our community.

Please be patient with me as, once again, I bring up the need for a full-time nurse. I believe that every community, for various safety reasons, for life and death matters, everyone needs a nurse in each community. We appreciate the regular visits that we have received; however, it is just not enough. This, I strongly believe, has to change.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out policing services in Tsiigehtchic. Although we have regular patrols in the community, residents feel the need to have a police officer stationed right in the community, again, Mr. Speaker, for safety reasons and to make the community feel more comfortable knowing that the RCMP is situated right down the street. The outcome, we believe, is less crime, less alcohol, and less domestic violence, to name a few.

These are just two of the services the community is requesting. We also would like to know about hiring an income support worker, probation officer, and all the other services that are offered in larger centres. Tsiigehtchic wants to be a community that offers all essential services to the community members.

Mr. Speaker, our ministerial tour of the Mackenzie Delta has brought forward many more concerns, but I'll only touch on these for now. I'll have questions later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members' statements. Item 3, returns to oral questions. Item 4, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd like to recognize a couple of constituents from the riding of Yellowknife North; Mr. Frank Walsh, who is the president of Local 11 and a Yellowknife North resident, and also Mr. David Connolly, who does a lot of community relations with Avalon, Advanced Metals Inc., and TerraX Minerals. I'd like to welcome you to the House. Thank you for being here.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize my cousin, Ann Peters, who is also your CA. Welcome to the House, Ann. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I did not know the Member was going to do that. I apologize. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that I have four Pages here in this session, Jeremy Beauchamp, Gordon Kwon, Ehxea Antoine, and Desiree Pitt. I'd like to thank them for all their service to us in this session. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you to all the Pages. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Thank you to everyone who has joined us today, and thank you to everyone watching around the world on social media and on satellite television. We always appreciate people engaging with our democracy. Item 5, acknowledgements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 18-18(3):
ALEX CZARNECKI

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge former Yellowknife North resident Alex Czarnecki, who passed away recently.

Alex came to Yellowknife in 1972 to become a teacher at St. Pat's School. He became a well-known member of Yellowknife's artistic community, a frequently performing musician, a director of more than 40 local theatre productions, and a producer of films about the North in cultural transition.

Alex Czarnecki passed away early in January this year. Members, please join me in offering condolences to his friends and family, and applauding his life and contributions to the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Our condolences are with the family. Acknowledgements. Item 6, oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 583-18(3):
PUBLIC INFORMATION REGARDING
RESOURCE ROYALTIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today I reviewed how the Minister of Finance did not provide the information requested in my written questions on resource royalties from October 31, 2018. Can the Minister explain why the information requested, a breakdown of resource royalties from 1999 to 2017 by commodity type, was not provided in his response? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The resource royalties for the period from 1999 to 2013 by commodity type were not provided because the information that is available combines the Northwest Territories information with data from the other three territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. So that explains some of the reasons, that the federal government combines it, and so on, but last week I tabled extracts from a privately published book by a former deputy minister and devolution negotiator that clearly showed the resource royalties paid to the federal government from 1980 to 2009. Can the Minister explain how such information was published, and yet he could not provide it in response to a written question from a Member of this House?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The excerpts from the book that the Member refers to are from the public accounts of Canada. The data represents the three territories combined until 2003, when Yukon went through their devolution, and combined the Northwest Territories and Nunavut as of 2003 until 2014, when the Northwest Territories went through devolution. The Member has requested Northwest Territories royalties only. We can provide this table to 2017, but it will not match the production value table, because the data is an aggregate for the three territories over the same years.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. I spoke earlier today of the world-wide movement toward more transparent and open public reporting of government revenues from non-renewable resources. Even most of the diamond mining companies operating in the NWT support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Can the Minister of Finance tell us whether he and his staff have studied the standard developed by the initiative, and when we can expect it to be adopted or implemented by this government?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Department of Finance, we are aware of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative standard for reporting. To date, the government has reported aggregate royalties rather than royalties by mine to respect the confidentiality of financial information of individual mines, as required per the Northwest Territories Lands Act.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Now we get that it's restricted because of wording in the Lands Act, so I look forward to that being changed. Canada is a supporter of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and has provided funding to a variety of countries, such as Peru, Indonesia, Tanzania, and even Mongolia to fix up how they report revenues. This country has adopted the standard through the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act, so can the Minister tell us when our government will get on board and begin to report royalties paid by commodity type, or even by individual companies? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I understand that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is reviewing the Mining Regulations and transparency and accountability principles, and that all will be taken into consideration as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 584-18(3):
SENIORS' HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I talked about fuel subsidy for seniors, and I talked about, in Fort Simpson, that \$2,700, which works out to about 2,143 litres. Typically, when a fuel tank is filled to between 80 and 90 percent, that works out to be about 960 to 1,080 litres, or two tanks. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment please advise why those changes were made to this program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment regularly reviews programs to make sure they are still meeting the needs of people; in this case, seniors in our communities. We recognize that there was a need to expand our program because we weren't subsidizing people who had rental accommodations; we were only subsidizing homeowners. In my personal opinion, oftentimes, not always, but oftentimes homeowners are often at a financial advantage to people who have to rent. Not always.

So we expanded it so that we could include renters, and we increased our income threshold so that we would reach more people. By doing this, actually, we have increased our intake. We have approximately 100 more seniors in the Northwest Territories who are actually accessing this program because of the changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: It's great that we see this increase of 100 seniors getting through this program. It's of value. However, we went, in the Nahendeh riding which had 2,800 litres, to \$2,700. Can the Minister please advise the amount of money allocated to each zone, so we get a bigger picture?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We tried to look at it more in a fairness and equitable manner, because I couldn't really justify how the funding was provided beforehand. We used a market basket figure to look at how the communities are, so looking at similar costs between communities of the cost of living to define how we would do it.

In zone 1, a person who is making \$56,000 or less is entitled to an annual amount of \$2,700 a year. In zone 2, someone who is making \$64,000 or less is entitled to \$3,600 a year in fuel subsidy. In zone 3, which is our most isolated communities, someone making an annual income of \$73,000 or less is entitled to a subsidy of \$4,200. Remembering this is a subsidy program, it is not meant to cover the full cost. If people fall under that and they are still struggling, though, they should consider other programs, such as income support. Come to us. We will see if we can help you.

MR. THOMPSON: The Minister talked about the number, a high number or less. A lot of elders are not even close to that threshold, and even when we see this subsidy provided, it still has a hindrance to these communities, and so our elders are having to make choices. My next question to the Minister is: can she please advise if the monetary allotment has a living index to it?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Currently, it doesn't have a cost of living index included into it. This is just the start of the program. We have increased the threshold. We have increased the amount. We have looked at it on more of an equitable basis, so based on communities that have a similar cost of living.

Once this season is over, this summer, then we will be doing a review of it again to make sure, but I cannot stress enough. I take heed of the Member from Nahendeh stating that many seniors do not even reach this. I mean, \$56,000 for the lowest zone is quite a bit of money, although you can struggle on it. So if you are not making it, please, please come in and talk about accessing income support or other services. People need support, and we want to try to help them as a government. Reach out and ask.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister providing those answers to us right now today. I mean, it is great that we need to get in there right now, but will the Minister look at actually putting a cost to it? Previously, it was 2,800 litres, and each zone had litres and not a monetary value. It is great that some people are able to access monetary value, but for those elders who are under that, will they look at the ability to, instead of monetary value, actually put it in litres or the value of those litres that they were supposed to get? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: As stated earlier, we will be doing a full review of the program. This was the first year that we have implemented the changes, so we will be doing a full review in the summer coming up here. Yes, if it makes sense. We try to work closely with the Seniors' Society, recognizing we don't ask every single senior in the Northwest Territories, but we do try to work with the society that is in charge of representing them to do this. We will work closely with them and we will look at it.

One of the things that is noted, though, is, when we only moved litres, there are a lot of seniors in small communities, Mr. Speaker, who are only using a lot of wood heat. If we are only providing litres, we are neglecting a huge population of people who are still using wood heat. That is why we moved to a financial compensation versus litres, because under the litres, if you are using wood, you weren't always getting the amount of money. So, right now, it has moved to financial. You get the payout. It doesn't matter what you use it on, but we will review it in the summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 585-18(3):
APPOINTMENT OF THE WORKERS' ADVISOR

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation and Safety Commission's appointment of the Workers' Advisor, why was an expression of interest not issued to the public? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under Section 107 of the Workers' Compensation Act, the Minister responsible does have the authority to appoint a workers' advisor. Because, as some Members know, our last workers' advisor was retiring, we needed to fill the position, and the process of the Minister responsible appointing a workers' advisor is left up to the discretion of the Minister. That was what happened. I look forward to the new workers' advisor doing a great job working in this position and working for the safety and the well-being and the wellness and health of our employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: I acknowledge that the Minister has the discretion. In fact, I said that earlier today. The Minister's predecessor made the last appointment with a public process. Why did the Minister not follow the same process that Northerners have come to expect surrounding this appointment?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I can't speak of my predecessor and the decisions that they made. I can speak for the decisions that I make in this House, and I just answered the question earlier, that it was my decision, discretion of the Minister, and I am very glad to have a long-time Northerner working in this area. Like I said, he is going to do a great job working on the health, the well-being, and ensuring the safety for our employees across the Northwest Territories.

MR. TESTART: Again, I am not questioning the merits of the person who was appointed, and I am sure they will do a good job, but the Minister knows quite well that this is a long-time political aide of the Minister. Can the Minister confirm whether or not he brought this issue up with his Cabinet colleagues or with the Conflict of Interest Commissioner to assess whether or not it was a conflict for him to make this decision?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: This is legislated. I did mention in the Workers' Compensation Act under section 107, and I will say it again, section 107, so

everyone can hear that. I, as the Minister, have the authority to appoint a workers' advisor. It is legislated. It was a decision that was made, and anybody who is in that position is very well-qualified to do that work.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that everyone knows that the Minister is capable about making this appointment. It is the Minister's judgment around this appointment that is the issue. Will the Minister agree to re-assess this appointment with the advice of someone who is skilled in assessing conflict and make the appropriate decision after that time? Will he at least look into this from a conflict perspective? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The decision was made, a legislated decision, and I stand by that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 586-18(3):
HEADQUARTERS FOR NEW POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. In her response to the Aurora College foundational review, the Minister said that the transformation of the college will begin with the creation of an NWT-wide vision of post-secondary education. My question is: isn't the first thing to resolve the issue of where the headquarters and the main campus are going to be located? Masi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I think that the first thing to do, actually, was to hire the person to actually become the associate deputy minister, would be the first priority, and that is what we focused on. Actually defining where the headquarters are, we spent a lot of time, Mr. Speaker. I went to the three communities, Inuvik, Yellowknife, and Fort Smith, a total of three times. I met with the community counsellors there. I met with public meetings. I spent a lot of time, and I heard clearly, I heard clearly, that students and staff see the benefits of all three communities, and I see the benefits of all three communities, so defining where the headquarters will be is something we need to look at down the road, once we have an implementation plan.

I have committed that the person who will be hired fairly soon, I will be announcing that fairly soon, as well, will be located in Yellowknife, because we have to work very closely together on the planning stage. After that is done, then we will be defining if and where we need a headquarters. At this time, Mr. Speaker, all three communities have stated very clearly both orally and in writing that they do not want one community over the other. They want, as my vision was, three strong communities and three strong campuses.

MS. GREEN: I have no quarrel with the idea of three strong campuses, but I don't understand how the Minister and her staff are going to create an implementation plan when there is not a vision for where the main campus is going to be. I get the idea of three, but I do not think they are going to be equal, so how can she go forward with an implementation plan without knowing where the headquarters is going to be?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Once that person is hired, which I will be announcing, again, later on, the implementation plan will take place at that time. Again, we have committed. I have said that we will take that person, they will be located in Yellowknife so that we can work very closely with them over the next couple of years, but the question still remains, Mr. Speaker: do we need to move every single position out of Fort Smith, at this time, into Yellowknife? Do we need to move the finance? Do we need to move aspects of that? Those are questions we need to look at more in depth. Also, it cannot be about one community over another. I recognize I am an MLA for Yellowknife, but on top of that I am a Minister for all communities in the Northwest Territories. My commitment is to making sure that all communities are taken care of, and that is why I have said from the beginning and will say till the end: three strong communities, three strong campuses. I will not let one be detrimental to the others.

MS. GREEN: The Minister has been unable to answer my question. At some point, there is going to be a new campus built, and my understanding is it's going to be built in Yellowknife. There is going to be money needed for this, so where along this whole road does the decision get made that there will be a new campus in Yellowknife and that it will be the headquarters for the new polytechnic?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I am a little bit shocked. I am wondering if the MLA has more information than I do, because I didn't know that we were having a new campus in Yellowknife at this time. We are still working with the City of Yellowknife to define if that is a brick and mortar or if it actually is building on what they have already. So those decisions have not been made, and my commitment has been to work very closely with the

municipal government to determine that need. Like I said, the first couple of years are around planning, and the definition of what headquarters looks like or where it will be will be future, down the road.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I hear is the Minister is punting this decision down the road to the next Assembly so that she is not going to disappoint anyone, but I want to put on the record that this decision is going to have to be made. Whether we are talking about bricks and mortar, whether we are talking about distance learning, whatever it is we are talking about, this thing is going to exist somewhere and the Minister is going to have to make a decision about it, so at a what point is that going to come, if not some future Assembly and some hapless Minister of the day having to make somebody unhappy?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I think that I have been called many things since I have taken this position. However, I have not been called "easy" and I have not been called "lazy," so I am not looking for easy answers out. I am doing my job as a Minister, and that means protecting all people in the Northwest Territories, in all communities. As stated, I see benefits in all three communities. Climate change is affecting our northern communities more so than Yellowknife. Not to say it's not affecting Yellowknife, but it's affecting them more so. Would that not make sense to study there? If we are going to do ENR programs, does it make sense to do them in Yellowknife or does it make sense to do it outside the community? Those are questions we need to look at.

Before we even get to defining what the headquarters looks like, Mr. Speaker, we have to develop a vision. One of the recommendations says we try to do too much for everyone. We need to stop that. We need to look at what we are good at, what we should be specializing in, and what we should be leaving to other universities and polytechnics throughout Canada. So that is the first step, is defining what we need, what we are good at, what we should be focusing our energies on. After that, then we will be looking at the structures of how we support all three communities and all three campuses. Not only the campuses, but the 22 community learning centres also need to be in that picture, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 587-18(3):
TRANSITION TO NEW POLYTECHNIC
UNIVERSITY

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to continue, then, on down the road of questions with regard to the polytechnic, but I guarantee I will not ask any questions about: where shall it go? Mr. Speaker, I will go down this road, however. There are some people who are very excited about this transition. Obviously, Aurora College has served the Northwest Territories very well. The government has accepted a number of recommendations with regard to the review. That means we are going to transition into a polytechnic university, so I would like to start simply by asking the Minister if she can tell us what work has been done so far to prepare for the transition of Aurora College, that has served us well, into this polytechnic university? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to take a moment to state that I do not see the MLA who just asked me the question as a coward. I see him as a very capable MLA, so I will start with that.

What have we done? What have we done so far? We put out the ad, and so again I will be releasing very soon where we are with the hiring practise. That will be coming up, by the latest, on Monday. I will be doing a Minister's statement on the polytechnic at that time. We have done visits, three visits to all three communities, and that was a lot. In fairness, when I went to the communities, there was a lot of fear-based. It took three visits to get them actually to feeling a place where they could see a future, that they can actually take hold of this and say it is the right thing to do, so that was very worthwhile, my time. We have also met with the community learning centres. Because there are 22 in different areas, we could not meet with them individually, so we had a teleconference with all of them to define what they see their strengths are and their needs are. We have done the draft of what the vision questions will be. I have submitted those to the MLAs. I believe I gave a timeline to get that information back so that the MLAs can give me final feedback on if the survey questions are appropriate. We are expecting that as soon as the beginning of next month. We will be submitting that out, the visioning out, throughout the Northwest Territories.

I know at the beginning the MLAs had asked me in committee if I would have an implementation plan, and I actually did not want to do that because I took the recommendation that said ECE is too entrenched, so I wanted to hold off, but I could not wait. As a person, I am a little bit "get her done," so we have started a draft implementation plan. Once this person is in place, they will take that draft and they will actually make it a final implementation

plan. So we have done a little bit of work. We have much to do, but I am excited about the work to come.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for the reply, and I appreciate the preparation that is under way. Residents, though, Mr. Speaker, although they are very excited about the opportunity that another level of education will provide to Northerners, they are still a little bit troubled to understand exactly what is undertaken, or what does a polytechnic university look like. Can the Minister maybe describe to us exactly what a polytechnic university looks like? What distinguishes it differently from Aurora College? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: A very broad question. In responding, can the Minister please take note of the time and the fact that we are not even halfway through questions? Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Okay. I am going to really try because, you know me, I like to talk. What is a polytechnic university besides Aurora College right now? A polytechnic university is actually really hand-on learning. It looks at taking in practicum plus the academic learning with that. So what it gives us that it does not have at Aurora College is that Aurora College is limited because it is a college. They have partnerships that can access university monies, but they don't actually get that money themselves. I don't know this money. It came out in a city report. I believe that it said that there was, like, \$500 million floated through that we didn't access. We could only access a couple hundred thousand dollars of that money.

Moving into the polytechnic university will give us specializations in what our strengths are in the Northwest Territories, and it will also give us access to a lot more research money, which will lessen the dependency of Aurora College on the Government of the Northwest Territories, which is critical for sustainability.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for the reply. The Minister has indicated a couple of times in previous replies and earlier in mine that there is soon, I guess, to be announced a new associate deputy minister. Once this particular ADM is hired, what will be the actual first steps and actions that this position or this person is going to have to take?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: One of the first things, of course, that that person will have to do is get used to what he is walking into, or she is walking into. They will have to look at taking over the overall supervision, the operations of the normal day-to-day operations within all the campuses.

Because we will be starting the vision exercise, they will be actually working with that close vision exercise, not only for the Northwest Territories, but taking that vision and then what we define as a vision of the Territories, they will be defining what the vision is for the polytechnic university. They will be taking our draft implementation plan, whatever state it is in, and finalizing that work. As well, they will be looking at their management team to make sure that they have the best-placed people in the best places. They have a lot of work to do in a short period of time. Like I said, I am a pretty hard Minister, and I want this done. I will be on them constantly to get er done.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for the reply. Clearly, there is lots of work to be done. As we know, we have little to no resources actually identified in this particular budget with regard to this initiative. There is a little bit of a concern toward how much are we actually cementing this initiative into the mandate of this Assembly. I would like to ask the Minister: what can we expect that will be done on this file in the remaining life of this Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Sometimes, in honesty, I think that sometimes we work too slow. Then I have to remind myself I only got this portfolio in April. I won't even have an actual year until it is finished, but I think we are making a lot of progress. What can be done? The person will be hired as our associate deputy minister. Our overall vision statement for the Northwest Territories and for the polytechnic will be done in this Legislative Assembly.

We will be doing that drafting of the framework for the evaluations of the programs, the education and the social work. That was a personal commitment and a personal concern of my own. That will be done. We will also be bringing forward the legislation to guide and make sure that all post-secondary education within the Northwest Territories is providing quality education to our students. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 588-18(3):
DENTAL SERVICES IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the situation in Fort Providence of dental services, or the lack of dental services. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Social Services. You know, we are elected

here to serve the interests and the well-being of the public and ensuring we provide efficient programs and services. With that in mind, can the Minister sketch out for us the way that dental services are delivered in our small communities, including responsible parties, and how this compares to services in regional centres and in Yellowknife? Mahsi.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing the time, I will try my best to do this quickly. Dental services are not provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories. They are provided by private clinics and private practitioners. That is for all residents of the Northwest Territories. Dental services are not an insured health service.

However, the department does administer portions of the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB) on behalf of the federal government, who do have some responsibility for ensuring that dental services are provided to those who are eligible for NIHB. The health authorities have and do enter into contracts on behalf of NIHB with dental providers, private businesses, to travel to the regions and communities that do not have local or resident dentists.

The actual dental services, as I have indicated, are provided by these private providers, and they will actually invoice the federal government directly for the cost of those services. Dental services are based on self-referral. Every resident can call a dental office or other to book their own appointments. They would do that directly with the dentist, not through the Health and Social Services system.

If dental services are not available in a home community, like Providence as an example of residents, those who are eligible for NIHB can make arrangements to travel to access dental services and have some of those costs covered through NIHB. In larger centres that have private dentist offices, individuals who are eligible for NIHB also book their own appointments directly with the dentist, and the dentist will invoice the federal government for coverage under NIHB program.

If services required are not covered by NIHB, which is the case for some procedures, or they exceed the benefit levels that are covered, then the cost is the responsibility of the individual. That is similar to individuals who are covered by employee dental insurance programs and other things, like our GNWT employees, who have some of the best benefits in the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I think the Minister covered a lot of information. I wanted to talk about the location of the services whenever it arrives in Fort Providence and perhaps at least acknowledging that communication has been problematic. Talking specifics about Fort Providence, residents have asked me why the dental team is using the old dental room at the Snowshoe Inn Centre when there are facilities and a new health centre. Can the Minister explain?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I have asked the department to provide me with some clarity on the use of the Snowshoe Inn Centre. It is my understanding that the dental providers out of Hay River actually weren't under contract with NIHB to come. They had actually made those arrangements themselves and made their arrangements in the community.

Having said that, we did construct the new health centre in Fort Providence, which we opened in 2015. Subsequently, a dental room was requested to be added to the new centre. The dental room has been completed, and the required dental equipment has been installed and commissioned in that health centre. Although the authority is currently exploring options for a dentist to be available to residents of Fort Providence who are eligible through NIHB coverage, we are talking to the federal government right now about doing an RFP or some other mechanism to find a dentist who will come in on a regular basis into that community to use those facilities.

MR. NADLI: The department is doing some very important work on oral health for infants, children, and youth. I don't want to take away from that, but I am also mindful of adults in need. How is the department taking action to improve adults' oral health in the NWT?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We did release the oral health strategy here in the Northwest Territories, and the focus is on prevention rather than the actual provision of services, because the provision of services is the responsibility of private dentists and others. We do accept and we do agree with everything the Member said about the value of oral health and healthy gums, a healthy mouth leading to overall health. We do have the oral health strategy. There is a lot of focus on youth, as the Member has said.

However, with regard to oral health initiatives for the adult population, there are a number of action items within the oral health action plan that will benefit adults as the action plan is implemented over the next three years. Some of those notable examples include the provision of oral health toolkits for all residents of long-term care facilities in the Northwest Territories; large-scale oral health

promotion programs into the general population; the expansion of community water fluoridation in the territory; upgrading and replacement of dental equipment in dental rooms across the Northwest Territories, like we did in Providence; and augmenting oral health services for expectant mothers through prenatal oral health programs. There are a number of things that we are doing that are focusing on supporting adults as well as youth and children.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister did state that dental services, providing services to the community of Fort Providence, is really left up to private clinics. Can the Minister assure the residents of Fort Providence that, clearly and definitely, he will have a role in ensuring that private clinics do provide dental services to Fort Providence as soon as possible? Mahsi.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, we have been in touch with the federal government about possibly issuing an RFP to find a provider to provide those services in Fort Providence. That is going to take a while. We are looking to see if there are any providers locally who might be able to do something immediately, but in the meantime, we are also trying to get some more communications information from the NIHB that we could share with community members, showing them how they can get some financial compensation to go to appointments, so that their ability to maintain their health or deal with emergencies isn't limited by financial situation.

A number of things are happening. I don't have those answers for the Member today, but we are looking into it, and I will get back to the Member as soon as I have more information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

QUESTION 589-18(3):
SMALL-SCALE MINING AND VALUE-ADDED
PROCESSING

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I talked about small-scale mining. I would like to ask the Minister of ITI a couple of questions. Will the Minister work with the small-scale, high value-added mineral industry to adjust their requirements to a small scale from what would be a normal, large-scale operation? That would be proportional approvals, proportional requirements, and costs. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All resource projects in the Northwest Territories are reviewed in the same laid-out regulatory regime that we have within the Northwest Territories, according to their scale and scope. We have a multifaceted regulatory system in the Northwest Territories. There is a process to adjust the requirements and make changes within that process, but also, in the Northwest Territories, we have a lot of players. We have the Government of the Northwest Territories and our departments; we have the federal government and their departments; and we have Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories that need to be involved in the regulatory process.

The one thing that I can say, as I said in the House here last week about this project, it is something that is very interesting that I will be following very closely with my colleagues on this side of the House, particularly the ones that manage natural resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: Specific to that project, will the Minister work with the governments, regulators, and firms like Avalon and Cheetah to facilitate an accelerated timeline at Nechalacho to achieve small-scale production?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: We will definitely work closely with them, as we do with many other companies in the Northwest Territories that are trying to get business done here. We want it done right, and we want to help them avoid any red tape unnecessarily to move their projects forward. The nice thing about ITI is that we have developed a Client Services and Community Relations Office within our department, and their role is to help the companies work their way through the regulatory system in the Northwest Territories. We certainly encourage Avalon and Cheetah to work closely with that division and help move their timelines and scope along.

MR. BEAULIEU: As these companies move forward, the potential for ownership with the Indigenous governments and Indigenous groups, will there still be requirements for impact benefit agreements should these companies have ownership along with the Indigenous governments?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As you know, we introduced our bill here last week, so I want to speak very carefully about what I am going to talk about here, because it is in the standing committee's preview right now of the bill.

In our bill, we proposed benefit agreements, not impact benefit agreements. There is already a

process laid out for that, and that is through the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. When you look at our proposed bill, the benefits side of things, we want to make --

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, the bill is before standing committee, and it is inappropriate to discuss it at this point. If you could answer the question perhaps without direct reference to the bill that is properly before the committee? Thank you.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Well, as I said, the bill is with the standing committee, and in it is a benefits agreement, not an impact benefit agreement, as clearly laid out, as I said, in the process under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister discuss the possibilities of technology, energy, and green metals becoming a focus of research and study with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment? Thank you.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Technology, energy, and green metals are already on the radar, particularly of this Government of the Northwest Territories, and particularly of our department, through the NWT Geological Survey. We are trying to get a better understanding of what role that the Northwest Territories and our resources can play in this global movement towards these types of resources. The early work on the knowledge economy has also identified the importance of leveraging and taking advantage of the world demand of green metals, and I am definitely prepared to find opportunities to work with my colleagues and add to the discussion further to the research and study of this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 590-18(3):
POLICING SERVICES IN TSIIGEHTCHIC

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, the community feels that it is very important that we have full-time officers in the community. I would like to ask the Minister: how many times since the fall have the RCMP stayed over the weekend in Tsiigehtchic? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise that, in the 2017 calendar year, the

RCMP conducted 22 overnight patrols and 67 day patrols, and in 2018, the RCMP conducted 19 overnight patrols and 76 day patrols in the community. I don't have a seasonal breakdown or a breakdown by month, but I know also that, in December of 2018, there were 14 day patrols through Tsiigehtchic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: It is nice to have day patrols, but like I said, the community prefers when the RCMP stays the weekend; though, actually, a full-time station would be preferred. Will the Minister do a cost analysis to have an RCMP station in the community of Tsiigehtchic?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I don't think we are in a position, really, to examine such an idea in that kind of detail. I do know that setting up a new RCMP station would be extremely expensive, but certainly I would be prepared to have a conversation with the Member opposite about this matter. I have some idea about the overall cost of setting up a new RCMP detachment, and it is very high. We would have to decide if there was a need, first of all, before we examined it further.

MR. BLAKE: The department has come up with those numbers in the past. As we work toward self-government, the community will be looking at having their own station. It is always better to have in place before those agreements are in place. Maybe as a pilot project, will the Minister and his department take a serious look at having a special constable, at least, in the community of Tsiigehtchic?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I thank the Member opposite for the question. I don't think that we are contemplating such a move at this time. If the Member opposite is contemplating having a situation in which there is one member in a community, I understand that generally we don't do that anymore, but I certainly would be able to consider this matter further. Again, the cost of setting up a full detachment would be very high, as I have mentioned previously, and I don't think we are contemplating it at this time. However, we certainly would be willing to look at the statistics for the community as a preliminary matter.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that the department always is looking at Aboriginal policing. I know we don't have a very much of an intake in that initiative that the department is trying to do, but the department always talks about the cost. You know, you might be looking at \$5 million. We already have housing in place for the officers, so it is just a matter of putting up a station. Will the Minister at least get a

rough cost estimate for having a station in the community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As the Member opposite has mentioned, there is now a housing accommodation for the RCMP in Tsiigehtchic, which I think is a marked improvement to the situation which existed prior to that. I don't think we are looking at setting up a detachment in the community at this time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 591-18(3):
APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS' ADVISOR

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission has clearly laid out his case that he has a statutory authority to appoint this candidate. The question is around the fairness of the appointment. I would like to know if the Minister can tell this House: how many candidates were considered for the workers' advisor position? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, I don't have numbers in front of me. As I mentioned in the last set of questions, under section 107 of the Workers' Compensation Act, the Minister responsible does have the authority to appoint a workers' advisor. A decision was made, finalized, and like I mentioned earlier, I am proud to have a long-time Northerner in that position working on behalf of our employees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: The position is for the public, not for our employees, and certainly not for the Minister. What criteria did the Minister use to select the candidate? Just being a long-time Northerner, a long-time personal staff member of the Minister? Or were there other selection criteria?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I am not going to go into the details of somebody's resume, but I can tell the Member and the Members should know that this individual is very well-qualified, has done a lot of work at the local, regional, territorial, even national level, and that I have full confidence that they can continue to do the work moving forward.

MR. TESTART: The Minister has spoken about the urgency around this appointment. How much time did the previous workers' advisor give notice when they resigned from the position? How much time did the Minister have to fill this position?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I will have to get the details for the Member. I can inform the Member, though, that the previous workers' advisor did do some crossover work with the current workers' advisor, just for the continuity, as well as working to make sure that there was a good transition moving into the position. I can get that information for the Member and share it with him.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is it was three months. The Minister had three months to fill this position. The Minister can't tell me if there is more than one person. I would like to know what process is in place to ensure that Cabinet and political appointments conform to the standards of transparency and fairness that Northerners have come to expect from their government? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The Member knows that people in our positions, whether it is an MLA or an administrator, in this case with the workers' advisor, as I mentioned, it is legislated under section 107 of the Workers' Compensation Act that we have that opportunity to appoint a workers' advisor. Under 107(5), we also have the opportunity to appoint them from the public service. As I have mentioned, a decision was made. I stand by that decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 592-18(3):
SENIORS' HOME HEATING SUBSIDY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. My question is about the seniors' heating subsidy. When the Minister talked about those changes to the program, did the department ask for more money to the department, or did they actually use the existing money to make these changes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to get back to the MLA on that and actually get the actual facts on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I appreciate the Minister is going to get to me with that there because, again, we have made a change. There should have been new money to make this change if we got 100, and if there isn't, that means seniors or elders were

getting the short end of it who were actually accessing the program. The Minister actually talked about elders going out and cutting wood and that to help, you know, pay for that. That is great, but did they look at actually allocating the money that was litres as money instead of just coming out with monetary value?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: What I do know is that not all seniors actually got less money. It is that some of the regions, the higher zones, zone 3, actually, had an increase because their cost of living was substantially higher than, I'm going to say, it is a lot higher cost of living in Tuktoyaktuk than it is in Yellowknife or in Hay River. I hate to say that, but that is the reality we face.

This program actually extended it so more seniors can actually access the program. Not all seniors, but it was based on looking at comparable communities to see what their cost of living factors were, market baskets, and defining what their subsidies should be. Remembering that this is a subsidy program. It is not meant to take care of every single cost of seniors, and so it was determined that it was more equitable to give a cash payment versus a litre payment because of the fact that many seniors in our smallest communities are still using wood heat and are not getting the full allocation because of that.

MR. THOMPSON: Again, I thank the Minister. She talked about wood heat. In my riding, small communities use wood heat. They use that and they use fuel subsidy. These elders are in, you know, older ages. Again, when we did these changes, why weren't the communities, like we talk about the seniors, but why weren't the political bodies asked then question? Like DFN and those political bodies.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I am trying to remember back if that was actually because, again, I was allocated this portfolio in April, and so I am trying to remember and I will have to get back to the Member on whether that was just before I took over or just after I took over, but it was fairly soon that it came up. I do know that they work closely with the Seniors' Society. I don't know who the other stakeholders were, but I will find out that. Again, stating that we are doing a full review of this program in the summer after this one year is finished.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I appreciate the Minister saying that the department is going to look at it, review that, and I greatly appreciate she is going to get back to me with that information. The Minister spoke about, when I

asked her questions earlier, she talked about income support and having to look at it. Can the Minister advise, if seniors apply for this seniors' subsidy, do the department staff actually encourage the seniors to apply for income support, as well?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Education, Culture and Employment is supposed to be actually providing as much, the best, customer service as possible. I cannot say that every single person is always doing that, but the direction is that they should be very consumer focused, and they should be, actually, if there are seniors who are struggling financially, they should be talking about all of the options. So, if they are accessing this program and their income is low and they are still in need, then my hope, and I will look into that, is that they should actually be referring people and saying, "Would you consider income support?" Recognizing again that many seniors are very stubborn and very proud and very proud in their ways, so sometimes asking for help is not always easy for that population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 593-18(3):
FORT SIMPSON HEALTH RECORDS SECURITY
BREACH

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. They concern the discovery of the health records in the Fort Simpson dump, a discovery that caught the attention of my constituents, as well. I am aware that there is work going on behind the scenes to investigate how they got there, but let's turn to the people whose information has been compromised. Has the department been able to contact everyone whose file was found there? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the breach was incredibly troubling. We take it very seriously. We have been working very closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who actually has possession of those files that were found. We have attempted to reach out to all of the clients, but the records are quite old and some of the contact information on those records is not current, so we are trying to track down some individuals. As of February 21st, 69 individuals have been notified by the authority, by mail. As I said, the documents, some of them, are very old, so we have not been able to get contact information from everybody. We will keep reaching out until we have reached everybody.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the files are old, but I am interested in knowing what efforts specifically the department is making to reach out to the other half of that group whose records were found.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Some of the individuals no longer reside in the Northwest Territories. Some have passed away. We are trying to reach out to family where appropriate. We are also reviewing our own records to see if we could find current locations, current addresses, for those individuals. We will take all mechanisms, all means, to try to find current location, current contact information. We are still at it. We have not stopped. We will keep going until we have reached everybody.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the detail the Minister was able to provide. I understand that the department appointed two people to investigate, and the investigate is ongoing. Are there any early results that the department is going to act on immediately?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are always looking for opportunities to strengthen our response to these types of breaches, to make sure that they do not happen again. This one is very complex. There is lots of information out there, lots of conflicting information, and I think it's too early to presume we know what the findings are going to be. We are working closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The Information and Privacy Commissioner, will likely be making a report on this, as well, and I look forward to discussing those findings with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, with committee, to make sure that we find ways to ensure this does not happen again.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The analogy here is that sometimes the transportation safety board will issue an early report on an accident because the findings are of such importance that they cannot wait for the year that it takes to do a full review. My final question is: when will the public learn why this data breach happened and how another can be avoided?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are certainly not waiting a year. We are anticipating we will get a report back by the end of March, barring any unforeseen circumstances or other challenges. We will need to get that report, review it, have discussions with committee and other stakeholders, and then we will be releasing what we can. Some of the information we may not be able to release as a result of privacy concerns, but, where possible, we need to be able to discuss what happened, how it happened, and what we are planning to do to make

sure it does not happen again. We want to do that as soon as possible, but we have got to get the report first. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 344-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
564-18(3): EXPANDING LEGAL AID OUTREACH

TABLED DOCUMENT 345-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
569-18(3): SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING

TABLED DOCUMENT 346-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
571-18(3): IMPACT OF ALCOHOL SPECTRUM
DISORDER ON THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following three documents entitled "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 564-18(3): Expanding Legal Aid Outreach"; "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 569-18(3): Sexual Assault Reporting" and "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 571-18(3): Impact of Alcohol Spectrum Disorder on the Justice System." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board.

TABLED DOCUMENT 347-18(3):
PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2018

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "2018 Annual Report, Public Utilities Board of the Northwest Territories." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 348-18(3):
YUKON QUARTZ MINING LAND USE APPROVAL
LQ00253B FOR MACTUNG PROPERTY DATED
FEBRUARY 4, 2016

TABLED DOCUMENT 349-18(3):
APPLICATION FOR CLASS 4 QUARTZ MINING

LAND USE APPROVAL BY GNWT FOR
MACTUNG ADVANCED EXPLORATION DATED
DECEMBER 20, 2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 350-18(3):
MACTUNG ADVANCED EXPLORATION –
PROJECT PROPOSAL, BY TERRA TECH
CANADA INC. DATED DECEMBER 2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 351-18(3):
2018-0211 – MACTUNG CLASS 4 QUARTZ
EXPLORATION – RESPONSES TO
INFORMATION REQUESTS DATED FEBRUARY
6 AND FEBRUARY 13, 2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 352-18(3):
FEDERAL AND N.W.T. GOVERNMENTS TEAM
UP TO SELL CANTUNG MINE AND MACTUNG
DEPOSIT, CBC NEWS DATED FEBRUARY 14,
2019

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following five documents entitled "Yukon Quartz Mining Land Use Approval LQ00253b for Mactung Property dated February 4, 2016"; "Application for Class 4 Quartz Mining Land Use Approval by GNWT for Mactung Advanced Exploration dated December 20, 2018"; "Mactung Advanced Exploration – Project Proposal, by Terra Tech Canada Inc. dated December 2018"; "Responses to Information Requests dated February 6 and February 13, 2019"; and lastly, a CBC News story, "Federal and N.W.T. governments team up to sell Cantung Mine and Mactung Deposit, CBC News dated February 14, 2019." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 38:
PROTECTED AREAS ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Monday, February 25, 2019, I will move that Bill 38, Protected Areas Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

BILL 39:
ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I give notice that, on Monday, February 25, 2019, I will move that Bill 39, Environmental Rights Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

First Reading of Bills

BILL 36:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM
RESOURCE ACT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 36, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Resource Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 36 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

BILL 37:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE OIL AND GAS
OPERATIONS ACT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 37, An Act to Amend the Oil and Gas Operations Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 37 has first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, 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, with the Member for Mackenzie Delta in the chair.

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

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Good afternoon, everyone. I now call the Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the committee would like to consider Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates 2019-2020, with the Departments of Justice and Infrastructure as the departments under consideration by committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Testart. We will continue after a short recess. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Committee, we have agreed to continue our consideration of Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates 2019-2020. We will continue with the Department of Justice. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left is Mandi Bolstad, director of corporate services with the Department of Justice, and to my right, Martin Goldney, the deputy minister of Justice. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister. Committee, we left off on page 275 of the tabled document, Department of Justice, corrections, operations summary, pages 274 to 278. Any questions? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have some questions for the Minister about the new correctional facility for women in Fort Smith. It is scheduled to be done, I believe, at the end of this fiscal year. Could the Minister tell us whether that is still the case? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Currently, the following schedule is anticipated: construction completion by June 2019; building occupancy by August 2019; and the building will be in service in October of 2019.

That is the schedule. The two-month time period is required to ensure that the systems are operating properly and to orient staff to new procedures. Following completion of staff training and building commissioning, the facility will be ready for full occupancy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there has been about three months of slippage on this schedule. Could the Minister please explain why that is? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I understand that the project has fallen behind schedule. This was due to a number of factors, including the complexities associated with building a correctional facility, collaboration with a design-build team around compliance with functional specifications, and a narrow weather window for deep excavations. It is a fairly complex structure, and yes, there has been some slippage. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it is my understanding from seeing this facility myself that it is quite a bit larger than the existing facility. I am wondering how this budget accounts for the increased staff that will be required. I note that it is up by about \$600,000. Is all that is required to fully staff that facility an increase of \$600,000? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I wonder if I might have Ms. Bolstad assist with answering that question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is no increased operational funding required for the new female facility coming online. The increase may be noted due to amortization with the facility coming online, so that is just booking the accounting entry for the facility over the 40-year term that we expect the building to last. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't understand how a facility that is so much larger, with so many more beds or rooms, can be operated by exactly the same number of staff. Could the Minister please explain that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that there are some vacancies that are going to be filled. I understand that the facility, while physically much larger, will have larger areas for meetings, and so on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, could the Minister tell us how many inmates the current facility serves and how many the new facility will serve? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am just looking over the statistics. I understand that the initial capacity for the new facility will be 23 beds, with a possible provision for expansion, and that the current capacity is 20. I don't think there are 20 inmates there currently. It looks like there are 10 currently, nine of whom are sentenced and one on remand. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Is no increase in staffing required because there will only be 10 in the new facility? Is that the premise for not increasing the staffing? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly that will be subject to operational requirements. I suppose, if we find that there is a great increase in the number of inmates and that we need more staff, we would have to look at that at that time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Given the number of inmates who are in the old facility and the capacity of the new facility, can the Minister remind us why the new facility was sized the way it is? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The old facility was not appropriate for women. In fact, there was a bit of an overflow, I think. Some of the space was used in a residence across the street. Also, as I say, it was not built to be a correctional facility initially. It was different things over different periods of time. Clearly, it was inadequate for modern usage. A larger facility was required. For that reason, the new facility was built.

The old one had many issues, which is not surprising in view of the fact the building was many years' old. I am not sure when it was built, but it was a long time ago.

Again, it was not built as a correctional complex. It was absolutely necessary that something new be built. We wanted to make sure that it was large enough to accommodate a possible increase in the number of women who would be housed there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, having seen the current facility, I don't have any questions about why it was necessary to replace it. Given the overall trend of declining incarceration, I do wonder why the new facility was sized to house at least 23 women. Why was that decision made? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly, the new facility is much larger than the old one, but it also contains a large space for programming, which is, of course, a necessary component in a modern correctional complex. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that there is room for programming, and that is a good idea. What I am asking about is the number of, let's say, beds that it was sized for, at least 23 inmates with the number of beds. How was that decision made, given falling incarceration rates and the fact that the current facility is not full in terms of bed capacity? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I understand that a study was done several years ago. The conclusion was that we needed a bigger and better place. I think that it is probably better, and this is true not only of this correctional facility, but virtually all infrastructure, that it is better to build a bit bigger than you might expect than too small, because if it was too small, then we would have to expand, which would be incredibly expensive. Certainly, it is larger. It may be larger than what we need right now, but it does have, as I say, the initial capacity of 23 beds and provision for a possible expansion. I think it was a wise decision to make it large enough to accommodate possible increases in the numbers

that we currently have incarcerated in Fort Smith. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green, your time is expired, but we can put you on again if you wish. Thank you. Next, we have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is related to page 276, detail. This budgetary number of 179 supports this transitional program. It seems to be consistent, so it tells me that there is a demand. Could the Minister explain an example or examples of this cost allowance, if there are clients transitioning underneath this offender reintegration program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am not sure I entirely understand the question. There is an amount set out there for offender reintegration. If that is the number that is being referred to, the \$179,000, that number has been the same. Perhaps I should let Ms. Bolstad answer this question, rather than getting information second-hand and perhaps getting it wrong. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$179,000 noted in grants, contributions, and transfers on the detail is for offender reintegration activities associated with the therapeutic community implementation at SMCC. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How many clients have utilized this cost allowance underneath this reintegration? Last year, for example, we can see we are serving a demand, a little bit more detail on the success of this allowance. For example, how many clients are utilizing this cost allowance for reintegration back into their communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Sorry, Mr. Chair. This is to support offender reintegration in the new facility that we are planning. Perhaps Mr. Goldney could elaborate a bit on that answer. I understand this money was transferred from another program that was underutilized. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Just in the interest of time, if you know one of the other members will answer, just give direction

so we can try to speed it up a bit. We will go to Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That number does reflect a bit of a change in some of the funding, where we didn't see as much utilization as we might have preferred for wilderness programming, but we are anticipating a need for this funding as we transition the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre into a therapeutic community. What we have identified there is a need for that integration support and building programs with community partners to help support that reintegration. We don't have any numbers available yet, but that is what that funding is targeted for. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am glad that allowance is budgeted for that purpose to provide this reintegration service. I am just curious on the historical justification on the success of it. If you see a need for it, I am glad it is there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. More of a comment. Next, we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to follow up on questions from Mr. McNeely here. Can the Minister provide more information about the planned therapeutic community of the South Slave corrections? What is going on right now with that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. As Members will know, we are advancing this project of transition of the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre to a facility that operates under a therapeutic community model. This is based largely on the Guthrie House program in Nanaimo, British Columbia, that some of us had the opportunity of examining by going down there. It was thought that the Hay River facility would be ideal for this, and I understand that staff has bought into the idea.

When we were down at Guthrie House, it seemed that this was a path that could lead to success. Now, what we don't want, of course, is have people who are recidivists constantly coming back to the facilities, whether here, Fort Smith, or Hay River. So we did look at their program. We have made some alterations to fit with our northern circumstances. We also will need to make some improvements to the facility. As you may know, it is a minimum-security facility, and I believe we have

to move it up to medium-security to be appropriate for this type of program. One of the things that is being done is that there will be enhanced security fencing, and that is a fairly major item. In addition, I understand that there are some lesser costs that will be involved inside the building. There are a lot of key steps that have to be taken before we make this total transition. We have to develop contingency planning for off-grounds activities and programs of orientation.

As I understand it, there are essentially four stages. There is an orientation that is peer-led, primary treatment with re-entry transition counsellors, case management and outreach, and aftercare. It is a four-step process, and we are working, of course, on this.

There will have to be additional staff training, but as I said earlier, my understanding is that the staff has bought into this idea. We are optimistic. Under the communication plan, all of the staff have been notified of the transition, and they will be receiving continuing updates. I believe, also, that the public will be supportive.

This seems to be an excellent idea. Any of us who had the opportunity of going to Nanaimo, I think, were impressed with what they are doing there. There is no guarantee of 100 percent success, but it did seem to us that there was a better chance of success with this type of therapeutic community.

Those are the steps that we are taking. Some of it is in dealing with the staff, keeping them informed and training them, and also the enhancements or changes that we have to make to the physical site. Thank you, Mr. Chair

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have been to Guthrie House, saw it firsthand, and saw how it worked really well. It is a positive model. I guess my question is: you talked about your facilities, you know, staff buy-in, but what is your schedule for planning? What have you done to set up planning for the training so that, when it is actually running, the staff are ready to go? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The corrections service, I understand, has created a working document for the steering committee, outlining next steps and a work plan that was developed to assist in tracking and task management.

There are a lot of things that need to be done. The work includes operational model development, inmate programming, structural upgrades, staff training, communication plan, a transition and implementation stage, and community re-entry plan. Work has gone, in my view, pretty quickly on this. It was only a few years ago that we started even contemplating this, and as I say, some of us, including the Member who has asked the question, have had the opportunity of visiting Guthrie House. I am satisfied with the progress that we have made, and I am looking forward to this institution being opened. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my question is: what is the training? Have we started the training of staff? Have we got programs? Staff have to be getting trained so that they can actually be operational when all of that work is done, and we are not waiting. Can the Minister elaborate and focus on just the training? Has there been training done, and what are the next steps moving forward? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am happy to advise that that work is well under way. Of course, we have to start with the program design, which included the staff and recognizing that the models that we looked at will have to be tailored for the northern context. We wanted the experience and input from staff providing similar types of programming.

The expectation is that the program design is near complete, with complementary training happening already, and the expectation is that training will be done, along with the finalization of the program design, by mid-summer. Then, assuming that we can get the physical changes that are required to the facility done by late summer, that is our time frame for implementation. We might be looking at as soon as early fall. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is great to hear because we are moving forward. My question previously, the year before, I asked about engagement with the community because a part of the success of Guthrie House is the involvement of the community. What has the department done to get the community's buy-in, and are we able to do similar stuff that Guthrie House is able to do, or do we have to look at moving them once they complete the program? To get into housing, they

maybe have to come to Yellowknife. Has the department looked at that and moved forward on that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of course, we had to do some further work on the program design before we did some of the community engagement, but that work is planned for this spring, and we do expect to more actively seek those discussions with the Town of Hay River and, importantly, potential community partners when it comes to the community integration aspects of it. We won't be just looking at Hay River, recognizing that, for many of these participants in the program, not all of them will be reintegrated back into Hay River. Some will want to look to their home communities and perhaps elsewhere, which will require some of that support.

That is one of the reasons that we looked at re-profiling some of those wilderness programming dollars, to help provide some tools to support community partners in our efforts to support that reintegration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is great to hear. I actually applaud you guys for looking outside of the box and at home communities, as well. That is very positive. My next question is: what is the status of the department's plan to introduce additional security measures at North Slave Correctional Centre? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that the main change will be the fence that I have referenced earlier, and I understand that some other minor or less expensive modifications are needed to the actual facility itself, again, removing it from a minimum-security, which it is now, to a medium-security.

Sorry, I might be talking about the wrong place. I'm not fixated on the facility in Hay River, although it has been paramount in my thoughts because it is so important, but I apologize if I misunderstood the question. Are you asking about enhancements to North Slave? Thank you. I think that the things that we needed to have done, we have done, which was largely the fence. There are some minor items that still need to be done, but the major items have been completed. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson, your time has expired. Are there any further questions from committee? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do have a couple more to follow up on that. With the North Slave, the additional measurements there, have you looked at increasing staff for that facility? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I forgot to add in response to the last question that the outdoor programming that was put on hold pending some of those security enhancements has all been restored. We have done some operational assessments at the North Slave, and at this time, we are not planning any additional staff. The assessments indicate that we are adequately staffed at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister then advise, you know, how much overtime do we see there? Would it be better to actually have new staff in place? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Thank you. Thank you for the question. I think overtime will always be a factor in a facility that is open around the clock. I do see that overtime that was pretty significant in past years is still significant, but it does seem to be decreasing this year. As I say, it seems that the nature of the facility, or this type of facility, is that they will always be some overtime. The question is: is it a reasonable amount? I can see that it appears to be going down, at least compared to last year when it was very high. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I understand that having a facility open 24/7, there is going to be some overtime because of sickness and stuff like that. I guess my question is: has the department looked at a cost analysis to see if it is more feasible to actually hire a couple more staff in case of that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes. Well, we do want to reduce these costs. One of the

ways is by effective use and scheduling of relief corrections officers. We do realize that this is an issue. One of the things that may alleviate the problem is that a Corrections Northern Recruitment Training Program is currently under way in Yellowknife for completion in March 2019. This will provide trained individuals who can apply for employment in the corrections service. I would anticipate or hope, maybe more hope than anticipation, that this would reduce the overtime costs. As I say, in looking at the numbers over the last four or five years, there certainly was a bump in 2017-2018, but we seem to be back now with, at least until January 31st, a lower number. Again, there are people in the system who are being trained. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe I am not understanding clearly. I understand you do a training program, but previously, you just said that there was no need to be hiring new staff. My question was previously: have you done a cost analysis to see if we should have more staff in there that would reduce the cost of overtime? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The previous evaluations have demonstrated that the staff complement that we have is adequate. When we say we don't need more staff, it is really positions that haven't been identified as, you know, that facility is having a shortage of positions. You know, from time to time, there are sicknesses and vacancies that we have to manage, and that does make overtime challenging at times. We do look to the training opportunities to make sure that we have a ready pool of relief workers. I think that was part of the problem that we had seen in past years, where that pool wasn't as deep as we might have preferred, and then cascading that overtime problem by relying on a smaller number of people.

We do think that we have turned the corner with that problem and do have adequate positions and more relief workers available. This will always be a challenging thing to manage, overtime, and we are very mindful that we have to keep our eyes on that issue, because it can be a significant cost driver. The challenge is, we can't just add more positions without affecting the hours of the existing positions. There is that balancing that has to be done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that answer. My next question is in regard to case management and recruitment of Indigenous people to be working in those positions. I guess my question is: do you have a plan in place, a session planning, that you actually train your Indigenous workers who wish to be in that role? Do you give them the ability to do training so that, when those positions come available, they are the ones who are given that opportunity? Right now, my understanding is we see a lot of Priority 3 staff in that position. Have you set up a plan for that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do recognize that this is an important area for improvement. I believe we talked about this last time. When it comes to the training opportunities, we do apply the Affirmative Action Policy and actively engage Aboriginal employees and try and encourage participation in those opportunities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is great to hear, but what is our success rate? How many Indigenous people are case management workers? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. If I can break it down by different institutions, at North Slave Correctional Centre, my understanding is that 50 percent of middle management are Indigenous, and 10 percent of program staff, and 16 percent of correctional officers. In South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, the figure is 80 percent for total management, 50 percent of program staff, and 48 percent of correctional officers. In the Fort Smith Correctional Centre, it is 70 percent of total management, 60 percent of program staff, and 49 percent of correctional officers. Those are the figures for the three different facilities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that answer. Again, though, I am asking case management. You know, when we are looking at it, have you looked at that information? If you don't have it, can you get it to us? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I don't have that figure in front of me, but I can certainly obtain it and provide it to committee.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions from committee? Seeing none, I will call the page. Justice, court service, operation expenditure summary, \$13,790,000. Sorry, I was getting ahead of myself here. Under Justice, corrections, operation expenditure summary, \$37,421,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you. Next, we have Justice, court service, operation expenditure summary. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a question about court registries. There is a reference on page 268 under the revenue summary that, "Land title and legal registry fees will increase by \$500,000 in the next fiscal year." I am wondering if the Minister can give us some detail on how that is going to be accomplished. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I wonder if we might defer that to the revenue summary page. It doesn't come under this section; at least in our notes, it doesn't. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: I will defer my question until we get to the summary page on revenue.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Next, we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: If I can ask a question there, Mr. Chair. Last year, I talked about the Justice of the Peace program. Can the Minister elaborate if we have seen an increase in hiring in that area? Appointing in that area, not hiring; appointments of that area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not aware of any shortages as far as justices of the peace, if that is the question. I don't know the exact number, but we could certainly provide it to committee. We can easily find out that figure. Again, I am not sure of whether there are vacancies

or shortages. I am not aware of them, if there are. There may be vacancies. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions, Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. My concern or my understanding is, I know in my riding, we only have one in Fort Simpson and we don't have anything in Fort Liard. Previously, we had two or three in Fort Simpson and at least one in Fort Liard, so again, this is a valuable service. I guess my question is: you are saying there isn't, but how are we going to be able to help administer justice if we don't have these positions there and they have to go out and get the service from another community? Will the Minister look at that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the question. As I say, I wasn't aware of a shortage or an undersupply, if I can put it that way, of justices of the peace, but I am aware that people are retiring, of course, or taking on different occupations. Yes, certainly, I will look at that. We do need justices of the peace and they do fulfill a very important position in the community. Yes, it would be better. If there is a shortage, we should certainly look at it and attempt to recruit people, I agree. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the Minister looking into that. I am looking forward to seeing the numbers of JPs we have out there. Again, I think it is a valuable service for our system. You know, it helps the RCMP, it helps the community, and victims and people all alike. Again, it is just more of a comment, and I thank the Minister for looking into this matter. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Comment taken. Any further questions, committee? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think this is where the court registries is found. As I understand it, I think it was last year that the court system went to a different way of doing court reporting. I wonder if the Minister can give us an update on how that has worked out. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a question I will perhaps have Mr. Goldney

expand on, but yes, we are moving and have been moving to a new system. This is not something that we are breaking new ground on. This is quite common in the South. Ultimately, I think there will be an ongoing requirement, or likely for the near future, for subcontractor court reporters in jury trials. I know in the past, of course, we use them at all levels of court. We are in the process of moving to a different system. This is to really modernize and hopefully make more efficient our current system. Having court reporters, and generally they come from the South, has been very expensive for us.

Again, I think that using court recording technology would reduce our reliance on contracts. I think most of these contracts, if not all of them, were with southern contractors and were incredibly expensive. Many courtrooms in Canada have introduced new court recording technology, and I understand that a successful pilot was completed in two Yellowknife courtrooms and in some circuits late last year. New equipment and software will be rolled out in the future.

Perhaps Mr. Goldney can expand on that. Again, we are not out of step with other jurisdictions in this. I think, to some degree, we are catching up. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have been testing this technological change for some time, now. We have learned along the way, so there has been some product adjustment in some of the technology that we use, but I can report that we have the recording equipment now installed in all of the courtrooms in the Yellowknife Courthouse, in Hay River, and Fort Smith, and soon we will have the same equipment in Inuvik.

We have also been testing portable equipment for the circuit court. The big change that end users will eventually see is, instead of having to wait for a court reporter to generate transcripts and charge, they can now get near immediately a digital recording of the proceedings and transcripts from that recording can be generated quicker and cheaper. So we do anticipate that there will be some appreciation for that enhanced service.

As the Minister noted, we do also anticipate there will still be an ongoing use of court reporting for, certainly, jury trials. There might be other trials where the use of a court reporter will continue, but we are still evaluating those options. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. With the five minutes I have left, I guess I would like to know how this change is affecting access to justice. I guess my concern is that, if defence counsel has to pay for the generation of transcripts, I wonder whether those are acceptable to the court or not. How is this affecting access to justice? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our belief is that it is not detrimentally affecting access to justice. Again, this is a system or type of system that has been used in the South for a long time. My understanding is that there should be no diminution of the access to justice. If there is, we will have to make sure that the system is updated and, as I say, we are rolling this out now. There may be glitches along the way. Hopefully not, but I am confident that there will be no loss of access to justice with this system. I think that is what they found down South, and that is why they have moved to this, quite apart from reasons of cost. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister tell us, then, how this pilot project is going to be evaluated, and is he willing to share that evaluation with the appropriate standing committee? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are evaluating the experience and making sure, working with the judiciary, that there is confidence in the technology and the approach. I don't think we are anticipating a formal written evaluation. It really is just a matter of ensuring that the technological solution works as we expect and that we have the confidence of the judiciary and court staff that we have a reliable means of recording the proceedings and documenting them appropriately. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think I heard the deputy minister say that there is not going to be a formal written evaluation. If there is no formal written evaluation, how do you decide whether you are going to continue to expand or not? I would like to ask that question. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As this is rolled out, I hopefully will learn from my experiences as we move ahead with this. Again, I am confident that there will be no loss of access to justice.

Yes, it is something new, but while it is new here, it has been tried and true in other jurisdictions. I am confident that there will not be, as I say, a loss of access to justice, because we will be keeping a careful eye on this. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. While I appreciate the Minister keeping a careful eye on it, that is not the same as an actual evaluation. I guess I remain to be convinced. Has the department reached out to the Law Society or defence counsel to get their views as to how this is being implemented and whether it is an improvement, or how it is affecting access to justice? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you. We do meet with lawyers in the defence bar. I certainly do quite often. I was one until a few years ago, though the system was rolled out after I had taken on new responsibilities. I haven't heard, from the defence lawyers, complaints about this system, and they are not shy. I think they would come to me if they did have concerns. All I can say is that I haven't heard any specific concerns about this system. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. I don't have any further questions for the Minister on this issue, but I just want to reiterate my concern. If you don't have any formal way of evaluating whether this is improving services or affecting access to justice, and it is a pilot, how do you decide whether you are going to expand this or not? I don't think that is a good way to proceed, but I will leave it at that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Any further questions, committee? Seeing none, Justice, court services, operation expenditures, \$13,790,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next, we have legal aid services from pages 281 to 283. Any questions, committee? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is to the Minister in regard to legal services, about the opportunity to branch it out to the South Slave. I know that, in 2014, they looked at this. However, in 2014, we had lawyers there. Presently, in Hay River, we see one lawyer retiring and another lawyer downsizing his practice. Can the Minister explain why they wouldn't be looking at this? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you. I think that, in 2014, there were concerns expressed about disruption of the private practitioners south of the lake. The Member is quite correct; there are fewer practising lawyers south of the lake now than there were then. There is nobody who is actively practising in Fort Smith, and the situation also in Hay River is in transition. I think we can put it that way.

This was looked at before, as I understand it, in 2014, and apart from issues of disruption, there were concerns about conflicts. It seems to me that it is worth examining this again. I don't know whether we should be putting a new clinic in somewhere outside Yellowknife, but we may need more clinics to avoid conflict issues. Certainly, I am open to considering the idea of an additional clinic or, perhaps, more legal aid lawyers, because they all do seem to be busy.

Again, in the past, there was concern expressed about disruption of the legal profession south of the lake. Those concerns may not be as relevant today as they were then, and we haven't done any real planning about this, but certainly I am open to discussion and consideration of this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Minister's answer. I understand that, in 2014, we had a thriving law practice in Hay River, and then we had a lawyer in Fort Smith at that time, who has now gone on to a different career. Again, though, it is about the ability to provide legal services to the residents of the South Slave, which encompasses a lot of the communities. Can the Minister look at a cost analysis of this and get back to committee on this? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that we could do some preliminary investigation about this with respect to costs and get back to committee. I am willing to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Minister doing that. With part of that cost analysis, could he look at the need, the demand of these positions, and how many people need the services? Can that be part of the study, as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, certainly. That would be a part of any analysis, because we would have to determine what the need is, which we can do. I think we could look at numbers, dockets, and so on. Yes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As part of that cost analysis, can the department, when they look at this, see if there is the feasibility of finding office space for the clinic to be there as part of the investigation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, of course. Initially, we would have to determine whether there was a need, and whether it made sense, and whether it would be more efficient. Ultimately, I suppose, part of any cost analysis would be rent costs. I don't think we are at that stage yet of looking at what the cost of rent would be, and I don't know whether that would be part of our initial analysis, but at some point, if we did move ahead, obviously the cost of rent would have to be looked at. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand the Minister's apprehension to this, but, again, if we are really going to look at the feasibility of this, that has to be part of the process. So, again, I am asking the Minister and the department if they are willing to add this to part of the evaluation of it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I think it would be reasonable to look at ballpark costs, rent costs, as part of this analysis. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that, and I look forward to seeing that information as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Any further questions, committee? Seeing none, I will call the page. Legal aid services, operations expenditure summary, \$6,571,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Agreed. Thank you. Next we have Office of the Regulator of Oil And Gas Operations, operations expenditure summary, \$1,874,000. Any questions, committee? Seeing none, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Okay. I will call it again. Office of the Regulator of Oil And Gas Operations, from pages 284 to 287, \$1,874,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Agreed. Thank you. Next we have policing services, operations expenditure summary, \$46,257,000, from pages 288 and 289. Any questions? Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Looking at First Nations policing, we have a lot of First Nations in the territory. We have two reserves. Earlier on the floor of the House there was some talk about the lack of police services in some communities. I am wondering if the department has ever looked at something like having community constables in communities that do not have police officers so that we can have some stability of policing, or at least some type of reporting for crime and to be there for individuals in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Minister Sebert. Okay. Thank you. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are working with the RCMP and looking at options, including having discussions with our federal partner on accessing resources dedicated to First Nations policing. The challenge, though, in having a program that would have officers by themselves in communities is likely insurmountable, just given the occupational health concerns that would come into play and the program design. Where we see community constables, for example, they are always co-located where they have the additional support of other officers. So that has not been something that we have looked at, a program that

might see them placed in communities where there are not existing resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Maybe just a suggestion, but it might be something worth looking into for the next Assembly. Some communities are hard to reach, and some are fly-in only, and some are quite remote, that there needs to be something there for the community. So we are looking at the health and safety of one or two individuals as opposed to a whole community. I think we need to look through a different lens, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I thank the Member for his comments. Of course, his question comes up quite often. We are aware of the necessity of policing services in the smaller, more remote communities. As I mentioned earlier today with respect to the community of Tsiigehtchic, it's not as though there is no policing there. They go in on an intermittent basis, staying overnight on occasion. Now, I mean, it would be best if we could have officers in every single community, but that is not really possible anymore. There is not only the cost issue, but, as Mr. Goldney alluded to, I don't think you can have one officer in a community anymore. That is just not possible, but we are always aware of the needs of the communities, always want to enhance the policing, but may not be able to place officers in every single community. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just one last thing here, you know, it might be something that we can look at, some of the communities that have a highway, as part of a highway patrol. Someone, a Member on the floor, mentioned that there is a residence in one of the communities, and that might be an option, to look at that and restructure that. I am sure that, as part of operations, it's something that might be doable by the department and the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Nakimayak. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, we are always trying to look at ways to enhance policing protection for our communities, so we are open to looking at new suggestions, but I don't want to hold out false hopes that we would be able to have a detachment in every community. That does not seem likely or possible, but, as I say, we are looking at ways to

look at the delivery of police services more efficient and as good as we can make it, if I can put it that way. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister and his staff. I don't have anything else. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next on our list we have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, of course we all know that this past year the government legalized the use of cannabis, and so I would just like to maybe start by getting an understanding or some feedback from the Minister with regard to, since the legalization, how has the Department of Justice, or in particular the RCMP, been doing as it relates to getting a handle on or understanding the effects the legalization of cannabis has had with regard to public conduct, in particular driving under the influence? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Thank you. Certainly, the public engagement that we went through in the fall highlighted a number of concerns for residents about enforcement and the prevention of drug-impaired driving, and, of course, police use their skills every day. There are a number of tools that they can use to detect imperilled driving, including the standardized field sobriety testing (SFST) and drug recognition expert (DRE) evaluations. So there has been training, and I understand that a fair number of officers are SFST certified, including seven in Yellowknife, three in Behchoko, one in Hay River, one in Fort Simpson, one in Fort Liard, and two in Inuvik, and some have been trained or recertified. Rather than going through the individual statistics, there is a target of 90 percent. The commanding officer has directed that all regular members of a division complete the SFST review and introduction to drug-impaired driving online course, with a target of 90 percent by the end of the fiscal year. As of January 21, 2019, 151 members or 77.4 percent have completed the course.

So this important issue is being treated seriously by the RCMP, and that is where we are at with respect to that. I asked earlier today whether any charges have been laid with respect to this, drug-impaired driving, and I am not aware of any that have been laid since, what was the magic date, October 17th. That doesn't mean it won't happen. Certainly, there have been a lot of impaired driving charges of the

traditional kind imposed since then. The training is taking place. The police are prepared. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: All right. Well, that is appreciated. I appreciate the detailed update and letting us know. It gives confidence to the public at large that RCMP are being trained specifically on the Standardized Field Sobriety Testing. Is the SFST the actual mechanism or means for which we are testing as it relates to driving under the influence with the use of cannabis? Is that the actual test that is specifically used for that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are a number of tests available and tools available for the RCMP to enforce impaired driving. The Standard Field Sobriety Test is often used as a way to determine if there is an indication of impairment, which then might lead to use of an oral fluid device or the use of a drug-recognition expert to get the expert evidence required to prosecute those offences. There are a number of tools that are available for the RCMP to use to enforce impaired driving. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just lastly, I appreciate the further information. How is the department, in particular the RCMP, working with communities and schools and other stakeholders with regard to communications around the use of cannabis but, in particular, you know, driving under the influence? Are we working with organizations like MADD and other groups? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can report that the RCMP does work with community partners in its awareness campaign. I think it is an important partner in those awareness campaigns because they do have some experiences that they can share and do have opportunity to reach kids in school. Of course, it is not the RCMP alone when it comes to cannabis awareness and impaired driving awareness. There are other partners beyond the RCMP and the Department of Justice who have complementary work, including the Department of Health and the Department of Transportation and MACA and other partners who are working to raise awareness about cannabis use. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Next, we have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Minister, in his opening remarks, had mentioned to the highlight bullet number one here on forced growth funding to provide these types of initiatives, including training. Years ago, the special constable really played a vital role in assisting the police officers here years ago and, in some case, even survival on the land as they made their trips out to the different outpost camps.

Can the Minister elaborate if some of this forced growth amount will be or is looking at being designated towards a special constable program in some of the communities that do not have detachments, such as Tsiigehtchic and Cold Lake, for example, if there is a training program that is going to be looked at for a special-constable-type liaison person in those communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The training dollars identified in the budget are really there to reflect the mandatory training increases that have been set federally. Unfortunately, none of them are directed at a special constable program. They are really there to address things like the need for improved training for drug enforcement and other mandatory training set by the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to the deputy minister for that reply. Is it the wish of the department moving forward into this new fiscal year to look at further, different federal funding sources to access to apply toward this special constable liaison program, if it is, in fact, one of the desires of the department? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Of course, we are always looking to our partners, if I put it that way, in Ottawa for increased funding for these important projects, including the issue of First Nation policing. The answer is yes, we will be approaching them on various items, including First Nations policing and positions. Yes, I guess is the simple answer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Next on the list, we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just like to follow up on questions by Mr. McNeely there. In regard to the special constable, has the department been looking at this as an opportunity to get more Indigenous police officers in the system? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. It is important, of course, that the RCMP, to a large extent, reflect the population with whom they are dealing. I do believe that they hope to recruit more Aboriginal officers. Certainly, that would be our wish. I can express that, certainly, to the commanding officer. I believe they do wish to do that. As I say, it is important that, in a population that is roughly 50 percent Aboriginal, a large number of the police officers are Aboriginal themselves. Yes, the police do understand this concern, as do we. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, I understand, you know, Indigenous RCMP regular officers, but have we looked at, you know, special constables like we have done in the past where, you know, you are getting a local individual to train, to be able to help the members who are coming in, and to assimilate into the community and have a face the community knows who to talk to? Is the department looking at the opportunity? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We do understand the importance of special constables in the past history of the RCMP and the invaluable service that they did provide. We have been seeking federal expansion of the First Nations Policing Program. We do recognize that this is an important issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to clarify, are we actually asking the federal government to look at reinstating this type of program, or is it just something that we are talking about? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Rather than looking at a new program, we are looking at expansion of the current program, if I can put it that way. Again, we

are seeking federal expansion of the program. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you. Can the Minister expand on what this program is that we are talking about? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. The program that we are seeking expansion on is for the First Nations Policing Program. Perhaps Mr. Goldney could speak to where we are with respect to our efforts, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Deputy Minister Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The First Nations Policing Program is not quite the Aboriginal Constable Program, but it is a program from the federal government to support Aboriginal communities in the provision of policing services, and it does offer a different cost-sharing arrangement than our current police services agreement with the federal government.

We have long maintained as a territory that our communities shouldn't be treated differently than other Aboriginal communities in the country, and we should be able to benefit from that program. That would allow the RCMP to have more resources funded from the First Nations Policing Program applied to communities in the Northwest Territories. That has been a longstanding topic of discussion amongst all of the territories and our federal partner. We continue the work to see that expansion and are hopeful that we will find some success in that engagement and see additional resources applied to the RCMP that way. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Deputy Minister Goldney. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In other words, it is just more funding so that we can cover the costs a little bit more; we are not looking at developing a training program or a program for local Indigenous people that may assist the RCMP to do a better job? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. MCNEELY): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly we do encourage our Aboriginal citizens to consider a career in the RCMP, so we are encouraging them from that point of view. As I said earlier, we do need a police force

that is reflective of the people that they serve. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am assuming that, no, we are just utilizing the RCMP as they are presently in place. I will go on to another question. Can the Minister please explain how the new cannabis regime affects the RCMP's ability to charge and prosecute drug dealers, given the legal possession limit presently? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Well, the legalization of marijuana, cannabis, was long contemplated, of course, going back to the Le Dain Commission in the 1970s. At least in my community, the great concern about drugs is very little with the so-called soft drugs, but with the harder drugs, which are still illegal to possess and certainly traffic. In many ways, this change, in my view, is actually helpful to the RCMP. They won't be wasting their time with minor possession charges, which, if contested, they would have to prove in the past that it was marijuana and so forth. I would hope that this would free up the police to pursue the real criminals, those that are dealers, particularly in the hard drugs.

The courts clearly treat those matters very seriously, as do the RCMP. As I said, the fact that now the minor charges that used to clog the courts and give people records are no longer before the courts, of course, for possessing small amounts. I would say that this change in the law should actually enhance the ability of the RCMP to pursue the really serious criminals, those dealing in hard drugs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we talked about legalizing cannabis, it was actually to stop the drug trade with cannabis and that there. What I am hearing right now is that we are not going to worry about that now. Is that correct? Is the RCMP able to actually prosecute individuals that are selling cannabis? Right now, it is supposed to be just for our retailers. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, of course. Trafficking in cannabis outside of the part that is allowed by the stores and so on is still illegal. There still will be prosecutions. When I talked about the police's time, I was thinking more of those caught with minor

amounts who used to have to go to court for possession of small amounts. Clearly that won't be an issue anymore, but my understanding is that those who are dealing in cannabis outside the regulated system, that will still be an offence and subject to prosecution. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Your time has expired, Mr. Thompson. Did you want to go again? Okay. We'll reset. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question is: does the department track how many people have been charged and convicted of cannabis sales since the introduction of this new law? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We don't have that information before us, and I am not aware of any charges or convictions since October 17th. There may be some. Certainly we could track that kind of information. As I said, the whole point of the change was to remove this product from organized crime, but I do appreciate that there will still be those who break the law and presumably will be prosecuted, even if the drug that they are selling is marijuana or cannabis. There are still laws that presumably will be effective and used against those that are selling illegally. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I am just asking: do we have a system in place to track it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I don't think the Department of Justice has a system of tracking these things. I suppose we could. I suppose the police do track these things. Most of these statistics, I believe, we get from the RCMP, whether it is this type of offence or another kind. I believe the police would provide us with information with respect to charges or perhaps convictions. I'm not certain. We do get statistics from the RCMP about various offences, but I don't think the Department of Justice itself is tracking this. We may be able to obtain information. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the department may not be doing it, but the RCMP should be tracking this, because we are

supposed to be seeing a decline in the sale of cannabis, the illegal part of it. I guess I am looking forward to maybe you asking the RCMP to add that as part of their report to you. Can you get at least that done through that way? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. I suppose I can ask. I mean, one of the points of the legalization was to remove this from the black market. We will know what sales are in the Northwest Territories, and I would like to think that is money that is taken out of the hands of criminals. That was one of the major points of the legislation.

As I said, this was long in coming. I mean, if you are asking me how much the market for marijuana has been diminished by the change of law, that is rather hard to determine because it was a black market before. I would hope that the fact that now it is being sold legally in some of the stores in the Northwest Territories that that has reduced the illegal trade, and logic would tell me that is true, but I don't know if there is any way to mathematically verify that. Logic tells me that is true. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my concern is I am still hearing of people selling cannabis. What I am asking, though, was if the RCMP is able to confirm with you if they have been able to convict or charge people with this, for selling it, trafficking it. That is what I am asking. I will hope that they are able to give that to you and you are able to report to the House and the committee on that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Did you want to provide a reply to that comment there, Minister Sebert?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. I thank the Member for his comments. I mean, for example, in the liquor trade, we do have people charged for selling illegally. I will bring this concern that has been mentioned to the RCMP. Yes, it is probably true that there are still people selling marijuana, but I would hope that the majority of those who wish to acquire marijuana are going to the store and buying it, just as they do with liquor. Yes, there is still liquor that is being sold illegally, and, yes, there is still marijuana that is probably being sold illegally. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions on this activity? Seeing none, I will call out on page 289, Department of Justice, policing services, operations

expenditure summary, \$46,257,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): For the record, I will call that total again here. \$46,257,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Okay. We will move on to page 291, Department of Justice, services to government, operations expenditure summary, \$11,908,000. The details are from 293. Any questions to this activity? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, could I ask a question of clarification to start with, that the Victims Assistance Fund information on page 297 is a part of this segment of the budget? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, I understand that it falls under community justice and policing, but we can certainly take the questions if there are questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Okay. It wasn't clear to me exactly which segment that is in, because it is right after "services to the public." My question is about the Victims Assistance Fund. I see here that it is running a deficit of \$359,000, and that is up another \$50,000 over last year. Can the Minister explain to us why this fund is growing and whether there are any plans to disperse more information according to the current criteria? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand that, actually, this is a surplus, but perhaps I could have Ms. Bolstad expand on my answer.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that is correct. That is it is a \$359,000 anticipated surplus in 2019-2020. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Yes, I misspoke. I realize it is a surplus. I am asking why there is such a large surplus in this fund and whether there are plans to spend it down. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand that this is managed by the Victims Assistance Committee and that they determine the allocation of funds. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green, I would like to point out that your line of questions is on the next activity, and we will bring that out when we go through the detail. Right now, we are discussing the operations expenditure for services to government activity. Any further questions to this activity and the detail? Seeing none, I will call this page. On 291, Department of Justice, services to government, operations expenditure summary, \$11,908,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Agreed. Okay. We will move on to the next activity, starting on page 295. I will read this activity page out, and we will discuss the detail. Department of Justice, services to the public, operations expenditure summary, \$4,249,000. We can now proceed on with the detail following that. Ms. Green, did you want to speak to this activity? Okay, Ms. Green, you've got the floor.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Who is the Victims Assistance Committee accountable to? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Apparently, they are appointed by me.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: It is fantastic that every day has an opportunity for learning. My question, then, is what kind of guidance the Minister is providing to this committee about the size of its surplus, in terms of whether it should keep growing, whether it should be spent, whether it should be diverted to the SPCA? What is the guidance being given here? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. The committee that is appointed recommends disbursements from the fund to support community-based projects and activities. I understand that there is an annual report tabled. It is strange, I agree, to see a surplus, but I do see a list of worthy projects that they have proceeded with. Yes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am wondering, where this is used for victims of crime, whether the Minister can guide the committee to spend down more of this surplus on the victims of crime? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is more project-based. For example, I see a list of projects that have been funded in 2018-2019. If I could just go briefly through some of them, the Native Women's Association of the NWT; supporting families who were victims of homicide, \$30,800; Status of Women Council for the NWT; Family Violence Awareness Week, \$21,750; Status of Women Council of the NWT, \$15,000; International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women; Inuvik Justice Committee, \$5,670; healthy relationships and consent school presentation. So those are the types of organizations that we have been funding. I see that was for the year funded-to-date 2018-2019, and there are similar projects and similar types of amounts that were funded in 2017-2018. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the detail, but it doesn't answer the question. The question is whether the Minister can direct more of this fund to be spent on the projects that may be eligible for funding. Can he direct that this surplus be made more available to victims-of-crime services through the NGOs? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, certainly there is this large surplus, and perhaps we should be more active in encouraging the types of organizations that I referred to earlier to apply for funding. I think we do need to be more energetic in this area. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, can the Minister make a commitment to direct the board of the Victims Assistance Fund to spend down the surplus by a given amount in a given time so that more people who are victims are able to benefit from this fund? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you. It would be unusual to encourage people to spend down a surplus, but I think we do need to be more active and encourage them to bring forward projects that would be of the type that we should be funding, so I am committed to have our department become more active in this area because, clearly, there are surplus funds. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not exactly sure what "more active" means, but here we have this money, and we are never short of victims in the NWT, victims of crime, and so what I am looking for is something a little more specific than "more active" in terms of dealing with this surplus, to the benefit of the people it was meant to serve. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just looking back over some of the other groups that can be funded or have been funded in the past, to give you some idea of the kind of ambit of types of projects we are willing to fund, and I am going back to 2017-2018: Tides Canada was funded for northern youth leadership for \$13,000; Inuvik Justice Committee, Inuvik Justice Committee elders program and young parents program. So these are organizations that are funding very important work in the Northwest Territories. As I said, I think we can encourage groups to come forward. I am not going to encourage them simply because we have a surplus but, rather, because this work is important. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. The detail I am looking for is how that encouragement is going to take place or how becoming "more active," what's that going to look like. That is the detail that I am looking for. How are we going to operationalize this idea? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly, I think I can commit to having staff communicate with the committee. I don't know if we can approach them on the basis, "Hey, there's a surplus that you need to spend," but I think we could approach them on the basis that we are looking for projects to fund. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: That is everything. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Next we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister advise us what the status of the department's work towards implementing the recalculation services is? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you for the question. You know, progress has not been as quick in this area as it should have been, and I am going to acknowledge that. An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act received assent in the Legislative Assembly in November 2016, and in 2018 the department undertook engagement on the draft regulations with the judiciary family-law lawyers in federal government. We are revising the draft regulations and bringing forward amendments to the legislation. Engagement on the draft regulations has now been completed, and adjustments are under way. This is an important area, and I do acknowledge that we have not moved as quickly on this as we should have. I understand that recalculation of Divorce Act orders requires a memorandum of understanding with the federal government, and discussions on establishing the MoU are currently under way. It is important that this be done. I do recognize that this has not moved ahead as quickly as it should have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's very, very important. I mean, we see that across Canada it's been implemented and followed through on, so why has the launch of the recalculation services been delayed? What is the stumbling block? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We had hoped to have the recalculation service implemented at the beginning of 2019. However, when we went out for the engagement on the regulations, the federal government came back with concerns on terminology in the act itself. Subsequently, we needed to update the regulations and do the amendments to the act, so that was really the driving piece behind the delay this year, and so we are hoping for it to be implemented towards the end of 2019 now, once those

amendments are through and the program model is established. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the answer. So my understanding, if correct, is we are not going to see it during this Assembly, but it's going to be introduced or activated in the 19th Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. We are going to try to get this done as soon as possible. I do realize how important it is, and it would be good if we could get it done during the life of this Assembly. We will try. I think I can leave it at that, and I do acknowledge that this should have moved ahead more quickly than it has. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The electronic maintenance enforcement system has been tested since 2016-2017, but my understanding is it's now been delayed. Can you please explain what obstacles the department has encountered in utilizing this system? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We originally had intended some additional add-ons to the maintenance enforcement system for automatic email notifications and those kinds of things. An upgrade did happen, and the system is stable and functioning properly. We are planning an assessment of the system later, once the new information shared services is online, and we will be looking at a potential replacement or a plan in the future for it. Right now, it is operating normally, and it was recently upgraded. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. I greatly appreciate that it is operational. I apologize for implying that it was delayed. Well, actually, I did say it was delayed, so it is great to hear that it is operational. When are we looking at implementing the new upgrade? When is that going to be done? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't have a definitive timeline yet. It is ongoing. Because of the shift with the information shared services unit, that work plan and prioritizing all of the department systems will be under way here shortly. We are looking forward to that engagement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. If I am understanding correctly, you're not sure, so it probably won't be done during the 18th Assembly? Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: That is correct. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Next, we have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in services to the public, we also have the rental office here. We have shared some concern in the past with the Minister with regard to staffing of the rental office. I would just like to start there and see if the Minister can inform us as to whether now the office, based on its workload, is adequately staffed. One of the complaints in the past has been that there has been a heavy workload, and it has been causing a backup in terms of tenants and/or landlords getting their disputes resolved. I would like to start there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. We do understand that there have been issues in the past in the rental office, and I understand now that there has been hired, on a contract, a second rental officer, and hopefully delays will be reduced.

The office has taken some other steps to reduce wait times, increasing the number of hearings via three-way teleconference and scheduling face-to-face hearings outside of Yellowknife more promptly. As I mentioned, the new deputy rental officer began training in December and, as of mid-January, is now presiding at hearings. This is in addition to the existing deputy rental officer, so hopefully wait times will be reduced. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is good to hear that there has been a deputy hired and that we are making use of technology to expedite some

of the disputes, but the Minister has still indicated that he is hopeful that this will reduce wait times. What does the department do to actually measure whether these wait times are, in fact, being reduced? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is reporting required from the rental office, and we are very mindful that this is a concern. As the Minister mentioned, with the extra capacity through the additional resource of another rental officer, we do expect that those wait times will be reduced, and that will be something that we will be watching for. Unfortunately, there were some procurement challenges, and it took us longer than we had hoped to get that resource in place. We are also looking at other changes in process to streamline this, and we also anticipate that, once those are put in place and made effective, we want to see this process made easier for those utilizing it and certainly more timely. That still remains an objective. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for the additional information. Now that we are working towards putting adequate resources in at the rental office, one of the undertakings of the rental office is that they are available to present at public forums, for example.

Is there any indication from the department as to whether the department will actively go out and promote some information workshops in order to communicate a little better to both landlords and tenants around what their responsibilities might be with regard to the Residential Tenancy Act? Would the Minister look into how they might actively engage the public so that they can be better informed? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, clearly, information is important because a lot of these disputes might be able to be resolved informally rather than going through the rental office. Certainly we do recognize that education is important. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think what I am trying to get at is that I can't speak for the whole of the territory, but certainly in Yellowknife there are a number of landlords of various kinds, whether it's in apartments, whether it's in town

homes, whether it's actually in residences, who are challenged to understand what their obligations are. I am trying to see if the department would take an active role in trying to educate the public and, in particular, landlords and their tenants on what their obligations would be. Is there a way? Is there a means? Is there some budget or some resources that we can put toward doing that form of communication? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can advise, of course, that the focus for the rental office has been to address those wait times and triage some of those most pressing matters, but we do anticipate, as these new resources are being added, that there can be the types of activities that the Member is suggesting, including some public education. We will commit to having the rental office look at the tools that it has now online and potentially updating those and making them easier and being more proactive in making staff available to provide that education. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Goldney. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Minister and his staff for that commitment. No further questions at this time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you. Committee, any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to thank my colleague from Yellowknife Centre for asking questions about the victim assistance funds. I just had a couple of quick ones, perhaps. Can the Minister tell us why the surplus is growing? Is it an issue of not enough applications to use up the funding, or are applicants being turned down? What is going on? Why is the surplus building? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly, disbursements of funds, if I can put it that way, are based on the applications that we do receive, and I do see that many of them tend to be modest. The money is available, so as I said earlier, I think we can have a conversation with the committee about the opportunity to come forward or have those organizations, such as the Native Women's Association and Justice Committees, to come forward and seek funding. Perhaps we are not disseminating enough information or the committee isn't. Certainly, we are willing to work on that. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, I am glad that the Minister is going to have a conversation with the staff and that they are going to talk to the people that administer the fund. Can the Minister then make a commitment to get back to us and provide an explanation as to why the surplus has been growing over time? Is it there are not enough applications? Is it that there maybe hasn't been enough promotion? Can the Minister make a commitment to get back to standing committee with the reasons why the surplus is growing and what the plan is going forward to make sure that the money is disbursed? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned or has been mentioned, we are willing to enter into discussions with the committee. To my mind, the surplus has been growing simply because there are fewer applications or the applications are not eating up the cumulated surplus over the years, which I see has grown over the years. Again, yes, we certainly would get back to this committee with respect to our committee discussions with the committee that, after all, I appoint. I don't think it is necessary to go to them and say, "You must spend this money," but there probably are projects out there that are worthy of consideration. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think I am asking for a simple commitment here. I would like to know whether the Minister is committed to get back to standing committee with (a) the reasons why the surplus is growing, and (b) what the department is going to do to try to get more money out the door to help victims of crime. Can the Minister make that commitment? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. I see no further questions. Committee, I will call the page. Justice, services to the public, operations expenditure summary, \$4,249,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, committee. Please return now to the departmental summary found on page 267. Justice, total

department, \$127,617,000. Does committee agree? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I have questions on the revenue summary on page 268. Is this the appropriate time to ask?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Yes.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question for the Minister is: what is the Drug Treatment Court Funding Program? Could he please describe that initiative? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand that funds the specialized courts, Wellness Court and DVTO. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: I thank you, Mr. Chair. The Domestic Violence Treatment Option court is not the Drug Treatment Court Funding Program, unless there is a mistake in the main estimates. This shows a revenue of \$100,000, starting in the next fiscal year. I am looking for an explanation of what this is.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I may have not given the best answer to the last question, so I am going to refer this to Ms. Bolstad. Perhaps she can give a more accurate and helpful answer to the question. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is a \$100,000 federal contribution to the Wellness Court Program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Could I have some detail about how this money is going to be spent? I have never heard of drug treatment court before. I wasn't aware that we had one. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The federal funding pot is called "Drug Treatment Court Funding," and we are eligible under it for our Wellness Court. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Bolstad. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. Okay, I understand that now. My next question is about an increase of \$500,000 worth of revenue in legal registries. Why is revenue going to increase by that much in that area? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. This is an increase in fees. It is under the Land Titles Act and the PPSA, Personal Property Security Regulations. Anyway, Members may recall there had been some discussion in the past about a land transfer tax. Anyway, what we have done is looked at, fairly, in my view, minor increases in the area of land transfers. That is where the majority of this money is going to come from, and mortgage registrations. Our estimate is that there will be increases in funds with the new fee structure. Again, land transfers average over the last three years have been \$483,000. We are talking about the land transfer itself. Estimated incremental fees will be \$168,000 to come up with \$650,000; mortgage registrations, \$460,000 over the last three years. Estimated incremental revenue with the new fee structure would be \$230,000 for a total of \$690,000. PPSA registration or Personal Property Security registration or renewals will be increased, also.

So, yes, those are these increases, and, also, so Members will recall, there was a good deal of discussion about a land transfer tax. What we have brought forward here is a modest, in my view, increase in the amount of fees. Most of this money will be obtained through the increase of fees on land transfers and mortgage registrations. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you. If I understand correctly, the land transfer tax has been scrapped and, instead, all the fees are going to go up. The Minister ran through a list, but one that I wrote down here is going up by 100 percent, from \$230,000 to \$460,000. So this is the case, that the land transfer tax has now been replaced by an increase in fees at land titles for land transfers and mortgage registration? Could he confirm that, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The mortgage registrations will go from \$460,000, average revenue, to \$690,000. Land transfer is from \$483,000 to \$650,000. So, if I might, if I could use an example, if

your house of \$400,000 with a mortgage of \$300,000, currently, the fees on that would be \$1.50 on the \$400,000, which is \$600, and a dollar on the mortgage, which would be \$300. What we have suggested here is increasing those fees, the land transfer, going to \$2 per \$1,000, so that would be \$800, and the fees on the mortgage going from a \$1 to \$1.50. So, in the example I gave, that would go from \$300 to \$450. It is not a doubling. It is an increase, but it is not a doubling.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that it is difficult to keep all of these numbers straight when you are getting them in an audio way, but the fact is that they are all going up 25 percent according to what I have heard the Minister say, and this is in communities that have fee simple land holdings and mortgages. The last time that land transfer tax came around, it turned out that 70 percent of those places were in Yellowknife, 20 percent in Hay River, and 10 percent in Fort Smith. On what basis, other than trying to fatten the budget for roads, is the government imposing these new fees? What is the rationale for imposing these new fees? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: It is a revenue increase, but we are constantly under pressure for new programs for various worthy things. The land transfer tax, as Members may recall, would have been a much more radical change than this is. These are fairly modest increases in my mind. They will be borne by those who are buying houses or putting on mortgages, but I don't regard this as a particularly large increase. It is certainly far less than was contemplated under the land transfer tax, which was not popular.

I thought, since the rates had not been changed in many years, that a change was worthwhile. As I say, for your \$400,000 house with a \$300,000 mortgage, yes, you will pay more, \$350 or so more than you might have before. When you are talking about housing costs and prices, just an increase in the mortgage rates, for example, on that \$300,000 mortgage, if I can use that example of 1 percent, is \$3,000 a year; \$15,000 over a five-year term, if persons hold onto their house for five years, as many do. I mean, a \$350 cost, and that's not a yearly cost; that's simply when you register, in my view, is not terribly significant. As I say, we are constantly under pressure for many of the programs that we have discussed today and many of the programs that the government has entered into have, as I say, constant demands. My submission to you is that this is a reasonable increase, far, far

less than the significant increase that we were contemplating under the land transfer tax. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Your time has expired, Ms. Green. Next, we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess my first question is: can the Minister explain what he means by modest and minor? Is it similar to when he talked about the increase to land fees in going to 10 percent? Can he explain what he means by minor or modest? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes. This is a modest increase. I mean, it is not something you pay every year unless you buy a new house every year. Again, if someone is contemplating buying a \$400,000 house, a \$300,000 mortgage, yes, they will have to pay \$350 more in the example that I gave, assuming that my numbers are correct. That is not a huge amount when you are dealing with hundreds of thousands of dollars on a purchase. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, can you tell me what you mean by modest or minor? I am sitting here looking at these numbers, and even though you are saying that it is 50 cents on one and 50 cents on the other, my calculations are a 33 percent increase and a 50 percent increase. I don't know where you come from saying it's minor and modest. That is a huge increase. If you are doing that across the board with all of these things, it is a minor amount, you figure? For somebody that is buying a home, that may be something that is a little bit of a challenge as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: On a \$400,000 purchase, I don't think a \$350 cost is significant. I mean, these rates have not been changed for many years. I forget how many, but more than 20 years. I mean, most things are more expensive than they were 20 years ago. It hasn't been increased for a long period of time. I feel that the increase is justifiable. We need to raise money. I don't want to cut valuable programs. We did need to raise money when we were looking at our overall finances. I think this is a sensible, modest way of raising some additional funds. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am glad that the Minister figures that a 33 percent increase and a 50 percent increase, regardless of the fees, is modest and minor. I mean, for people out there who are house poor, that is an impact on them. Did the Minister or the department look at averaging or increasing it gradually instead of just one lump sum? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A gradual increase, perhaps, would have been sensible if it had been raised every year, but it hasn't been. It hasn't been raised for many years, and going back to the example I gave, on a \$400,000 purchase, \$300,000 mortgage, \$350 is not a terribly significant sum.

As I say, the banks have raised their rates. If they raise their rates 1 percent on a \$300,000 mortgage, that will cost you \$15,000 over the five years. \$350? I think that is an entirely justifiable increase, far less than we had originally contemplated. We heard from the people, we heard from the Members, and therefore, we came back with what I submit is a reasonable increase. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. It just blows my mind. I am glad that he thinks it is reasonable. I am glad that he thinks it is moderate. I am glad that he thinks it is minor. When he talks about getting a mortgage, well, you lock into a mortgage for a period of time, unless you don't want to lock into it, depending on the market. He said we didn't do it for 20 years. Well, why are people being punished now? Could we not look at gradually implementing it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am not sure that I accept the proposition that all tax is punishment. I mean, after all, this money isn't being wasted. It goes into our coffers to support many of the programs that Justice and many of the other departments have. I mean, as far as affordability, the increase in mortgage rates of 1 percent has a much more dramatic effect than a \$350 one-time cost. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We are talking apples and oranges. If you want to talk about mortgages, then let's talk mortgages on another day, but we are talking about increasing the fees. The fees are 33 percent and 50 percent on just those two that the Minister talks about. Can the Minister, then, provide us the increases for each of those programs and the percentage? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Okay. Land transfer for property buys less than \$1 million is currently \$1.50 per thousand with a minimum fee of \$100. It is going to \$2. That is a 33 percent increase. Correct. Mortgages, I should go to next, are currently \$1 per thousand in most cases, and that will go to \$1.50, which is a 50 percent increase. Correct. Again, on the example I gave of the \$400,000 house with a \$300,000 mortgage, instead of paying \$900, you would pay \$1,250, an increase of \$350.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will just try to make it real simple. Can the Minister provide us with the information of all the increases that he has talked about with this here with a percentage? Just give it to us. You don't have to tell us the numbers here today, but if you can give us the information for all the things that he is proposing to increase? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly. I mean, I don't think it is terribly complicated what we are proposing to do here or we are going to do here. I would be quite happy to provide these numbers in writing.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Next, we have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The concern with this particular matter is not about it even being modest. The first thing is that had we not even raised this here on the floor today, then there would probably have been no disclosure to us that this increase to the cost of living was going to be coming. I mean, clearly, the Minister and the government are very well aware that the idea of the proposed land transfer tax a year ago was not publicly palatable. Simply, this is just a new angle. It is simply a new approach to cash grab. The Minister has indicated that is all this really is. It is just a revenue generator. Really, all you would have to do if you were just seeking to increase some money is just cover off the costs that it takes to

administer these land transfers. This is basically a substitute for replacing the land transfer tax that we knew publicly failed.

You know, the Minister might continue to see this as being modest, but what he is failing to see is that the idea of a sugar tax, the forthcoming carbon tax, the airport tax, the lease rates that came out of his other department, Lands, the ongoing power rate increases, that this is another increase to the cost of living. We are a government that says that we stand by reducing the cost of living. This is just another factor that is going to tip somebody to that point where they just cannot afford to live here anymore. "Modest" is not the word that they want to hear. We are a government, along with the federal government and the municipal government, that is responsible for driving up the costs of living. The government, in my view, Mr. Chair, should be embarrassed as it relates to this attempt, this backdoor attempt at trying to hijack those who will disproportionately be penalized for selling residences and/or businesses in market communities. I don't need any further clarification. I know exactly what this is. The department should be ashamed for trying to attempt to put this forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: This government, all governments, are faced by an insatiable demand for new and better programs. I mean, the money has to come from somewhere. The original land transfer tax we talked about was something that was far greater than this. This generally is a tax that will fall on those who can afford it. Let's be honest with it. These are home buyers. \$350, really, I don't consider that a particularly outrageous or unfair increase. Rates have not been changed in 20 years. As I say, a bigger impediment, if there is such a thing, to buying a house might be increasing mortgage rates. I mean, we are constantly being asked for more programs all the time. In my view, this is a modest and reasonable increase in taxation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Minister Sebert. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Chair, the way you deal with that is by creating an economy. You attract more people. You build and sell more houses. That will generate more fees to begin with. I mean, we are running into a soft economy. Things are going to be slowing down. We are continually chiseling away at residents' earned dollars. Their take-home net pay is getting smaller and smaller and smaller. At some point, they are just going to reach tipping points where they just can no longer survive. I have said it before: the worst thing about this job is when

you get those emails or those phone calls from residents that say, "You know what? I am packing the van as we speak. I can't afford to live here anymore." Yet, we are a government that continues to say that we want to lower the cost of living and that we need to attract more people to the North.

The Minister can continue to say that this is modest and that it is hardly an increase, but that is the same thing the City of Yellowknife says when they propose a new property tax increase. It is the same thing when we say we are going to put up an airport tax fee. It is all just modest, but it is not modest to the homeowners and to the residents of the North when it is slowly chipping away from their income. That is hurting our economy. We are taking away from disposable income.

You know, if we haven't learned anything in the recent months about how dire the situation is out there, then we need to open our eyes. I still stand by the fact that residents need a government that is going to support them in reducing the costs of living. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Just reminding committee we are discussing the budget here. We are getting a little off topic. I will give the Minister a chance to reply.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know it has been a long day. I don't want to repeat the arguments I have previously made. Just going back to say that we are constantly trying to enhance the lives of people in our community. Sometimes, that costs money. There are many programs that are funded by the monies we raise. Again, I feel this modest increase is justifiable. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Thank you. Committee, noting the clock, we will conclude the item under consideration, the departmental total for the Department of Justice. Justice, total department, \$127,617,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Agreed. Thank you. Does committee agree that this concludes consideration of the Department of Justice?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (MR. BLAKE): Agreed. Thank you. Thank you, Minister. Our thanks to the witnesses for appearing before us. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Thank you, committee. I will now rise and report progress.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I get the report of the Committee of the Whole? Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering 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 Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Do I have a seconder? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Tim Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, February 22, 2019, 10:00 a.m.

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

19. Second Reading of Bills

- Bill 36, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Resources Act
- Bill 37, An Act to Amend the Oil and Gas Operations Act

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

- Bill 32, Naturopathic Profession Statutes Amendment Act
- Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement
- Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, February 22, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

