



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
**LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY**

19th Assembly

**TERRITORIAL LEADERSHIP
COMMITTEE**

Thursday, October 24, 2019

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Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Mackenzie Delta)

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(Deh Cho)

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(Kam Lake)

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(Sahtu)

Ms. Caroline Cochrane
(Range Lake)

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Mr. Jackie Jacobson
(Nunakput)

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(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

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(Thebacha)

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(Great Slave)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, October 24, 2019****Members Present**

Mr. Blake, Mr. Bonnetrouge, Ms. Chinna, Ms. Cleveland, Ms. Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lafferty, Ms. Martselos, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. Norn, Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Semmler, Mr. R.J. Simpson, Mr. Rocky Simpson, Ms. Thom, Mr. Thompson, Ms. Wawzonek

Call to Order

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Mercer): Good morning, Members and members of the public. As Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to call this second meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee to order and to preside over the selection of a Speaker-elect. I would like to you to rise, and I would ask Mr. Norn to please lead us in prayer.

Prayer

---Prayer

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Members, before we begin, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a few former Members who are watching our proceedings from the gallery today. I would like to welcome Mr. Tom Beaulieu, former Member and former Minister; Mr. Bill Braden, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly; and Mr. Herb Nakimayak, a former Member of the Legislative Assembly. Welcome. It is a pleasure to have you at our proceedings.

---Applause

All Members have a copy of the agenda in front of them.

Review and Adoption of Agenda

The next item on the agenda is the review and adoption of the agenda. Are there any additions or deletions from the floor? Seeing none, is the agenda adopted?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): We're agreed. Thank you, Members.

Opening Remarks by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

This is the second meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee for Members of the 19th Legislative Assembly. In front of you, in addition to

your agenda, are the guidelines and procedures for the selection of your Speaker, Premier, and Members of the Executive Council. These have been previously agreed-upon and publicized.

The process for the election of the Speaker will begin with self-nominations from the floor. In accordance with your agreed-upon procedures, I will ask Members to indicate whether they wish to allow their names to stand for the Speaker's position. Once Members indicate their interest, each candidate will then be permitted to make a five-minute speech. The speeches will be made in alphabetical order by surname. Questions to the candidates will not be permitted. Voting will then commence by way of secret ballot. If only one nomination is received, that Member shall be acclaimed. Are all members of the committee in agreement with this process for the selection of Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Thank you, Members. Once you have chosen your Speaker-elect, that individual will assume the chair of the Territorial Leadership Committee and will preside over your proceedings for the balance of the day.

With regard to some technical matters, Members should be aware that you are not required to turn on your microphones. This will be done automatically for you.

Also, in front of Members and built into your desks are the timing mechanisms. When speeches are being made, clocks will count down the time available to you, and you are asked to please be mindful of the time limits that have been set and agreed to amongst yourselves. I wish to make Members aware that your proceedings today are being broadcast live on the Legislative Assembly television network, as well as on social media. Our proceedings today are being simultaneously translated into the Tlicho, Chipewyan, South Slavey, North Slavey, Inuvialuktun, Inuktitut, French, and Gwich'in languages. I would also like to remind Members that, although this is a less formal committee than the House itself, Members are please asked to stand while they speak.

I understand Mr. Alfred Moses is also in the gallery, former Member and former Minister. Welcome, Mr. Moses.

---Applause

Election of Speaker

The next item on the agenda is item 5, election of Speaker. You have the Speaker selection guidelines in your packages. As per the guidelines, my first duty is to ask all Members who wish to allow their names to stand for the position of Speaker to rise in their place. Please do so now.

Results

As Mr. Frederick Blake is the only nominee for the position of Speaker, it is my duty to advise you that Mr. Blake has been acclaimed to the position of Speaker-elect. Congratulations.

---Applause

This appointment will be confirmed by motion in the House tomorrow afternoon, but at this time, I would like to ask Mr. Blake to please come forward and assume the chair of the Territorial Leadership Committee.

Speaker-elect Assumes Chair of Territorial Leadership Committee

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): As you can tell, I'm a little eager today. Thank you, everyone. I would like to thank you all for the trust that you have placed in me as your Speaker-elect. I will have a lot more to say tomorrow when the 19th Assembly officially opens.

Confirmation of Process for Election of Premier

The next item on the agenda is the election of Premier. Our agreed-upon procedures will see us call for Members to ask one question to the previously nominated candidates. As we all know, the candidates for the Premier position are Caroline Cochrane, Jackson Lafferty, Frieda Martselos, and R.J. Simpson.

Election of Premier

Members are now permitted to ask a maximum of one question to be directed to all Premier-candidates. Candidates will have two-and-a-half minutes to answer each question. In the interest of time, I will be consistent in enforcing these timelines today. Members, the floor is now open for questions. Mr. Simpson.

Questions by Members

MR. ROCKY SIMPSON: Thank you. Mr. Speaker-elect, Canada has re-elected the Liberal Party to again lead our country. With a minority government in place, we may end up with another election fairly soon. It is therefore important for our government to quickly establish an immediate and effective working relationship with the federal government to address issues such as our fiscal position, state of our economy, health, housing, land claims, and many more that directly impact the residents of the NWT.

The question that I pose to the candidates is: if elected Premier, what do you see as the first and most pressing issue respecting the NWT that you would raise with the Prime Minister of Canada, and why? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. The first candidate that we have is Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The most important thing that we would have to express our interest in would be the economy. The economy of the Northwest Territories is at a crossroads. The main issue with the economy is extremely important. We know that we are in a deficit of over \$1 billion, and I think that something has to be put forward to make sure that we address the whole thing with the economy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. Congratulations. Part of the process should be that whoever is elected as the Premier and Cabinet need to, obviously, meet with the newly formed Liberal government. Although they're a minority, there are a lot of moving targets in Ottawa.

First, and foremost, obviously, I agree with the economy, as well, those areas that we need to have an informed discussion with the federal government. We need to continue to push our existing infrastructure that is before the federal government and that we push as a territorial government over the years. We have mega projects that are on the books right now and waiting to be approved. We need to continue to push that forward because that will have a lasting positive impact in the Northwest Territories.

At the same time, building our relationship that we have in the federal government, the new Prime Minister and also the Cabinet, whoever that will be. At the same time, we must have strong working relations with our MP and also our Senator for the Northwest Territories. We need to utilize their services because they are our gateway through

Ottawa, opening doors for us. We have positive working relations with our current MP and newly again re-elected. We need a foundation even more going forward because we do have a lot of challenges. At the same time, I'm optimistic. There are great opportunities for the Northwest Territories, and this is the time. This is the time that we move forward with the federal government because we need to form positive working relations with them as well. Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Speaker-elect. I agree with the last two speakers that the economy in the Northwest Territories is a huge issue that we need to address. However, I must also state that we need to make sure that our priorities line up with the mandates of the Liberal government that is newly elected because it is strategic to make sure that we're asking the same thing that can meet their goals.

I think that one of the beauties that we have is being a consensus government. Over the last four years as a Minister, when I met with different federal Ministers in different jurisdictions, I have not made an issue of putting my voice behind one party, and I think that's important. As a consensus government, we have to support all parties, especially in a minority government, and relationships are critical. We have a very strong Member of Parliament. We need to use that. Michael McLeod has been for us for the last four years. He's a strong advocate for the Northwest Territories. We need to strengthen that. We have a strong relationship. We need to use that relationship.

We need to meet with the Liberal Party. We need to make sure that our priorities can fit within their priorities, and we need to meet forward not in an aggressive way -- aggression is not the answer; I've learned that as I've aged -- in a collaborative way, working towards them, showing how, if they support our jurisdiction in the Northwest Territories, it will actually further their priorities, as well. Working together is the key. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson, Jr.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. In 2015 when I was elected, I was asked the question: what was the first thing I was going to do when I came to the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife. My answer was: I was going to build relationships.

When I was acclaimed to this Assembly, the first thing I wanted to do was build relationships, so I

reached out to all new Members. If elected Premier, the first thing I would do is build a relationship with the Prime Minister. We have priorities, but if we're not on their radar, if we don't have that kind of access at the very top, then our priorities aren't going to be heard. It's good to have relationships with Cabinet Ministers and the bureaucracy as well, but to have the ear of the Prime Minister I think is very important because we have serious issues facing us, and I'd tell him to expect a new way of doing business from the territories, as well, that does line up with the Liberal priorities. The Liberals, they talk a lot about reconciliation. There is nowhere in the country that does reconciliation like the Northwest Territories. Going forward, we're going to see a new way of it. We're going to move forward arm-in-arm with Indigenous governments, and we're going to go to Ottawa with our Indigenous partners to address some of these issues, to address these infrastructure issues so that we can be a sustainable economy on our own, so we don't have to wait on our \$1.3-billion welfare cheque from Ottawa every year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: "Nokleby."

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Sorry, I mispronounced it.

MS. NOKLEBY: Thank you very much. Congratulations, Sonny. This kind of builds on Rocky's question there, Mr. Simpson's question, sorry. If we want to advance all of these great big infrastructure projects that we have been discussing for several years now, if not decades, one of the key issues for that or the most important thing we're going to have to do is go to Ottawa and ask for a significant portion of the funding, and I'm aiming to look for more than the 75 percent, actually, that they usually pony up.

My question to the Premier-candidates is: what experience and skillset do you bring to the table that will enable us to get that money from Ottawa and convince them that they do need to invest in the North, and do better in taking care of all of us, and see that the northern infrastructure projects are not just for the territory, that they're for the entire nation, a part of our Arctic sovereignty and our access to our northern ports? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby. First, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you for the question. To continue on with what I was saying, we need to be on the federal government's radar. Politics, a lot of politics, is sales, and it's relationship-building. I

have been able to do that over the last four years, I believe, anyways. I had relatively good relationships across the board in the last Assembly. There were always strained relationships between Cabinet and the Regular Members, but I prided myself on being able to work with people and to reach out. I think that's what I would bring. It's not just reaching out to the federal government. It's reaching out to the Indigenous governments, and it is understanding that, if we want more from Ottawa, we can't keep everything for the GNWT. We have to understand that our Indigenous governments are our partners, and, moving forward, we have to include them with equity shares in these projects. We have to make sure that we all benefit. I think that's the kind of attitude that we need going forward because we are stronger together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. I'd like to ask all Members to please speak slowly to allow the interpreters to keep up. Thank you.

Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTESELOS: Well, I have the experience of going to Ottawa. I have built those relationships. I have dealt with the federal government, and I am very thankful that MP McLeod got in again. We have a very narrow window, like one of my colleagues said, of two years. I think it's extremely important that we are well organized to ensure that our issues are on the table with this new government. It is going to be a narrow window because we have a minority government. We have to make sure that the Indigenous partners are also involved, and all the partners, whether it be private industry, but I think that, when we go, we go as a group, we go as partners, and we collaborate with all the people -- that is necessary -- and we be persistent. I think that persistence is what gets you what you need in the end. We won't get everything, but you will mediate through to make sure that we get as much as we can. There are new ways of doing business with this whole file, with the infrastructure, and I think that's what the people of the Northwest Territories want. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Speaker-elect. We now have the Liberal party as a government, so we depend on them for operating the North. They asked what I was going to do, what kind of skills that I have. I have a lot of experience. I was a Minister for many years. I also had a good relationship with the federal Minister for about eight years, so they also know what I can do. If we get the support of the Indigenous leadership, it is better to bring the issues to the government if we have the

Dene leadership behind us as well. We cannot go to Ottawa as one individual person. We need the support of all of the other leadership and have one voice, and it will go a long way. We all know that the federal Ministers will be selected soon. Also, we have to think about the capital infrastructure in the Northwest Territories. We have to have that in place. We have settled claims in the Northwest Territories, but we also still have two outstanding claims that need to be settled. We need to support them as well.

With all of this leadership in the Northwest Territories, we will be able to bring our issues to the federal government. I think it would make a big difference. I think that is very important. Let's have a good relationship, a respectful relationship with them, and things can be accomplished. I have been a Minister for eight years, so I have had experience working with the federal Ministers, as well. I feel like I do have the experience to do this job. Thank you [translation ends].

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. What experience am I bringing to the table? I have 20 years that I have been a social worker; I have over 20 years that I have actually spent counselling people, so listening is one of the biggest skills that I have. Being able to work with people and not cutting them off, I think, is very important.

I also spent the last four years building the relationships with the Liberal government and with all governments, not only the Liberal government. I have said it before and I am adamant that it is important that we maintain relationships with all parties in all jurisdictions. Things can change in a moment.

I am honest. Honesty is one of the most important traits. I see it as a strength and a weakness. Sometimes people say that honesty is not good, but I believe that, if I am honest at all times, I don't have to lie to cover my lies, and that is important to me.

The other thing that I bring that is really important is I have always been a strong woman. When I was younger and I first got into social work, I was a strong advocate, yelling and screaming and holding up the picket signs. I have learned as I have aged that that is the wrong approach. That should be the last resort.

We do need to go into Ottawa with all of the Indigenous governments, if they are willing to come with us, community governments. We need to come as a unit, but we also need to build the relationships one-on-one. The last thing that I would want to see as a Minister is a group of 20 people at my door.

Automatically, my guards would go up. It is important that the Premier go first and build the relationship, Premier to the Prime Minister, and build that first, to make sure that they feel comfortable, give them notice that we are coming, and make it a win-win situation, not that "we are pushing our needs down your throat" but "this is how our needs will benefit Canada as a whole."

Those are things that I bring to the table, and those are the things that I have learned from my experience, my professional experience, and also my age. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Any further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Congratulations, Mr. Speaker-elect. I would like to know from each of the candidates what they believe the environmental priorities should be for the 19th Assembly and how those priorities would stack up against other priorities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Now, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The environmental priorities that we have for the Government of the Northwest Territories should not only be our priorities; they need to be international priorities. Climate change is real, and it is impacting our communities, impacting the Northwest Territories, more than many other jurisdictions in the world. We see that. We have had Members talk about it already in the short time that we have been in the House. We have seen it in the last session.

During my speech to be Premier, I had stated that anything that we do for moving forward has to have climate change, always be looking at that, realizing that we do need infrastructure and we need a strong economy, but we also need to be as environmentally conscious as possible within that. We need to be part of the solution in battling climate change. Our youth are screaming at us. Our youth are begging us, crying in the media, to save their future. We have an obligation to do that. Climate change, the reality is the environment has to always be hand-in-hand with any decision that we make moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Obviously, climate change is a global crisis, and everyone is concerned about it. We feel the effects more than others. This is one area where, because we feel the effects and because of the high cost, the GNWT has actually done quite a bit over the last number of years to reduce our greenhouse gas

emissions, but of course, we always have to do more. Going forward, we have to consider climate impacts in all of our decisions, in all of our infrastructure and our policy decisions, as well. Even service delivery could have implications.

We have to address the declining caribou herds. That's an environmental issue, but that goes far beyond environmental concerns. That goes to food security; that goes to culture. I know that some work has been done, but that is not something that we can ignore or make half-hearted attempts to consider.

Another issue which I hear a lot about in the South Slave is water. There are a lot of concerns about water. The water that comes into the territory comes from other jurisdictions in Alberta. We are near the oil sands. There are major dams being constructed that could affect the level of water, and that has practical effects on things such as shipping, as well as on traditional harvesting and fishing.

Those are some of the concerns that I have heard the most about and I think that we need to focus on going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Well, we did a group of priorities. I think the priorities have to be addressed, and balanced development is important. Making sure that the climate change issue is a priority in all of our decisions that we make in the future with regards to infrastructure or any other decisions that are made is important.

I also feel that I want to put on my Indigenous hat and explain to the Assembly that Indigenous people are environmentalists in their own way. We have always looked after the water, the land, and everything around us, and the animals. I think that it is extremely important that Indigenous people are part of the whole issue of climate change. I think, also, that, climate change, a piece of the whole development of the polytech in Inuvik will be an incredible solution for studying climate change, not only for the Northwest Territories but for Canada and for the world. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. [Translation] When you are speaking about climate change, it is a big issue in the North. When you look at it, there are a lot of changes in the environment, not only the water but the land, the animals, all of the things that are on the land. Even to make winter roads, it is getting difficult.

When you are talking about climate change, it has to be one of the priorities for the next four years, and I think that we can work on that all together. We have talked about it for the last four years, so I know a lot of people here want to work on it for the next four years. We have to also listen to the people in order to work on the climate change. We have to also include the young people and also the elders, who are almost like our doctors. We have to take all of the information from the elders, and the elders also have to work with the young people on this climate change. They are almost like our scientists. There are scientists all within Canada, but they are our scientists in the North, and we have to put them ahead with the climate change issue. Even in 50 to 100 years from now, we will see the results of their work. There are a lot of people who are southern people, who want to say we can do this and do it this way, but we have to learn to work together because we have different knowledge of this issue, the young people and the elders. When you are talking about climate change, it is extremely important because it affects our water, our land, and our animals. Thank you [translation ends].

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Next on our list, we have Ms. Semmler.

MS. SEMMLER: As we have heard loud and clear this past couple of weeks that the Indigenous governments do not have any trust in our government, can you tell me why you would be the best person who should represent us in building this relationship? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Semmler. First on our list, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. [English translation not provided.] [Translation] Sometimes it is difficult to work together. Sometimes we have issues that we cannot resolve, and now we have a lot of new MLAs. We also talk about having one voice. In order to go forward. We need to build trust among each other. We need to talk to each other about what is important to us in our region. Once we settle that and have a good relationship, we will be able to go forward. We need to keep an open communication with each other so that everyone knows what everyone else is doing. Also, in the Northwest Territories, we need to communicate with the Dene leadership and the mayors of the Northwest Territories because they have the grassroots information in their region. Sometimes, if we do not know this information, we are not able to resolve the issues at our table. I believe that working together and having trust among each other is very important. When I look at the past leadership, we did not have that in place, and everyone knows here, I have said this to the 18 Members here, we talked about our priorities and

how we can work together. In order to do that, we all need to work together. I would like to thank every one of the MLAs. Also, the leadership that's here, as well, I would like to thank them [translation ends].

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next on our list, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: [Microphone turned off] ...governments and building trust. Trust is not an easy thing. People often use it and say, I have often heard, "trust openly, and then, if it's taken away from you, don't trust again. Slap once, and be careful if you turn your head again." However, I will say that I have built my relationship over the last four years built on trust. I have been very honest in all of our bilaterals. Many chiefs, many Indigenous governments have called me. Many have my cell phone number, which is something I do not give out to everyone. They know it's an open-door policy. I have done things as a Minister, for Indigenous governments, that have not been done before. I am going to give you an example, even though my colleague is standing here, as well. Salt River: never before was there a housing unit put in that community, never before. As a Minister, I said "fairness to all." I was the first Minister to bring housing units into Salt River. I worked with Colville Lake. They are looking at a school. They have gotten some pushback saying, the department saying, "We want to do it on our own." I have given them my word we will work together. Trust is something that we have to build, we have to earn. It's not something that I am going to walk in and assume that we have. People, Indigenous people, have been hurt for many, many years, not only in their leadership but all of the people, so it's something that we have to be conscious with. The biggest way to build trust, in my opinion, is to be open and to be honest. I am not going to promise things I cannot deliver because, if I do that once, I have lost that trust. So I am honest. It is my strength and my weakness, and I think that most of the Indigenous governments know me by now and they know that my word is my honour. That is the most important thing that I can bring. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. When we met with the Indigenous leaders from around the territory last week, two weeks ago -- it's been a whirlwind; I can't really recall when it was; it was recently, though -- there was a strong desire, everyone who spoke had a strong desire, to improve relationships with the GNWT. It was clear that everyone had been frustrated in the past, but everyone saw this as an opportunity to move

forward, and we need to capitalize on that. We need to listen and understand why there is that lack of trust, not make assumptions, actually listen, and we have to address those issues. Like I said in my previous speech about accountability, I can say I am going to do a better job, and I am going to be more trustworthy, and I am going to listen more, but what about when I am gone? So what we need to do is put some procedures in place. The same way that the Cabinet and the Regular Members have communications protocols, we need that, those types of things, in place for Indigenous governments because I have heard the frustration that there will be a meeting and then there is no follow-up, maybe for months, maybe for years. Four years is the last one I heard where there was an issue that had just been unaddressed. So every time the government comes back to the table, the Indigenous government has to bring this issue back up again, and that is not acceptable. It's those kinds of things that we need to put in place so that, no matter who is in the office, we can maintain a level of trust. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Being in that leadership since 2007, an Indigenous leader, and then sitting around that table and listening to the Indigenous leaders on October the 17th was quite an experience sitting on the other side because I have lived that. I think the Indigenous people have to have a strong voice in changing the way government thinks. We are the majority of this Northwest Territories, and I take a very strong stand on making sure that all the claims that are outstanding are settled. I also make claim that all the land agreements that are implemented or have not been implemented with one section or two sections, that we ensure that we look at those. I think that it's extremely important that the trust is reinstated by this government. Our Indigenous people is a big file, and I know it thoroughly because I sat around that table since 2007. My commitment to my own people is that this will be done with honesty, with trust, with compassion, and ensuring that the people of the Northwest Territories benefit from all, because, when claims are settled and land agreements are settled, it benefits not only Indigenous people, but it benefits all the Northwest Territories, and then we can move forward to develop the economy. I am very compassionate about this file, and I am sure that you saw that the last couple of weeks. I want to thank everybody for the comments that I was willing to make. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next set of question, we have Ms. Thom.

MS. THOM: [Microphone turned off...] congratulations. This question is from one of my constituents from Inuvik Boot Leg. Actually, there was another question on climate change, but that was already asked. The question is: what would the candidates do to support families losing their children to the childcare system because of homelessness and the lack of support for them to care for their children? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Thom. First on our list, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: This is a big file. I have had the experience of dealing with this issue. Children who are apprehended and are put in permanent care is not the way to go. I think that the social workers work hard to try and keep the families together, whether it be an extended family or not. Many times, there are issues that are pending. I know that I have dealt with this issue many times, not only territorially but cross-border in Alberta and BC and different parts of Canada, because we have members from all over Canada. One situation that I had was in Edmonton. I had to have a colleague of mine and myself sit outside a deputy minister's office for four hours in order to get access because they were going to take a child away from a grandmother. It was a very emotional experience. I know that we waited outside that deputy minister's doors to make sure that we caught her when she was coming out. That's how persistent I was in the whole file, and we were successful.

I think that children are extremely important, and the start of their lifespan and making sure that we don't use the wheel to re-invent any residential school issues. We have to look after the child at a young age and try to keep them with the family and unite them with the family, whether it be extended family or stay with family. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is of interest to all of us. It was one of the priorities, as we said. Whether it be apprehension, foster care, kids being taken away from their family, I feel that, as a government, as we move forward, we need to promote more of an awareness of what kind of programs we have, after-care programs or even homes that they need to go to. One of our first priorities should be families in the communities. If there is not much available in a community, then at least in the region, so they don't lose their language or our culture or way of life. We have heard over and over from our elders, from our parents, from across the Northwest Territories, that their kids are taken away. Even in my region, some of the kids have been taken away for the last 10 to 15 years,

and some have lost their language, as well. We need to take that back and deal with it as part of our priority-setting. We have talked about it, and I think that it is very important that we deal with this first and foremost.

To deal with homelessness is another great example there of our most vulnerable. We have so many in our communities now, even here in Yellowknife, our own constituents who are wandering the streets. How can we make our program more equitable and also fairness across the board in the Northwest Territories? The NWT Housing Corporation programs are not meeting the needs of our people, especially the homeless. Let's be creative, be innovative, and let's fix that issue once and for all because we talk about it. Now we should take actions to deal with the most vulnerable people, our people, in the Northwest Territories. Masi, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I know you have asked us to speak slowly, but this is a passionate file for me, and I am going to try to speak slowly and try to get everything I need in there.

I came from a family who had serious addictions and serious family violence in the home, and so people think sometimes that that is a horrible story and they need to take that away. The big thing is that we loved our parents. When our parents were not drinking, when they were not physically abusive, they were the most wonderful people in our lives. We learned to hide our secrets. I knew that, if I spoke anywhere out of what was going on in my home, there was a risk of being taken away, and that is not the answer, and so we kept those secrets, and we experienced that violence for many years. We grew up with that violence, and it related in anger for most of us, all kinds of issues.

I spent my career, I moved into social work because I cared about people. Before I came into politics, every AGM with health and social services, I was at their meeting and saying, "What are you doing with these children? What are you doing with these children? Why are the numbers not going down? Why are they all Indigenous? What is going on?" I had my own children, and I struggled through that. I didn't know because of my bringing up, I didn't know how to bathe my children, I didn't know how to feed my children. I loved my children, and I needed help.

Thankfully, somebody reached out to me and I was provided into a women's centre, and they did give me the support. They showed me how to raise and bathe my children and feed my children and take

care of my children. Because we love our children. I am now a grandma, and I have a new baby. Well, she is three years old, and I love her dearly. I watched the young parents struggling and trying to make it, and I give them as much guidance and support as we can. Food, clothing, and shelter are basic needs. We should not be taking children away because of those. Those are basic needs. We need to make sure we support them. We need parenting support. We need supports for people.

I want to go into longhouses, the experiences in schools when communities, Indigenous communities, took care of their own. That would take way more than the 21 seconds I have left, but we need to work with Indigenous governments. The majority of these children are Indigenous. Indigenous people have the answers. People say it is residential school if we work with them and we support them, but it is not. Indigenous people need to take ownership and work hand-in-hand. They are the answer.

I am running out of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is an issue that cuts across the government, it cuts across departments, it involves housing, it involves health and social services, it involves ECE, and it involves the Indigenous governments. It involves communities, community governments. That is where the Premier's role is engaged here. You know, the Premier doesn't create health policy, but the Premier has to take responsibility. In the last Assembly, we had a scathing report from The Office of the Auditor General about our health and social services system. When there are situations like that, where there is something so fundamental to what we are as people, there is an issue like that, that is the time when the Premier needs to step up and say, "We are going to handle this."

Ultimately, this is something that, even though the Premier isn't going to be developing service delivery policy, the Premier has to stand up and say, "This is an issue that I am going to personally look into, and you can personally hold me accountable for it." That is something we haven't really seen in the past just because of the way our system is designed.

We need to do a better job engaging with Indigenous governments and implementing self-government, and building capacity in communities so communities can draw down the authority to run their own programs because, you know, people in the community know their community. They know the children in their community. They know the

people. The government can't do everything. The government shouldn't do everything, and we shouldn't try. We should engage the people who know how to do this type of work. In the role of the Premier, that is how I would deal with the situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Any further questions? Mr. Bonnetrouge.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Good morning to my colleagues. Good morning to the candidates running for Premier. I have not heard any specific strategies on addressing the issue of settling the land claims nor the self-government agreements in this House. Past Assemblies have reiterated the settling of land claims negotiations as a priority in order to share the lands for resource development and to create partnerships with the Indigenous governments of the Northwest Territories. A statement was made at the 18th Legislative Assembly, stating that they would create an oversight committee made up of Cabinet Members and Regular MLAs to give direction to the negotiating team in order to settle any and all outstanding land claim negotiations. However, that idea did not come to fruition.

I truly believe that creating the oversight committee ensures that this government is serious in settling all land claims and self-government agreements. If elected Premier, what will be your strategy to seeing negotiations finalized for the outstanding claims? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Bonnetrouge. First on our list, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was a Member of that committee, the Joint Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Relations, I believe it was called. Frankly, it was more of a place where we would go and get briefings from the government about what was going on. It wasn't really a place to give advice on these issues. That sort of exemplifies the type of changes that I would like to see going forward, where we take advantage of all of the skill sets that we have here in this Assembly, and we move forward making informed decisions.

Do I have a specific way that I would advance these claims? There is a lot going on. There are a lot of different tables, and I can't say that there is a specific offer that I would make, but there is definitely a different approach that you can take. Right now, the approach is that the GNWT and Canada make an offer to Indigenous governments, and it is sort of a "take it or leave it." There doesn't seem to be that back and forth. That authoritative way of dictating negotiations is what needs to change. We heard from the Indigenous

governments that they want to move forward, as well, and everyone says the GNWT is what is standing in the way. What we need is a willingness to change that. Like I have said before, nothing should be off the table. If it's a whole new way of doing business, if it's new people, then those are the things that we have to do.

The reason I got into politics is because I was tired of people talking and nothing seemingly changing. I have come to realize over the past four years that it is not enough to just sort of inch along here and do things slightly differently. Sometimes a big change is needed, and I think that, to settle some of these claims that have been going on for decades, a big change is needed, and I am willing to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I used the statement "win-win" before when we talked about going to the federal government, but we also need to carry that forward when we are dealing with our Indigenous governments. It has to be a win-win situation here. It can't be top-down. It can't be the GNWT making the direction. It certainly can't be the federal government making the direction.

We need to, first of all, build that trust that we have talked about, because the Indigenous governments don't have as much trust in us as we need to have. We need to bring things to the table. We need to be willing to put what we have out there, not "I'll give you a little bit and hope you don't ask for too much." Let's just be honest and put it out there and say, "This is what we have to offer."

The biggest thing that we need to do is we need to change. I keep hearing that it is GNWT and Canada against the Indigenous governments. That is not what I want to hear. We need to start hearing and practising that it is the GNWT advocating for the Indigenous governments when we talk about Ottawa. We all live on this land together. By fostering our relationships, by moving Indigenous governments into their own self-government, we will all become strong as a people. We say that all the time, so why don't we act on it? If we believe that, then that is how we should be walking.

I think that the most important thing that we need to do is actually sit down at the table, more meetings, regular meetings, build that trust with them, put out what we have to offer on the table, and then we need to work together in advocating to Canada. It can no longer be Canada directing the GNWT and forcing the Indigenous people to try to get crumbs on the bottom. It has to start with the Indigenous governments telling us what they want, the GNWT

being willing to work with them in a win-win situation, and then all of us advocating to the federal government.

I want to turn it around. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Well, having this file since 2007, every year around our annual meetings, we would hear the same thing: the claims are unsettled. I am very happy to say that it is one of our priorities. The thing that I have been hearing from the leaders of the Indigenous community is that they would like to have a negotiator who understands the claims for all of the outstanding claims and the self-government agreements. In some of the self-government agreements, there are two clauses that are not being looked at. Some of them have one clause that is extremely important to their development. I will ensure that they have a person on each claim who is familiar with the claim, who is Indigenous, for the Government of the Northwest Territories, so that we stop being obstacles to ensuring that those claims are supported, not only with our own government, but are supported to ensure that we get the best deal from the federal government for the Indigenous people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is, again, one of the first and foremost priorities that we discuss around the table. All 19 of us around this building support settling the two outstanding claims. As we stand here, we need to take the lead. We need to make that happen. Enough of this talk; let's put that into action.

The Member is asking what the steps are to be taken. One of the steps to be taken is to go outside of this building and meet with elected officials face-to-face, without any staff there. We are supposed to be giving direction to our staff to start discussions and implementations of such claims to be finalized. Those are discussions that we need to have, put everything on the table, and have a constant dialogue.

We need to have open communication with our Aboriginal leadership. We have heard last week from the NWT Indigenous government leaders that that is not the case. They rarely see government leaders or Cabinet Ministers. We have to improve in those areas. Working relations is very crucial at this point in order to finalize the two claimant groups. It is time that we start listening to our Indigenous

leaders across the North. They have told us to finalize it, and we need to start listening to them.

One of the elders' visions, obviously, is being united as one, all 19 of us here with our Indigenous leaders. We need to have one voice going to the federal government, and they obviously will be standing behind us, supporting us. We've heard loud and clear from our elders and from our Indigenous leaders that this needs to be the case, and I, for one, would like to push that forward. Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane. Sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself here. I was trying to give you a second chance. Next, we have Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Today before we get started, I'd like to welcome to the House, my mayor of Tuktoyaktuk and my deputy mayor, Mayor Merven Gruben, deputy mayor Erwin Elias. Former Member Mr. Nakimayak, welcome to the House. My wife and my son Joseph, it's good to have you guys here and everybody here.

Mr. Speaker-elect, as you are aware, this Legislative Assembly has 11 official languages in the territory, some strong and some not so strong, and we're losing our languages, especially in the riding where I am from, of Siglitun, Inuvialuktun, and Inuinnaqtun, Mr. Speaker-elect, and even the Gwich'in Nation is losing our language. In this government, this 19th Legislative Assembly, what are we going to do to promote and preserve our languages and the culture and way of life? It's time to take action and less talk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Now, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Speaker-elect. [Translation] Our language and culture is very important to us. It identifies who we are. The question that is posed to us, if we were to look at our languages, we talked about this as one of the priorities of the 19th Assembly, the 19 Members. We need to put that forward and make it stronger. We have all departments, and, if we take a look at our languages, it seems like it is under education but at the bottom of the list. I think it should be a different department for language, culture, and heritage. There are a lot of people who are advocating for that, and they are saying that we should make this as a priority and create its own department. Even our elders are in support of this. If we were to create a different department, I think it would be very important. If we had that as a separate portfolio of the government, the federal government would take us more seriously. We have all these

official languages, and the more we use our language, they would listen. When they look at us, they look at the Department of Education, and language doesn't seem to be a priority in Department of Education. I think we have to have our people use the language and to practise their culture. I think it's important that maybe we create our own portfolio. I think it will get stronger once we do that. As Dene people, Dene leadership would be very happy if we did that. It is their priority that we want to push forward. That's what they want us to do. Masi [translation ends].

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Language is culture. Language is important. As a Métis woman, I realize my family down in Paddle Prairie lost their language. They don't even know which language they speak anymore. They are desperately trying to regain language. I don't want to get there. I don't want to be a population of people who are struggling to find out who we are, to figure out what our language is. We have one of the strongest jurisdictions in the whole of Canada in our languages, but we are quickly losing them, so it has to be a priority. I believe language is more than culture. It's about self-esteem. When you can speak your language and you feel proud in what you speak, it makes you feel proud as a person. Taking away your language is one more chip to making people feel bad about themselves and to taking away a society.

Currently, the federal government does give the Government of the Northwest Territories money for language preservation and revitalization. We are doing some good work. We have money going into the education system. Some schools are bringing elders into their schools, taking children on the land. We're working within our whole government departments to actually have access so that those 11 languages aren't available just when we have the appropriate translators in the House, which I appreciate, but also when anyone phones to any government building, that they'll be able to speak their first language and actually get services. That's critical, but the key is there's also money that we give to the Indigenous governments.

I'm careful to say this because I see that it's important that we have money for schools to be able to promote it and that we have money to promote the GNWT for access to services, but I believe in my heart that the strongest way of retaining and revitalizing the languages is giving it to the Indigenous governments and letting them use the money to preserve. It is their language, and they know what they're doing, so I think that the best thing to do is again to sit down with them and talk to them and say, "This is what we're using the

money for. Is it the right way? Is it not?" and letting them take the lead. It's no longer appropriate for the GNWT to tell them how we will preserve their language and revitalize it. It's time for them to tell us what they want to do so that they can preserve their own culture and their own language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. These consensus government leaders' debates can get a little boring sometimes because often we're all on the same page and often we're all saying the same thing. We all recognize the importance of language.

Being in this House for the last four years, I've seen the growth of the use of language, and it's inspiring. I think that we need to see that across the territory, and I agree that we need to do a better job partnering with Indigenous governments, giving them the lead, perhaps, in this. We need to better raise our profile so that, when we go to the federal government, we can get more of those funds. Language isn't just a way to communicate. It's culture. If you have a stronger connection to your culture, you have better mental health outcomes, better education outcomes. If we are teaching children multiple languages when they're young, that does wonders for them. I know in Hay River, they attempted an intensive Dene Yatie program to complement their intensive French program, but they couldn't get the instructors to do 80 percent of the course load in Dene that they needed. We need to do more in order to do better. I've heard good ideas around the table here, and, going forward, I'd be happy to work with everyone and implement those.

Personally, I have a connection to this, as well, because my grandpa spoke Cree, Chip, English, and French. I spoke a little bit of French in high school, but right now, I'm just English, so I see how quickly how all of that can be lost, and we need to take action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have, Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Preservation of the Aboriginal languages is extremely important. I know the territorial government has done some great things because we were recipient of some of those things that were handed down. I know both schools in Fort Smith have access to both languages. Also the Head Start program, we teach some parts of that with the Aboriginal language. I think it's extremely important, though, that we do more than that. In my idea of the polytechnic university/university of the North, I think that there should be different sections

to that. The climate change and all that thing with the erosion of the shoreline in Tuktoyaktuk and the warming of the ocean in the Arctic, there should be a special department that is made up in Inuvik.

In Yellowknife, I feel, because we have the hospital here, that the medical centre should be situated here. We should be training our nurses. We should be training our technicians. We should be training our x-ray technicians. That should be our medical centre. The one in Fort Smith should be the place where a lot of the Aboriginal languages are studied, and the holistic approach to medicine could be in that place, also, the more cultural area for our people of the North, so that we preserve the languages.

I have lost my language. My father spoke Chipewyan, both my mother and my father, but they did not teach it to any of us, because it was a barrier to doing well in school in those days. I graduated without learning to speak my language, and I am sure it is a regret today. My parents both passed away, but I know that it is an extremely important part. The more languages you speak, the better it is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Ms. Cleveland.

MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations on your new position. I would also like to thank former Premier Joe Handley for joining us and thank him for his service.

Thank you to all of our colleagues who have put their names forward for Premier. My question today is: given the stressors caused by the last round of collective bargaining for public servants and the territory as a whole, and given our ongoing economic challenges, as Premier, what will you do to ensure a successful round of upcoming negotiations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cleveland. First on our list, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: That is a great question. I am very labour-friendly. I have always been very labour-friendly, because it is the people all through the ladder who do the work to ensure that the Northwest Territories moves forward.

I will listen. I will ensure that good decisions are made for both the government and for labour. I will always ensure that we don't have so many barriers, that we are able to sit across the table and mediate properly and in good faith. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is an area that we have gone through in government for quite some time now. Collective bargaining is always at the Cabinet table. It is very important that we look at and re-evaluate how we approach this. It is our community staff, community employees, and contractors. Those are discussions that, obviously, we are going to be having. I, for one, would like to have engagement with the union representatives and hear their perspectives, where they are coming from, and what their wish list is, basically, but we have to keep in mind that we have to educate them as well, that "our fiscal reality is this," and obviously, we need to compromise somehow.

As Ms. Cleveland alluded to, how can we be successful moving forward? If we have an open communication dialogue constantly, I believe that we can achieve that goal. Maybe not everybody will come to an agreement, but at the end of the day, I would like to see us moving forward to benefit the communities, the region, and the Northwest Territories as a whole, for our staff, our employees, and our contractors at a community level under the union representatives. I feel that we need to have the communication dialogue constantly going.

There has been a breakdown of communication in the past for various reasons, but at the same time, in order to achieve our goal, in order to finalize our deal, similar to land claims, let's meet. Let's constantly put it on the table and try to work on an agreement. We have done that in the past, and I believe that we can build on the relationship that we have and make it even stronger. Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I was on the Cabinet for the last collective bargaining with the union, and that was not a pleasant experience. I certainly don't recommend that anyone who puts their name for Cabinet forget what we experienced in the last Assembly. We need to learn from our mistakes. I was also, I believe, the only MLA that, after the fact, put on Facebook that we need to change this.

My understanding is that this went on for years and years. This is not okay. It is not okay that the union and the GNWT make this a personal battle between each other, because the victims are the people who are providing the services. They are the ones that we can't forget.

I put on my Facebook, and I am open to working with standing committee on it, because I'm not the expert on it, that we need to find a solution. That was on my Facebook a couple of years ago when

that all went down, over a year ago, I believe it is. It has been fast; life goes fast.

We need to look at our Public Service Act. Right now, the Public Service Act says that we have the right to go into negotiation and mediation. It does not have the right to go into binding arbitration. When the motion was made, if it had said binding mediation, we could have stood up, because that is within the act. If binding arbitration is something that the people want, then we should be willing to put it back on, but not compromising by saying, "Take away the strike vote," because that's punitive. We need to work with that.

I also believe, in the Public Service Act, that we need to have timelines. Again, I am open to feedback on that, because I am not the expert on this, but it is not okay, what we are doing. Let's put a timeline. People should not have to wait years and years to get through each process. There should be a timeline: negotiation is this long at maximum, and then it moves to the next step, that long maximum, then it move to the next step. I don't usually like to be punitive, but maybe we need to look at consequences if the union and the GNWT do not meet those timelines and do not do that.

We need to start in good faith and move forward, but we can't forget that these are people's lives. I got calls during that time, and it broke my heart, of people crying and saying, "If I don't have a paycheque, I can't feed my children," and that stays with me forever. This should not be an adversarial process. We need to work. We need to make it better, and it cannot be lip service. We need to look at our act and figure out how we can strengthen it so that we have the best interests of our employees always. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The thing that we need to do, I believe, is improve our relationship as the elected Members with the public service. We need to show respect to the public service, and we need to listen to their concerns so that they don't get dealt with during contract negotiations. That is the worst time to try to deal with everyday concerns.

That is why I talk about things like having some sort of a feedback loop, where these frontline concerns that people are talking about for years on end actually get dealt with. A lot of times, the complaints are things related to mental health. We heard them talk about that in the contract negotiations. Well, if you are listening to people, and you are improving the situation on an ongoing basis, those don't become concerns.

We need to do a better job with the timing of these meetings. I thought that I was an idiot because I would look at these meeting schedules and see months in between them. I thought, "Oh, I guess that's how negotiations go. It doesn't make any sense to me, but these guys must know what they're doing." No. You can't wait six months between meetings. You need to be at the table and hammer something out.

I know that there are practical issues, but we have to get over that. We almost had a strike here. There were businesses around the territory that were hurting. There were people who didn't go travel to see their families, because they didn't know if they were going to be able to afford it. These are real life issues.

The other thing that we need to do is have better communications amongst ourselves during negotiations, because as a Regular Member in the last Assembly, I didn't know what was going on until basically the eleventh hour when we got a briefing, maybe two briefings, during that entire time. Again, the Regular Members need to be able to provide feedback and show the public service that, as the elected Members, we are all concerned about this issue.

Those are some of the changes that need to happen because not only does no one want that to happen again, but we can't have it happen again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next on our questions, we have Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, on being acclaimed again.

I just wanted to start off by recognizing someone in the gallery, Mr. Tom Beaulieu, who was in my seat here for several years, many years in the public service, Housing as a Minister and as a Regular Member. On behalf of the world, I want to say a big mahsi cho for your service.

I want to start off just making a quick comment, and, just to make sure that my question is fairly simple, I will give you some context. I have spoken with a lot of my constituents about their interactions with the government. One common theme I seem to hear is, "Oh, you know, we always seem to run into barriers. We always seem to run into red tape. There are always these obstacles." What I mean by that is, if you are a small business, there is something going wrong with the BIP policy; if you are a struggling single mom who wants to get into housing, you have some policy that is blocking your way to get into your home; or, if you are a job applicant who has earned the way and worked really hard to get an education, you still can't get a

job within our government ranks, affirmative action. Early on here, we had some discussions about our policy and policy restructuring, so my question to the Premier-candidates is: of these three policies I mentioned, BIP, affirmative action, and housing policies, what do you feel needs immediate attention in this 19th Assembly? Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Norn. First, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I didn't quite catch the end of it, but I think my comment on these policies and what needs to be changed, basically, the Member is correct. There is a lot of red tape. One of my biggest concerns with service delivery is the service delivery. There seems to be a default to "no." When there is an issue and someone needs help, the default answer is "no" when it should be, "How can we help? You know, how can we get to the answer?" Yes, there are policies in place and we need to be accountable, so we need to follow those policies, but there are ways to get things done. We have to remember we are in the customer-service business. From the top down, I have noticed there seems to be this notion that the government isn't necessarily there to serve the people. It's sort of attitude of "We are doing you a favour," and we need to change that mentality. It has to happen right from the top down, and that goes across all policies.

We have housing policies. Sometimes, people can't get into houses because there are just not enough houses. You know, in Hay River, we just don't have places to put people right now, so that is one barrier and that one I understand, but, if it is something where everyone who is looking at the situation says, "This doesn't make sense," there should be a way to rectify the situation. We shouldn't just say, "Nope, that is what the policy says," and then move on. That goes for everything.

I have a minute here to talk about affirmative action and the Business Incentive Policy, and I am not going to be able to touch on them, basically, the way that they need to be, but it has been acknowledged that those policies need to be looked at. We need to make sure that they are serving their purpose. For a long time, according to a lot of people, they haven't been. It has been clear from what I have heard in the public and from the Members here that we need to re-examine those.

You know, if I am Premier, I will do what I can in that role to ensure that not just those policies are looked at but policies across the territory have a focus on service delivery and customer service. That is one of the reasons that I am actually running, is because the Premier's position is the one who gives the mandate letters to the deputy ministers and to the Ministers. Mandating a better

customer service is something that the Premier can do, and that is my plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: I think all three policies are extremely important. The whole BIP policy, we have to ensure that our local and our northern contractors are addressed because we have heard many times that a lot of the monies are flowing out of the NWT, and we cannot let this happen if we want to build an economy that we are going to ensure that the money stay here, so that is an extremely important policy.

The housing policy, also, we know there is a shortage of housing, and it is one of our priorities that we looked at. As Premier, I would make sure that we ensure that we rebuild on those policies to make sure that we address all the issues that the Indigenous governments have come forward to us about because it affects mostly the Indigenous population and the population as a whole, the low income people.

The Affirmative Action Policy, I think we have to review the way it is being implemented because I have heard, also, many times, lots of complaints about the way the Affirmative Action Policy has been implemented. Sometimes, the implementation is not the way it should be, and we have to be more open and transparent and accountable of how we hire our own people, all the North, the people who lived here and work here, and we must address that issue very carefully.

I will take a strong stand on any policy that is not addressing the issues of the Indigenous governments and the people of the North, all the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. The interaction with the GNWT as a government and Indigenous leaders, I think it is very crucial that we hear from them. We have heard clearly just last week, NWT Indigenous leaders, that these three areas they have raised over and over. They want us to do something about it. In the past, obviously, this has been a barrier, an obstacle, for community members, contractors, business, and it hasn't really benefited our communities. The BIP process obviously is a challenge right now. We hear from our community members that a lot of contracts have been awarded outside of the NWT, no benefits to the communities. That needs to put a stop to it.

Affirmative Action. We have had 32 percent. Now it is 29. It is going down. Our GNWT affirmative action is not working for our people, for our staff, so it is a concern to me. The Housing Corporation, that alone we can speak all day in this House. We need to be proactive, Mr. Speaker-elect. We always seem to be reacting to certain things that are coming up. Let's be proactive. The policies are there as guidance for our senior staff to start implementing with the communities. We, standing here as Premier and Cabinet Ministers, are supposed to take that lead to get direction to our staff. I don't see that happening, and I, for one, would like to push that forward and make it happen. We need to lead these Northwest Territories, and these three critical areas need some revamp of the policies. Policies can be amended. It is not legislating, so, Mr. Speaker-elect, let's move forward on making positive changes in these areas so it benefits our communities, our businesspeople, and the Northwest Territories as a whole. Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. My first instinct was to say food, clothing, and shelter, housing is important. If your business is failing, how are you going to pay your rent? If you don't have a job, how are you going to pay your rent? However, in honesty, Mr. Speaker-elect, neither of those are the most important in my opinion. They are all huge priorities. The most important thing is give the power back to the people. Let the people. It is not for the government to determine.

I had over 20 years' experience working with homeless people, and when I look over Housing, I did not stand here and say that I had all the answers, because I was old enough and smart enough to know that I didn't have all of the answers, but the people did.

The first thing that I did with the Housing portfolio was that I sent a survey across to every residence in the NWT, and I asked the people. From the people's voice, we divided that up into short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals, and then every time I stood in this House, I was able to say, "We did this, we did that, we did this, we did that," but it wasn't my work. It was the people's direction. You know what? I never got slaughtered in the House, because I listened to the people. All of the Regular MLAs couldn't fight that, because they knew that it was the people's voice.

Then I got Education and income support, and it was a huge file with not enough time and a lot of things coming at once, but I wanted to get to income support. I never got enough done, but the

first thing I did was income support. For the first time in history, I gathered all of the NGOs that I could and the clientele on income support together. "Nothing about us without us." We did the same process. I said that you can give me a basketful of problems, and then I have a basketful of problems, or you can give me the solutions. We spent a day. It was so powerful, Mr. Speaker-elect. They had flip charts all over the room, and they wrote solutions that were incredible, and we did the same thing. We did short-term, mid-term, and long-term. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker-elect, I never had enough time in the last Assembly, so we only got a few things ticked off of the short-term goals.

My direction, if elected to be your Premier, to every single Cabinet Minister is: you work. You engage. You don't just consult. You do not know it all. You engage the stakeholders applicable to your files. You are here to serve the people. Serving the people does not mean telling the people that you are the boss, you know all. Serving the people means asking the people and listening to them and making your decisions based off of the direction of the people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Colleagues, members of the public, I would like to take this time to recognize our newly re-elected Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, Mr. Michael McLeod. I would also like to recognize former Premier Joe Handley and former MLA Kieron Testart.

At this time, we will take a 15-minute break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): I now call the Territorial Leadership Committee back to order. Ladies and gentlemen, next we have on our list, Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations on becoming the Speaker tomorrow. It is my understanding that the Dehcho is taking a different approach now with their negotiations. They want to focus on taking the responsibility of education, housing, and potentially language to start with. This is a unique approach, which I support.

As the Premier moving forward, how are you going to be able to work with the Dehcho leadership on this new direction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. First on our list, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is actually really exciting news. I am really glad to hear this, actually. It is one of my passions.

When I actually took over as the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, I have to say that it was a pretty easy file because the first thing that I said to them was, "Community development, are we giving the say to the community and the Aboriginal organizations?" and MACA said, "We're there." That was great. That's all about giving power to the people. That's what I have said.

I actually, also, was working with a chief in one of the communities, and I won't say which, who unfortunately lost his seat. At that time, we were talking about bringing down Housing. I was the Housing Minister at that time. The election changed, and so we need to rebuild that relationship.

I am really excited that governments are looking at this. My opinion, to work with them, it is not about telling them, "This is how we do it. This is our system." We need to give them the money for our system. "This is our system. This is how we spend our money." Community development is really about listening to them and providing support.

As the GNWT, our role isn't to say, "We know best, and we will tell you how to do it," but it's to say, "We are supporting you. What do you want from us?" and "We are there to support you in actualizing your own community self-government," because self-determination is the answer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and thank you to the Member for bringing it forward. This is probably the most exciting news -- well, potentially the second-most exciting news, potentially, of the day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is a unique case, obviously. It is one of the claims that has been ongoing for many, many years, and I believe, from my understanding, the reason that Dehcho is at this point is because there has been such a roadblock to getting a deal regarding lands and resources, which is generally how things are done. You get the land and the resource base, and then you start doing the other things, the service delivery.

Instead of just accepting the fact that there is this problem with land and resources, and negotiations have broken down, can we look at moving that forward? That is the first thing that I would do, is figure out what those issues are, but like I said, nothing is off the table. We need to keep an open-minded approach and move forward for the benefit of the people. What is going to benefit the people on the ground, the people receiving these services, the most? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Being at the main table with Grand Chief Norwegian was an inspiration. She's a great thinker, and if there has been a change of direction in their land claim, it was always the position from Salt River that we supported the Dehcho claim. If it takes a different direction, the support will always be there.

I think that calling her and asking her for clarification of the direction that they are taking is important, and I am willing to do that. I think that the Dehcho claim has got to be settled so that the region prospers with that whole region. It is good not only for the region but for the whole Northwest Territories, and I support the completion of the Dehcho claim.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. I believe that we are all on the same page with this file. Obviously, we have to respect their approach if it's a different direction. As we have heard just last week from the grand chief, we have to be open-minded. As the GNWT going forward with the two outstanding land claims and self-government negotiation, if there is a will to negotiate education and housing and potentially language, let's be there with them. Let's support them. If they need space from us, then let's respect that, as well. They want to get their claims settled, and we feel the same way, too. Both parties, along with the federal government, I believe we can go a long way, but we have to be open-minded and respect their direction and their approach, as well. Mr. Speaker-elect, at the end of the day, we are empowering the communities to have the full authority to deliver these core programs, education, housing, and language. Others can follow eventually, but they want to settle on those three terms, and I fully support that, as well, going forward. Any opportunity that comes to our table, if it is going to be achieved within the next four years, by all means, let's pursue it and let's get it done. Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. I would like to take this time to recognize Mr. Henry Zoe, former Minister, former MLA. Thank you.

Next on our list, we have Ms. Wawzonek.

MS. WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations again.

For the last three weeks or so, we have all, I believe, every one of us, at some point said how important consensus is, the value of it, the value of

making decisions together as a group, where we do that by listening to every voice as equals. The role of Premier sets itself aside and sets itself apart from that. My question is actually quite simple, but sometimes those are the most difficult. I would like to know why it is that you are seeking this office. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Wawzonek. First, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. [Translation begins] The consensus style government is one that works together. Well, the reason I am running for Premier is because I want to see some changes. The previous government had difficulty working together, but, now that we have a new government, we all want to work together. Not only us as a government here but all the northern Aboriginal governments want to work together, but we also have to work with the federal government at the same time. We just had an election for federal government, which is Michael McLeod. I am very happy that he is re-elected. I know that he is there to support the people of the North. That is one of the reasons we run for office, because we want to see some changes, the way the people live in the North. People in the North have given us what they want us to do. We know that there are policies that we don't really like. There are lots of people who are in poverty who we have to help and listen and take care of them, so we have to have good communication. That is the only way to work together.

We also have to listen to our elders from the past. We have to listen to each other and speak as one voice. Here, we are sitting here as a government. We have to hold each other and support one another. Well, one of the important things is we have to listen to the northern people and support whatever it is that they want to have done either in their government or their regions. We have to support them for the next four years. That is one of the reasons I have put my name forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect [translation ends].

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The question of why I am seeking this office was a question I had to ask myself many times. In fact, it was a question I asked myself four years ago when I ran to be an MLA. For most of my life, I have heard the saying, "You can make changes from the outside in. You can make changes from the inside out." I tried that. I spent over 20 years working with low-income people saying, "Help us, help us, help us," and no one helped us. For over 20 years, we never got an increase: \$30,000 a year of core funding to support homeless women. I spoke on

that before. I talked to people who worked in the bureaucracy, people who worked for the government, and I heard their frustrations, and I thought, "Well, even from the inside out, you are struggling to make change" because often, they said, "This is your job description. If you don't like it, you can leave."

Then one day, an epiphany came across, and I thought, "Why do we always talk the inside out and the outside in? Why don't we talk about being the top?" At that time, I decided to put my name forward, and it wasn't power and control. In all honesty, Mr. Speaker-elect, this is not an easy job. I came from the NGO world, where people love me, and the only people who fought against me were the government. Then I came into a place where half the people love me and half the people, most of them don't even know me, hate me with such passion.

I believe the reason that I am here is because we can do better. I came in here hearing about consensus government and hearing it was based on an Aboriginal policy, a place of doing business where each person has a say and each person is valued for their input, and I haven't seen that. See, it is different, being a Premier is totally different, than being a Minister or a Regular MLA. The job as an MLA is to fight for your people, to keep us accountable. The job as a Minister is to make sure your departments work hard and get the changes done. The job of a Premier, Mr. Speaker-elect, is to bring together the Members of the Assembly. We won't always agree, but, Mr. Speaker-elect, my experience, my background, and my heart, my heart is why I am here, and I will work hard, as hard as I can, all of us together, to make sure that every Member's voice is heard and that they have a say, and that the people, more importantly, have a say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I am running for this role because I see that there are things we can do to improve our system of government and improve the way the government functions and serves the people of the territory. Consensus government is still very young. It is a very young form of government, and there is room for improvement. Things that have changed: I saw some improvements in the last four years, but there is much more room for improvement. We need to start doing those things, and we need to understand that we need to improve. It needs to be ongoing. It is not something where you get in the office and you make changes the first week and that is it. No, we have to have a culture where we are always looking at how we govern and always looking to make improvements. I want to change

the expectations in consensus government. I want someone to take accountability. As I have stated, it is all Members' responsibility to hold Ministers and the Premier accountable, but, when it is everybody's responsibility, it seems like it is no one's responsibility, and we need a Premier who is going to say, "I am going to take that responsibility. The buck is going to stop here." I want that expectation to continue forward into future Assemblies.

There is the customer service aspect that I spoke about earlier. The government needs to be re-oriented so that it has a focus on service delivery and not defaulting to "no." The default answer has to be, "Okay, maybe this doesn't work, but we'll see how we can help you. How can we get to 'yes'?"

I have seen governments overreach, the government getting into areas where maybe they shouldn't be, the government competing with the private sector in certain ways, not in all ways. I mean there are some enterprises that they have to get into, but there is a notion that the government is the authority and it is somehow superior to the private businesses, to Indigenous governments. That mentality needs to change as well. The economy needs to be addressed. I was standing up in this House for four years. My very first speech was about the economy in the South Slave, and I rarely see mention of that anywhere, in the media, and other than myself in this House, rarely from anyone else. I won't say that. I won't say that about my colleague from the Nahendeh. However, we need to have a focus on that because that has been lacking, as well.

The other thing I wanted to do in this role is help advance some of these things that should have been done 50, 60, 70 years ago to help make the territory self-sufficient. You know, we always say, "Oh, I wish this Mackenzie Valley Highway was built 50 years ago, but we can't do it now." Well, if we don't do it now, they are going to be saying the same thing in 50 years later, so we have to do that, as well. The main thing I wanted to do was give the power back to the people, Mr. Speaker-elect. That is through things like ensuring everyone has access to the amazing wealth of this territory and ensuring everyone has quality education. Thank you for the extra couple of seconds.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you. I feel I have the personal qualities of a good leader. I'm compassionate, I'm strong, and I feel that I'm a thinker. I have a balance that I bring to the table of knowing the issues of the Indigenous governments and bringing solutions. I also know that the economy is a big part of the whole picture, and I

bring to you an accruelement of 40 years or more in the private sector. I bring a balance, a balance that is required at this time in our history of the Government of the Northwest Territories. I bring new ideas. I bring hope. I bring togetherness. I look around this table, and I see 18 other MLAs who want the same thing, and I think that, as a group, with our partnerships of all levels of government, municipal, our government, the federal government, and the private sector, we can do it together. We must have hope that the future of the Northwest Territories and the future generations of all people of the Northwest Territories will benefit from our decisions because our decisions made around this table benefit everyone and affect everyone. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next on our list, we have Ms. Chinna.

MS. CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. My question is in regards to mental health and addiction. Right now, the Northwest Territories does not have a facility for our clients to be attending these facilities in the Northwest Territories. They have to go south. I'm talking about the mental health patients or the incarceration inmates, that, once they are in these facilities, they have a proper diagnosis South, but, when they come back North and they return back to their communities, there's no support for them to integrate them back into a regular lifestyle. I think that it's an ongoing process. They either end up back in their addiction situation or else they are repeat offenders. As a Premier and as a government, what will you do to support our people returning back to our home communities, to deal with their mental health and addiction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Chinna. First on our list, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Mental health and addiction is an issue that affects each and every family, no matter what gender. Anyone and every family in the Northwest Territories are affected by some form of addiction, and it's a very important issue. The mental health issue is usually a trauma that happened with the residential school system, it could have been with trauma in early life. There are so many aspects to this whole question. As an advocate for it, I want to tell you that, in my former role, we had several on-the-land programs of six-week duration. We had a full team from Poundmaker's that did it, and it included the whole community, no matter from which background you came.

The one thing we always said was the six weeks, and then we also developed the full programs with the meetings, and then after that, it's the after-care. Families were all involved in this whole situation,

and I'm very, very favourable to make sure that the mental health and addictions issues is one of the priorities that I ran on in my mandate at the local level. It's one of my mandates at this level, and I'm sure it's the mandate of everyone around this room. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. Obviously, mental health is very complex when we're dealing with the community members. We talk about the lack of facilities in the Northwest Territories. We have to ship them out down south, and no support upon their return. One of the areas we need to increase that we talked about on the round table, even we heard from Indigenous leaders across the Northwest Territories, is having our culturally respected, community-based, on-the-land program with the target of mental health and addiction, utilizing our elders -- our elders are like teachers; they're like doctors in the community -- and community members. Those individuals are highly qualified, in our view, from the community's perspective, and we need to utilize their services. They're not going anywhere. They'll be in the community. They're there to offer support and help.

After-care program, we seem to be lacking. Every time we have people shipped down South, there's not much support upon their return. Let's focus on programs that they're offering down South, wherever they happen to be, part of their addiction or mental health and what's been offered over there. Could we expand even further in the Northwest Territories? On-the-land programming is a must. We have so many talented people in the community that we need to utilize their services. This is one area that our community can get involved. It takes a whole community. We've always heard that it takes a whole community to raise a child for beautification of our community and the wellness of our community. We have to start from the community grassroots level, and that's where I want to push forward on this particular important piece of work on mental health and addiction, Mr. Speaker-elect. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Mental health and addictions is huge across the Northwest Territories, and I think we have to start within Cabinet. Last Assembly, and I'm thinking it was a good idea and we need to move forward with it, is we had what was called a social issues committee. Part of the members was justice, health, housing. I would like to see human resources as part of that, as well.

We need to sit down as Members because we always talked about programs, so we talked about, debated about, programs, but we never started with developing a philosophy of care. I think that's what we need to do first as Ministers. We need to develop within the social programs: What is our philosophy around caring for people? That's the start. Then, I think we need to move. I'd like to be able to promise treatment centres in every community. That's not going to happen. We don't have the resources. We're all aware of that. Even if we had the resources, it would take many years.

Way back in the day when I was in university, there was a community called Delcauli Lake, and it was a dry community, and so I have to say that was some of it, but the chief and the community put their resources into their people, so, when people went out for treatment, they worked with the whole family, and they developed it with the family. They went in, and they painted their houses. They took care of them, so, when the people came back from the addictions, they had a new life. It wasn't the same environment that they had gone from. It was bright and fresh, and they had worked with their family. I followed it for years, and, sadly, the community had a change in leadership, and they opened up the community. It was no longer dry. The chief didn't believe in the philosophy. The supports weren't there.

What I'm saying, Mr. Speaker-elect, is we can't do this alone. We need the communities to help us with this, and we need everyone. It does take a community to raise a child. It takes a community to have a healthy community. We need to work together in addressing this after-care. The supports when they come home are critical, and, if we can't get a community there, then the least we can do, the very least, is to at least make sure they have a home when they come back. It's not okay. If we send them out and we haven't changed things when they come back, we're setting them up to fail, and that is not the answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. You know, when the Assembly puts together its list of priorities, this may be on there or this may not be on there, regardless, this is something that the government should be doing. It's one of the most basic services the government should provide, is ensuring that the people have a basic level of health. When you're suffering from mental health or addictions, you don't have that basic level of health.

This issue is cyclical. It will keep repeating itself unless we put an end to it, and it has ripple effects across the community and across generations. The

government often focuses a lot on symptoms; we need to start focusing on causes. We talked a lot about investing. Well, if we invest in people, we can save money later on. If you want to look at it from a strictly financial point of view, this issue engages multiple departments; Housing, ECE through income assistance, Health and Social Services, Justice sometimes, and so what we need, and what I propose, is like a policy unit that is responsive to Cabinet and accountable to Cabinet that can put together a broad approach to fixing this.

Right now, we have Health with solutions, Housing does some things, but we need to have a program, a policy, a way of doing things that ignores the fact that we have all these different government departments. We need to say: how do we fix the problem? Not how can this department fix the problem, what can this department do to fix the problem, what can this department do. Then we need to implement that, and we need to make sure that it's actually working; and, if it's not, then we change it.

Those are the kinds of changes I'd like to make as Premier, so that there is more accountability and we don't just stand up in this House and say, yes, this is a problem. Obviously, it's a problem. We all know what a dire problem it is, but how are we going to change it? You know, we say we are concerned about it, but what changes are you going to make to how we do business? Because everyone has been concerned about it for a long time, so we need to change the way we do business.

Like we've all been saying, now, for days, partnerships; partnerships with Indigenous governments, partnerships with communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next on our list we have Mr. Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I would also like to thank the four candidates running for Premier. We all just came off a long-fought election, and trying now to lead this House of politicians takes courage. I also think this competition, no matter who wins today, will come out better because of it. It means you all have to listen, you all have to compete with each other.

The Premier, more than any of us, makes a sacrifice in that, when they become Premier, they must put aside their own personal priorities, sometimes the priorities of their constituencies, sometimes their own political priorities, as we as 19 Members will table our priorities that we have set for the next four years. So my question to you is simple: if you become Premier, are you willing to put aside your own personal priorities and, at times,

the priorities of your constituents in order to be Premier? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Johnson. First on our list, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Putting aside your own personal priorities, it goes without saying. That is the role and, if you don't do that, you have no credibility, you have no legitimacy, and the Assembly should rightly remove you from that office, if it's clear that you are putting your personal priorities above those of the Assembly.

The second part of the question, about your constituents' priorities, is another thing altogether. Regardless of who is Premier, they are still the only MLA for their constituency, and I would expect them to fight just as hard as they would if they were a Regular Member for their constituency, but there has to be that divide. You have to take a holistic view, but your constituents can't be left without a representative.

So it is a balancing act, and I can see our concerns with that. You know, unless we want to elect a Premier at large, we want something like the United States, where you are elected by everyone, we have that system, and that's the same system in Canada; but, like I said, the premier needs to be accountable. The buck has to stop somewhere and, failing that, the Assembly has to keep them accountable, and I would fully expect that, if a Premier is putting their personal preferences above their role and their duties as Premier, that the Assembly would remove them, as they should, and I would support that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: I think an objective person, and making decisions on our priorities that we set as a group, is extremely important. Non-biased opinions are extremely important. Ethical values and honesty to what all of us have decided are the priorities is of utmost importance, and I will ensure that those are kept. Any decision that I make will be good for all of the Northwest Territories. I will not put an issue forward on a personal basis at any time. I think that we still have to serve our constituents. I will do that also in an objective manner to ensure that everybody on the Northwest Territories is served equally. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Mr. Lafferty.

MR. LAFFERTY: Masi, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is a good question to not only the Premier, but the Cabinet and the government leaders. Putting aside personal priorities, I believe it's a must. Obviously there are code of conducts we have to follow, as

well, within the Legislative Assembly. To put aside the priorities of constituents, it is a balancing act. We were elected as MLAs; we will continue to serve as MLAs for the next four years, but there are ways of working around that. When you become the Premier, you have a different role. I have stated in the past, when you become a Cabinet Minister, you put your MLA hat on the side and you focus on implementing your department's goals and objectives, but at the same time you have your staff who can deal with constituencies issues; but you cannot let go of that. It's always going to be there. You need to work with it. So it is a balancing act, but like I said, there are ways of working around it as a Premier. We've done that in the past, and I've had a Cabinet and also the Speaker's role. As Speaker, obviously you didn't have questions in the House, but there are other areas where I had the opportunity to access, obviously, the Premier and Cabinet.

Those are some of the areas that we can improve on as working relations. Mr. Speaker-elect, constituencies, we are still their MLAs and we will continue to do so, but there are ways of working around it. Masi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Lafferty. Next, we have Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. When I did my speech a couple of days ago, it feels like weeks ago, I talked about not deciding which priority was the key, because we would all take part in that, but I also talked about which were priorities to me, and that was about showing who I was. Showing my heart, showing where my concerns are. I recognize that we are developing our priorities. We all had input in that. I also had a chance to speak in that process, and we decided, each of us, we will finish up the defining of the priorities, and that's the Premier's job, is to move those forward. However, recognizing that departments and work still goes on above and beyond our priorities, I think that was a stress for many Members. If it wasn't on the list, it's not going to get done.

So opening up my heart and showing who I was kind of showed the direction that I would be going as a person; take it or not, that's who I am. The priorities of constituents, they have to come first. They have to come first, but that's why we have constituent assistants. It's tough, being a Premier. It's tough, being a Cabinet Minister. Your time is very limited, and you are pulled in all directions. So the priorities of my constituents should be, as Premier, your job is to take the responsibility for all residents, but if a constituent comes to me and says, I can't get in my house, income support has cut me off, I'm struggling as a small business, how is that not the needs of all residents? Because my

gut is telling me, if one person says it, there are many people in many communities saying it, as well.

One thing I can promise, though, in my riding of Range Lake, if I'm the Premier, you will not see a huge skyscraper in my riding. You will not see a major infrastructure project in my riding unless all Members say it is the best thing for the Northwest Territories. So dealing with constituents' issues, they should be able to relate to issues throughout. Doing special privileges because I want your vote, that will not happen. I would rather be defeated and knowing I can hold my head high and say I was ethical, as I have done throughout the last four years, and that will be how I guide myself. I have shown that in the last four years, and I would rather lose an election by being ethical than win an election because I have done some kind of special favours for people in my riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Colleagues, it appears that there are no further questions for the Premier-candidates. Before we vote, I want to thank all candidates who agreed to put their names forward for Premier. This was a long morning, but you have given us all confidence that whoever is chosen to be our Premier will be up for the job. I think this experience indicates that the process we use to select the Premier is an open and transparent one.

Voting

Members are now asked to proceed to the Clerk's Table where they will receive their ballot. If Members could then please proceed to the voting booths to mark their ballot and then place it in the ballot box located in front of the Clerk's Table. Members, when you come to get your ballots at the table, please come to the clerk on the side of the Chamber where you are seated. In other words, Members on my right should get their ballots from the Clerk on my right, and vice versa. Please proceed.

---Voting commences

There being no one else wishing to vote, I will now proceed to vote, myself. Thank you.

---Voting commences

Ladies and gentlemen, I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will be now taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. It is my duty to announce that there is a need for a second ballot for the position of Premier. The nominees for the second ballot are, in alphabetical order, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Lafferty, and Mr. Simpson.

Before we proceed to the vote, are there any nominees wishing to withdraw at this time? There being no such withdrawals, the ballots are available as before. Please proceed to vote.

---Voting commences

Are there any more Members wishing to vote who have not voted yet? There being no one else wishing to vote, I will now proceed to vote, myself.

---Voting commences

I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, everyone. It is my duty to announce that there is a need for a third ballot for the position of Premier. The nominees for the third ballot are Ms. Cochrane and Mr. Lafferty. If Members could please proceed to the Clerk's Table, the ballots are available before you.

---Voting commences

Are there any more Members wishing to vote who have not voted yet? There being no one else wishing to vote, I will now proceed to vote, myself.

---Voting commences

I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office, where the ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

Results

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Now, the moment you have all been waiting for. Ladies and gentlemen, I declare that you have elected Ms. Cochrane as your Premier-elect.

---Applause

Congratulations. The appointment will be confirmed tomorrow by motion in the House. I would now like

to give Ms. Cochrane an opportunity to say a few words.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I never actually made a written speech for today, so I'm going to speak from the heart.

I want to begin by thanking all of the people, all of the people of the Northwest Territories, for having faith in me. I thank my constituents for allowing me to get back in. I thank all of the MLAs for their votes, not only for me but for all Members, and I thank the Members who stood forward and put their name. I know, personally, it was very challenging and not easy. My commitment to all of you, though, is that I have heard it, and we need to work better together. For each Member who stands here, my commitment is to always have an open door, to put my heart in the people, and to hear your words, because together we make a stronger government and, working together with our Indigenous and community organizations and the NGO world, we will make these next four years the most progressive government in the Northwest Territories. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker-elect.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. I will now adjourn our proceedings for this morning for lunch. We will reconvene at 1:00 p.m. this afternoon for the election of the Executive Council. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

Confirmation of Process for Election of Cabinet

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Colleagues, I would like to call the Territorial Leadership Committee back to order. The next item on our agenda is the election of Members to the Executive Council. In accordance with our agreed-upon procedures, I will ask Members to indicate whether they wish to allow their names to stand for the Executive Council positions. The 2-2-2 geographic balance on Cabinet will govern all aspects of this selection process. Once Members indicate their interest, we will entertain a 10-minute speech from each nominee before we proceed to voting. Let's get things underway.

Election of Ministers

Nominations

I will ask all Members from the northern constituencies who wish to allow their names to

stand for a position on the Executive Council to please rise. Thank you.

Ms. Chinna, Mr. Jacobson, and Ms. Thom have indicated they wish to be considered for Executive Council membership.

I would now ask all Members from the Yellowknife constituencies who wish to allow their names to stand for a position on the Executive Council to please rise. Thank you.

Ms. Green, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, and Ms. Wawzonek have indicated they wish to be considered for Executive Council membership.

To bring this portion of our proceedings to an end, I would now like to ask all those Members from the southern constituencies who wish to allow their names to stand for a position on the Executive Council to please rise. Thank you.

Mr. Bonnetrouge, Ms. Martselos, Mr. Simpson, and Mr. Thompson have indicated they wish to be considered for Executive Council membership.

Therefore, the nominees for the Executive Council positions are as follows: from our northern constituencies, we have Ms. Chinna, Mr. Jacobson, and Ms. Thom; from our southern constituencies, we have Mr. Bonnetrouge, Ms. Martselos, Mr. Simpson, and Mr. Thompson; and from Yellowknife, we have Ms. Green, Ms. Nokleby, Mr. O'Reilly, and Ms. Wawzonek.

Each candidate is permitted to make a 10-minute speech. The speeches will be made in alphabetical order, by geographical area and by surname. We will start with the northern constituencies' nominees, so I call upon Ms. Chinna for her speech.

Candidates' Speeches

Ms. Chinna's Candidacy Speech

MS. CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I wanted to acknowledge before I get started the youth of Colville Lake who encouraged the federal election. I just wanted to acknowledge that community.

Good afternoon, colleagues. I want to pay my respects to the leaders within the Sahtu for this opportunity to submit my nomination for a Cabinet position. I am seeking support from the 19th Legislative Assembly. With my passion and integrity, I bring forward 20 years of work experience and personal triumphs that have molded my leadership to display at one of the highest levels of government in the Northwest Territories.

I am originally from Fort Good Hope, and I am a member of the K'asho Got'ine district. I am the daughter of Martha Chinna and Don Fabien. I was a single mother and did raise my daughter. Presently, I am raising my niece who is 13. I did attend residential school, and I do display the positive effects and experience of being educated in the residential school system. I was also raised in foster care and believe that good homes and guidance display the integrity and the willingness to do better and be better. At the age of 26, I lost my mother to cancer and raised my siblings, ages 16, 15, and 10. During that time, I was the single mother of an eight-year-old daughter, with a single income. In the following years to come, I lost my sister tragically.

My story is similar to the people of the Northwest Territories, and my connection to the residents of the Northwest Territories ignites the passion to work with resilience and demonstrate perseverance. I have the determination to want to improve programs and services throughout the Northwest Territories.

During the past 20 years, I have committed myself to gain work experience in the public sector and with the Government of the Northwest Territories. My first employment opportunity was with the K'asho Got'ine Charter Community Council and the Yamoga Land Corporation in Fort Good Hope. I assisted in the development of their land administration. At the time, I was involved and participated in the creation and development of their community plan and zoning bylaw.

I worked for Municipal and Community Affairs, administering community land administration within the municipal boundary, and program delivery to establish land ownership, administering legal documents, contracts, sales, and financial issues. This position brought me to dealing with the residents at the grassroots level who are affected by the GNWT policies, acts, and regulations that cause difficulty in program delivery for front-line workers.

The experience with MACA brought me to transfer from the Beaufort-Delta, Sahtu, and the South Slave regions. During this time, I observed the programs and the delivery, and the effects that it made, and the changes determined by MACA and the GNWT. This experience brought me to understand the importance of our local community members who are being affected by our decisions we make as a government.

I was very fortunate to work the three regions out of the five in the Northwest Territories, which gives me a more broad perspective of where we sit as the Northwest Territories. I then furthered my experience, gaining employment in Fort Smith with

the Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority as a nurses' aide. This opportunity gave me the perspective of what the healthcare system is enduring. I did notice that the shortage of nurses, housing, and accommodations were definitely a factor.

In the following months, I did further work in employment with forestry management in Fort Smith. I was able to realize the need for forest fire recruits and that the training needs in preparation for the forest fire season were limited. I also held a position with the Sahtu health authority, assisting with medical travel and realizing, even in that position, to be short-staffed. I also worked for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment in the Sahtu region, working for parks and preparing for business symposiums.

During my 20 years, I committed my work experience to serve the people of the Northwest Territories. I began my career as a front-line worker. I was exposed to the effects that are displayed at the grassroots level. I have seen the results of program delivery in its successes and its failures, the need to work in conjunction with our Indigenous groups, and the determination to support and finalize self-government and land-claim agreements.

I see the effects of climate change that are displayed at our local community level, affecting ground stability for residential areas, affecting erosion and shoreline and the riverbanks, and the short season for the winter roads, which decreases supplies to the communities. I noticed the declining of water levels making it a short season and difficulty to receive scheduled barge services and supplies.

I do look at the Northwest Territories as a whole. I do see the need to represent our local communities. I recognize the need for housing and concerns for overcrowding, and this as a territorial issue, not at a regional level.

We have seen and heard the issues that affect our healthcare, education, and housing systems that do not work in our communities. This opportunity brought me to experience a different working relationship in structures throughout the Northwest Territories. I was able to gain a different perspective.

As a Minister, I see the potential to work in conjunction with Indigenous leadership and working productively and fairly with our consensus government. I would like to see improvement with our education system and develop a strategy to improve our healthcare system to build strong, healthy families across the Northwest Territories, and look and work towards prevention of

addictions, support mental illnesses, support our homecare for elderly and people with limited mobility.

I would like to enhance economic diversification, improve the support of local businesses, and utilize the services that already exist at the community level. The need to keep the money in the North is imperative. We need to develop solutions to decrease social dependency, to invest into our regions, and become proactive of expectations of our program delivery so that people of the North qualify.

I also wanted to include that I did work on a community development project, and this was able to bring me to work with the people face-to-face. I was able to see the need and the outcry for help in a lot of the government services that we provide.

I also see the need for addiction, and I would like to work with the people of the Northwest Territories in our Aboriginal groups. I'm confident with the 19th Legislative Assembly, with my colleagues, that the support in me to become Minister is at value. I bring to the table years of experience, learning from the grassroots, and connection to our Indigenous groups and non-Indigenous groups. I look forward to working with you in the 19th Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Speaker-elect.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Chinna. Next, we have Mr. Jacobson.

Mr. Jacobson's Candidacy Speech

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Colleagues of this Assembly, it's an honour for me to appear in front of you today in support of electing me in a Cabinet position of this 19th Legislative Assembly. I was born and raised in Tuktoyaktuk to my mom and dad, Jimmy and Bella Jacobson. I come from a very large family. I've lived in Tuktoyaktuk my whole life other than leaving for school. I was fortunate to meet my wife Jenny 31 years ago in the lunch line at Grolier Hall. Now, we're so blessed, we have six children and one grandson who we raised up in Tuktoyaktuk. I also provide support for our other children. We had 20 to 30 foster children that we took care of over the last 20-some years.

Although I've always been interested in promoting economic issues in development in the North, I've been committed to participating and supporting social and cultural life in our communities. This participation has included membership in the Canadian Rangers, where I served for 25 years as a local sergeant; the education committee, acting as a director in the Inuvialuit Development Corporation. I also organized a sled dog race and

events back home for our jamboree, and assist our local church and social organizations.

In the next few minutes, I'd like to provide Members of the details of my government experience and my thoughts on the economic future of the NWT, the priorities for me. Improvements of our educational system, our healthcare services, and housing issues are my main concerns; the impact of climate change on our land. We need to bring vision and passion into this Assembly to work together, from communities to residents that we represent. I am committed to working with all of you to bring this vision and passion forward to improve living conditions in our territory.

Colleagues, within the House, I've sat in this House for eight years' experience as an MLA and the last four years in the 17th Assembly as a Speaker. During this time, I played an active role supporting my riding and all communities in the NWT. I have a solid understanding on how important it is for Ministers to work in unison with Regular Members. When we build meaningful partnership among MLAs to work together towards a common goal, we will be successful, not only for ourselves but our regions and the Northwest Territories as a whole.

I have also served as community government, as a mayor for four years and as a councillor for 12, in my home community of Tuktoyaktuk. I am proud of our community and our achievements in securing one of the biggest community infrastructure, Tuktoyaktuk Highway or the ITH. That was the largest infrastructure undertaken by the GNWT that came in on schedule and on budget in 2017. It opened up servicing the residents successfully since that time. As MLA and as Speaker, I was charged with listening to all views of all Members, treating all equal and with respect. Through these conversations, I've learned the issues and the concerns of the 33 communities in the NWT to find out so importantly. Being a new Member is never easy, and learning a process that requires you to be there for your people whenever they need you, 24/7. However, like new Members, I've made mistakes in previous Assemblies. I have learned from my mistakes. I tried my best at moving forward. With growth and lessons in mind, I put myself forward for this Cabinet position for the North.

As a consensus government, as a collective, we must be more inclusive and considerate of others in our territory. Some of the older approaches of this government need change. We need to balance and address the needs of both larger centres and smaller communities. We need to facilitate greater engagement with our Indigenous governments, that recognize inherent right to self-government and self-determination. We welcome and respect the different ethnicities, gender, cultural heritage, and

LGBTQ2S+ residents. We need to engage all variable participants in our decision- and policy-making process.

As a Speaker, my door was always open. I commit to continuing that practice if elected to Cabinet, and I commit fairly, equally promoting priorities and objectives of all communities and all the residents in the Northwest Territories.

As well, everybody in the Northwest Territories, we're faced with difficult economic times. We grapple with climate change and infrastructure challenges. It is uncertain the levels of support of our federal government. The Economic Conference Board says, the Northwest Territories, we're in a grim situation. We need to pay close attention to our economy to seek out meaningful ways to diversify our economy and attract investment.

Now, firsthand in the community experience when economic downturn occurs, people suffer. This occurred in my own community of Tuktoyaktuk when the resource exploration left, not once but twice in my lifetime. The small communities are hurting. Although we must continue to pursue resource-based projects, particularly which promote alternative local sources of energy, we must transition from uncertain economy, dependent only upon natural resources, to ones based upon tourism, services, and environmental reclamation.

The recent reclamation projects at Giant Mine, Imperial Oil's Tuktoyaktuk base, and Norman Wells oilfield have demonstrated Northerners benefit a reclamation economy. These projects bring much-needed jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars into our territorial economy. Other large projects, including clean-ups at the Cantung and Silver Bear Mines, will soon follow. We must ensure that these projects go ahead and maximize the benefits of all of these projects. To do this, we must pressure the federal government and work with them to ensure that these benefits stay in the Northwest Territories. Too many dollars spent in the NWT are siphoned away to southern companies. We cannot afford to sit by and watch these projects be operated by fly-in, fly-out workers when people in our territory are qualified and ready to work.

New highways and power infrastructure will open up prospective resource development. Combined with tourism, a knowledge-based economy, cold weather and climate research activities, commercial fisheries development and the current and proposed reclamation work, we can strengthen our NWT economy and provide business and training opportunities to our residents. This will also assist us in building the capacity necessary to carry this forward as new economic developments arise.

Another challenge that faces the North, and one which threatens our lifestyle, is the impact of climate change on our rivers, our lands, our animals, and our people. Recent events in my home community demonstrate the impacts that climate change is having on our land and our people. Permafrost melting and sea levels are altering the landscape and threatening homes. Every day I look out the window at the Arctic Ocean, and I see waves beating on Elders' homes, the shoreline eroding, and the old ways of our people becoming less and less certain.

The dramatic environmental changes in the Arctic have also attracted worldwide attention. We need to recognize that interest in the North on the world stage will continue to increase and that we will become more and more incorporated in the global economy and world affairs. We all need to be vigilant in protecting our Arctic sovereignty aggressively representing our northern interests to the federal government and in worldwide forums. Through this increased participation, we will be able to profitably advance our economic objectives.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I challenge us as Members in this House to ensure the economic future of the NWT while adapting to the climate changes that we will continue to face. This is no small task, but a challenge we must all face it together.

At the same time, we need to balance our pursuit of economic prosperity with attention to our social and education needs. It is crucial that we improve education, housing, and healthcare for our residents across the territory, our small communities, and our youth and elders.

As a Cabinet Minister, in addition to pursuing our economic objectives, I will support initiatives to improve housing conditions and build long-term care facilities in our communities. As well, we need to increase educational standards throughout the territory regardless of where our children live, to ensure that they are competitive throughout Canada and worldwide.

I believe that a path forward can be found that will strengthen our economy and protect our lands for those who follow us. It has been over 15 years since my riding was represented in Cabinet. My uncle Vince Steen was the last voice for Nunakput at this Cabinet table. I want to build upon the successes and achievements of our past leaders and bring a perspective to Cabinet that has been absent for far too long.

I am excited to work with this Assembly to identify priorities that reflect the needs of our territory and the residents who we serve. I believe that I can play an important and crucial role in helping us to

become a strong, viable territory that reflects our diversity, strengths, cultures, and languages.

With your support, it would be an honour and a privilege to serve as a Cabinet Member. Quyanainni. Quana. Mahsi.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Next, we have Ms. Thom.

Ms. Thom's Candidacy Speech

MS. THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and good afternoon. I have put my name forward to seek support for Executive of the 19th Legislative Assembly. My knowledge and experience will portray my abilities to take on this challenging role and be a voice for the residents of the Northwest Territories. I bring key components to the table that can be used to ensure accountability and transparency in the 19th Legislative Assembly.

I was born and raised in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, where I was custom adopted by my grandparents, being the oldest grandchild in the family. Raised in a traditional Inuvialuit lifestyle, we lived a nomadic way of life, moving from seasonal camp to seasonal camp, led by my Daduck, my dad, and my Nannuk, my mom. They were the greatest team I have ever known.

I realized from an early stage that academics would be a key to my development and a path into my future. I was always curious and perceptive in school. I wanted to know why things worked the way that they did, so I would challenge myself to learn and understand the subjects taught to me front-to-back and back-to-front, and still do to this day.

I was sent -- it wasn't my choice -- to attend residential school at Grollier Hall to complete my grade 12 and graduated. During this time, I met many friends from across the communities of the Northwest Territories, and I still maintain those friendships today. However, it was a challenge, as Inuvialuktun was the first language spoken in my family, and I quickly lost my mother tongue.

After graduation, I attended Arctic College -- back then, that was the name -- Business Management Diploma program in Inuvik. Upon completion, I began my employment with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation as the Regional Youth Coordinator. This role allowed me to work with youth in the region and also work with ITK on National Youth Initiatives.

Further to this, I moved to the development side of the organization and worked my way up from accounts payable to receivable and eventually to

assistant controller for multiple business corporations while completing the Aboriginal Financial Organization designation.

With one more year left to complete my bachelor's degree in management with Athabasca University, I moved south to complete my degree and further develop my academic skill set, then went back to Inuvik and started in community development. I was in charge of programs such as ASETS, Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training, Education Foundation, National Health Initiatives, Economic Development, Early Childcare, Research and Culture, while managing multimillion-dollar budgets in annual and multi-year funding.

There was also an opportunity for me to explore and fulfill my career interests in the oil and gas company. I took a one-year secondment to British Petroleum, BP, as a communication advisor. The role of communication advisor was to liaise between the communities in the Beaufort Sea and the oil and gas industry. I did two weeks up north and two weeks in the south. During this time, it allowed me to get a good understanding of oil and gas licences in the Arctic offshore. This includes 2D and 3D seismic and environmental safety mechanisms.

A week before the tragic event in 2010, I was called back to the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation as Executive Director for Community Development and Community Programs and Initiatives. I was the Inuit representative on the National Inuit Committee on Health, the NiCoH, as well as PHAC, the Public Health Agency of Canada. My role was to set strategies and plan policy-driven health priorities for the North. I was also a part of the GNWT's Community Wellness Plans. I took my team to each of the different communities, and we developed priorities for each of the different communities.

I started and completed my master's degree through Royal Roads University in Victoria. My thesis at the time was based on Indigenous self-inherent rights.

Back to Inuvik and to the organization's self-government/intergovernmental relations, I was quickly appointed as chief negotiator and director of intergovernmental relations with the Inuvialuit. My responsibilities included working with the Board of Directors and with communities and beneficiaries, along with territorial and federal negotiation teams. These required a variety of quarterly meetings and community visits, putting together a field work program, and monthly main table sessions.

As the Inuvialuit representative on the GNWT Intergovernmental Relations, I worked alongside Indigenous groups in the Northwest Territories. As part of the work in negotiating a self-government

agreement, there was a lot of work in the Implementation, the Financial, the Fiscal, the Tax, and Communication Working Groups with representatives from Canada and the GNWT at various tables.

I was elected and served two terms as a board of director for the Inuvik Community Corporation, where I was vice chair during the first term, and then secretary/treasurer during my last term upon my recent election.

Mr. Speaker-elect, in the last two days, the 19 Members sat down and came up with priorities for this 19th Assembly. They include strengthening partnerships with our Indigenous groups, improving mental wellness, increasing economic diversification, and climate change, just to name a few. I have lived in small communities in Aklavik, Inuvik, Fort McPherson. I also had, during my employment, the opportunity to reach out to some of the smaller communities.

My experience and my education skill set have prepared me for this challenge. It is the reason I put my name forward to run for Inuvik Boot Lake Member of the Legislative Assembly. I also want to acknowledge the support from my husband, Grant Thom, and my son, Connor Sullivan, for supporting me to be here in this role.

That has brought me to where I am today, Mr. Speaker-elect. I ask other MLAs to consider my education and vast experience and think about that today when you cast your vote, as you choose who can best represent the people of the Northwest Territories during this 19th Assembly. I also acknowledge that we have a lot of work to do. We have been tasked with many different challenges, and I am really honoured to be here with everybody right now. Quyanainni, thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Thom. Before we continue, we are asked if Members could please slow down. The interpreters are having a little difficulty keeping up, so just keep that in mind. I know it's a little nerve-wracking. We will continue now with the southern candidates, starting with Mr. Bonnetrouge.

Mr. Bonnetrouge's Candidacy Speech

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Good afternoon, colleagues. I would first like to say a huge mahsi cho to my Deh Cho riding constituents for believing in me to represent them at the Legislative Assembly. I thank my family and grandchildren for their continuing support. I will always remember where my roots are grounded.

I would also like to thank my predecessor, Mr. Michael Nadli, for his years of dedicated service to the residents of Deh Cho. Let me congratulate you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and I know you will do a tremendous job in your new position. I also would like to congratulate the new Premier-elect, and I am confident that you will lead the 19th Legislative Assembly to the best of your ability. I look forward to working with both of you in serving the people of the Northwest Territories.

To my colleagues of the 19th Legislative Assembly, I submit my name for your consideration as a Member of the Executive Council. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the fact that the 19th Legislative Assembly is the only government body in Canada, and for that matter in the world, to have a gender-balanced Assembly. We have with us nine women to look after us. I say that with deepest respect. I look forward to learning and working with each and every one of you for the next four years.

Most of you do now know my background, but I attended Sir John Franklin High School back in the day and had the pleasure of not only taking the academic stream, but playing trumpet in music class. I was also fortunate enough to take up photography as an elective, which piqued my interest in seeing my surroundings through the lens of a camera, a hobby I still pursue today.

Some of my work experiences include stints as a classroom assistant, housing maintainer for the Fort Providence local housing authority, log builder, and I worked in the building construction industry for a number of years. For the past 11 years, I was employed in project management as a project officer with GNWT Infrastructure. Previously, this was the Department of Public Works and Services, better known then as DPW. I guess it's safe to say that I do know what hard work is all about. I will bring these work ethics to my position as a Member of Cabinet.

My political career started in my early 20s as a Dene Band councillor. There were many elders who shared their wisdom and knowledge with me, and I am forever grateful. I pay tribute to the many knowledge keepers who have passed on. I also served as chief of the Deh Gah Gotie First Nations and was involved with the Dehcho First Nations as negotiating partners seeking a treaty and self-government agreement. I have also served on the local hamlet council and was currently a councillor prior to this year's territorial election.

I have been around politics for quite some time and have always kept abreast of all the current issues. I seek a position on Cabinet as I am known as a team player, a consensus builder, and a people-person. I bring passion to addressing and solving issues that are common to our territory. It takes a

collaborative effort by Cabinet and the Regular MLAs to make informed decisions for the betterment of the people of the Northwest Territories. This is consensus government at its finest, and a true testament to the people that consensus government is alive and well in the Northwest Territories.

There are many challenges facing this Assembly, and I am up for facing those challenges. The biggest challenge is the state of the economy and the uncertain future in terms of new economic development as our territory faces the winding down of the diamond mines. Of course, the diamond mines brought optimism to our territory when the future looked bleak, after the closing of Giant Mine. The diamond mines provided much-needed employment and, most of all, economic and business benefits to Indigenous partners involved in the projects. We have seen that developing partnerships with the Indigenous governments of the Northwest Territories can and does create economic reality and prosperity for our territory.

Should I have your support as a Cabinet Member, I commit to providing optimism and hope for the future by opening up the lines of communications with the pretext of developing partnerships with the Indigenous governments. Of course, this will not happen without the collaborative efforts of all Members of this Assembly. The NWT and Nunavut Chamber of Mines and the NWT Chamber of Commerce have reached out to the Members of the 19th Legislative Assembly. We heard that mining exploration continues to languish and we are losing out in important investments for our territory. Only our neighbours, the Yukon Territory and Nunavut, continue to benefit from mining activities, which contribute to their respective economies.

According to the Chamber of Mines, the contributing factors affecting mineral exploration is the onerous regulatory requirements and complex permitting processes. There is also the factor that Indigenous governments have set aside protected areas within their land base. I believe this is to protect historical or culturally significant areas and to prevent any type of exploration or development. These areas may be protected and written into each Indigenous government's land management plan or self-government agreement, and they should be respected by everyone involved.

They are also concerned that mineral exploration does damage the land and leads to contamination of the water. As a Cabinet Member, I will suggest to my colleagues to initiate a round-table meeting with invites to the Chamber of Mines and the Indigenous governments. At the meeting, we can put everything on the table and see if we can find commonality and the next steps required to form partnerships and continue meaningful dialogue. I

believe this is an important first step to understanding any concerns or aspirations for economic prosperity for the Indigenous governments, the Chamber of Mines, and especially for the people of the Northwest Territories.

In closing, there are a myriad of priorities to be presented to the Executive Council for further work, and I look forward to this exercise, with your blessing and support as a Member of Cabinet. I will always have an open-door policy and expect the same in return. I look forward to all the meaningful dialogue with each and every one of you and, of course, learning from you for the next four years. Together, we can make consensus government work to the benefit of all residents of the Northwest Territories. God bless and mahsi.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Bonnetrouge. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

Ms. Martselos' Candidacy Speech

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. First of all, I want to congratulate our newly elected Premier, Premier Cochrane. I know you will make a great leader, and I know you will be fair. I also want to thank the constituents of my area, Thebacha, for giving me this opportunity to stand before you today, for Cabinet. My community is an amazing community with many diverse people and different interests, and they have given me this opportunity to stand here today to be part of your Cabinet and to put my name forward.

I am a strong advocate for the economy. The economy is extremely important in this 19th Assembly. We saw that we are in over a \$1-billion deficit. The deficit has to be addressed. Building of the economy has got to be one of the major issues and not the most important issues because we also have to settle the Indigenous land claims and the outstanding claims and self-government agreements and the implementations of these agreements.

I, too, just got off leadership. It was on August 30 that I was done from Salt River and then went right into the territorial election.

We all have experiences of misgivings with government, and hopefully we can fill those gaps to ensure that the Indigenous file is heard by this 19th Assembly.

I think it is extremely important that all people of the Northwest Territories are included in all decisions that are done in partnership with what we do because it affects them.

When we make a decision around this Assembly, we also have to think of the little person that it affects because many times we forget who we are representing, and I will never forget the people of the Northwest Territories.

I think that the social envelope is also extremely important. You know, we have to have a balance between the economic and the social envelope. It is very important. We have a lot of issues with addiction. We have issues with childcare. We have issues with apprehension of children. We have to support our workers on the front line to ensure that we do the right thing for the people who deliver the services to all of the people of the North and especially to our Indigenous people.

We passed, in the last few days, 22 priorities for the Government of the Northwest Territories. As Minister, I will try to ensure that we do the best we possibly can to deliver these priorities in the best ethical and honest and sincere way as possible. I stand by honesty. Ethical issues are important to me. I stand with transparency, accountability, and a very open-door policy. I think we should all be approachable, whether we are on Cabinet, whether we are a Minister, or whether we are an ordinary Member. We are all here for the same reasons. I said earlier that we are all here to serve the Northwest Territories, and I saw so many faces and everybody wanted to do that. I have learned a lot in the last three weeks. You know, you taught me many things. You taught me that there are many opinions to solving a problem. Consensus is extremely important.

I love this territory as I love my community. I love the Indigenous people, and I love all of the people of the Northwest Territories. Being inclusive is extremely important. Any decision we make is always dependent on what we say and do. We must be role models for the youth. We must be role models for everybody in the Northwest Territories.

When I stand here today, I bring to you a lot of experience in private industry, I bring you experience on the social issues, I bring you the experience on everything because, when you are a chief, you have to deal with each issue individually, you are the social worker, you are the person who makes the decisions for business, you are the person who has to ensure that people have food on the table, and you have to do everything. I am offering that experience and that personal experience to this Assembly and to the Northwest Territories.

With that, I hope that everybody around here realizes that democracy is spoken and, you know, democracy is very important. That is why we are all free in this country we call Canada. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next on our list, we have Mr. Simpson.

Mr. R.J. Simpson's Candidacy Speech

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I don't have a speech prepared. I think people have heard me speak enough in the last week.

First, I want to begin by congratulating our Premier-elect. People have asked me am I disappointed about not being Premier. Well, you always want to set out to accomplish your goals, but I am not disappointed with the outcome because the past few weeks that I have spent with this Assembly have given me a lot of faith that we are going to move forward and that we are going to deliver the kind of change that the territory wants.

I am not going to talk about a lot of the things I have spoken about already, about the land claims process and about the governance changes I would like to make because you have all heard that. I want to introduce myself to the new Members, perhaps who don't know who I am. I see now the importance of family in placing you in the territory, and so I want to talk about a bit about my family. My mother is here in the gallery. She came to the Northwest Territories in the '70s, I guess, from Manitoba and grew up on a farming family, where she met my father, Rocky Simpson, who is here on the floor with us, when he was working in the oil and gas industry up in the Beaufort-Delta.

My father's family, my grandpa is from Fort Chipewyan. He grew up living on the land and came to Hay River in the '50s for commercial fishing, which is the reason a lot of us are in Hay River in this day. My nanna, who is watching right now in Hay River, she just turned 96. She came here from England in 1945. She got on a steamship, crossed the ocean, got right onto a train, and, after the seven-day ocean voyage, she had a seven-day train trip up to Peace River in the middle of February. All she had was her fall coat that you wear in England, so it was a bit of a culture shock. There was no road up to the territory back then, so it was a bit of a different world. Like I said, she is still in Hay River where I have a number of relatives, a number of family, aunts, uncles, cousins, you know, and we have spread across the territory.

I have lived in Hay River my entire life, except when either myself or my parents were attending school. That turns out to be a big chunk of time because education is important to my family. I received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from MacEwan University, and I later received my law degree from the University of Alberta. I returned to the territory

to work after receiving my law degree. I know it's hard for us to retain people. Once people go away to school, it's hard to get them back, but I believe this is a land of opportunity, and I believe that we all have something to contribute here and we all owe the territory something. I believe that. The territory helped me. It really shaped who I was, as did my parents and their values of education and their values of community service and giving back to the community. My dad said if no one ran against me that he was going to because no one should get a free ride. I honestly thought that that was one person I might not be able to beat in Hay River, because they do a lot for the community.

That's why I'm here. That's why I ran for government, or ran for MLA, because I wanted to give back and I want to give people those opportunities that I had. You know, I was lucky. I say this all the time. I was tremendously lucky with my upbringing. I had a family who valued education and who provided for me, and because of that I want to be able to extend that to everyone else in the territory to the greatest extent that I can.

Everyone has been talking about the economy, and it's true that the economy is down. That was another reason that I was spurred to run, but we've had diamond mines for a long time in the territory. We have become very wealthy as a territory, but that wealth is centralized in a few different places, and we need to help everyone participate in this economy. I think education is the way to do that, and I always have a strong focus on education. Education is freedom, and we need to address it in all aspects of what we do as a government.

In saying that, I understand that we can pour all the money we want into schools, we can create universities, but, if kids aren't going to school or if they go to school and they can't concentrate because of things that are going on at home, then we are fighting a losing battle. So, like everything else, the focus on education is nothing unless we help solve the issues that are surrounding that, that are causing people to not graduate and not go to school. Those are things like mental health and addictions.

Mental health is a growing problem, the mental health crisis in the territory. I've seen some changes here and there, but we don't treat it the way we should. We are still very reactive in terms of treating mental health issues. We need to be proactive. We need to ensure that people can get out of bed in the morning because they're not depressed, and that they can go to work, and that they can contribute. These are the kinds of investments that we need to make now to provide for the future for everyone.

There is no end to the issues. Often, when I start chatting with people about what I do, I go off on

tangents and I have to stop myself, because there is no end to our concerns. There are issues with justice. One of my colleagues was saying that no one has been talking about justice. It's a major issue. There are some promising things that we're doing in the South Slave. There is the therapeutic model that they're implementing at the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, and that's good, and that's one of the things that I want to make sure that this Cabinet follows up on. I want to make sure that, when we do something, we're seeing it through all the way, and part of that is after-care in the communities. We've been talking about that, as well, and that's something else we need to deal with.

Housing is another major concern. We hear it from everyone. It doesn't matter if you're in a small community or if you're in Yellowknife: we have housing concerns. In Hay River, 150 people just lost their home in Hay River when the Hay River high-rise closed down; 150 people lost their home. We had a housing crunch before that. Now, there's nowhere to go. People would bounce between housing units and the high-rise; now, they bounce out of their housing unit, for whatever reason, and there is nowhere for them to go. We're feeling it all across the territory, and these are some of things that we need to deal with.

I didn't think I was going to go this long. I apologize to everyone. When I was running for Premier, I had a lot of very high-level ideas, but these are the kinds of things that I'm concerned about on the ground that we really need to deal with. I just wanted to share this with my colleagues here, because we haven't had a chance to sit down, but we will in the future and I really look forward to working with this group and doing great things for this territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. No need to apologize; you all have 10 minutes. Next on the list, we have Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Thompson's Candidacy Speech

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. You said 10 minutes; I'll have to slow down. First of all, I'd like to congratulate Premier-elect Caroline Cochrane. I believe you'll do a great job moving forward in the Northwest Territories; as well as Speaker-elect Mr. Blake.

I want to begin my remarks today with an acknowledgement that today's proceedings are taking place on Chief Drygeese Territory, traditional home of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and also the traditional lands of the North Slave Metis.

For those of you who are new to the Assembly, and for members of the public who are listening in, allow me to introduce myself. I am Shane Thompson. It is my honour today to put my name forward for consideration as a Member of the Executive Council. I have been returned by voters to the Legislative Assembly for a second term as the Member for Nahendeh. I am deeply grateful to the people of Fort Simpson, Jean Marie River, Samba K'e, Wrigley, Fort Liard, and Nahanni Butte for their strong support and putting their faith in me a second time.

I am the son of Mary and Gordon Thompson of Hay River and the proud father of seven children and eight grandchildren. I was born and raised in Hay River and spent 23 years with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs as a senior recreation development coordinator.

In addition to Hay River, I have lived in Inuvik, Kugluktuk, and Fort Simpson, which has given me the chance to experience life in other NWT communities. Additionally, during the course of my career, I have been fortunate enough to travel to 32 of the NWT's 33 communities. Spending my life living and working in the Northwest Territories has given me the opportunity to familiarize myself with our communities and get to know the people who live in them. This helps me to understand what is important to NWT residents.

By the way, the one community that continues to elude me, despite several attempts, is Paulatuk.

I would like to talk for a bit about my personal qualifications and my outlook on northern governance. I want to tell you how these experiences have shaped me and informed what I would bring to the job as a Cabinet Minister. I served as Chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development for the full term of the 18th Legislative Assembly. This committee is responsible for providing oversight for the Departments of Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Housing; and Justice. These departments account for approximately 60 percent of the government's budget.

Some of the highlights of my tenure as chair of social development committee was we improved 23 bills. This included partnerships with the Standing Committee on Government Operations on the Cannabis Implementation Act. This federally mandated legislation work was a big job that had to be completed on a tight timeline. The two standing committees worked cooperatively and traveled extensively. Our review produced 20 motions to amend this bill. Some of the amendments included:

- Allowing for the potential for private cannabis vendors in the NWT;
- Clarifying the rules around local plebiscites on private sales; and
- Providing authority for the Minister to make important regulations respecting cannabis cultivation and cannabis smoking in areas adjacent to public places, such as school grounds and business establishments.

I am very proud of the work that the social development committee did, working with the Minister of Justice and his senior officials on the Corrections Act and working with the Minister of Health and Social Services and his senior officials on the Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act. Both of these reviews involved an unprecedented level of cooperation between GNWT departments and standing committee and resulted in sweeping changes to the proposed acts. My experiences as a standing committee chair taught me the importance of the work done by Regular Members in the standing committees, and how this vital review by elected legislators only improves proposed legislation put forward by government.

As a Member of Cabinet, I commit to ensuring that my department is prepared and empowered to work collaboratively, to the greatest possible degree, with the appropriate standing committee. This includes seeking more extensive committee input on proposed legislative initiatives at the earliest possible opportunity.

I had the second-best attendance for the 18th Assembly. I am proud of this record, which speaks to my dedication to my job. I worked hard to stay on top of as many issues as possible, including attending meetings of standing committees that I did not serve on.

I am also proud of my voting record. I worked hard with each Minister to reach agreement on issues and improve budgets for residents of my riding and the NWT. I voted not to support or defeat Cabinet, but according to my conscience, based on what I understood to be the best interests of the communities and the people who elected me. If elected to Cabinet, I will continue to bring this philosophy of hard work and fair play to my new role. I believe that true consensus government means building positive working relationships with each Member of this House, no matter how widely our beliefs differ.

As a Member of Cabinet, I commit to walking the halls of this building, reaching out regularly by phone calls and emails to break down any perceived barriers between Regular Members and Cabinet Ministers. I believe that it is the

responsibility of a Cabinet Minister to provide strong, clear, political direction to the bureaucracy and to show that they are dedicated and knowledgeable in public service, taking the necessary steps to implement that direction. I look forward to being challenged by Regular Members and by my Cabinet colleagues, both, to excel in this area.

I also commit to reaching out to each Member individually, especially where work being done by my Ministerial portfolio has potential impact on your constituency. I will work actively to seek your invitation and find opportunities to travel to your communities to better understand your concerns and those of your constituents. I commit to regularly reaching out to the standing committees, not only to inform committee of work of my department or departments but to seek your guidance, thoughts, and input before making key decisions on policies, programs, and legislative initiatives. I know that we may not be able to reach agreement on all issues at all times, but I pledge to you to ensure that the views of the standing committees will be sought, heard, and carefully considered before important decisions are made.

As important as I do, I will do my best to explain the decisions I make and the direction I give my department so that, during these times when your requests have not been fully met, you understand the rationale that has shaped the final decision. Your satisfaction that I communicate frequently, sincerely, and responsibly will be the measure of my success in this area.

I want to talk about some issues that are important to me. During my 23 years in the sports and recreation division with Municipal and Community Affairs, I dedicated my career to facilitating people working together to provide opportunities for young people to learn and grow. This has been an important part of my life and something I always remain committed to. I believe this government must do a better job with respect to providing meaningful summer employment opportunities for our youth, not just so that they have a paycheque but so our future leaders get hands-on learning doing meaningful work that helps these students build skills and understanding.

Like many of you, I worry about the northern economy and about maximizing opportunities for northern employment. I believe the GNWT must look carefully at its procurement practices to ensure that work which could be done by northern companies is not needlessly going to southern contractors.

I also believe strongly that we must come to terms with how the GNWT will need to change in the future or to settle the outstanding claims. Through

committee work on the Public Land Act earlier this year, I had become more painfully aware than ever how the NWT colonial legacy has contributed to decades of land mismanagement, which caused unnecessary heartbreak and stress for the people across the NWT. We need a plan to resolve those outstanding individual claims. It will show faith to the people of the Northwest Territories that this government is listening to their concerns and will shore up the economic potential of our small communities by increasing certainty over land ownership.

Finally, while this is not the last of the issues that matter to me, it is one of the more important ones. I believe we must do more as a government to support our elders. As I have said in this House before, I would like to see the GNWT legislate a seniors' advocate who works to ensure that the needs of members of this vulnerable demographic are being met.

While these issues are important to me as a political leader, I will work equally as hard to fulfil the direction set by this Assembly and our priorities for the benefit of the NWT. As a Member of this Assembly, every single one of you was selected by your constituents to represent their concerns. I deeply respect the responsibility that has been placed in you to be the voice of the people you represent.

If you put your trust in me today to serve as a Member of the Executive Council, then I will make you this pledge. Going forward, I vow to always keep this respect in the forefront of my mind to serve as a constant reminder that being a Member of Cabinet does not make anyone more important than a Regular Member of this House. It just adds new responsibilities to their role. I also pledge to the people in Nahendeh that I will continue to be available to my constituents to help you address and hopefully resolve your issues.

I am grateful of this opportunity to speak to you all today, and thank you for your support and the best. Thank you. Marci cho.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Next, we have the Yellowknife candidates, starting with Ms. Green.

Ms. Green's Candidacy Speech

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I would like to start by acknowledging that I am here on Chief Drygeese Territory and that I am a visitor here.

The 18th Assembly was my first term in this House and the first time ever in an elected position. I was

a Regular MLA, chair of the Caucus, deputy chair of the Standing Committees on Social Development and Rules and Procedures, and chair of the Special Committee on Increasing the Representation of Women in the Legislative Assembly. I am thrilled to congratulate Caroline Cochrane on her win. This is the beginning of the change we were elected to bring about in this 19th Assembly.

In all these different roles, I have had an opportunity to learn about how government operates, what this House does, and how to get things done. I stand ready to put this learning into action to accomplish our shared priorities: a healthy, inclusive, and prosperous future for all of us. In the next few minutes, I am going to review my lessons learned, talk about how they strengthened my bid to be on Cabinet, and lastly I will fill in a little of my own background.

Lesson number one: if you do your homework and come to the table prepared, you can be very influential. That means reading the briefing material, digesting the steady stream of reports, letters, and studies that come from colleagues, allies, and lobbyists. It means analyzing all of this information and thinking about what it means to the residents of the Northwest Territories. I have these abilities and strong skills to communicate what I have learned.

Lesson number two: in order to move on our shared priorities, you have to create solid working relationships based on honesty and respect. I was able to do that, especially with the Ministers of the social envelope departments. Together, we worked on a variety of initiatives, from creating a sobering centre in downtown Yellowknife to lobbying for a specific plan to reduce core housing need. Of course, I didn't get everything I wanted, but I got more by working with the Ministers than by ignoring or antagonizing them.

Lesson number three: work with your colleagues on your side of the House. None of us get to choose who we work with, but we all have an opportunity to learn from our colleagues and about the communities they represent. I served with most of the small-community MLAs and heard first-hand about the challenges of crowded housing, food insecurity, limited employment, unsuccessful education, and the lack of hope for a different future. I want to give a special shout-out to Tom Beaulieu and to Michael Nadli for their wisdom and guidance. I will miss them being here.

Lesson number four: standing committees in consensus government play an important oversight role, whether for the budget, legislation, or policy. As a group of Regular MLAs, we were able to influence cuts and spending in budgets and to help shape policy responses to key issues, such as child

and family services and the foundational review for Aurora College. I am most proud of my role in improving the Corrections Act. I contacted expert interveners and asked them to provide briefs that would strengthen the act by making it more specific. Staff at the Department of Justice worked with us to make changes, and together we ended up with a better Corrections Act. This is consensus government at its finest.

Lesson number five: take on a leadership role to advance your own priorities. I introduced five motions during the last Assembly. Four passed with the support of my colleagues. The motions were about creating a disabilities action plan, which was completed; creating a plan to reduce core need in housing, which was completed; creating a plan to fully fund junior kindergarten, which was completed; and the motion I am most proud of, committing to action to increase the representation of women, which was completed.

These were my lessons. Now, I'd like to turn to considering how all of these lessons apply to Cabinet. We expect Cabinet Ministers to do the work and come to the table prepared. I've demonstrated I can do that. Second, you have to cultivate your allies in order to action your shared priorities. I have demonstrated I can do that. Third, your colleagues have a wealth of experience to offer from their lives and experience. I recognize that and value it. Fourth, standing committees are essential to consensus government, and developing good working relationships is the starting point for moving on budgets, policy, and legislation. I appreciate that, and I commit to working closely with standing committees. Finally, I'm always going to support someone else's good idea if it makes sense and will improve the lives of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

I'm not going to review my own priorities. They are among our shared priorities that we will be tabled tomorrow, and I commit to implement them without reservation.

Now, I'm going to go to talk about who I am and what I did before I was elected in 2015 and again this month. I am living the dream of every immigrant. My family came here from England when I was a child, and it is obviously the best thing they ever did for me. By coming to Canada, I have had a wealth of opportunities, and the greatest of these was education. I was the first person in my family to go to university. I earned a Bachelor of Arts in History at the University of Saskatchewan, a Master of Arts in History at the University of Calgary, and a Master of Arts in Journalism at the University of Western Ontario. I am also a proud lifelong learner, most recently completing a certificate in fundraising management from Ryerson University.

I was able to apply my skills and knowledge throughout my career at the CBC, where I worked for 16 years; in Labrador for five years; briefly in Nunavut; and then finally, here for the last nine years of my career. In all that time, I travelled to 27 communities in the Northwest Territories to cover stories, including the regulatory review of the Mackenzie Gas Project, and I used the information that I acquired in my master's degree in history to cover resource development, particularly mining. That was coal in Cape Breton, nickel in Labrador, and diamonds when I arrived here. I feel I have a very solid base of information about mining economies like our own, on which we depend, and about oil and gas, from my reporting.

I was able to transform volunteer work at the YWCA into my day job, so I left the CBC 10 years ago. I had a comprehensive lesson in the needs of vulnerable populations in the Northwest Territories. Although many YWCA services are based here in Yellowknife, many of the clients come from other communities. They are rebuilding after instability and need the wraparound services that will help them succeed, and they do succeed.

What you will get from me is evidence-based decision making. That is the person I am. You will also get my heart and dedication to improving the lives of Northerners, particularly those who are vulnerable because they are marginalized. I made a long-term commitment to the North when I moved to Yellowknife almost 20 years ago from Labrador. I got married to my partner, Janice McKenna, in the gallery. We adopted a child from the Delta. When my mom retired in 2007, she moved here, too, and lived in Yellowknife until her death last year.

Eleven years ago, my partner started a business, a funeral home. We learned how to write a business plan and how to run a business. The funeral home has expanded and now employs two full-time staff and two part-time staff. It also operates in Hay River. It hasn't been an easy journey, but I'm proud of its success and the excellent service it provides.

In summary, I bring a lot to the table: experience in diverse fields, a broad knowledge of the Northwest Territories, and an ability to collaborate. I was and I am still excited by the potential of the North and its journey to self-determination. What I offer you is the ability to work hard on our shared future, my integrity, and a results-based orientation. Thank you for your consideration.

---Applause

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

Ms. Nokleby's Candidacy Speech

MS. NOKLEBY: I'm going to try and speak slower. I'm the youngest of four children, so I learned very early on that I needed to speak quickly if I wanted to get what I had to say out there so everyone could hear me.

A lot of times we are asked, as people sitting in this House, why we wanted to be politicians. I can honestly say to you that I never wanted to be a politician. My reason for running solely has been because what I have seen in my experiences in living in the North. I realize that our government often doesn't have a voice that represents science-based decision making in the House or brings the skill set that I can bring to the table. While I'm not experienced within the Government of the Northwest Territories, I am far from inexperienced. What I bring to the table is 13 years of northern engineering experience, working on the ground with Indigenous workers, Indigenous groups, as well as other project managers, engineers, scientists, community members, Indigenous organizations, development corporations, as well as other consultants. I have worked all over the North. That includes Nunavut and the Yukon. I have spent time in your communities. I've drilled holes to investigate what your foundations need to be for your buildings, and I've watched everything change.

The climate is changing. There are impacts happening, and, while those are affecting your communities, they are also affecting my projects. I too was dealing with the ice roads melting. I too am dealing with low water levels so that we can't get the barged equipment in to do your work. All of these things I have seen as I have travelled around in the North including to mine sites, as well. I wanted to bring that experience to the table and bring a different lens to show that we can be doing things differently in the North, that we can be a leader in climate change adaptation and research.

While I may have a very science-based background and I found that, as we've been moving through our priority setting session, there's been a lot of discussion about social issues versus economic issues. It's very easy to try to pigeonhole things or to put them into silos. One of the things that I am really noticing as we go through this is how intertwined everything in the North is. The things that I may consider to be an economic driver, others can see the social ramifications of that. A huge issue, I believe, is our economy, where I note during the campaigning process and period, I was very much labelled an economy and infrastructure type person. However, I would argue that, if we don't have our economy going, we are going to have a huge increase in social issues going forward, so that's an area where I think that we need to stop looking at things as being economic or social and recognize that they're all integrated. That goes for all of us, as well.

While I may be sort of labelled as the economic candidate or the economic person or the infrastructure person, I bring a real balance to the Assembly. I have been very active in social issues or social groups within Yellowknife since I arrived here 13 years ago. I've been a director with the YWCA. I've been a Girl Guide leader for 12 years. I've been working with our youth, and I've been advocating strongly for women in science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, and I believe that all of that work and that volunteer experience will bring to me a skillset and a balance that I can use to tackle all of the issues and problems that we may be facing as we move forward.

In my work as a professional engineer, I've worked at the Giant Mine. I've been there for three years, solely on site, and I've worked on that project as a consultant. I believe I'm one of the few people in this room who can bring that knowledge to the table. As well, in the rest of my work, I've done a lot of remediation and environmental assessment work. I go out to these sites. I see what is happening when things are not done right, and I see the impacts that that has on the communities, on the people, and on our budgets. If we could only do things right and we took a proactive approach to things, we would be able to prevent a lot of the issues that happen. We won't be having another Giant Mine. We do have a regulatory system that will prevent that. Now, however, we need to make sure we have people in Cabinet who can understand the implications of certain projects and be able to balance the economic benefits with the social benefits.

I know, in my work with the Indigenous development corporations, that there is a real appetite for mining and resource extraction in the territory. I feel that I bring a really unique skill set and experience in that area that would be very beneficial to all of us trying to move this territory forward and out of this economic slump that we find ourselves in.

Throughout our conversations in the priority-setting, I have been a firm advocate for northern retention and northern businesses, contracts staying in the North and work being done by northern workers. That is something that I promise you, right now, no matter what side of the table I end up sitting on, that that is the lens and that is something that I will continue to push for and advocate for always.

When it comes to the climate change issue that I brought up earlier, I have been trained in the PIEVC protocol, which is an Engineers Canada protocol that is used to assess climate changes on infrastructure. I believe that I can bring that lens to the table and help us all to see things from the

bigger picture when it comes to the impacts on our infrastructure.

Another area in which I am quite proud of has been my activity and my involvement in my professional associations, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Associations of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists. There, I have been a two-term councillor, and I have had a lot of involvement with the committee work there. I have been active in planning and presenting at our Professional Development Conference every year, and I also act as a mentor to young women who are entering the engineering and geoscience fields.

The other association that I was speaking to is the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of the Northwest Territories. I am proud to say that I was the first female president of that association, and I represented the Northwest Territories on the national and international stage in Ottawa, spending time on Parliament Hill and meeting Justin Trudeau. I won't show you the really embarrassing photo of me kind of fangirling over him. Maybe that shyness kind of dimmed a bit. I shouldn't say that, I guess.

I think that what I am trying to get at here is that I have a broad range of experience, and I am comfortable either being at a work site, on the ground with workers, all the way up to the leaders of our country and beyond. I feel like that is another asset that would be really important in working in the North.

In politics in the South, it's a very civilized, very set-out protocol, and I am not sure how much filters from the people on the ground all the way up to the top, but in the North, that is completely different. We are going to be going into places where we are going to have to get along and be able to work with, talk to, learn from, and listen to people who maybe aren't in the same field or in the same career area that we are in. I feel that I can do that quite easily, and I am able to move between the different communities.

When it came time to decide about whether or not I was going to put my name forward for Cabinet, I had always been given the advice that it was better to sit and wait, take one term, learn how to be a Regular Member, and that way I would be more effective. I know that I would be effective as a Regular Member. However, my answer to the media when they asked that was that I was going to wait and see, and I was going to look at the skill sets of the rest of you who have been elected and make my decision at that time.

When I look around the room, I see an amazing set of skill sets here. I am actually really, really encouraged. From day one, we have lawyers and

nurses. We have people involved with other parts of the health community. We have social advocacy people. We have environmental people. We have infrastructure people. I know that, no matter who does end up in our Cabinet, we are going to be well-served by those people, and I have every intent to work collaboratively, no matter what side I end up on, whether it be in Cabinet, working in one of the portfolios that I think I am actually quite suited towards or on one of the portfolios that maybe doesn't seem to be my natural fit. However, there is nothing out there that does intimidate me, and I think that I could take on any one of those portfolios.

When I look around here, I see that we need to have this balance. We need have to people who can look at all sides of the issue. I will be listening to all of you. My door will always be open. I will always come forward with good ideas, and I can tell you right now that my intent for the territory is to do good. I am not in this for my ego. If I was, I don't think I would have made it through the campaigning period; I would already have been long gone. I want to say that I just want to bring the skill sets that I have, I want to use the knowledge that I have gained, and the uniqueness of that skill set and that voice that I have, to do good things for this territory, and I know that I can be very, very effective as a Cabinet Minister. Thank you very much.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby. Next, we have Mr. O'Reilly.

Mr. O'Reilly's Candidacy Speech

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to start with congratulating our Premier-elect, and I look forward to working with you no matter what side of the House I end up on.

I would like to use my time today to talk a little bit myself, my experience, and my approach as a Cabinet Minister in this 19th Assembly. I am on the ballot as one of your choices to serve as a Yellowknife MLA on the Executive Council.

My mother's family is Ukrainian and French-Canadian. Although Shirley Vaillancourt's father spoke French in northern Ontario, the language was not spoken at home and was lost. My father, Thomas O'Reilly, came from the Republic of Ireland to Canada in 1955, and we still have many relatives there. I was born in Hamilton, Ontario, in 1958, so I am going to let you do the math, but I do qualify for a free parking sticker with the City and Seniors Extended Health Benefits.

I grew up in southern Ontario. I skipped grade 12 for a day in May 1976 to go into Toronto to watch the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. That is

probably what got me hooked on the North. I went to the University of Waterloo, where I graduated with a Bachelor's in Environmental Studies and stayed on to do a Master's in Planning. My thesis work was on land management in the Yukon, where I spent three summers. I worked in Ottawa for Environment Canada after I graduated in 1983, but my heart was in the North, so I interviewed for and accepted a position with the Dene Nation as the Land Use Planning Coordinator in 1985.

In 1987, the position changed to a joint Dene-Metis assignment. It was a great job as I worked with regional staff that included David Krutko, Gina Bayha, Michael Nadli, Violet Camsell-Blondin, and Raymond Jones. We travelled to most of the communities in the Northwest Territories south of the treeline and met with many elders and harvesters, many of whom are no longer with us. I remember staying with Nap and Annie Norbert, hearing Gabe Etchinellie talk about crossing the Mackenzie Mountains on foot, losing at cribbage to Dolphus Lennie, fishing for pickerel off Dolphus Jumbo's dock at Samba K'e, and listening to Frank Laviolette talk about buffalos.

My other work experience includes:

- being a sessional instructor at Aurora College in the former Native Studies program;
- executive assistant to the Dene National Chief;
- opening a northern office for the Canadian Polar Commission,
- a ten-year stint as the Research Director for the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, where we looked at issues like Impact and Benefit Agreements, policy options for mining, and intervened in the environmental reviews of three diamond mines; and
- another ten years as Executive Director for a public environmental oversight agency for the Ekati Diamond Mine.

Some of my other work experience and volunteer work includes:

- three terms as a City Councillor here in Yellowknife, where I led negotiations of a Memorandum of Understanding with Yellowknives Dene First Nation, waste reduction initiatives, and efforts toward an energy plan to save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- eleven years on the Waste Reduction and Recovery Advisory Committee, reporting to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources when the Beverage Container

Deposit Program and an electronic waste recycling program were developed; and

- negotiation of the Giant Mine Environmental Agreement with the federal and territorial governments, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, the City of Yellowknife, and Alternatives North that set up an oversight body that also has responsibility for ongoing research and development.

I have a broad range of experience working with public governments and Indigenous peoples and their governments. I also have in-depth knowledge and experience related to the environment and resource management. These will be important for whoever serves in Cabinet. I hold people accountable for their commitments and obligations, but also work collaboratively and get results.

What was accomplished in the 18th Assembly? There were many successes in the last Assembly that I helped contribute towards:

- we will soon have 911 service for the Northwest Territories;
- an Ombud for the Northwest Territories;
- there was serious planning towards a university for the Northwest Territories;
- modernized elections, with more opportunities to vote, as recommended by the Rules and Procedures Committee that I chaired;
- increased support for women in lineup and efforts to make the Assembly friendlier for MLAs with younger families;
- tougher and binding rules for MLAs with an independent Integrity Commissioner, also from the Rules and Procedures Committee;
- more committee business was conducted in public than ever before, with improved reporting of these meetings;
- hundreds of changes were recommended by the Regular MLAs to the legislation put forward by Cabinet, and many of these changes were accepted by the Ministers;
- a much-improved Corrections Act, developed cooperatively with Regular MLAs;
- improved access to information and protection of privacy legislation;
- new protected areas legislation that lays out a clear process and responsibilities;

- following suggestions from Cabinet, I developed a Private Member's Bill, the only one from the last Assembly, that helps clarify cremation services that was supported by both sides of the House; and
- I worked with the Minister of Justice, who agreed to carry out a review of Victim Services programs and supports here in the Northwest Territories.

Having served for one term as a Regular MLA, I know what it is like to be on that side of the House and have learned from that experience. There are many ways that we can improve consensus government. Much of this was set out in the Report of the Special Committee on Transition Matters. I volunteered to serve on that committee. Some of our recommendations included:

- better orientation and ongoing training of MLAs, and we have been living some of that experience over the last three weeks;
- setting clearer and fewer priorities;
- options for the structure and selection of Cabinet and standing committee;
- improved and more collaborative budgeting;
- mid-term review with a focus on priorities; and
- improvements to how legislation is developed, introduced, and reviewed, including future regulations.

You heard my priorities for the 19th Assembly on October 8th, where I laid out a vision of where the Northwest Territories can and should be ten years from now, and I am going to try to highlight some of that again for you.

- A diversified economy where we would produce a lot more of what we consume.
- Our workforce would more closely reflect the cultures and diversity of the NWT.
- We would have vibrant small communities, regional centres, and a capital that serves all of our residents.
- Indigenous languages would continue to be spoken in each of the regions and taught in our schools, with improved access to all government services in all of our official languages. There would also be a strong French first language education system that would control its own admissions.
- All of our citizens would have access to affordable, suitable, and adequate housing.

- Our communities would be self-sufficient for their energy needs, and there would be a solid plan and progress on dealing with climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Caribou herds would once again be thriving. There would be a fully-funded and functioning integrated environmental and resource management system.
- Legally-binding water agreements and land use plans would all be in place to protect us from upstream threats.
- There would be a new confederation of regional Indigenous governments and a territorial public government with strong community governments, set out in a constitution for the Northwest Territories.

Why should you vote for me as one of the Yellowknife Cabinet Members? I worked very hard in the last Assembly, as my attendance record shows. I participated in as many Committee meetings as I could, so I have a reasonable understanding of what is happening in many of the departments and across GNWT as a whole. I strongly believe in evidence-based decisions. I ask tough questions, do my homework, and come prepared to meetings. I fully intend to continue in these roles, no matter what side of the House I end up on. There needs to be a proper balance between big infrastructure projects and long-term investment into programs and services for our peoples. Decisions should be communicated openly and made transparently, with reasons and evidence provided.

Over the last couple of days, we have collectively developed our priorities for the 19th Assembly. We will need the right people in Cabinet to help develop a mandate to achieve these priorities. I believe that I am one of those people, based on my knowledge, experience, and work ethic, and I ask for your support. Thank you. Mahsi. Merci. Marci. Quana.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Next, we have Ms. Wawzonek.

Ms. Wawzonek's Candidacy Speech

MS. WAWZONEK: Merci, Monsieur le President. [English translation not provided.]

I have three broad commitments that I would like to make if elected to Cabinet this afternoon, but first, I want to give a lengthy introduction to myself, as we have all found, although we have been speaking about our priorities and our vision, we don't necessarily know a lot about one another's backgrounds.

I was born and raised in Calgary to Ed and Bev Wawzonek, who are first-generation immigrants to Canada. They both grew up north of Edmonton on farms where their parents didn't speak English. In fact, my uncle still lives on my mother's farm and only had running water when I was an adult.

I met my birth family when I was an adult living in Toronto. My birth mother found me, Shelly Kunz from the Lac La Biche area of Alberta, and then my birth father also met me, Steven Woake, and I discovered that he is a member of the Metis Nation of Alberta. He immediately sent me the paperwork, seeking for me to join the Metis Nation of Alberta. No longer living in Alberta at the time, that wasn't possible, but I had the opportunity to look at my ancestry and see the line that traced straight back to the Lagimodiere family and the founding of the Red River Settlements in Manitoba. Although I wasn't raised in the Metis culture, I am deeply proud of this heritage.

None of my parents had the opportunity to attend university. Every one of my parents made sacrifices to make sure that I would have the opportunity to dream and the opportunity to follow whatever dreams I had. When I attended my undergraduate at the University of Calgary, over 20 years ago now, it sparked in my mind, "Why is it that we don't all have the opportunity to dream, and why is it that we don't all have the opportunity to follow our dreams?" When something holds a member of our society back, it holds us all back. It holds back our wellness, individually and as a group, and it holds back our collective prosperity.

A few years later, I decided that the one way that I might help seek change would be to help change the rules, and that's when I went to law school. I decided to learn about the rules that sometimes restrict us, but also learn about a way that we can challenge inequality, challenge unfairness, and demand better from our government. If you had asked me back then whether I might eventually run for office, I would likely have laughed and told you that my plan was more to take governments to court rather than stand in one.

My husband, a geologist, back in 2007, took an opportunity here in Yellowknife. I opened my own law practice. I attended circuit courts, I believe, in every community that has a circuit court here in the Northwest Territories. My regular stomping grounds were, in fact, the Sachs Harbour/ Paulatuk/ Ulukhaktok circuit, which I had many wonderful opportunities to visit.

As a lawyer, you have to understand a person's story in order to truly be able to help them and to present their case. You stand up, and you own their story on their behalf. To do that, I met with not only my clients, but their parents, their spouses, and

sometimes their children; I had tea in their homes; and I heard them tell me heartbreaking stories of childhood trauma, family breakdown, residential school experiences, poverty, mental illness, and addictions. I realized that I was now in a place that I needed to be in order to help make a positive change for people and to help seek justice and more equality.

When the eldest of my two children was born, almost eight years ago now, I realized I had to step back from mothering all of my clients, and so my practice evolved away from criminal practice. I joined a fully northern-owned and fully northern-operated law firm and expanded into more general litigation. What that meant was that I was now having the opportunity to help small- and medium-sized businesses across the Northwest Territories. I worked with government departments; ran coroner's inquests; did child protection work; worked with environmental regulatory boards; worked with professional organizations, including teachers and nurses; worked with other governments on their behalf; the City of Yellowknife; and some small community governments as well.

I very soon developed a balanced and broad practice that gave me perspective on the social envelope, as well as government practice, government foundations, and business needs. I realized that, at my core, what drives me and motivates me has never changed. It is that I want to advocate for creative and effective solutions that help people, improve communities, and improve societies. I want to help solve problems. That is true across sectors, and it's true across industries.

I will give you a couple of quick examples. I was counsel last year at the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. The inquiry was mandated to examine, essentially, every system in society, from our government relationships, education, healthcare, justice, to even relationships with industry. We were being asked to help find solutions for why there was anything less than equity in our society. I also have had the pleasure of serving with now-Senator Dawn Anderson on the steering committee that designed the Domestic Violence Treatment Option court here in the Northwest Territories and, later, the Wellness Court, as well. These are courts that are seeking, again, creative solutions to help improve the situations facing victims and offenders, to actually go to the root of what causes crime, and to truly collaborate across departments because that's the only way those solutions are going to be solved.

I have appeared many times before standing committees, in fact before now, some of my colleagues, on behalf of many organizations, including the Canadian Bar Association and the

Chamber of Commerce, always there advocating for new solutions.

As my career evolved, what surprised me was that, although criminal court is flashy and fun, what I truly love is administrative law, which, if you haven't heard of that, it's everything outside of the courtroom. Essentially, it's all the decisions made by a Minister, boards and tribunals, like student financial assistance, the education authorities. It really is how we make fair decisions, and so my work has evolved where I've actually had the opportunity to teach boards and tribunals and decision-makers how to structure a fair process, how to make a decision that actually meets a legal standard of being reasonable, and how to give good reasons so that the people that are being affected by your decision understand why you've made it.

I have applied that work in a lot of different areas. I've acted as the president in the Law Society of the Northwest Territories, as a secretary and director at the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce. I was appointed as the chair of the Legal Aid Commission and to the Income Appeals Assistance Committee as well as many other community positions. All the while, I have found that fair and effective processes to drive rational decision-making that benefit people, community, and society is true across sectors and industries. That's the approach that I want to bring to Cabinet.

The three commitments I'd like to make specifically are:

- Commitment to continue to be committed to people, to relationships, and to working and understanding the stories of others, starting right at the front lines of all government services and continuing right up to every person in this Chamber.
- I'd like to make a commitment to continue to seek creative and effective solutions. A process of solution-finding doesn't end when you think you have found the solution. You need to implement your solution. You need to make sure it actually has the results that you need to fix the problem you were trying to fix because, if it doesn't, you need to go back and be more creative. When I say "you," I actually should say "we" because it's not about solutions that I might have. My role isn't necessarily to come up with the solutions. It's to go out and help people find those solutions and bring them forward.
- My third commitment would be to fair processes and reasonable decision-making, reasonable decisions that I'm prepared to

explain so that everyone who is affected by them understands why I have made them.

I thank you very much for your consideration today.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Wawzonek. Colleagues and members of the public, we'll take a 15 minute break before we get into the questions. Thank you.

--- SHORT RECESS

Questions by Members

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Members, we are now permitted to ask a maximum of one question to be directed to all Executive Council candidates. Candidates will have one-and-a-half minutes to answer each question. Again, I will be enforcing this time limit consistently today. The floor is open for questions. Mr. Norn.

MR. NORN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. During our Northern Leaders Round Table last week, we heard several times from our Indigenous leaders that there have been constant communication breakdowns and a lack of trust with our government. In my riding, there have even been instances where invites were ignored for visits to the community. To me, this is unacceptable. My question to you as a ministerial candidate is: if elected as Minister, how will you ensure that your respective departments keep open lines of communication with our Indigenous and community governments? Mahsi cho.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Norn. First on my list, we have Ms. Wawzonek. Members, please be mindful of the interpreters. They ask that people please slow down a bit, so just keep that in mind. Thank you.

MS. WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Trust has been at the core of my professional life as a lawyer for over a decade now. You can't ask someone to come to you and share with you something that they may not share with anyone else in the world if they don't trust you. You then have to take that and move it forward, but it's not just about the clients that I'm serving who are sharing their personal stories with me. In order to get anything done, I have to have trust with someone who is on the opposite side of a file with me; someone with whom I may have an adversarial relationship. We will get more done if we can actually trust each other.

Trust is built and trust is easily broken and, as I developed relationships with other lawyers, with clients, with judges, with other decision-makers, it's how you engage. It's how you do things. It's, when

you make a promise that you're going to do something, you do your best to follow through. If something changes and you can't do it, you need to tell them why and you need to be straightforward and upfront, and you develop a reputation very quickly as someone who you can or cannot trust.

I think it starts at the top and so, for that reason, I'm speaking about how I would present relationships that are full of trust, but it has to go to the front lines, as well. So, to me, as a leader of a department or a ministry, I would expect to be walking the front lines of whatever ministry I'm in, developing trust with people at the front, and I would expect whatever DM or assistant DM to be alongside me along the way so we can develop trust, starting at the front lines of the department all the way up to the top. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Wawzonek. Next, we have Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I guess, working with leadership back home, I think an open-dialogue, open-door approach and working with our different land claim groups right across the territory. I think what we have to be is transparent and open to work and make change on their behalf, and I think, if we work together, all together, we could get basically what we want all done for the people of the different land claim groups. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Next, we have Mr. Bonnetrouge.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you for the question. Of course, I would like to have open lines of communications with Indigenous groups. As a Minister, I would have to confer with my department and media staff in order to get any messages received from the Indigenous groups. We have to decipher, look at it, and work with our staff in order to respond to the Indigenous groups. As Minister, I don't think that I would be allowed to just answer the question outright and communicate with the leaders myself, so I would have to confer with the departments on that. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Bonnetrouge. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. We talked a lot about communication and the importance of it and how that built relationships. Communication with Indigenous governments is obviously a priority. Earlier I spoke about the need for perhaps formalizing this communication in certain respects. If there are complaints that calls to the department go unanswered or that certain things are ignored, we need to figure out why that is happening. Perhaps we have to put some things in place where

there are policies or there are protocols that, when we are contacted by an Indigenous government, there is a timeline for follow-up, there are people who are responsible for following up on that.

Sometimes there are leader-to-leader discussions. We can speak with Indigenous governments, but if it is something that happens within the department, something in a band office or Indigenous government office, and they need to contact the department, that is where those types of protocols come in. When it comes to the leader-to-leader contact, well, that's on us. That's our job. That's our responsibility to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Ms. Thom.

MS. THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Communication is important. We heard from the leaders of the Northwest Territories last week on how we need to start mending these partnerships. You look at some of the Indigenous groups and some of the wonderful things that they are doing on their own, and with just a little bit of support from the government, it can go a long way. I think that that is really important to consider.

We heard the frustrations. We have to be considerate of the different regions. The diversity that is happening within the regions is really important, and we have to really get to know them, understand some of the history and the context of where the different Indigenous groups have come from. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Thom. Next, we have Ms. Chinna.

MS. CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. If I am elected Minister, Indigenous relationships will be an absolute priority. I look at the successes in my region. My region has, for the community of Colville Lake, built a seven-kilometre road on their own, independently, which had cost them \$200,000 and would have been \$7 million with the GNWT. I also look at the solar panel project that is happening in Tulita and in Colville Lake as well, too, and also the housing initiative that is being brought forward by Fort Good Hope. Going forward, it is imperative that we deal with Indigenous groups and that we start dealing with them and recognizing them as partners and no longer clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Chinna. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I feel that my job here is to carry the mandate that I put forth with the Indigenous file. Sitting in the room last week on October 17th with all of the Indigenous

leaders was incredible because I couldn't say anything. My door will always be open. They know that. I know the issues. I respect each and every one of them, and I know each and every one of their issues. It's an open-door policy for me. It's a no-brainer.

I love the Indigenous people of the North, just as I love everybody else in the Northwest Territories, because we are very unique. Okay? We are very unique in that the majority of the people of the Northwest Territories is Indigenous, and our doors should always be open to the leadership of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. My whole life has been about communication and trust. For 23 years, I worked with the municipal governments, starting out with nine in the region, up to 19. I built the trust working with them. You need to, first and foremost, listen to the people. You need to have open ears and understand what they are trying to say. I think that we need to listen to Indigenous governments, municipal governments, and the residents of the Northwest Territories, not just certain people. We need to listen to everybody.

I look at my record in employment and my MLA record. My communities have trusted me. They have given me concerns, and I have brought them forth to Ministers. I do believe that we need to be doing the same thing. We need to be working with the Indigenous governments, we need to be working with the municipal governments, and we need to be working with the residents. We need to have an open ear, and we need to also have our staff do the same thing. Our front line staff should be in the communities. They should be working with them. If we don't, this is where the trust barrier comes in.

I just look at my record. I look at my relationships with Indigenous governments and municipal governments throughout the last 34-plus years, and I honestly think that I have built the trust moving forward. I think it's just part of working together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Next, we have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh for the question. I think that it is really important that actions speak a lot louder than words.

We need to make some progress on the land rights negotiations and do an analysis of what the issues are at each of the tables, make sure that we have the right people, the right kinds of resources, and

get that going very quickly. We also heard that co-drafting of post-devolution legislation regulations is important for people. We have to make sure that we continue that and continue it on into the regulation-making phase.

When we met with the Indigenous leaders, they said that the Memorandums of Understanding, the intergovernmental agreements that we have with them, are good, but we shouldn't be limiting our consultation to those agreements, once-a-year meetings. People want Ministers to go to assemblies and want proactive visits to communities. I am prepared to do that and try to build some of the relationships on some of the relationships that I have already developed through my years of being here.

I think that we need to make some progress on implementing UNDRIP here in this Assembly.

Those are some of the ideas that I would bring forward. Of course, I would like to work with my cabinet colleagues to make sure that everybody is on the same page and Regular MLAs, particularly from the smaller communities, as well. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Next, we have Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: I have been really encouraged by a lot of the discussion that we have been having lately as we set the priorities with the tone of improving the relationships with the Indigenous governments and groups in the territory.

One of the reasons that I decided to put my name forward for Cabinet was that a lot of people outside of this room, et cetera, my constituents, were urging me to go ahead and run for Cabinet, and included amongst those were former Indigenous leaders who have sat in these seats, as well as development corporations, land corporations, others that I have worked with over the years, and business owners. I won't name names, but one Indigenous business owner told me he was more excited to see the results in my riding than he was in others.

My plan going forward is just the open-door policy. I plan to listen. I plan to go for coffees. I am a fairly social person, so I just want to always be out there, reaching out and continuing to always build those bridges with the Indigenous organizations, and not only with their leadership, but also with workers on the ground and the people whom I have met over the years in my course of my work. That is really important to me.

My mother always taught me that you pay as much attention to the CEO as you do to the janitor and that every person has something to offer, so I will always be open; I will always listen; and I will

continue to communicate well with the connections that I already have and foster and develop new connections with Indigenous groups. Thank you.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you for the question. What I have seen in my experience in small communities is that even small changes would make a difference, for example, keeping the contact list up to date with who the most recent leadership is. I've reviewed lists that are hopelessly out of date, so, if the letter is going to the community and it's addressed to the wrong person, likely, there won't be any traction. Likewise, I find that we rely too much on e-mail where it would be a better choice to pick up the phone and actually talk to a person about the issue that you want to bring to their attention. I understand that capacity issues are at the heart of some of these issues, as well, that the First Nations are often underfunded, that they don't have a full complement of staff, and that it can be difficult for the people who are there to juggle all the requests they have for their time. I think that this is an area where we really need to walk the talk. If we want better relationships with Indigenous people, we have to take a range of actions that start with things like keeping contact lists up to date, and include things like implementing UNDRIP and everything in between. I think we have to show that we are fully engaged, that, as somebody said at the meeting last week and I fully agree with and it was repeated here, that we treat Indigenous government organization as partners and not as clients. Thank you.

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

MR. JOHNSON: I believe we have been handed an overwhelming mandate for change. I believe that started when we elected nine women to this Assembly, and it continued today when we elected Caroline Cochrane as our Premier. I also believe, as we set our priorities in the last weeks and we table them tomorrow, it is your job as Cabinet Ministers to follow up on those and to ensure those changes are made in your departments. However, I think we must recognize we are not the only decision-makers here, and my question to you as future Cabinet Ministers is: how will you approach sometimes and likely resistance to change within your own departments? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Johnson. First on our list, we have Ms. Chinna.

MS. CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Thank you, Ryan, for your question. I know that, being in the Ministerial position, we will end up not always agreeing. I know we will encounter

scenarios and situations where we will be disagreeing on a lot of situations, but, at the end of the day, we are the 19th Legislative Assembly. We do have an obligation to meet the needs of the people at the grassroots level, the people who are working in our GNWT offices and our stakeholders, as well, in the Northwest Territories. I feel that it's imperative that we continue that relationship and the relationship-building. In all due respect, I feel that going forward, we need to change with what is better for the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and I appreciate the question from the Member. In fact, I think we should expect resistance to the changes that we have adopted in our priorities. I think the first thing that we need to do is understand what that resistance is: is that a resistance because the idea is too far out, it's beyond the capacity of the person you're talking to? What is the origin of the resistance to change? It might not be simple obstinacy. It might be actually a problem with understanding what's required or acquiring the skills to respond to the changes that are being proposed.

I have already said and I will say again that I am committed to evidence-based decision-making. I'm also a very good communicator of how I get to the decisions that I make, and so I would make a special effort, of course, to reveal this evidence to the people I'm talking to and to ask them to come on board to create the conditions in which they can come on board.

Finally, though, we as the politicians, as Mr. Simpson said often enough during his campaign to become Premier, the buck stops with us. We are ultimately responsible for this, and so, if change isn't happening, we have to figure out, if the soft touch doesn't work with our innate skills, we're going to have to ramp things up in order to make the changes that we have been asked to make. Thank you.

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

MS. MARTSELOS: I will abide by the priorities that are set by the 18 Members of this 19th Assembly. I will ensure that the decisions that are being made are good for all the people of the Northwest Territories. At the Cabinet level, I will also ensure that management takes direction, working with management on making sure we have all the pros and cons before the decisions are made, and I will ensure that we respect the public service and the people who do all the jobs to make us better leaders. This is the way I've always managed

before. Everybody has a say in the department. Making good, solid decisions, that's what I'm about, and I'm really results-oriented. I bring strong leadership to ensure that these are upheld. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: The only constant in life is change, so it's funny to me or ironic that that actually seems to be one of the things that people struggle with the most, is when their life is maybe disrupted or something is going to change, and it's that fear of the unknown. I feel that the best way to go about diluting that fear or in reassuring my department that this change isn't necessarily a bad thing, even though it might be difficult to go through it at the time, is education. The more the people understand the reason for change and why it's happening, then they will be less fearful of that change, itself. If you can help your staff to understand that, while we may have to go through some difficult moments to get to the end result, that the end result is going to be better for them than the situation you're in, I think that will go a long way for decreasing that fear of change. People want reassurance. They want to know what's going on. They want information.

I'm an engineer. I'm all about data. I'm all about information. There will be no secrets. I know there will be issues with solidarity and all that, and I would definitely be mindful of that and follow protocols, but I am an open book. I think those of you who have gotten to know me in the last three weeks realize I'm pretty straightforward. What you see is what you get, and that's the way that I plan to run my department. Every single person will know that they can come into my office, that they can talk to me about their fears, that it's a safe space, and that they're not going to be retaliated upon. If they disagree with me, then that's fine because the only way I'm going to learn is if other people are going to tell me what their opinions are. I do not want a group of "yes" people. I will definitely go in and have that discussion. Thank you.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Speaker-elect. To me, it's about communication to begin with, to explain to the bureaucracy why we're going the direction we're going. Once we get that overarching picture there, then you need to talk to them and understand what the challenges they have are with the process that we're moving forward. There may be something with our policies that may challenge us, moving it forward, so we need to first work with them. Then, if it doesn't happen then, as Mr. Simpson said, the buck stops here, so you need to first work with them and try to get them to

understand the reasons we're moving it. Like Ms. Nokleby said, they may say, "No, this doesn't make any sense." They can explain, but again, it's communication, working with them to make what's better for the people of the Northwest Territories. It's not using your heavy hand. It's using the velvet glove, but, at the end of the day, you may have to have an iron fist inside. However, at the very beginning, it's about working with the people, communicating the vision that we're moving forward on, and then go from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Next, we have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I see myself, as a Minister, I would really like to meet with the senior staff; visit the offices of the department in Yellowknife, outside of Yellowknife, get a good understanding of who the staff are and what their issues are and what the barriers may be to some of the changes that might be required as a result of the mandate. So I think it's really important to get to know the staff and the department, and I'll be looking for a "how-to" approach, not why we can't do something. I think, in order to make sure that change happens, you have to have good evaluation, good monitoring in place to make sure that it actually does happen, and that that is understood clearly by everybody as part of the system.

I guess the last thing I'd like to say is that I, too, also believe very much in evidence-based decision making. I think that, when change is happening, it can be difficult for folks. Communication is, obviously, going to be very important. It's going to be important to work with standing committees so that they also understand why change is or is not happening, and the reasons for that. If changes need to be made in terms of staffing, that's not something I'm afraid to do, but hopefully it would never come to that. As leaders, we have to be held accountable at the end of the day. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Next, we have Ms. Thom.

MS. THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The people of the Northwest Territories are relying on this Assembly for some change. You know, when we're doing our campaigning, we're going door-to-door and we're hearing from our constituents, from the people, that there needs to be change; and, within change, there will be resistance. We know that. It's just how you go about taking that resistance.

If elected, we will all be given different portfolios. It's so important to learn about your portfolio. Communicate. Earn that trust, and I think that can

go a long way, with just working with the people who you have to work with. So I think communication and trust are very important. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Thom. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. During my brief run for Premier, I received a lot of feedback from members of the public service. They liked a lot of the things I was talking about in terms of how to change the system and change the way we do business, so the public service is ready for change. They are not opposed to change. We need to support them to make that change. I think that's the issue.

I was talking to one of my colleagues earlier and they said that, you know, the government will have a policy out and then the public service finally figures out how to implement it, and then they change the policy. So people aren't resistant to change, but they need to be supported and, if there are problems with it, they need to be heard. They need to be part of the system. There needs to be that feedback I've been talking about.

If there is a problem, if there is a bottleneck when it comes to this change, if there is someone in a position somewhere who, no matter what you do, just won't comply, then that's when you need to lean on your Premier because, as a Minister, you can't hire and fire people in your department. The management of it is done by the deputy ministers, who are responsible to the Premier, so we need to work as a team and we need to make sure that our Premier is going to have our back. I'm not sure if she's had any pushback in the past for any changes she wanted to make.

---Laughter

I think that she knows what it's like and that she'd be there to support us, and we need that kind of support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Mr. Bonnetrouge.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. It's important to note that employees are our most important resources. I come from the Department of Infrastructure; prior to that, it was the Department of Public Works and Services, and there was another Department of Transportation, where they amalgamated the departments, and there were messages going around saying that they were going to amalgamate the positions, so they had meetings with us. It wasn't clearly defined, and no emails. There was lots of scepticism, and there was fear, fear of losing your jobs, because now

you're amalgamating departments and there might be duplication.

I've been involved in those kinds of situations at the other end of it, so I'm kind of becoming a professional at maybe trying to alleviate those positions, now. You know, you have to alleviate that fear, that fear mongering, and let them know that a lot of their positions are not going to get affected. It's important to relay to them the necessity for the change in your department, and what the future outlook is for your department, also. You need to relay those messages and explain the reason why that change is important. Usually, meetings with your departments are very informative and can alleviate a lot of these fears. My time is up, so I'll stop there. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you very much, Mr. Bonnetrouge. Next, we have Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I think, with an open-handed approach when working together with your staff and letting them know what you're expecting of them, and when you treat your staff well, I think we can all come together for the common good for the people of the Northwest Territories, making sure that we remind them that that's why we're here, to serve the people.

For myself, I think we have to lead by example, and change is good. This 19th Assembly, we have to do something. This is a "get 'er done" Assembly, working for the benefit of all the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Next, we have Ms. Wawzonek.

MS. WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I have three things; I hope I get through all of them. The first is to lead by example, develop an understanding about the functioning of the departments, but show flexibility ourselves and also show courage ourselves so that, when we're going forward and asking other people to be courageous with change, they're seeing that coming from us first.

The second is to engage people in the process. I think someone has already spoken about that. Although we're providing them priorities in the mandate, that's a vision, but a lot of the real solutions are actually going to come from within the public service, and so people should feel engaged in this process and not scared of it.

The third is to create a culture of accountability, which I would see doing firstly with timely and transparent communication about what is happening and about the processes that we're asking people to buy into and engage in, and to

create clear points of accountability along the way, both for ourselves and also throughout the department at different levels.

Change doesn't have to mean surprises; it shouldn't mean surprises. It just means showing people what the processes will be. I believe we actually have a very strong public service, and I think we have a public service that wants to be engaged in the process of change. I think we just need to give them the opportunity to do that.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Wawzonek. It appears we have no further questions for the Executive Council candidates. Ms. Cochrane.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Many of us talked about building the relationship and working better together as Members of the Legislative Assembly. I have often said, and I've told myself, too, that honesty is a strength and a value that I cherish in myself and I cherish in my Cabinet Ministers. I want to know the commitment from everyone who is putting their name forward for Minister: what will you do, whether you're elected or you're not elected, to help build the relationship between Regular MLAs and Cabinet Ministers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. Let's start off with Mr. Jacobson.

MR. JACOBSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Thank you for the question. I think this is why we're here. You know, we have to put all our differences at the door in regard to when you come into the Assembly and this Chamber, and respecting the Chamber and why we're here. We have to be more open-minded, I guess, in regard to we're here for one reason: to provide service to the people of the Northwest Territories. Checking your ego at the door for the benefit of all the people who you are representing, I think that's the way to be. That's all you have, is your word, trust. If you don't have that, I don't know why you're here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Jacobson. Next, we have Ms. Thom.

MS. THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Communication is key. You know, we all come here wanting to best represent not only our constituents, but, as Members of the Executive, the whole of the residents of the Northwest Territories. I mentioned last week, we've spent the last three weeks together, and, at the end of it, I said, "No matter what happens Friday at 5:00, or Thursday at 5:00, whatever the date may be, we all need to maintain that communication." It is very important. That's the way you get things done. I will work hard. I am

dedicated. I come in with a new lens that could be both positive and negative, but that is my commitment to this Executive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Thom. Next, we have Mr. Simpson.

MR. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Our Premier-elect is correct. We did talk a lot about this when we were speaking about being Premier because relationships are so important. Some of the basic things are just walking the halls. I get here too early in the morning, but when I get here later, I like to take the long way around. I go by people's offices. I can say hi, and I can just see what's going on.

I think that that is a big thing, and no matter what side you are on, you need to do that more often. I sat with the Premier-elect in her office on a number of occasions discussing issues. We need to implement some of those standing committee procedures in terms of how they interact with the Executive that the Minister helped to pioneer in the last Assembly.

If I am a Regular Member, I am going to do my best to help guide the Regular Members to avoid some of the pitfalls that we ran into in the last Assembly that sort of hindered communication.

There is lots to do. I have lots of ideas, and I look forward to implementing them no matter which side I am on. We are all on the same side; how about no matter which hall I am down? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Next, we have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I, too, endorse a lot of the recommendations that came out of the Special Committee on Transition Matters. I talked about some of those in my speech earlier today, things like ongoing training of MLAs. We need to more effectively use caucus, which is all of us as Regular MLAs leaving our hats at the door to talk and resolve issues. I think that we can do a better of job at that.

We need to find ways to more frequently visit each other and build working relationships. The Premier-elect knows that I did work with her well in the last Assembly. Standing committees are very, very important. They play a crucial role in how Regular MLAs work with Cabinet Ministers, and we have to make the standing committees work a lot better.

Some of the ideas that I have had from the special committee report: pre-budget consultations; clearer legislative proposals, and if they get changed, bring them back to committee; and have plain language

materials ready, so that when committees take bills on the road, they can do a better job at promoting or consulting with communities and stakeholders, as well.

Those are some of the ideas. Most importantly: no surprises. That needs to be a hallmark of this Assembly moving forward. There are conventions that can help with that, but we shouldn't have surprises happening. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Next, we have Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Do what I did for the last four years. It's about walking down the halls. It's not just talking to the Ministers; it's talking to the Regular MLAs to get to know people. It is about understanding people as you move forward, but you have to be honest.

I have gone into the offices of Ministers and told them exactly what I was going to say before I said it on the floor. I am being very honest and upfront. I have had numerous conversations with the Premier-elect over the four years. It is about working together and communicating. Whether it is on committees or individuals, it is about working together. I think it is about team-building and the ability to be able to walk into anybody's office, sit there, and chat, and have a conversation. It doesn't have to be about politics. It could be about anything. It's about getting to know people moving forward. That is what it is about, building this.

We are a family of 19. That is what we have. I have nine sisters and nine brothers. Right? That is what we have here right now. This is what we are. We are going to be a family, and we need to be working together, so we need to communicate together. You need to be honest. If you don't agree with it, don't say you agree with it, and then come out here and say something different. If I tell you what I'm going to tell you, that is what I'm going to be doing.

It is about honesty, and it's about respect, because at the end of the day, if you are honest with somebody, that is showing respect to that individual. That, to me, is the most important part of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Much of my speech dealt with this issue. I think it's very important to develop relationships with people, obviously, to get to know them as a people, in order to develop trust and mutual respect. I don't need to tell anyone how to do that. I think that we are all here able to develop relationships.

There needs to be open and honest communication, and it needs to be proactive. I want to echo Mr. O'Reilly's comments about there not being any surprises. Some of the most disruptive moments of the 18th Assembly turned on surprises from Cabinet or from the Premier. We do have a communications protocol as a caucus, and it is something that will soon be introduced to the new Members. It is a very important document, because it lays out how communication should work and really must work in order for us to be able to work consistently and cooperatively together.

As I said in my speech, the standing committees are essential, and there could be a lot more done with consultation with the committees on regular business, such as budgets, policies, and regulations, as well as legislation, to help us work collaboratively. Thank you.

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

MS. WAWZONEK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. First of all, as the Member from Nahendeh has already said, I don't see us as separate. I think that we are all here to fulfill a role to govern to the best of our abilities.

I am fairly new to the internal processes. I was surprised that people don't walk up and down the hall and talk to each other in the mornings. That seems like an obvious thing to me. I am surprised that not more time is spent together in caucus. I am surprised that there is not more time spent between a Minister and the Cabinet doing direct communication in terms of trying to make bills and legislation better before it has to hit this floor. Those things seem obvious to me.

I think I talked to somebody who had been in here before about every Minister having, sort of, a non-Cabinet buddy, if you will, someone that they can check in with on a regular basis in a more direct way, and it was suggested that, when that is tried, then the Minister gets burned, but I want to assume the best. I want to assume the best from everybody that is here, so to me, having those relationships where you can check in and say, "Where are we at on this?" and doing a bit of a gut check, I would like to think that we can build that trust based on the communications that we have had over the last three weeks here.

Really, if communication fails, to me, the solution is never to shut it down and walk away. You actually have to double down. When there has been a breakdown down in communication, that is when you actually have to go in and make extra efforts to try really hard to make it better. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Wawzonek. Next, we have Mr. Bonnetrouge.

MR. BONNETROUGE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I think that communication is a really important trait that everyone should have. As we are breaking down communication barriers, we should be talking to each other, maybe even saying, "Good morning" or "Hi," short chats every day in the mornings. Making time for each other is very important to build that working relationship. Communication is ultimately very important for that. It is also very important as we are working on trying to rebuild a consensus government style. Communication is very important in that aspect there. I would really encourage everyone there to not hole up in your little office and just be walking around and talking to everyone. That is going to be very important. We have to work together for the next four years, and that is very important. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Bonnetrouge. Next, we have Ms. Martselos.

MS. MARTSELOS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. First of all, I want to say that, whether I become a Cabinet Minister or remain an ordinary MLA, either way, I want you to know that I will be the voice for the people. I feel very strongly about the people of the Northwest Territories, all people, and I have a special thing in my heart for the Indigenous people.

I am very honest, and I am very sincere. I am very results-oriented, and I am a great communicator. I don't get my way all the time, but I am able to leave it at the door. I've learned a lot in these last three weeks, and I will learn a lot in the future, and it will be from all of you in this House, including the staff because, you know what, we have great staff here. I respect each and everybody who comes through the door, always did, because that is part of our culture as an Indigenous person. We welcome everybody. We want everybody to be part of what we know and what we have, and we always share. I look forward to sharing those ideas with each and every one of you in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Martselos. Next, we have Ms. Nokleby.

MS. NOKLEBY: I agree with all the comments made by my colleagues here. I think communication is key to building relationships and trust amongst us. I do like to talk, but I am also a fairly active listener. I know that that was something that was commented to me during the forums, that I was always interested in listening to what others had to say.

My parents were educators. My dad was a principal and my mom was a teacher, the first in their families to go to school. So, for us, I was always

taught to be a life-long learner, and one of the things that I realized coming into this process was how little I actually know. In the last, say, two months, even including the campaign, it's been one of the steepest learning curves of my life, and so I already have the mindset to come in here and learn from all of you and every one of you. If I end up in Cabinet as a first-time and there is someone who has been in Cabinet before, I'm going to go to them and ask them, how does this get done, if I have a question or a concern.

So my plan is just to go in and continue to talk to everyone. I was actually really shocked when I came in to realize that the Cabinet offices were in one section of the building and the Regular MLAs were in another; to me, that struck me as really an odd situation for a consensus-style government. I actually think that it would probably do better to have staggered Cabinet-Regular-Cabinet-Regular, and then that would force that interaction. I can guarantee you, I will also be walking the hallway. I will be coming to all of you. I know I'm not an expert; as an engineer, I'm liability-adverse, so I'm not going to say something I don't know. I plan for all of you to teach me those things. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Nokleby. Next, we have Ms. Chinna.

MS. CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I was thinking about this question, and I thought that we are all very new to the 19th Legislative Assembly. The staff is amazing. I've had probably the best three weeks here, and I was really excited to know my colleagues from the Beaufort-Delta, and I'm very familiar with them, coming into the House and just reengaging that relationship again. I also have a lot of respect for the amount of skills that surround this table. I think, looking at this question on how we build the relationships between the MLA and the Cabinet, I just think: it already exists. It's already there, and I think we need to maintain it. We need to follow through with it, whether we're going to be walking up and down those halls 10 times a day; so be it. Those relationships have already been built. I'm very honoured to be working with the number of people who have been elected and the skills that they have brought to the table. I have brought some issues up to some of the MLAs, and I got such an incredible response; very passionate, and a lot of relatable issues that are very similar throughout the Northwest Territories. I think, going forward, I feel very confident in maintaining that relationship.

There are going to be some days where we don't agree with each other, and we're going to be fighting for infrastructure that's needed in one region compared to the other; then, so be it. At the end of the day, we value and we measure our

success through the people we serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Ms. Chinna. I'll try this again. It appears there are no further questions for the Executive Council candidates. I want to thank all candidates who agreed to put their names forward for Executive Council.

Voting

Members are now asked to proceed to the Clerk's Table to receive three ballots, one for the northern candidates, one for the Yellowknife candidates, and one for the southern candidates. Members are reminded to cast two votes on each ballot. A failure to cast two votes on the ballot will result in the entire ballot being rejected. Please proceed to the voting booths to mark your ballots, and then place them in the ballot box located in front of the Clerk's Table. Thank you.

---Voting commences

Are there any other Members wishing to vote who have not voted yet? There being no one else wishing to vote, I will now proceed to vote, myself.

---Voting commences

Ladies and gentlemen, I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bells will ring for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Colleagues, members of the public, it is my duty to announce that there is a need for a second ballot for the north and the Yellowknife constituencies. The nominees for the second ballot for the north constituencies are Ms. Chinna, Mr. Jacobson, and Ms. Thom. This means that there was a tie for second place. In Yellowknife, we have Ms. Green, Ms. Nokleby, and Ms. Wawzonek.

Before we proceed to the vote, are there any nominees wishing to withdraw at this time? There being no such withdrawals, the ballots are available as before. Please proceed to vote.

---Voting commences

Are there any more Members wishing to vote who have not voted yet? There being no one else wishing to vote, I will now proceed to vote, myself.

---Voting commences

I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back in once the results are determined. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Ladies and gentlemen, I will now call the Territorial Leadership Committee back to order.

Results

Ladies and gentlemen, I declare that you have elected the following individuals to serve on the Executive Council: from the North, Ms. Chinna and Ms. Thom; from the South, Mr. Simpson from Hay River North and Mr. Thompson; from Yellowknife, Ms. Nokleby and Ms. Wawzonek.

---Applause

Congratulations. These individuals will be recommended for appointment to the Executive Council by way of formal motion in the House tomorrow. I would like to thank everyone for your contributions and participation today.

Adjournment

This meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee is now concluded. We adjourn, but, before we do, we have a meeting of Regular Members in Committee Room A tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. Thank you.

---ADJOURNMENT

