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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Monday, May 27, 2019

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:29 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 181-18(3):
STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL – FIRST
PATIENT DAY

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks a major milestone for healthcare delivery in the Northwest Territories. On May 26, 2019, we began accepting patients at the new Stanton Territorial Hospital, and we implemented a detailed patient move plan to bring patients from the old Stanton hospital to our brand new facility.

I am pleased to report that our patient transfer was successful and that the new Stanton Territorial Hospital is now providing health services and care to residents. Our team successfully transferred 55 patients at approximately three-minute intervals over three hours. These transfers were provided by porters and healthcare staff through an above-ground tunnel built specifically for this move to ensure patient safety and privacy. Our partners from Health Care Relocations, who are experts in this area, provided us with guidance on this elaborate move process and also helped us through the facility activation phase of our new territorial hospital.

Having a brand new hospital that provides improved patient care requires that our entire healthcare team of professionals are knowledgeable and confident in their new work environment. This process is called "Facility Activation" and was another crucial milestone for the Stanton Hospital Project. Led by the Stanton Renewal team, dedicated hospital staff, and our P3 partner Dexterra, Facility Activation is the process for making sure that everything from work stations, machines, equipment, and the overall flow for

patients and staff work as they need to. I can tell you that this is no small feat and that countless hours and work have gone into making the new hospital, from top to bottom, as ready as it possibly can be to provide improved patient experience and care.

Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to say that things are better and nicer at the new hospital, but I want to take a moment and provide a few highlights and examples of how the new Stanton Territorial Hospital will help us provide residents with the best patient care we can, both now and well into the future.

Our new hospital is twice the size of the old facility and houses new systems and features on every floor that make it possible for us to support the health and wellness of patients as never before. The new hospital has:

- 100 single in-patient rooms;
- a significant expansion of the Emergency Department, Ambulatory Care Centre, and Intensive Care Unit;
- operating rooms that are double the size and equipped with surgical booms; these structures provide equipment support, which is something that we didn't have in our old hospital;
- a secure dedicated outdoor space, especially for mental health patients;
- a designated non-denominational Sacred Space for spiritual ceremonies that can support smudging ceremonies;
- an expanded cafeteria featuring northern artwork, lots of natural light, and a living green wall;
- upgrades including a pneumatic tube system, patient lifts, a nurse call system, integrated bedside terminals, and Wi-Fi;
- a therapeutic garden space, complete with a ceremonial fire pit, playground area, and natural flora and fauna, which is completely wheelchair accessible;
- wood pellet boilers, reducing greenhouse gas

emissions and making the new hospital more energy efficient;

- dedicated elevators for the public, which are separate from elevators for patients and staff, to enhance privacy and mobility throughout the facility; and
- 375 parking stalls, almost double the 188 that were available for staff and public at the old hospital.

These are just some of the highlights of our new territorial hospital. It has also been designed to maximize natural light throughout and to be able to grow and adapt to our future healthcare needs. It is a beautiful facility, and it will welcome patients, their loved ones, and staff from throughout the North.

It should come as no surprise that there has been a great deal of public interest in the new facility. Earlier this month we escorted over 250 guests on tours of the new hospital. Unfortunately, we weren't able to accommodate all requests, but we plan to make videos available that will feature all of our program and service areas. These will be available on the Stanton Renewal website later this summer.

I also want to thank my MLA colleagues and all of those who shared information on changes in services in and around our first patient day. This allowed our staff and patients to move into the new facility as efficiently as possible and prioritized emergency and labour services. As is the case whenever you move into a brand new facility, we know that there will be some hiccups as staff and patients get used to our new hospital. During these early days of operation, staff will be working diligently to minimize any inconvenience wherever possible and to ensure that we can deliver the best service possible

Mr. Speaker, later this summer we will hold a grand opening event for the new Stanton Territorial Hospital. It will be an opportunity to thank all of our staff, partners, stakeholders, and volunteers who have been involved in making this project a success and a chance to celebrate our new hospital as a key part of how we hope to achieve our goal of Best Health, Best Care for a Better Future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 182-18(3):
CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
ACTION PLAN

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories made a mandate commitment to develop

a territorial climate change strategy that takes into account northern energy demands and the cost of living, while reflecting international and national commitments to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Last year on May 1st, the Government of the Northwest Territories released the 2030 Northwest Territories Climate Change Strategic Framework. This is our government's coordinated, comprehensive response to mitigating and adapting to climate change, outlined in the following three goals:

1. Transitioning to a strong, healthy economy that uses less fossil fuel, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030;
2. Increasing understanding of climate change impacts occurring in the Northwest Territories; and
3. Building resilience and adapting to a changing climate.

Last month, the Government of the Northwest Territories publicly released the first five-year action plan to put the vision of the framework into motion. The 2019-2023 Action Plan identifies work currently under way or resourced to take place within the next five years, as well as high-priority areas that we need to secure partnerships to accomplish and a tracking process for implementation.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to reviewing the action plan and reporting on our progress annually. After five years, a review of the action plan will guide the development of an updated action plan for 2025-2029 to ensure that we continue to meet the coming challenges and opportunities related to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories is on the front lines of climate change and has been experiencing impacts for decades. We remain committed to addressing the threats that climate change poses to the sustainability of Northwest Territories communities and the health and safety of our residents.

We know we cannot do this alone. The action plan was informed by input from partners, including Indigenous governments and organizations, community governments, the Government of Canada, co-management boards, non-government organizations, industry, and academia. All partners, including the Government of the Northwest Territories, need to make significant commitments to implement the action plan. The Government of the Northwest Territories' commitment and investment to addressing climate change is

demonstrated by the actions it is leading or partnering to achieve.

As the Northwest Territories is a small jurisdiction with limited resources, support from Canada and other partners will be essential for action plan implementation. We continue to work with the Government of Canada to find funding that supports our long-term vision and approach to energy and climate change that will enable the Northwest Territories to transition to a strong, healthy economy that is less dependent on fossil fuels. As the lead department responsible for climate change, Environment and Natural Resources will provide strong leadership on related coordination within the Northwest Territories and with other jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, through implementing the 2019-2023 Action Plan, I believe that the Northwest Territories will be able to respond to the challenges and opportunities associated with climate change by improving knowledge of climate change impacts, increasing adaptation and resiliency, moving towards a lower-carbon economy, and doing our part to contribute to national and international efforts on climate change. We look forward to working with our partners to achieve the actions set out in the 2019-2023 Action Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 183-18(3):
UNLOCKING OUR PETROLEUM POTENTIAL

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, in the Northwest Territories, responsible resource development is at the core of who we are. It drives our economy, has generated billions in opportunities for northern and Indigenous-owned businesses, and provides thousands of jobs to residents.

Our natural resource wealth is not limited to minerals. We also have some of the world's largest reserves of natural gas and oil, both onshore and offshore, and these resources, if developed safely and responsibly, will result in significant long-lasting benefits and returns for NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, as part of advancing the territorial vision of land and resource management in accordance with the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, our government made a commitment to introduce a new petroleum resources strategy.

The Petroleum Resources Strategy: A Path to Northern Benefits and Energy Security was tabled in May of 2018 and is part of our government's overarching vision for addressing energy and

climate change in the NWT. It has set the stage for the steps that our government is taking to restore confidence and investment in NWT petroleum resources.

We have introduced amendments to the Northwest Territories' Petroleum Resources Act and the Oil and Gas Operations Act to increase transparency and accountability.

We have formally begun negotiations on the agreement for the management of oil and gas resources in the Arctic offshore that we hope will result in a new offshore oil and gas regime comparable to those already in place off Canada's east coast.

Although disappointed with how the moratorium was imposed, we also recognize that Canada has a need to provide a legal basis upon which to implement this moratorium.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' current focus is moving forward towards co-management of the Northwest Territories' Arctic offshore waters and resources. We are working with Canada and other partners on the five-year review of the moratorium.

We also want to ensure that the review is evidence-based and evaluates the different regions of the Arctic individually, as the Beaufort in particular has benefited from many years of study. The Government of the Northwest Territories needs this new management regime, comparable to the Atlantic accords, to ensure Northerners will be decision-makers on oil and gas exploration and development in our offshore, including making decisions on if, when, where, and how it happens.

Mr. Speaker, as we adapt to the realities of climate change, the transition to a strong, healthy economy, less reliant on fossil fuels, will benefit all residents and communities. Our government's petroleum strategy also recognizes more immediate opportunities that exist for our gas to be developed locally to reduce the cost of living, displace diesel for a cleaner environment, and create long-term jobs. These opportunities include working with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation to support the completion of a feasibility study to produce natural gas from local wells and use those resources to generate electricity and heat in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region.

With a view to the future, we are also working with the federal government to address the infrastructure deficit that exists in our territory.

If our government is going to promote economic growth and prosperity for all residents, strategic investments in infrastructure that support responsible development are key. Investments in

the Mackenzie Valley Highway, in particular, will help increase the viability of oil and gas resources in the Sahtu. However, if we are going to get our petroleum resources to market, we must also change the way we look at traditional infrastructure like pipelines.

As we continue our work to implement the Northwest Territories petroleum strategy, our northern perspective offers a unique competitive edge and an opportunity to consider a new direction for getting our gas to market, both figuratively and literally. Instead of going south, where the shale boom has flooded the gas market, we have been approached by investors interested in transporting our LNG resources west from the Arctic coast, where the Beaufort Sea offers a route to the Bering Strait and on to Tokyo.

We know that LNG is being sold in the Asia-Pacific region at six or seven times North American prices, and consensus research tells us the demand for natural gas in this region will continue to grow until at least 2050.

Mr. Speaker, we have incredible, proven reserves of Arctic natural gas, once destined to flow south through the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline. While controversy rages across Canada over pipeline megaprojects to move gas to tidewater, more than 6 trillion cubic feet of defined NWT gas sits in our Mackenzie Delta, just a short pipeline away from the Arctic coast.

Technological advances mean that, once these resources reach the coast, they could be processed and distributed for transportation from floating platforms, where ships capable of navigating through Arctic ice can make the journey to Asia.

These are not unproven technologies. Icebreaking LNG tankers are already in use between the Yamal Peninsula and Vancouver, and floating LNG platforms are in use off the coast of Russia, Malaysia, and Australia. From the delta of the Mackenzie River, it is just over 3,800 nautical miles through the Beaufort Sea and the Bering Strait to Tokyo. By comparison, it is 4,300 nautical miles from Vancouver to Tokyo and well over 5,100 nautical miles from the Yamal Peninsula to Tokyo.

The Mackenzie Delta is well positioned to be a supplier of LNG globally. It is a region of potential and ultimately can be Canada's first highway to the Arctic Coast without crossing other jurisdictions. The region has active Indigenous businesses with experience in oil and gas and a history of working with industry to get things done. This is all a stark contrast to what companies must navigate in other jurisdictions.

There is still a lot of work and research needed to make this concept a reality, but as we continue to implement our petroleum strategy and advance and define our approach to climate change, the development of our territory's natural gas resources offers a means to reduce our use of fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and realize greater energy security, all while providing economic benefits and opportunities. Secure and sustainable sources of energy will create a more prosperous territory for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 184-18(3):
FINDING COMMON GROUND

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has a mandate commitment to have land use plans in all regions of the Northwest Territories. Furthermore, the government's vision of land management, articulated in the Land Use and Sustainability Framework, states that we will promote and support land use planning in all regions of the Northwest Territories.

Regional land use planning in the Northwest Territories has been a key component of our evolving land and resource management regime since 1983, when the Basis of Agreement on Northern Land Use Planning was signed by the federal and territorial governments, the Dene Nation, the Metis Association of the Northwest Territories, and the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut. The concept of land use planning has been incorporated into each land claim agreement that has been signed since that time.

To foster the conversations and relationships to support these objectives, the Department of Lands created the NWT Land Use Planning Forum in 2015 to bring Indigenous, regulatory, territorial, and federal planning partners together. Each year, the partners gather to exchange ideas and build a shared understanding of how to advance land use planning in the Northwest Territories. In other words, by finding common ground, Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories can facilitate and coordinate the important and necessary work to complete land use plans in every region of the Northwest Territories. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to land use planning as a central feature of our land and resource management regime across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, a land use plan is both a process and a document. Land use plans are developed collaboratively to reflect the values of Indigenous

people, residents, and communities in a planning area. The plans create the rules for use of the land that will promote their social, cultural, and economic well-being. The process of land use planning itself builds confidence for communities, and the completed plan provides certainty for land users on how and where development can proceed. Completed land use plans will improve investor confidence, which in turn will support growth in important economic sectors such as tourism, agriculture, and resource exploration and development.

Our government remains committed to land use planning as a central feature of our land and resource management regime in all areas of the territory, and continues to create tools to help us advance this commitment in partnership with other land managers in the Northwest Territories. Later today I will table "Finding Common Ground," our commitment to strengthen partnerships and support land use planning.

Finding Common Ground describes the approach to advance land use planning and the accountability framework for that approach. It was developed in partnership over four years, beginning with the first NWT Land Use Planning Forum in 2015. The Finding Common Ground approach aims to strengthen existing government-to-government relationships among the Government of the Northwest Territories, Indigenous partners, and Canada to:

- advance land use planning in a way that supports the completion of outstanding land, resources, and self-government agreements with the Akaitcho Dene, Dehcho, and Acho Dene Koe First Nations, and the Northwest Territory Metis Nation;
- establish a new land use planning process for Wek'eezhii; and
- renew the land use plans for the Sahtu and Gwich'in.

Mr. Speaker, who gets to use the land and resources in the Northwest Territories and how it is managed matters to all of us. Finding Common Ground is one way the Government of the Northwest Territories and federal and Indigenous government partners are working together to provide clarity and certainty around how land and resources are managed and used, and this renewed commitment to land use planning will help us make wise land use decisions for this territory and its people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECONCILIATION AND CO-DRAFTING LEGISLATION

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be a Canadian and a Northerner, and I'm proud of our shared history as a country and many peoples and nations, but not all of our history deserves celebrating. As we share international achievements, we must equally share in the mistakes from our past, and those which are still repeated today. We must reflect on the pernicious legacy of wrongheaded policies that work to victimize and harm the peoples with whom we co-exist.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the wrongs inflicted on Indigenous Peoples and Nations through cruelty of the residential school systems, the all-too-frequent failure to honour treaties, standing by and ignoring third-world conditions which exist on many First Nation Reserves, and the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. These wrongs must not be forgotten, yet we must have hope for the future. Governments can learn from mistakes of the past and, in some important respects, the GNWT has made meaningful progress towards real reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in the Northwest Territories.

This House is considering a concert of bills respecting lands and resources which were co-drafted with Indigenous governments. Well beyond consultation, Indigenous leaders had a seat at the table to ensure these crucial laws respecting what happens in their traditional territories included their values and perspectives.

During recent committee hearings, honourable Members were told directly that this process works and represents a clear realization of reconciliation. Co-drafting can be slow, and it's not without differences of opinion, but if this ensures our government is actually walking the walk when it comes to reconciliation, then it's crucial we continue down this path and invite Indigenous governments back to the table for the development of regulations and other matters arising from these proposed laws. This model of law-making should be celebrated and used as an example in Canada and the world on how to honour and respect Indigenous Peoples, develop meaningful government-to-government relations, and deliver on the promises of reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to commend this government for establishing the co-drafting mechanism for these laws, encourage our Premier and Cabinet to stay the course, and show Canada

and the rest of the world that we can continue to do better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GIANT MINE REMEDIATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Giant Mine remediation project is crucial for the people of Yellowknife. Constituents have concerns with the process that they've been raising with me. It's important that the plan accommodates everyone's legitimate concerns and interests.

Mr. Speaker, two groups with significant interests are the Yellowknife Historical Society and the Great Slave Sailing Club. Over the years, both have made substantial investments in the area. Now, they're concerned that the remediation plan won't meet their needs.

The Historical Society is developing a destination site that reflects our mining heritage. That includes a community museum in the old Giant Mine Rec Hall. While their current sublease guarantees them continued use of that building, it doesn't assure them access to other adjacent areas and buildings they also plan to use as part of their development. The Historical Society also promotes the preservation of the natural landscape, and is concerned about plans for extensive blasting. The blasting would provide material needed to fill in existing pits, but it's planned for areas that are highly visible to the public. The society is concerned about the potential environmental degradation.

The Sailing Club has operated in its current location for 40 years and has a significant investment in infrastructure. The club supports the remediation plan, but members understood that it would happen in stages. That would allow them to continue to use the dock and mooring locations, but in the remediation plan that was released last summer, that suddenly changed.

Mr. Speaker, the remediation of such an enormous contaminated site is a huge and complex task. We should acknowledge the Giant Mine Project team and all the people involved at every level, and the enormity and scale of the work they've taken on. Environmental rehabilitation and public safety are the highest priorities, but there are extensive public interests in the area, and I suggest that it's important that the remediation plan take everyone's needs into account.

Mr. Speaker, the project's work plan outlines opportunities for public hearings and intervention by interested parties. I urge everyone to participate fully and make sure the process is truly responsive.

It's important for everyone with interest in the area to be part of finding solutions, to make sure that the remediation project is done right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES 2019 BARGING SEASON

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Mackenzie River has for generations resupplied the communities along this corridor and connecting communities in the Beaufort Sea area while supporting industry. The Mackenzie River is 4,240 kilometres in length, the longest in Canada, a lifeline for many communities; in most cases, the only means of bulk and personal resupply. With the reality of climate change and environmental impacts, the changing of navigational river channels by deposits presents many challenges to the logistics of resupply planning and, more importantly, delivery.

The Marine Transportation Service Division is as important to the resupply chain Highway 1 leading into Yellowknife. A resupply vessel that supports home and commercial building projects, grocery stores, family home appliances, community fuel inventory, just to name a few. As you can understand Mr. Speaker, the growth and sustainability of our remote communities are very dependent on this supply chain system.

The Sahtu region holds a significant amount of this waterway corridor, and holds two sets of rapids with potential portage delays. This previous winter road season was drastically shortened by the warmer weather. Our next resupply season is upon us, the Mackenzie River barging season.

Mr. Speaker, later I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INCOME SUPPORT CHANGES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the last sitting, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment reported on the Income Security Forum she hosted last December. To recap briefly, service providers from non-government organizations and some of their current and former clients met to discuss about how the income assistance program could be improved. Mr. Speaker, as a former ECE minister yourself, you can imagine there was no shortage of suggestions.

First, the application and rules around staying in compliance are complex. They need to be simplified. Second, eligibility must be based on the need for housing, food, and other necessities first of all, before taking compliance with the productive choice program into account. Third, clients want to be treated with respect and be provided with simple information on dispute resolution. Fourth, the department must promote accountability by staff of mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, these are a few of the points that caught my attention. They resonated with anecdotes I heard while I worked at the YWCA, and with constituency issues I've been asked to help with in the last three years. Many of the issues arise start with a lack of understanding about what the rules are or with information that has been lost. This often results in late payments, which in turn creates additional expenses for loans and arrears, and ultimately ends up with the client having less money to spend on essentials. What is needed is a fundamental shift in promoting compliance where the program transitions from a highly regulated, punitive approach to one that is flexible and solutions-based. This change can't happen soon enough.

Mr. Speaker, there's another shift required that addresses the bigger picture; that's to figure out how to create incentives that will encourage clients to come off income assistance. Once again, this needs to be a solutions-based approach. Maybe it means people are able to keep more of their earned income by pro-rating assistance, for example. Maybe it means that, when clients are cut off, it's for less than 60 days so that they don't lose their housing or fall into arrears. We have to offer people on low income the tools to change their circumstances and those of their children.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has a lot of work to do in this area. I know she is committed to program improvements, but we have just three months left in our term. I will have questions about her priorities. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEW STANTON TERRITORIAL HOSPITAL

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. As the Member whose riding has the new Stanton Territorial Hospital, I am welcoming the new facility, which officially opened yesterday, to Frame Lake.

The Minister of Health and Social Services has provided statements on the new Stanton Territorial Hospital and its many features and attributes, and even today in his Minister's statement, as well. I will

not repeat these, but I would like to focus on a few key areas and improvements.

First of all is the space. The 280,000-square-foot new building approximately doubles the size of the old Stanton Hospital. Operating and emergency rooms are twice the size. There are 50 percent more beds. All patients will be in private rooms, proven to improve and speed recovery. Interiors are open and airy, with all the rooms facing the exterior of the building to maximize the natural light, also proven to promote healing.

The new Stanton hospital also includes more culturally inclusive spaces. There is a meditation room or "sacred space" designed to simulate a glass-enclosed half-teepee and equipped with ventilation to allow for traditional smudging ceremonies. Northern and traditional foods in an expanded cafeteria and interior designs keyed to northern landscapes provide a northern feel to the hospital care.

People who want a closer look at the facility and its features can go to the Stanton renewal website to see photos, videos, and diagrams and, as the Minister said, there will be an official ceremony later this summer.

The redevelopment of the old Stanton Hospital will also benefit NWT residents. There has already been an announcement of 18 extended-care and 72 additional long-term care beds, and specialized services and programs are expected to occupy the renovated space.

This major investment in the health and well-being of our citizens represents the biggest social development expenditure development of our term. I would have preferred to see this as a government-owned asset, not a P3 project. However, with the facility now open, I want to congratulate the Minister, the project team, and all the facility staff for their hard work in this immense contribution to the quality of life for NWT citizens. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT PROVIDENCE SENIORS' FACILITY

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. As you may recall, I spoke to the House in 2017 about calls from local leaders of Fort Providence for the establishment of a long-term care facility in Fort Providence. Deh Gah Got'ie Koe has somewhere in the neighbourhood of 116 residents aged 60 years and older. Nevertheless, the government decided to regionalize long-term care, placing beds in larger facilities in larger communities and forcing many

elders and seniors to move away from their communities, their homes, and their loved ones.

For those seniors and elders who do not require long-term care, Fort Providence has come to rely on the Deh Gah Got'ie Seniors' Home for seniors' housing. However, having been built in the 1970s and having the capacity for about 18 residents, this facility has been in dire need of renovations.

Today I am pleased to report that much-needed upgrades to the Deh Gah Got'ie Seniors' Home will soon be under way. This coming fall, the residents of Deh Gah Got'ie Koe can expect to see renovations completed to the main complex, including eight interior units, common area, and kitchen. Security for the building will be enhanced. It's expected that about seven seniors will be housed as a result of the improvements, providing some relief to the waiting list for public housing.

Mr. Speaker, while it's great to see our elders receive better-quality accommodations, community members have made it clear to me that the seniors and elders of Fort Providence need more. Most seniors want to live at home for as long as possible, not to move into a seniors' home or move away for long-term care. What we really need is a new seniors' centre, a facility with programming and activities tailored for all older people in the community. At present, the common area of the Deh Gah Got'ie Seniors' Home is the only space in Fort Providence where elders can gather safely and regularly. I will have questions on this matter at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DOCTOR SHORTAGE IN HAY RIVER

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month Hay River was in the midst of a serious physician shortage. We had one physician in the community, one physician to service not just Hay River but all of the South Slave communities served by the regional health centre, one doctor to manage the workload usually allotted to five full-time positions. The number of scheduled appointments was limited, and walk-in appointments, which are hard to get on a good day, were either limited or sometimes cancelled entirely, so, as you can imagine, the emergency room turned into the walk-in clinic.

Mr. Speaker, this shortage has further eroded public confidence in our healthcare system. It is unacceptable, and we have to take steps to ensure it does not happen again.

This situation also makes it harder to attract staff to Hay River. What doctor wants to work somewhere when they think they might be put in a position to be on call for days on end to do the job of five people? I understand that it's tough to find full-time doctors and even locums, and I acknowledge that there is a doctor shortage all across rural Canada. However, Mr. Speaker, there are things we can do to attract more full-time physicians to Hay River, and we need to start doing them.

First, we need to break down the barriers that isolate Hay River from the rest of the territorial health system, including those barriers that prevent authorities from sharing resources like staff and physicians.

We need to make more land available for development so there are actually homes for potential physicians. Mr. Speaker, while the availability of land does not sound like it's related to the healthcare system, it's a practical consideration that has become a real issue.

We have to shore up our electronic records management system so that, when a locum works in Hay River, he or she does not return south and tell everyone that it's difficult and time-consuming to simply find information about patients.

We have to fix administrative issues so doctors are not frustrated when they tell a client to book an appointment to see them in two weeks and then they never see them again because it's impossible to book appointments.

We need to support our residents who are attending nursing school or taking pre-med courses at university by offering them summer jobs. That has not happened in Hay River in years.

Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the examples of things that need to change. They are not insurmountable challenges, but, when you add them all up, they stack the deck against us. I will have some questions for the Minister of Health at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY OF FLOYD EDWARD DIAMOND-C

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Floyd Edward "Bo-Boy" Diamond-C was born on April 1, 1967, to Theresa Diamond-C in Fort Nelson. He lived his life in Fort Liard and, as a youngster, Theresa and his Grandpa Edward taught Floyd about trapping, the traditional way of life, and surviving off the land. His grandpa and brother Dale would go out to Bovie Lake to go trapping and

hunting on their trap line. He would often find himself out on the land with different family members to help them out any way he could. Floyd was a happy and giving man who would be there when needed for anybody who asked.

Floyd was the oldest brother of five siblings. He worked in and around Fort Liard all of his life, doing everything from construction, building camps, slashing, heavy equipment operator, supervisor for forestry, being a foreman and a labourer for local companies. He worked his whole life building a name for himself and his family. Floyd started Wolfe Trail Slashing in 2005, and operated his business for 10 years. A lover of the land, he started going out to his favourite place, Bovie Lake, and enjoyed his family and friends by his side there. It took him a few years, but he started building his own cabin, and some of his best memories there were fishing and camping with his two sons, Trevor and Trenton. Floyd wanted his boys to learn how to live off the land and have good survival skills, and there was no one better than Dad to teach them. Floyd would not only pass on his traditional knowledge to his family, but also to his friends or to whoever wanted to learn. He was proud of his kids, Trevor, Trenton, and Natasha. He was a proud grandfather, too. They all brought so much happiness to his life. In 2010, Floyd was proud to be the best man at his younger brother's wedding.

In 2013, Floyd decided to make a career change and went to live off the land at Bovie Lake, and that was one of the greatest decisions he made. Floyd would go trapping, hunting, set snares and fishing nets. More recently, Floyd had dreams of bringing back the traditional ways for youth. He wanted them to develop new skills and to retain the Dene way of life. He dreamt of making this a reality for his community, alongside his sons, Trevor and Trenton. Remember Floyd when you are out on the land fishing or trapping, because he is forever part of these lands and our territories now. He will continue to smile down on us with his smiling face and protect us when we need it. Floyd was just that kind of a man, to never leave us but watch over us and protect us. He is not here in person, but his presence will never leave us.

Floyd is survived by his mother, daughter, sons, his brothers and sister, a number of grandchildren, and his uncles. He is predeceased by his grandfather Edward, grandmother Pauline, daughter Angel, and auntie Elizabeth Diamond-C. We will miss him dearly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences to the family and to the community, as well. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HARMONIZATION OF CANNABIS AND ALCOHOL REGULATION

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to compare some laws in the NWT regarding alcohol and cannabis possession. As we all know, last October marked the legalization of recreational cannabis across Canada. This shift in federal policy has triggered a massive legislative overhaul to all laws pertaining to the purchase, transportation, and possession of cannabis, along with newer penalties for alcohol- and drug-impaired driving.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I believe that we should consider the harmonization of cannabis and alcohol because there exist several key differences in terms of legal limits on purchase, possession, and transportation that encumbers one substance but not the other. Currently, it is cannabis that is more tightly regulated than alcohol, which is only because alcohol prohibition ended sooner than for cannabis and has thus become less restrictive over time. However, from a harm reduction perspective, such restrictions for one substance over the other makes little sense, especially when you consider that the more restricted substance of cannabis is actually less harmful to people than alcohol.

Mr. Speaker, the harmonization of certain policies is nothing new to the NWT. In fact, there already exists some elements of policy harmonization between alcohol and cannabis. For example, the punishments for selling cannabis or alcohol to minors is exactly the same, as is the purchase of either substance from an unlicensed vendor and driving under the influence of either substance, as well.

The point that I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is simple. If the government wishes for our citizens to consume legal substances safely, responsibly, and in moderation, then the policy should be more consistent across the board. After all, both cannabis and alcohol already share the same minimum age for purchase, possession, and consumption. Why is it that we have purchase limits on the amount of cannabis, but no limits on how much alcohol one can buy? There is also zero limit to the amount of alcohol anyone can carry in person or transport to their homes. Why are we treating one substance differently than the other?

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, I am not advocating for the deregulation of either cannabis or alcohol. I am merely suggesting that we place them both on an even playing field. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. If there exist restrictions for one, there should be restrictions for the other. I believe that alcohol should not be sold without limits. There should be limits to prevent bootleggers from buying unlimited amounts of alcohol for illegal resale. According to many in my riding, bootlegging is a booming business. It is more difficult to charge bootleggers because there are no limits on the amount of alcohol that one can possess. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge someone joining us all the way from beautiful Vale Island in Hay River, my spouse and constituent, Ms. Chantelle Lafferty.

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

Oral Questions

QUESTION 721-18(3):

RECRUITMENT OF PHYSICIANS IN HAY RIVER

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a moment ago I spoke about the need for more permanent physicians at the Hay River Health Authority, and I talked about some of the issues, some of the barriers that we are facing, in terms of being able to recruit physicians. There are just a few. I often get complaints about the work environment as well, but I didn't want to delve into that too much.

I have a series of questions for the Minister of Health. My first is: what steps is the Hay River Health Authority, along with the Department of Health, doing to recruit more physicians in Hay River? Is there a strategy? Is there a plan, or are they going to continue to use the same recruitment practices that have had failed results? Can the Minister please elaborate? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I understand the frustration that the residents of Hay River have had. Obviously, we need to do better in Hay River than we have done.

The authority is actually currently developing a new formal recruitment strategy in order to help them find more physicians, hopefully on a permanent

basis. A lot of work needs to be done. I think the Member did a great job of articulating some of the things that need to be done. Some of those things are the types of things that they are doing, but I will reach out to the authority and figure out where we are on some of those exact items.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the NWT Health and Social Services Authority is currently recruiting an area medical director who would actually be based in Hay River. This individual would be working in Hay River to serve patients while also being part of the territorial medical staff for the entire territorial health authority. This will help build a relationship, an important relationship, within the system to help address challenges that we know are arising.

They are also working with the territorial authority to understand how we can better coordinate our physicians on staff, potentially looking at options to make Hay River physician staff formally part of the territorial physician staff. This would allow us to benefit from shared resources in a more coordinated, system-wide approach to recruitment and retention, and we are working closely with the territorial authority to help make those steps a reality.

There are a number of things happening. The Member did raise a lot of things that need to be addressed in the Hay River authority, and I will be following up on those as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: As I mentioned, we have a budget for five physicians in Hay River. Maybe we need six. Maybe we need seven, but we are probably never going to get there. Our healthcare system seems to rely on that model, the one that is heavily dependent on physicians. Are there any systematic changes that are being implemented to improve patient care, in light of the fact that it is so difficult to get full-time physicians?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Yes, absolutely. As part of our Cultural Safety Action Plan, the territorial health authority and health system have recently embarked on work to undertake a reform of our primary healthcare services across the Northwest Territories. This work is being led by the territorial authority and the department, with pilot projects happening in the Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Deh Cho, and Tlicho regions.

Just as an example, Mr. Speaker, two of these projects in this reform effort focus on the implementation of integrated care teams. The goal of this team approach is to provide safe, high-quality care that makes the best use of existing resources by creating integrated multidisciplinary care teams, where each member works to their full

scope of practice to provide what we hope and we expect will be flexible, responsive primary healthcare and health promotion.

These teams, and this is the exciting part, will have a wide range of providers, including mental health supports built in, different scopes and practices, nurse practitioners, community health nurses, admin staff, all to work as part of a team to provide high-quality primary care to our residents.

MR. SIMPSON: I think that the Minister was speaking about what is called the Nuka model, or something based on that. He mentioned that there is a pilot project going on in a few different regions. When can Hay River expect to become part of this pilot project or expect to have the end result of the pilot project fully implemented?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Nuka is a model that is very similar to what we are moving toward here, and we are certainly learning a lot from them, but it will be a made-in-the-North design. The primary healthcare reform is a system-wide initiative. Although our first six demonstration projects don't include Hay River, I want to be clear that Hay River Health and Social Services is participating in the planning and design process to ensure that they are a part of the effort from the very beginning. Although the pilot isn't happening in the community, they are definitely a part.

As we begin to implement integrated care teams in other parts of the Northwest Territories, we will be able to test these new approaches that might work well in Hay River and will likely work well in Hay River. We will certainly be helping with local staff, leadership, and residents to be more active once we start rolling those types of things out in the community.

Primary healthcare reform has been identified as a strategic priority for the Hay River Health and Social Services authority, and we look forward to them being part of our solutions moving forward.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the thorough response. If this type of model is implemented, will there need to be staffing changes, like a reduction of staff? A change in staff? New positions? Can the Minister elaborate on that?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We are talking about a new model, and in many of these primary healthcare teams where we've seen, it does involve different types of staff working in different relationships. It doesn't necessarily mean we need to get rid of staff. It doesn't necessarily mean we need to add staff, but it does mean we need to

change how they operate and work together and the structure that they provide services in. It could result in some job description changes. Those always have a potential of having some impact on employees, but we have proven that we are quite good at working with our employees to recruit and retain, and especially when they have skillsets that are very, very valuable in the Northwest Territories. Our front line providers clearly fit that, and obviously, we don't want to lose any of our professionals, but we need a system that really meets the need of our residents, and it needs to be designed with outcomes as a priority, and focus on our clients, not on the systems themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 722-18(3):
FORT PROVIDENCE SENIORS' FACILITY

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to thank the Minister of Health and Social Services on his recent visit to Fort Providence. They had a meeting that evening, and I think it was very clear that constituents were concerned about the well-being of elders. It's a known fact that we have an aging population in the NWT, and also Canada. This government has committed itself in terms of creating available beds at a specific date, and including beds, including facilities, and those facilities more likely will provide senior care and specialized care. I wanted to ask the Minister if he could update this House whether we're making progress in meeting those targets? Mahsi.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to start off this conversation, I want to be clear that our priority is to help keep seniors in their homes first, their communities, their regions, and then, if they do require high levels of care due to different degrees of acuity, obviously they would need to be going to a long-term care facility. Long-term care facilities are those level four, five facilities where individuals' needs are significant. They need a greater degree of care that can be safely provided in a community. We built long-term care facilities where we also have physician positions located.

Having said that, we know we're 258 long-term care beds short by 2026. In the budget, we have already begun to move forward with long-term care beds in Hay River. We've got plans to move forward with long-term care beds in Inuvik. There are 72 long-term care beds going into the old Stanton, the Legacy Building. We're looking at, at least 30 new beds in Fort Simpson over the next couple of years. A lot of work needs to be done. We're still moving

forward with the plan that I believe was presented both at the witness table and others over the years, and we are committed to getting that work done.

MR. NADLI: What I did not hear is reference to small communities, so that's the question that I have: what are the plans for the Minister and his department in addressing the needs for senior care and elderly care programming and facilities in small communities?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Under the Health and Social Services mandate, our responsibility is for the long-term care facilities. That doesn't mean that there isn't a responsibility for this government to move forward with living units for seniors, which the Housing Corporation has done. Over the last number of years, we have built or are in the process of building five independent living units for seniors throughout the Northwest Territories. I do have to applaud the Housing Corporation. They have worked very well with Health and Social Services to make sure that these new independent-living units for seniors have program space located within, where we have seen elders from the community go to and take advantage of different programs. We have seen that in Liard. We have seen that the in other communities. We will continue to work with the Housing Corporation to identify potential areas that they can explore for independent living. We'll keep working with them on design so that we can continue to evolve to meet the needs of our residents.

I understand that the facility in Fort Providence is being retrofitted and fixed up to meet current need. It's also my understanding that that upgraded facility will also have programming space, so we look forward to getting in there with our homecare teams and others to provide supports to the seniors who are actually utilizing those independent living units.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, we continue to move forward with our continuing care action plan, and one of the first priorities on that is to do our test piloting of the family and community caregivers, pay caregivers, that we're hoping to roll out as a pilot in the next couple of months.

MR. NADLI: My other question that I have, I think the Minister made reference to it. The Minister said that they're undertaking pilot projects in terms of delivering, and caretakers, and family care program initiatives across the NWT. Is there a particular region that they're focusing on? Is it specifically for bigger regions, and perhaps not small communities?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: When I stood up, I actually knew the answer to that question, and now, I've completely blanked. I know that we're trying to

do the family and community caregivers across a wide-range of communities, and small communities, regional centres, but I have completely blanked. I will commit to getting the Member that information.

MR. SPEAKER: That was a real blank answer. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I wanted to ask is the Minister noted an interesting initiative between Health and Social Services and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to try to not encourage, but to meet the interests of elders who want to live in their homes for as long as possible. Is there any immediate initiatives that could encourage or else at least reassure elders who want to live in their homes that at some point, there could be some tailored or customized programs to meet their needs, whether it's building access ramps for the wheelchairs, or whether it's for enhancements in terms of doorways, perhaps, upgrades, the Minister will need some cooperation with the Housing Corporation?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In short, yes, the Housing Corporation does have a number of programs around accessibility that seniors can use to do upgrades to their places to ensure that they can stay there safely for as long as possible. We've had a really great relationship with the Housing Corporation when it's come to the independent living units. They've really worked with us to make sure there's program space, and they did participate in the development of the Continuing Care Action Plan. It's not a Department of Health and Social Services action plan. It's a whole-of-government action plan. We really understand and want to, as much as possible, keep our seniors in their homes as long as possible, and the Housing Corporation has stood up, and we continue to work together to find ways to help our seniors stay where they want to stay. They want to stay in their homes, Mr. Speaker. They benefit from staying in their homes. We need them in their homes and in their communities for as long as possible. The last place we want to see them is long-term care, but we know that some will need to go to long-term care, and when they do, we want to make sure they have great facilities, providing great services for that level of care, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 723-18(3): EQUITY LEASES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I've been advised by a few people in the Nahendeh riding that they have purchased lots that were equity leases, but once they purchased them, they became regular lease lots. This doesn't seem

fair, especially since the department is now working forward on equity lease lots in the Northwest Territories. My questions are for the Minister of Lands: can the Minister explain why the department doesn't honour the original equity lease agreements until this issue is being resolved? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The equity leases are contracts that the department is managing and administering in accordance with the lease terms and conditions. If an existing equity lease expires, the department places the lessee in what is known as an overholding tenancy, and so, if the equity portion is paid, the annual lease would be \$1 per year. The department is bound by the terms of the lease, and we are allowing the lessee to go into an overholding position. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: I was asking the questions: when the person has an equity lease and sells it to somebody else, what happens there? Why aren't we just turning it over to an equity lease? My next question here is: with leases that are being switched to Commissioner's or NWT lands, what happens to the equity that the previous landowners had on these leases?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Essentially an equity lease can be assigned to a new lessee, but we are not currently issuing any new equity leases. If a person has an equity lease, and it has a term to it, that equity lease is assigned. The new lessee would take over that lease and be bound by the terms and conditions. As I say, we are not granting new equity leases.

MR. THOMPSON: We are not talking about a new equity lease; we are talking about an existing one. That is a concern. When somebody purchases a lot, there is equity into this lot. Can the Minister advise us what happens to the equity leases, and why does the equity that they have into it not return back to the original owner?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: If the lease, again, is assigned to a new lessee, then that lessee takes over the terms of that equity lease. There may be circumstances, and this would depend on the terms of the lease, where a portion of the equity could be returned. I looked today at a lease where there was a partial refunded equity. There may be, in some cases, partial refunds of equity, but generally speaking, what happens is that, if the equity lease is assigned to a lessee, the new lessee takes over the terms of the equity lease.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for the answers up to this point. My problem is that, when we have an equity lease and the person purchases it, the equity lease now gets turned into a regular lease again. Now the person doesn't own it; he is given a lease. Will the Minister look at those files that had equity leases, then they were turned back to leases, and will they turn them back to equity leases until all equity lease files are dealt with so that the individual can purchase it, whether it is for a home or a business? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned, we are not issuing new equity leases. However, if a lease is assigned, then the new lessee takes over the terms and conditions of that equity lease. We are not, however, going to be issuing new equity leases.

As I say, there may be circumstances, and it was asked earlier by the Member opposite, about refunds. Again, looking at the portion of the lease that I have in front of me, I do see that, in some circumstances, there is a partial refund of equity. I don't know if there are cases where there is a full refund. In any case, just to repeat, we are not issuing new equity leases. However, equity leases that are currently in force can be assigned to new lessees, so they will take over the terms and conditions of that lease, but we are not issuing new equity leases. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 724-18(3):
MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES 2019
BARGING SEASON

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Further to my statement on the supply chain, Mackenzie River Corridor systems and the Beaufort Sea communities, my first question to the Minister of Infrastructure is: how is the MTS ensuring that Sahtu, and other communities that are customers to the division, receive the resupply services that they require in this sailing season? What preparatory measures are the department taking? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This sailing season has already been posted online. Everyone is welcome to have a look at it. These are subject to change, of course, due to climatic change and other variables that we would be out of control of.

At this present moment we are planning to go to Norman Wells three times this year; June, July, and August. We are looking at going to Tulita twice this

year, in July and August, as well. To inform Members of this House and the people of the general public, the terminal in Hay River is now open, accepting cargo for all communities across the Northwest Territories, and I encourage those who want to send cargo to get hold of our terminal or else book through our customer service desk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for that information there. My next question is: what is MTS doing differently for this 2019 season to ensure a successful resupply? For example, federal resources for upgrades to the operational side of the division, and those types of things?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As all of the Members know, we have had a challenging year there last year with the issue that happened in the Beau-Del. We are focusing our efforts on high-quality and timely resupply services. We are going to have to focus on a number of efforts across the system, what we are going to have to do to ensure that we will be able to improve resupply. One of those particular measures is trying to get out earlier this year with our ships; that is why the sailing season has been altered a little bit.

Now, again, as I said, some of this is subject to stuff that is out of our control. The supplier of petroleum products has to run their schedule and get their stuff, and hopefully they are working closely with our department, which I know they are.

Something that I didn't even think about until today that could possibly hamper delays further in the season is something as easy as a forest fire that is happening high level, which potentially shuts down the rail system. These are things that we are going to have to work closely with.

Again, communication was a big thing that came out of the impacts of last year, and we will continue to work on those with all residents of the Northwest Territories.

MR. MCNEELY: The Minister must be a mind reader, leading up to my next question here. We are all quite aware of the drastic fires taking place in northern Alberta, which is in the rail system. Has the inventory for the communities been delivered and stored at the facilities in Hay River, ready for barging shipment?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Hay River has limited capacity to store all of the fuel that we ship up and down the system, so we have to work hand-in-hand with our supplier to meet the demands of our shipping season. We will continue to do that. It impacts our barge deliveries for the communities.

As I said, forest fires and stuff like that can have a large impact on the system. We are very concerned

about the low waters this year. That is already right across the system, but we don't believe that will impact the deliveries to the Sahtu region, because that is before the Sansu Rapids. We are monitoring this situation very closely, and we will continue to inform this House as the season moves on.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for that information there. Moving on to the last question, can the Minister elaborate a little bit on the long-range plans on the movement of goods and services and the MTS division? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I have said, this year particularly we have moved up our scheduled sailing dates and resupply for the communities. For long-term plans, we are working closely with the Canadian Coast Guard. We have reached out to them about how we can work more closely on the situation that could potentially arise in the Beau-Del again, particularly up on the Emerson Coast. This is something that we need to try to avoid, and we need to work very closely with them and their sailing schedule as well, to align with what we are trying to do, to resupply the communities.

I think that I have mentioned in this House before that we are having a strategic look at how we are storing our petroleum products, particularly in the Beaufort-Delta, and whether there is an opportunity to maybe expand on some of the resupply storage tanks in that area. I know that, in the Sahtu, for instance, we have enough fuel stored at Fort Good Hope and Tulita, and Fort Good Hope could actually support, if there was a shortage in that region, to Coville, and Tulita could certainly do the same thing for the Deline situation. However, up in the Arctic coast communities, it's a little bit tougher, and we need to have a look at what we are doing up there around our infrastructure needs and possibly what the challenges are going forward, if we are going to have to be able to have a larger supply of fuel in that region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 725-18(3): CHANGES TO INCOME ASSISTANCE

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. The Minister received valuable feedback at her forum on how to improve the Income Assistance Program. There were dozens of suggestions, and clearly there is not time to work on them all. My question is: what are the Minister's

priorities to improve the Income Assistance Program in the short term? Thank you.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The MLA is absolutely correct. There is not enough time to do them all. I would love to be able to do them all, and I cannot, so what we have done is, just as when I had the housing portfolio we had done the short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals, that is the process that we are in now. We will be sharing that with the MLAs and the standing committee within the next couple of weeks, and also the NGOs, because I do believe in "nothing about us without us." It was their meeting. We have been keeping them engaged right through.

The short-term goals that we are really focusing on right now, and we will be providing a full Minister's statement tomorrow, actually, are really around the communications. People are feeling that they did not know what their rights were, that the forms were too cumbersome, that they did not know their right to appeal, the programs, et cetera, things like that, so we are just doing up a new participant handbook. We actually hired an outside consultant to come in and help us streamline some of the forms, to make sure that they are appropriate, that we are only asking the information we need instead of things we do not need.

We are also really working on our relationship with the NGOs, too. It's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the NGOs stated that this is the first time that some of them had ever been consulted on income support. My own experience in the NGOs, I cannot remember ever being invited to a meeting where NGOs were asked what their experiences were. We committed actually that, every six months, we would provide a forum that NGOs and clientele can actually provide input into the Minister, and I think that is a huge step.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. I am glad to hear that the paperwork is going to be more plain-language. Is there any thought to actually testing this new paperwork with a client group to ensure that it is meeting the goals that they are hoping?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Honestly, I had never thought about that, but consensus government is working together. I think that is a really valuable idea, and so I will implement that, because I think it's important. They are the ones who are actually be utilizing the form. They should be the ones stamping and saying, "This works for me."

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister being open to that suggestion. One of the things that participants talked about was the need to address issues such as lost paperwork and late payments that come about as a result of that. Can the Minister tell us whether any progress has been made in this area?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you to the MLA for reminding me. Actually, that was one of the bigger concerns that I had. If people are getting, for example, their utility bills in and it's our fault that we are late and then we are not paying their late fees and they are getting late fees, that is a sin on our side, in my opinion. We are not giving a lot of money to people. We are not giving any money for late fees, so it's coming out of their food or their clothing allowance, and I am not okay with that. We have already implemented that, if the error is on our side, we will be paying late fees. If the error is on the clientele side because they have not got the paperwork in time to us, then the clientele will still be responsible. However, any time that it's our error because of paperwork or not being on time, we will be covering those late fees effective already, so I can say effective immediately, although it's already implemented.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's genuine efforts to reform this troubled system. I am wondering, in the area of the Income Assistance Steering Committee, this may be the one the Minister referenced earlier. People at the forum in December really wanted to see this committee be created to address ongoing issues. Is this the committee she referred to earlier in her answer?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, that is the committee we are talking to. It will be the NGOs, and, of course, we will be bringing in clientele as well with that. Like I said, one of my strongest philosophies is "nothing about us without us," and so that was an easy commitment. It's an embarrassment on the behalf of Education, Culture and Employment that we have not done that in the past, so we learned from our history. We learned from our mistakes, and, moving forward, we will be engaging them on a regular basis, twice a year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 726-18(3):
RECONCILIATION AND CO-DRAFTING
LEGISLATION

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I first learned of the intergovernmental agreement and the co-drafting process, I had some small anxiety about how that process would interact with this institution, but I can safely say, now that I have seen it, it is not incompatible. In fact, it's very much complementary. I would like to ask the Honourable Premier: what feedback on the co-drafting process has he received to date from the GNWT officials who have been working with the Indigenous governments to co-draft legislation? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I have been hearing is it's been working quite well. The intergovernmental forum, we are in kind of a push-pull situation, where our Aboriginal government partners are saying that we are having too much legislation or it's going too fast on the one hand and, on the other hand, our colleagues here in this House have been asking for more and more legislation. We are kind of in a unique push-pull situation, where I guess we all have to manage it to get things done.

MR. TESTART: Perhaps my desire was for a more technical response, but that is a fair point. We do need to work together on this, and we do need to understand the flow of legislation, especially when we have Indigenous governments partnering on this legislation. Many of those governments have come before standing committee in our review of some of these laws and have asked to continue their collaborative role in co-drafting not only the bills, but the regulations arising from these new acts, should they pass. My understanding is that some departments have reached out and started this work of the terms of reference for co-drafting legislation, so I am wondering if the government as a whole will continue this meaningful collaboration and implement policies and procedures to ensure that regulations are co-drafted on all bills respecting alliance and resources or all laws respecting alliance and resources.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: As with many things, this has been an evolving process. At one time, government did all of the drafting of legislation, and then we got into settlement of land claims and self-government. In those cases, we had Aboriginal governments that participated in the drafting of legislation. I think it was further advanced where, as a condition of devolution, we agreed to an intergovernmental process whereby we would work with Aboriginal governments that signed on to devolution for specific legislation or, as we called it, "mirror legislation" to develop made-in-the-North legislation.

Also, in specific cases, specific legislation, for example the Wildlife Act, which took about 25 years

to develop and bring to fruition, and also Species at Risk, where we started out with consultation, at the end, it involved all of the Aboriginal governments and their lawyers. I think it's still evolving. With a lot of the changes that are happening in the federal government, I think we are also taking a wait-and-see where they are going with a lot of their initiatives, as well.

MR. TESTART: This is very much a good-news story, and I think the federal government could learn a lot from what this government has put in place. The question remains around this issue of regulations. The last thing I think our partners want to see is kind of an ad hoc approach where some bills have co-development regulations and some bills do not, so can the government commit to creating a common approach to co-development of regulations across this suite of laws and regulations and basically any bill that is co-drafted, that the regulations that come forth have some degree of meaningful engagement with Indigenous partners, and can we standardize that as a policy across government?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: It's getting kind of late in the day for this Legislative Assembly. We have been participating with the federal government on the development of their Indigenous rights framework, which we are now aware that that will be pushed back until the next federal government. We are in a situation where we are now doing a review of our Indigenous government relations, and the purpose of this review will be to identify best practices and areas where we can improve our Indigenous relations across the government. Our expectation is that we will complete it before the 18th Assembly, and our expectation is the findings will be made available to the 19th Assembly to further shape and strengthen the Government of the Northwest Territories' Indigenous government relations.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Honourable Premier. That is good news, and I look forward to seeing the results of that finding. I still think that we have undertaken a process, and I do not think it's premature to start developing policy around that process that is already under way.

My final question is: many of the IGOs, Indigenous government organizations, that participated in this process shared with the standing committee that, for their engagement to be meaningful, they need to have the capacity to actually engage the legislation that is before them. In many cases, they did not have that capacity and could only focus on one or two bills when there were so many bills to consider. Is the government considering any capacity-

strengthening programs to address these concerns?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, we did hear that lack of capacity and requests for more resources very loud and clear. I should point out, as the Member has said, we have been engaged in collaborative legislative development with the Northwest Territories' Indigenous governments as part of the evolution of the devolution-related legislation, and this has included early discussions to inform key elements of legislation and sharing drafts to ensure that their perspectives are understood and incorporated.

Collaborative development, when we are doing that work, we have to remember that, although we work collaboratively with Indigenous governments, we also consult with those same Indigenous governments to ensure that their Aboriginal rights are not being adversely impacted. At the end of the day, the final decisions on NWT legislation rest with this Legislative Assembly, so, with what the Member is suggesting, that is an area that we have to innovate to make it happen. In the past, when we put into effect land claims legislation, we have had to work with the Aboriginal governments who primarily wrote their legislation, and we had to make some special arrangements in this Legislative Assembly so that it would go through. However, we have and will continue to bring to the table the perspective of Indigenous governments in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 727-18(3):
HARMONIZATION OF CANNABIS AND ALCOHOL
REGULATION

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's statement, I talked about cannabis and alcohol. My main reason for making the Member's statement is many constituents have come forward to see me during my whole time as MLA and complain about the bootleggers. I have a question for the Minister of Finance. I have some questions. My first question is: can the GNWT make laws to limit the purchase and possession of alcohol? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I share the Member's concern with the amount of alcohol that is sold across the Northwest Territories, consumed across the Northwest Territories. We all know in this Chamber that, of all the things that have ever been brought into the Northwest Territories and distributed amongst our people, alcohol is probably the one that has done

the most damage. I think we need to find ways that we can deal with it. However, there have been situations in the past where they have tried to ration the sale of alcohol. I think those were reversed, but, if there are opportunities for us to do what we can to limit the amount of alcohol that gets into the hands of our people, then I think we should all be on board with this.

MR. BEAULIEU: I am also seeing the issues with it. I know that I have had many discussions with the RCMP, and the RCMP themselves, particularly one corporal who had a discussion with me, said that it was very difficult to go through the whole process of actually charging a bootlegger; getting a person to buy alcohol for you is just one step, and there are many other steps. I want to ask the Minister: I wonder, I recognize how late in the term we are, but if the Minister could start the department looking at maybe having initial discussions of perhaps surveying the people of the NWT, to have some key questions in there on a way to restrict the amount of alcohol an individual can purchase or possess at one time?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I cannot commit the next government to anything, but I will have a conversation with the officials, see if there is an opportunity where we could do a bit of a questionnaire or some consultation on how far the people in the Northwest Territories want to take this. I commend communities across the Northwest Territories who have voted to become dry communities because they, too, recognize the effects of alcohol in their community and they are trying to do what they can to combat that. I think we should provide some type of support to those individuals who want to fight the amount of alcohol that is sold to the people of the Northwest Territories.

MR. BEAULIEU: The restrictions or the prohibition of alcohol does not seem to work, and we all know that. That is one, I think one, tool that the communities have done out of desperation, but they themselves have made the law to restrict alcohol. Yet, they are watching what is happening in the community, and it's largely because the bootlegger has no limit to what he can purchase, absolutely no limit at all. So, if there were some sort of a limit, and I am sure that most of the people of the Northwest Territories will agree, with the harmful effects of alcohol, that I think that this limitation has to be territorial. It cannot be left up to the communities to restrict or to limit and so on. I know we have limits in some communities and so on now and prohibition in others, yet this bootlegging continues, so I would like to ask the Minister if there is a way that he could start discussions with his department to harmonize the alcohol act and the Cannabis Products Act in order to put restrictions on both of those substances.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We all realize that cannabis was just recently legalized and that there will be an opportunity for a review, and it would certainly make sense to look at those elements that are within the GNWT's control as part of that overall review. There will be a review. There should be a review that's done on this, and we could probably take advantage of that time to do a review of the overall cannabis/alcohol that's within GNWT control.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently, around the time when cannabis became legal, I also know that it's legal for the RCMP to pull an individual over in a vehicle without having cause to do so, just to check. If it is possible to restrict the amount of alcohol that an individual has, I think that we will actually curb a lot of the bootlegging. I think we would be able to even reduce bootlegging in half. What's happening right now, I think it would be a good thing. I'd like to ask the Minister if there is any possible way to begin discussions, recognizing again that we're very late in our term, to begin the process of asking the department to look at a legal way to limit the alcohol for the purchaser for the entire NWT instead of by a community-by-community thing?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: First of all, a lot of times this winter in the news reports we saw pictures and stories being filed of alcohol that is being seized going into some of the communities. I commend the RCMP for the work that they're doing. I commend those who have reported that. I don't recall seeing a winter where there has been so many pictures and stories posted of alcohol being seized. That is a start. We are late in this Assembly, but it's never too late to start the discussion on what we can do going forward. I will have a conversation with the department on maybe coming up with ways that we can work on this going forward, and possibly some advice we can provide to the next Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 728-18(3):
GIANT MINE REMEDIATION PROJECT

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I spoke again about an important project that's going on in the riding of Yellowknife North, and that's the Giant Mine Remediation Project. I would like to maybe start with asking the Minister of ENR a couple of questions. We often realize that this is a project managed by the federal government, so the public is always wondering exactly what role, if any, that the Government of the

Northwest Territories has in this project. I would like to ask the Minister: does the GNWT retain any ownership in management of the surface lands at Giant Mine during or after the remediation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, the lands are Commissioner's lands, and the remediation project is operating under a land reserve to Canada. Discussions regarding future land ownership are under way.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. I would also like to ask the Minister what role the GNWT has played in the surface remediation, and how it's protecting the interests of stakeholders such as those that I've mentioned earlier, the Great Slave Cruising Club and the Yellowknife Historical Society? Even the City of Yellowknife has interest there, as well.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Giant Mine Remediation Project, they meet regularly with the NWT Historical Society and the Great Slave Sailing Club and discuss issues concerning impacts on both subleases by the Giant Mine Remediation Project. The Giant Mine Remediation Project will continue to work with both the NWT Historical Society and the Great Slave Sailing Club to accommodate access to their operations wherever feasible throughout the remediation project.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. We know that, right now, the Land and Water Board is going through a process. They're accepting submissions and will be having a public hearing at some point in the future. I would just like to ask the Minister if he knows what role, if any, will the GNWT play in the upcoming Giant Mine water licensing?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The GNWT is a co-proponent in the Giant Mine Remediation Project, and we will continue to work with Canada through the water licensing process.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The remediation plan proposes significant quarrying along the public highway known as Ingraham Trail, and this could potentially have adverse effects on altering the aesthetics of the gateway into the Ingraham Trail. I'd like to ask the Minister: what is ENR doing to ensure quarrying needs are done in a way that will not provide a destroyed landscape to those who travel and traverse the trail?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Again, we will work with the project team to try and mitigate as much as possible access and that to the residents who use the site. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 729-18(3):
PUBLIC HOUSING WAITING LISTS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few questions for the Minister of Housing. Pretty much every one of my constituency meetings, I get concerns about long waiting lists for housing, upwards of three years. I'd like to ask the Minister: are there plans to increase our housing stock in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As all Members know, we do have a capital plan to address housing needs across the Northwest Territories. As the Member knows, I don't really have to inform him, but we have done good work in Aklavik with the Joe Greenland Centre. We did do some renovations to that building. He was there. We opened up the Northern Pathways to Housing, which is a great program. We're also working on a seniors' complex in Fort McPherson, which should be completed this summer. Most recently, as Members know, and we're working on getting that report completed, we did have a housing summit in Inuvik, where we had leaders from the Member's region and from right across the territory. We also had the standing committee attend that housing summit, as well.

As I have said in this House many times, Mr. Speaker, we are working on community housing plans, and we initially were looking at just developing six during this fiscal year. Right now, we're working on 10, and we'll continue to encourage and work with our leaders in the communities to approach myself, as well as approach the NWT Housing Corporation, to look at addressing those.

MR. BLAKE: I have said a number of times in this House what a good job the department is doing, building new homes, but a lot of times all we're doing is replacing units, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask: when can our residents expect to see our number of housing units increase rather than staying at the same level?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I have mentioned in the House that we did get a carve-out of the Co-Investment Fund. We signed our bilateral agreement as well with the federal government, and

we do have a great partnership with CMHC, as well as industry, and working with our Indigenous government organizations to address the issue. As I mentioned at the Housing Summit, it can't all be relied on government. We've got to have a partnership. We've got to work together to address this, and that includes CMHC. It includes industry. It includes our Indigenous government organizations, and we have been seeing that, Mr. Speaker, over the past year.

We will continue to promote our programs, and we want to focus on having our leaders in the communities reach out to myself and the NWT Housing Corporation to see how we can work together to address the housing needs throughout the Northwest Territories, but in this case, have the leaders in the Beaufort-Delta reach out, and we can have this chat.

MR. BLAKE: I know that the department is trying to sell you on how its switch would free up other spaces. Has the department sold any units to date, which the department can now replace?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We are working on this lease-to-own program. We are trying to get that information out to some of our good tenants in the public housing units. We also have a home ownership program that we are piloting. The Northern Pathways to Housing has shown some really good success already, especially in Simpson. We have one in Behchoko. We will see how things work out in Aklavik. I think we are going to see some really good, positive things coming out of there. We will continue, and I have always prided myself on partnerships to bring better solutions together. I would encourage the Member to reach out to his leadership, approach myself, and approach the NWT Housing Corporation to see how we can focus on this.

As I have said, the community housing plans are going to be a game-changer, and we are going to see some really good things, I think, coming out in the next few years.

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

QUESTION 730-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES-NUNAVUT
BILATERAL MEETING ON TRANSBOUNDARY
CARIBOU

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. There were media reports of a meeting between the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources and Nunavut officials in Kugluktuk in April of this year. Can the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources provide some background information on the meeting, such as who was there, and table a

copy of the agenda so that we can see what was discussed? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my tour of the Tlicho and speaking to the leadership there, and the Member was part of that tour, I did commit to them that I was going to try to line up a meeting with my counterpart over in Nunavut, and we are fortunate that we were able to see that happen. We did meet in Kugluktuk, as the Member pointed out. There were about six representatives from each side. There was myself and the Minister in Nunavut, who is also the Premier; and we had our two deputy ministers, as well as some technical staff. About 12 people attended the meeting altogether.

What I could do, and I think the Member asked about the agenda, is that I will have a look here. I should be able to table the agenda so that we will have an opportunity to see what was discussed there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that commitment, and I look forward to getting the information. There are no temporary or permanent protection measures in place for key habitats of any of the transboundary barren-ground caribou herds shared by the NWT and Nunavut. Can the Minister tell us what the outcomes were at this meeting, whether there is going to be any protection of caribou calving grounds?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I thought it was a very positive and productive meeting that we had, and we did come up with an agreement to enhance our caribou research monitoring and management actions. Again, there was recognition of the leadership shown by the Tlicho government on the issue.

This was a fairly high-level political leaders' meeting, along with our technical staff. We had some good discussions on the calving ground, our concern that the calving grounds are in Nunavut, and maybe they didn't have the same regulations or restrictions that we had. They understood that, and they have committed to have a discussion amongst their co-management partners, as well. I did offer to host a meeting here in the capital in the fall. I would like to host that, and they seemed receptive to that. At that time, I want to use that as an opportunity to bring our Aboriginal partners in as well and have a thorough discussion.

I was very encouraged by the outcomes of the meeting. I thought it was a very positive tone and a very sincere recognition that we need to try and do what we can to protect the Bathurst caribou herd.

MR. O'REILLY: If everything works out right, maybe I will be at that meeting in the fall.

Cabinet continues to push ahead with planning and spending on an all-weather road into the heart of the range of the Bathurst caribou herd, while there are plans for a similar joint road on the Nunavut side that would pass through the calving grounds of this herd. Can the Minister tell us whether there was any discussion of the road proposals and their obvious detrimental impacts on the Bathurst caribou herd and what the outcomes of those discussions were?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We did have a lot of discussion, but as far as the road corridors go, we didn't really get into any type of detail or have discussions on the road corridors.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I have raised this issue of caribou in the House many times. The Bathurst caribou herd is in a desperate state, only 8,000 animals, down from a high of 480,000; yet our government has not concluded any extra funding in the 2019-2020 budget for this crisis.

I would like to know from the Minister whether this recent meeting is going to result in any real action to save the Bathurst caribou herd. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I think that, in the past budget that we just approved, we did put some money into enhancing the Boots on the Ground Program. I think that it is a great program. I think that we put some money in to enhance that. I do believe, with our conversations with our counterparts over in Nunavut, that we will take some steps to help try and protect the Bathurst caribou herd. This was an initial meeting setting a path forward, and I am not sure if they have had these meetings before. We did share with them our concerns and the concerns from the Aboriginal leadership on this side of the border about the restrictions on the Nunavut side. They said that they would have a look at it.

I believe that this is a first step, and again, if we have the meeting in the fall time, and this would be in the fall before the election, obviously, if we were to have the meeting in the fall time, then I think that we will be able to have a broader discussion on plans to do what we can to mitigate the impact being felt by the Bathurst caribou herd. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to

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. Member for Yellowknife North.

Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

BILL 35:
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION ACT

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report to the Assembly that the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment has received Bill 35, Supply Chain Management Professional Designation Act, and wishes to report that Bill 35 is now ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Lands.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 428-18(3):
FINDING COMMON GROUND

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Finding Common Ground." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 429-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES COMMUNITY COUNSELLING PROGRAM - CLIENT SATISFACTION REPORT 2018

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Northwest Territories Community Counselling Program, Client Satisfaction Report 2018." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 430-18(3):
ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS ACT ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 431-18(3):
2019-2020 CORPORATE PLAN: NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HYDRO CORPORATION AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following documents entitled "Environmental Rights Act Annual Report 2003-2018"; and "2019-2020 Corporate Plan: Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation and Northwest Territories Power Corporation." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 26, Statistics Act; Bill 29, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act; Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act; Committee Report 15-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act; Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement; Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Bill 26, Statistics Act. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will consider the bill after a brief recess. Let's take about five or 10 minutes. Thanks.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 26, Statistics Act. I will ask the Minister responsible for the bill to introduce it. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am here to present Bill 26, Statistics Act.

The Northwest Territories is the only jurisdiction in Canada which currently does not have statistics legislation that establishes a legal framework for the collection, protection, and dissemination of statistical information.

The purpose of the legislation is to establish a new Statistics Act for the Northwest Territories that will establish the roles and responsibilities of the Bureau of Statistics; outline data collection, analysis, and data dissemination procedures; describe methods to ensure the confidentiality of collected data; create offences and penalties for unauthorized disclosure of data; and provide the ability to enter into data-sharing agreements.

Towards these efforts, the Government of the Northwest Territories has worked closely with Statistics Canada, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and has engaged with other GNWT departments on the development of this legislation. This legislation will ensure that the NWT is consistent with all other jurisdictions in Canada and aligns with the mandate of the NWT Bureau of Statistics.

That concludes my opening remarks, and I am prepared for any questions Members may have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, which is the committee that considered the bill, for opening comments. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Government Operations was pleased to report on its review of Bill 26, Statistics Act, and today will take some comments from that report.

Bill 26, as the Minister said, establishes a legislative framework to support the continued work of the Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Finance to collect, analyze, and share statistical information.

The committee received one written submission on the bill, from the Information and Private Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Ms. Elaine Keenan-Bengts. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the Information and Privacy Commissioner for the input provided on Bill 26.

The clause-by-clause review was held on February 28, 2019. At this meeting, the committee moved five separate motions to amend Bill 26. Four of those motions were carried, with concurrence from the Minister. The committee thanks the Minister and his staff for assistance provided to the committee during the review of this bill.

Individual Members may have additional comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister, would you care to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Very deeply, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. The Minister will take his seat at the witness table. Minister, will you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my right, I have Mr. David Stewart, the deputy minister of the Department of Finance. To my left, I have Laura Jeffrey, legal counsel for the Department of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, and welcome to the witnesses. I will now open the floor to general comments on Bill 26, if there are any general comments. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to comment on the importance of this piece of legislation. The work of the Statistics Bureau is crucial to building the evidence required to make sound public policy decisions in both the Northwest Territories and Canada, as our statistics are able to be shared. That helps us, especially as lawmakers, to better understand what's happening in our territory and how our decisions are influencing the economy, poverty, the health and wellness of our citizens. Having a sound legislative framework for the work of the statistics bureau is crucial to this initiative or to that principle. For a long time, the Statistics Bureau has been doing this work, and the legislation is now underpinning the success they have already demonstrated. I know I always appreciate getting regular updates from the Statistics Bureau over the course of my role as an MLA. If we did not have quality statistics, we just quite frankly could not understand where we need to target our energies as a government and how we can best impact the lives of our residents for the better.

I thoroughly support this act. There is an unfinished matter that we will get to later, but I think this is a very important piece of legislation, and that importance cannot be understated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Further? Seeing no further general comments, we will proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill. We will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. I believe there are 18 clauses, so we can take them one at a time. Committee, please turn to page 1 of the bill. I will call out each clause. If the committee agrees, please respond as such.

---Clauses 1 through 9 inclusive, approved.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Clause 10.1. Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 118-18(3), DEFEATED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that Bill 26 be amended (a) in paragraph 10.1(d) by striking out the period and substituting a semicolon; and (b) by adding the following after paragraph 10.1(d): "(e) the particulars of ownership, copyright, and rights to use information that will be retained, conveyed, or exercisable by each party." Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is being distributed. I will wait until all Members have a copy. The motion has been distributed and is in order. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This amendment is similar to Nunavut's section 9 of their legislation to address information-sharing with other organizations. It would ensure that any ownership and exclusive rights issues to the information that we share must be addressed by the terms of the agreement to the satisfaction of the Minister. This would, in effect, ensure that Indigenous organizations and governments and other third parties, including NGOs, private corporations, et cetera, could place conditions into information-sharing agreements that protect their ownership of the data. Without this section, no such conditions are required, and the disposition of any information collected in these agreements would fall to the sole discretion of the Statistics Bureau, or ownership issues would be unresolved at best.

Earlier the Minister spoke about ensuring that this legislation is consistent with other statistics acts throughout the country, and we, as the standing committee, reviewed those acts and the legislative framework that underpins those statistical agencies. With the ever-increasing importance of information in the modern world, the committee felt very strongly that that needed to be addressed in any third-party agreements.

We received a submission from the Information and Privacy Commissioner that was very helpful in understanding the impact that this information has on the personal privacy of individuals and organizations. Data-sharing agreements are outside the government's normal possession of information, so they have to be handled differently. In this sense, where there has been a great deal of debate in Canada around the receipt of statistical information from Indigenous governments and nations to provincial and the federal government,

we wanted to ensure that that issue was properly addressed in the legislation itself.

Now, certainly, the Minister can come up with any agreement that the Minister wants to and address any issue, but this gives certainty to any organization that is concerned about the particulars of ownership, copyright, and rights to use information that those will be part of any agreement signed into. It is not saying that the government will hold ownership, copyright, and the exclusive right to use their information; rather, it is saying that the Minister must address that concern before an agreement is entered into to the satisfaction of both parties.

That is what we intended with this amendment, to ensure that the security and ownership of information given to the Statistics Bureau was protected, and that it is clear to any member of the public and any organization concerned around the collection of statistical information that, at the end of the day, ownership will be something that will come up and will be part of any agreement that they sign with the government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We disagreed with this. We found that this would be very disrespectful to the Indigenous governments. The Bureau of Statistics works closely with our Aboriginal government partners throughout the Northwest Territories, and this is a bit of a sensitive issue with for Indigenous governments.

Our view was that these issues are best solved through cooperation rather than the heavy hand of legislation. Having said that, we have a very good working relationship with Indigenous governments. We have worked with them on a number of occasions. Cabinet will not be supporting this motion.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I noted in the Minister's remarks that he indicated that the Information and Privacy Commissioner and other GNWT departments have been engaged in the development of the legislation. That is a good thing. I didn't hear anything about engagement with Indigenous governments. I assume, then, that the Minister has not heard directly from Indigenous governments on this issue.

I don't really understand what the problem is. Nunavut has the exact same wording in its legislation dating from 2006. They have had this in place and working now for 12-and-a-half years. If there had been a problem with this kind of

language, you would think that their act would have been changed in some way. It is the exact same wording, Mr. Chair; nothing different. When the committee was reviewing this, they went to the Nunavut act to try to understand what best practices might be over there, another northern jurisdiction. The exact same wording is taken out of this. I printed the bill myself, the Nunavut act, before I came in here to double-check this, so I don't know what the problem is in putting this in.

This does not require that anybody owns the information. This amendment would just say that the ownership of it should be agreed on when you get into the agreement. It doesn't say who owns it; it just says that you should spell that out to prevent problems from happening in the future. That is what this is about. This is about preventing problems from happening in the future.

The other sorts of things that are to be contained in the agreement are security and confidentiality of personal information, removal and destruction of individual identifiers, things like that. What is wrong with making sure that the agreement includes something about ownership, copyright, and right to use the information? It just makes common sense that you would want to put that in to prevent problems from happening in the future.

I don't understand why Cabinet is not in favour of this. I haven't seen any evidence. I haven't seen any correspondence or emails from Indigenous governments about this. If the Bureau of Statistics already has a great working relationship with Indigenous governments, that is wonderful, and this is not going to take away from that. It is just making sure that there is a common understanding of how the information is going to be used and who owns it at the end of the day. This is about preventing problems in the future, and this doesn't tell anybody what to do with the information.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will obviously be supporting the motion, and I urge my Cabinet colleagues to do the same in terms of ensuring that we have best practice here in the Northwest Territories. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I will now allow the mover of the motion to close debate. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you for the opportunity. We, of course, during the committee review stage, spoke with the government about this, and I think that we have come to cross purposes, because what my colleague, the honourable Member from Frame Lake, has said basically encapsulates where the committee was coming from. This is about best practices. This isn't about ensuring one way or the other that there is an outcome; it is about

addressing the concern that, rightfully, is a concern of anyone entering into these agreements is properly dealt with.

It gives confidence, again, to our partners who are providing this statistical information. It gives confidence to members of the public who are looking at this information to ensure that it is consistent with the high standards of privacy that we have set as a government for our citizens, and I think that this is an improvement. It is one of those improvements that is so important to our legislative process, working to research each clause of the bill and understand how to make those clauses better.

I do not agree with the Minister's concerns, and quite frankly, I don't understand them. We haven't received any submissions from Indigenous governments that inform that position, and we haven't been presented with any of that evidence, either. This does appear to be best practice for the North and best practice to ensure that ownership, copyright, and rights to use information are properly protected, because we don't want the government running roughshod over those rights and for people entering into these agreements not to be able to exercise those rights and have confidence that those issues with going to be addressed. That is why this motion is important and will greatly improve this piece of legislation.

Mr. Chair, I would like to ask for a recorded vote. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): The Member has asked for a recorded vote. I will put the question to committee. All those in favour, please rise.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): The Member has asked for a recorded vote. I will put the question to committee. All those in favour, please rise.

COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith): The Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Yellowknife North.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those opposed, please rise.

COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith): The Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Nunakput the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member of Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the

Member for Thebacha, the Member for Mackenzie Delta, the Member for Sahtu.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote are 11 against, six in favour. The motion is defeated. Zero abstaining, for the record.

---Defeated

I will now recall the clause. Clause 10.1, does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

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

---Clauses 11 through 17 inclusive, approved.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will now return to the bill number and title. Bill 26, Statistics Act. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Does committee agree that Bill 26 is now ready for third reading?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Bill 26 is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 26?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Thank you to the witnesses and to the Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber. We have concluded the consideration of the item at hand. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

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

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

---Carried

I will rise and report progress.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 26, Statistics Act, and would like to report progress, and that Bill 26, Statistics Act is ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Do I have a seconder? Member for Sahtu. The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed. Motion carried.

---Carried

Masi. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Tuesday, May 28, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.:

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

- Bill 29, An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
- Committee Report 15-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of Bill 30: An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
- Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement
- Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

- Bill 26, Statistics Act

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 28, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:08 p.m.