



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2nd Session

Day 17

18th Assembly

HANSARD

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

Pages 487 – 524

The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Government House Leader

Minister of Health and Social Services;

Minister of Human Resources;

Minister responsible for Seniors;

*Minister responsible for Persons with
Disabilities*

Mr. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

(Range Lake)

*Minister responsible for the Northwest
Territories Housing Corporation*

Minister of Public Works and Services

*Minister responsible for the Status of
Women*

Ms. Julie Green

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of the Executive

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and

Intergovernmental Relations

*Minister of Industry, Tourism, and
Investment*

*Minister responsible for the Public
Utilities Board*

Hon. Robert C. McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Finance

Minister of Lands

*Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs*

Mr. Daniel McNeely

(Sahtu)

Hon. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Minister of Education, Culture, and

Employment

Minister responsible for Youth

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Mr. Herbert Nakimayak

(Nunakput)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Hon. Wally Schumann

(Hay River South)

*Minister of Environment and Natural
Resources*

Minister of Transportation

Hon. Louis Sebert

(Thebacha)

Minister of Justice

Minister responsible for the Northwest

Territories Power Corporation

Minister responsible for the Workers'

*Safety and Compensation
Commission*

Mr. R.J. Simpson

(Hay River North)

Mr. Kieron Testart

(Kam Lake)

Mr. Shane Thompson

(Nahendeh)

Mr. Cory Vanthuyne

(Yellowknife North)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Principal Clerk, Committees and Public Affairs

Mr. Michael Ball

Principal Clerk, Corporate and Interparliamentary Affairs

Ms. Gail Bennett

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Mr. Glen Rutland

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| PRAYER | 487 |
| MINISTERS' STATEMENTS | 487 |
| 41-18(2) – Energy Initiatives of Public Works and Services (Cochrane) | 487 |
| 42-18(2) – Update of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation (Sebert) | 488 |
| 43-18(2) – Northwest Territories Climate Change Strategic Framework (Schumann) | 488 |
| 44-18(2) – Development of the NWT Energy Plan (R. McLeod)..... | 489 |
| MEMBERS' STATEMENTS | 490 |
| Need for Suitable, Adequate and Affordable Housing (Vanthuyne)..... | 490 |
| Impact of Migration on Homelessness in Yellowknife (Green)..... | 490 |
| Community Housing Development Plans (Beaulieu) | 491 |
| Addressing the Need for Affordable Rental Units (Testart)..... | 491 |
| Self-Government Initiatives in the Sahtu (McNeely)..... | 492 |
| Employment Opportunities Related to Housing Construction (Blake)..... | 492 |
| Territorial Housing Issues (Nadli) | 493 |
| Economic Solutions to Reduce the Need for Subsidized Housing (Simpson) | 493 |
| Ulukhaktok Arena Closure (Nakimayak) | 493 |
| Congratulations to Echo Dene School Graduates (Thompson) | 494 |
| Midwifery Services in the Northwest Territories (O'Reilly) | 494 |
| RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY | 495 |
| ORAL QUESTIONS | 496 |
| REPLIES TO BUDGET ADDRESS..... | 506 |
| TABLING OF DOCUMENTS | 510 |
| CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS | 523 |
| REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE..... | 523 |
| ORDERS OF THE DAY | 523 |

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, colleagues. Ministers' statements. Minister of Public Works and Services.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 41-18(2):
ENERGY INITIATIVES OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SERVICES

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been just over one year since the Government of the Northwest Territories' energy functions were consolidated in the Department of Public Works and Services. Today I would like to update Members on some of the work that this division is doing. The Government of the Northwest Territories has made commitments in its mandate to improve access to energy efficient products and to investigate and implement renewable and alternative energy solutions. Public Works and Services efforts in this area included the installation of energy efficient LED streetlights in communities across the NWT in partnership with the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, and the completion of solar projects in Fort Liard, Fort Simpson, Colville Lake, and Wrigley. The department also undertook wind monitoring and project feasibility work for a potential wind development in Inuvik. Building on the success with liquefied natural gas in Inuvik, we have also done feasibility work of using LNG in Fort Simpson. Since 2014, the Inuvik LNG installation has saved NTPC \$1.7 million in fuel costs.

Mr. Speaker, making better use of our existing hydroelectric resources is another one of the commitments in the Government of the Northwest Territories mandate. Our commitment includes exploring options to respond to low water in the North Slave system, which we have done with the recently completed North Slave resiliency study.

As a result of record low water levels experienced in the North Slave hydro system, Public Works and Services engaged Manitoba Hydro International to review our system and provide recommendations on how best to manage low water conditions. The study established that we can expect hydro-generated electricity to be available about 90 per cent of the time for at least the next 20 years. It also found that without a new large industrial power customer, such as a mine, alternative generation such as wind or solar would go unused most of the time and would add unnecessary expenses to customers' bills through the rate increases.

Recommendations in this study include improving hydrology monitoring on the North Slave hydro system, examining options for aging infrastructure, and to consider options to offset rate shock caused by low water, such as a low water fund. Over the coming year, Public Works and Services will work with other departments and agencies to implement these recommendations. The department also continued to deliver those energy products and programs which have proven successful year over year. These include:

- Installing six biomass boiler installations, bringing the total of Government of the Northwest Territories wood pellet boiler projects to 28; and
- Completion of 26 energy efficiency projects on various government facilities throughout the NWT which will reduce the equivalent of 8,800 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and save the government \$267,000 each year.

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of the Capital Asset Retrofit Program in 2007, energy conservation and efficiency improvements, and the adoption of biomass heating technology for many of our facilities, has resulted in annual savings of \$1.8 million. It is anticipated that in the coming year, annual savings will exceed \$2 million and annual greenhouse gas reductions will exceed 10,000 tonnes. Looking ahead, the Department of Public Works and Services will direct \$3.8 million in the coming year to energy retrofits and alternative energy products, including LED lighting, building retrofits, biomass, and solar across the NWT. As

well, five biomass boilers are included in the new construction projects across the NWT including the Stanton Territorial Hospital.

In response to our mandate commitment to increase incentives and improve access to energy efficient products, the department will continue to work closely with and support the work of the Arctic Energy Alliance. The department will provide \$3.5 million in funding to the alliance this year to ensure that residents, businesses, and community governments can access the services and incentives that will help them manage their own energy use. We plan to build on all of these successes by developing a long-term vision for energy through a new energy plan, which will address affordability, reliability, environmental impacts, and the economic development potential of energy within the Northwest Territories. Today, I will table the 2015-16 Energy Conservation Initiatives Report. This annual report outlines how the Department of Public Works and Services is meeting our government's mandate priorities in the areas of energy efficiency, alternative and renewable energy use, and support to residents to invest in and to adopt energy practices aimed at reducing the cost of living and mitigating the impacts of our energy use on the environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of NWT Power Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 42-18(2):
UPDATE ON THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
POWER CORPORATION

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide Members with an update on recent changes made with respect to the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. On May 24, 2016, I appointed six deputy ministers to the board of the corporation. The reasons for taking this action have been documented in the media, but I would like to briefly reiterate these reasons and provide Members and the public with some information on next steps.

First, and most importantly, this change to the board of directors will save ratepayers \$1 million per year. In the face of continued cost pressures, power rates for consumers have also continued to rise. Four years of rate increases have been followed by an application from the corporation for further rate increases of 4.8 per cent this year followed by four per cent in 2017-18 and four per cent in 2018-19. Retaining the previous board would have meant even larger rate increases for NWT consumers and this was one way the government could cut costs. As well, it should be noted that the nature of the corporation and its relationship with the government is changing. It has

been the recipient of substantial GNWT subsidies in recent years. The Auditor General has recognized these changes and directed that the corporation be reclassified from a government business enterprise to another government organization. The corporation must now adhere to public sector accounting standards. Given these changes, I believe it is time that the GNWT consider the most appropriate future governance model for the corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the former board for their service and to emphasize that this change was in no way related to the performance of the board.

I would also like to underscore that the corporation is a valuable and critical partner in our territory's efforts to reduce the use of diesel and develop renewable and alternative forms of energy. When one of the Ikhil gas wells in Inuvik watered out, the corporation's timely use of liquefied natural gas resulted in savings of \$1.7 million since 2014. The development of the cutting edge Colville Lake solar-diesel-battery hybrid system opened last month was also led by the corporation. These are just two examples of the corporation's leadership in developing alternative energy for the NWT. Mr. Speaker, the new board is in place and operating. As Minister, I intend to issue direction to the board to continue to look at ways to further mitigate rising electricity costs. They will review the responsibilities of the board as reflected in current legislation and guidelines; develop options regarding the future governance model for the Corporation; and develop an accountability framework that considers greater accountability to all Members of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, this work will feed into the development of a new energy plan, one of the commitments in the GNWT mandate. This plan will present a long-term vision for our approach to energy in the Northwest Territories and the role of the corporation will be a critical piece of this vision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 43-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES CLIMATE CHANGE
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, climate change continues to be one of the most serious environmental, economic, and political challenges of our time and it is an important issue to the residents of the Northwest Territories. In the mandate, the Government of the Northwest Territories, or GNWT, has committed to develop a territorial climate change strategy that takes northern energy demands and the cost of living into account. It will reflect commitments to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions and explore carbon pricing systems and how to capture local alternatives such as hydro, biomass, wind, and solar. Work to develop that strategy has begun, led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in collaboration with GNWT departments and other organizations. In 1998, the GNWT recognized the need to make an appropriate contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and commit to working with the federal and provincial governments to reduce Canada's emissions. The first step towards this commitment was the release of the first Northwest Territories Greenhouse Gas Strategy in 2001. The focus of that strategy identified the need to coordinate our actions to begin to control greenhouse gas emissions and make sure a northern perspective was part of Canada's national climate change implementation strategy. The most recent strategy, in effect from 2011 to 2015, identified actions that the GNWT, industry, and communities could take to stabilize territorial emissions at or below 2005 levels. Actions in this strategy have been closely linked with actions implemented under the Northwest Territories Energy Plan.

Mr. Speaker, we know these actions must continue to be linked to other GNWT strategies and plans. Like other jurisdictions around the globe, the Northwest Territories is faced with the need to transform our economy so it will reduce dependency on fossil fuels. Risks to economic, social, and cultural values in our communities will intensify if climate change continues to affect our ability to maintain our traditional pursuits and lifestyle. Melting permafrost requires more maintenance to our infrastructure and changes to our construction practices to ensure new infrastructure is more resilient to the effects of climate change. Winter roads are hard to maintain and travelling on the land is becoming more difficult and sometimes dangerous. Forest fire regimes are changing and there are shifts in plant and animal habitats and distribution. Last December, the nations of the world met in Paris and adopted a new global agreement to address climate change. The Northwest Territories, which had just had an election, was represented by a delegation of senior officials. In March 2016, Prime Minister Trudeau invited the Premiers of Canada to a First Ministers Meeting and Premier Bob McLeod joined them for this important discussion. This meeting resulted in the Vancouver Declaration. The declaration recognizes that all provinces, territories, and the federal government are responsible for taking action on climate change. The declaration also set in place an agreement among governments to develop a pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and to address climate change. First Ministers committed to transition to a low carbon economy by adopting a broad range of domestic

measures, including consideration of carbon pricing mechanisms, adapted to each province's and territory's specific circumstances, in particular the realities of Canada's Indigenous peoples and Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Four federal-provincial-territorial working groups were established to begin implementation work and the Northwest Territories is participating in all four groups. The report to the working group will be made public in September and provided to the First Ministers in October.

Mr. Speaker, we know this is an important issue in the Northwest Territories. We will be engaging with MLAs, Aboriginal governments, stakeholders, and NWT residents to hear their views and gather input on a Northwest Territories climate change strategic framework and the pan-Canadian framework. I expect to announce plans on this engagement shortly. I look forward to hearing Members' thoughts on the best approach to this important issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 44-18(2): DEVELOPMENT OF THE NWT ENERGY PLAN

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has made a commitment in its mandate to create a new three-year Energy Action Plan, building on previous investments made over the past three years and the outcomes of the energy plan review. As you have heard from the Minister of Public Works and Services, the Government of the Northwest Territories has accomplished a great deal in the areas of energy conservation and efficiency, and in implementing alternative and renewable energy solutions in recent years.

The NWT is an acknowledged leader in installed biomass heating and ranks second in the country in installed solar capacity per person. We have completed innovative projects, such as the Colville Lake solar-battery-diesel project, which has already resulted in periods where the community has operated without running its generators. As reflected in the proposed budget this year, we are working to advance the development of a wind turbine project in Inuvik, as well as an innovative project to install solar in combination with a variable speed generator in Aklavik. We plan to continue this success by developing a vision for energy that addresses affordability, reliability, environmental impacts, and the economic development potential of energy in the Northwest Territories. This plan will consider the future approach to the electricity system and the governance of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. The plan will also consider how to expand the use of alternative and renewable energy, such as wind, solar, biomass,

geothermal, and hydroelectricity development, as well as address the heating and transportation sectors. We will start developing this new energy plan by releasing a public discussion document in July that will outline our proposed approach. Over the summer and fall, we will be asking the public, community and Aboriginal governments, other stakeholders, and Members of the Legislative Assembly for their views on our proposed approach. The government intends to table a new energy plan early in 2017.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has held two energy charrettes over the past four years and gathered a great deal of information and input from community representatives, other stakeholders, and experts from across Canada. We have heard that affordability is the number one concern in communities, and that there are no simple solutions to the energy issues we face in the Northwest Territories. Addressing our tremendous challenges will require some innovative thinking and big ideas. For example, the Northwest Territories has tremendous hydroelectricity potential. Could some of this potential be developed in partnership with Aboriginal governments to supply southern provinces with renewable power? Alberta and Saskatchewan still rely on coal-fired generation, and perhaps Northwest Territories hydro could contribute towards national climate change goals. The Government of the Northwest Territories will pursue opportunities to leverage the Government of Canada's new infrastructure plan to fund green infrastructure in the NWT. With federal government help, we can support green growth and address the cost of living in the NWT. Based on what we have previously heard from Northerners, the discussion paper released in July will raise some proposed solutions. Further input will be critical to the success of this new energy plan and I encourage Northerners to provide comments to help ensure that we get it right. This energy plan will clearly be linked to the climate change strategic framework. The framework will address a span of actions from adaptation to the impacts of climate change to mitigating the impacts of our energy use on the environment. Mitigating the impacts of our energy use means continued growth and the use of local and renewable sources of energy in our communities, actions that will be detailed in the energy plan. Opportunities for joint discussions with communities will be coordinated and I encourage all residents to participate in the development of the strategic framework and the energy plan. With your help, we can ensure that we have a supply of secure, affordable, and sustainable energy that meets the needs of current and future generations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NEED FOR SUITABLE, ADEQUATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was pleased to hear the Minister of NWT Housing Corporation's announcement about the construction of nine-unit seniors' buildings in five communities. This is welcome news; however, suitable, adequate, and affordable housing remains in short supply. Housing in Canada is measured by three criteria. Suitable housing has the appropriate number of bedrooms for occupants. Adequate housing has working plumbing and does not need major repairs. Affordable housing costs less than 30 per cent of household income. A dwelling is considered to be in core need if it doesn't meet one of these conditions and the household income is below the core-need income threshold. In 2014, 32 per cent of all NWT households had some sort of housing problem and 20 per cent in core need. There are many complex challenges associated with providing quality housing in the North. Waiting lists for public housing are long. Inadequate supply leads to serious, chronic over-crowding. Social housing clients complain of unfair eligibility assessments. When clients do get housing the units are often in disrepair. Sadly, many public housing clients also need other forms of social assistance, such as support for addiction and mental health problems, so homeownership and maintenance is a very difficult goal to reach. Many communities have boarded-up homes that could be put to good use if the GNWT would resolve obstacles to their accessibility. As well, government has to balance the benefits of stick-built versus modular units, while also achieving energy efficiency. A lot needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. We need to promote homeownership, especially in non-market communities. We need to offer homeowner training programs about mortgages, home buying, and maintenance. We need to work with communities to secure available land and with the federal government to secure long-term support.

Later today, I will have questions for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON
HOMELESSNESS IN YELLOWKNIFE

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, we have heard debate this week about possible solutions to homelessness in Yellowknife and how they are going to be paid for. I welcome the announcement by the Minister responsible for Homelessness of additional money for homelessness initiatives both for semi-independent units located within existing shelters and independent units under the Housing First model. Either way, more people who are now homeless will be housed and that's the goal here. I want to talk about expectations Yellowknifers may have about making homelessness go away. It's not going to go away. This new investment will give people who are now homeless options to obtain housing. This is strictly voluntary. If they don't want housing, they don't have to have it. If they want to live outside or couch surf and continue sleeping at emergency shelters, that is their choice. I expect a good uptake on the new housing options, in the range of 80 per cent, according to city research, but not everyone will want to participate. The other reason homelessness is not going to go away is because of migration from the communities to Yellowknife. Any of my colleagues here in this House could walk downtown and identify constituents who are homeless here. A major driver of migration is the inadequacy of housing available in the small communities. People come here because there is more housing here, whether shelters, transitional housing, public housing, or market rentals.

Another driver of migration is access to services that are only offered in Yellowknife, such as specialized medical treatment or greater support for disabled children. Other reasons people come, in no particular order: to take a job, to be reunited with family members, and to have easier access to alcohol. No surprises there. Migration seems to be increasing, Mr. Speaker, at least anecdotally, and more migrants are homeless. As the City of Yellowknife has reported, "the costs of this demographic shift, including intrinsic costs, are borne by the city." That's in spite of the fact they have no mandate or budget for this burden, except for federal government Housing First money. There is no question that, again quoting from the report, "there are insufficient resources for housing and health services for those migrating from other communities." Mr. Speaker, I request consent to conclude my statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal and territorial governments are set to reverse this trend by funding additional housing for people who are

homeless. This is good news for the many people waiting for homes, for the City of Yellowknife, and for Yellowknife residents. This collaboration is the way forward for finding real solutions to this long-term problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PLANS

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho. Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, everybody's talking about the houses on this side here with the Housing Minister. We're going to be asking the Minister of Housing. I too will continue with the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, the NWT Housing Corporation has the ability to touch on every aspect of our mandate. It can impact the economy by providing communities with local housing projects that will see five or six people in the communities trained and working on renovating homes. These projects can also look at employing the 18-to-30-year-old group as youth employment rates are very low. We all know that having employment and a good house goes a long way to addressing the wellbeing of communities and its people. In other words, employ people and put them in good housing; you'll have healthier populations than people without jobs and in poor housing. Mr. Speaker, even in the area of governance, when you show the people in our communities that we care enough to make sure our citizens are living in suitable and adequate homes, we will see that leadership becomes a lot easier to deal with.

A chief told me that when we signed on to a devolution agreement he thought the government was going to be a partner moving forward. He said, "that is not what has happened." Mr. Speaker, the communities look at the government in the holistic sense and not department by department. It is important that we know that. I think the NWT Housing Corporation could do very well with the communities by developing good communication and it also can work with each community in developing a housing development plan, specific to that community. This housing development plan could have real targets in reducing core need for that community. This housing development plan could be the blueprint for the NWT Housing Corporation to address core need in every community. I'll have questions for the Minister of Housing at the appropriate time. Marci cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR
AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, this budget offers quite a few things Members of this House can get behind. One aspect in particular is investing \$16.6 million in new federal funding for affordable housing projects with the intent of providing residents of the NWT with an increased number of households that are not only contemporary in all relevant safety standards, but more importantly, and all too rarely seen in the North, affordable. This is by all means a noble measure of this government to tackle the cost of living and will benefit a number of families in Yellowknife and in all our communities, but, Mr. Speaker, today I want to advocate for a taxpayer that almost seems forgotten in this budget and one that is weighed down by the cost of living more than most, the renter. With the cost of fuel, power, food and other amenities being drastically higher than our neighbours in the South, the cost of living in our communities is so out of control to the point that this Assembly has made it a priority in our mandate. I commend this government for attempting to accomplish this for those families that will benefit from the earlier-mentioned budget measures, but our renters are also in a difficult position and I do not clearly see what this government is doing to address this.

In our capital city, a two bedroom apartment can be priced anywhere from \$1,400 to \$1,900, and a three to four-bedroom townhouse runs from \$1,900 to \$2,500. While in Fort St. John, a northern city of similar size to the South, a one to two-bedroom apartment starts at \$500 and goes to \$1,000, while a three-bedroom townhouse is in the range of \$1,150, Mr. Speaker. This comparison, in my opinion, is staggering and acts as a deterrent from people across the country to even consider residing in our great territory.

Mr. Speaker, there are solutions to this problem though, and made-in-the-North solutions at that, for the Yukon has just recently made great strides in addressing them. They have awarded two Yukon developers capital funding to support the construction and operation of affordable renting housing projects in Whitehorse and Dawson City. One developer will receive \$500,000 to construct urban micro-apartments in Whitehorse. In Dawson City, Chief Isaac Incorporated will receive \$450,000 for a 14-unit development. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues as well. This is a clear example of a northern government recognizing the problem and addressing it in a way that partners

with private sector and Indigenous governments, but it also does so in a transparent method that this Assembly expects to see of this government. I ask, Mr. Speaker, if the Yukon is doing something to tackle the issue of affordable rental units, what is our government doing to solve our problem here in the Northwest Territories? For if it can be accomplished in our neighbouring territory, it most certainly can be accomplished here at home in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SELF-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN THE
SAHTU

MR. MCNEELY: Today I rise in the House here to discuss the self-government initiatives undertaken within the Sahtu region, more importantly and more specifically we, the first government, here will see the first community-based and self-government initiative this fiscal year in a few months to come: the Deline self-government agreement. I would like to congratulate the previous government and the previous parties to that initiative and later I'll have questions to the responsible minister on pre-implementation planning which is important to any agreement on the implementation side of things. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions to the other remaining communities on their self-government initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES RELATING TO
HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the next couple years we have a total of 12 units coming into the Mackenzie Delta. In Aklavik, we have two duplex modular homes; Fort McPherson we have three duplex modular homes there as well; and in Tsiigehtchic, we have one duplex that we're still awaiting from last year. Mr. Speaker, that's great we're having 12 units coming into our riding, but the issue is that these are modular homes being shipped in. It's always been a practice within our riding through the Delta that we have stick-built in the communities. We have a 25-per-cent employment rate in our communities, small communities, throughout the NWT. I never worked out the total amount of employment that we're losing here, but it's in the neighbourhood of at least 20 positions. People are not going to have that opportunity to work for somewhere. Sometimes it takes maybe five to six months to build these units, but Mr. Speaker, we're losing that employment in

our communities and that's a big issue through my riding. We have contractors in Aklavik and Fort McPherson that are losing out here, not to mention all the people that they employ to build these units. I realize the Housing Corporation feels they're saving money, but, they're also taking away from our riding that employs our people throughout our small communities. I'll have questions for the Minister later today. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TERRITORIAL HOUSING ISSUES

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the majority of my constituents are First Nations, signatories to Treaty 8 and 11 with the Government of Canada in 1899 and 1921. In those treaties, promises were made to continue existing unhindered and of cultural pursuits, and with the most treaties, there were certain promises that were made including education, health, and housing just to name a few. Those promises are what we call today fiduciary obligations for program and services for housing. This is a brief historical perspective.

[English translation not provided.]

Our people were nomadic, they travelled in the bush, they lived in the bush, and eventually our children were taken away. They were forced to go to school. At about that point, the GNWT took over housing and generalized programs as public housing. The current view of the housing programs is that there's program services and policies for housing and what we call a fiduciary obligation. In that view, the GNWT has a responsibility at providing adequate housing to First Nations and all residents of the NWT. Within that policy initiative too, family units are separated and categorized in terms of needs and policy eligibility with focus on some primary family unit of parents and children, to ensure wellness and a healthy lifestyles. It is I hope the aspiration of this government for those people, families, to own their own homes. The seniors don't have homes, the young people are living in apartments, and some people don't even have a place to sleep. People that have been evicted or have arrears and no possibility of accessing their own homes are left to build their own shacks or houses, often on the titled property of their parents or relatives. There are some parts of communities that could be compared to shantytowns for tent frames and shacks that popped up. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE NEED FOR SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, imagine waking up every day in a house that's run down, mouldy, drafty and too small for your family. Then one day, you wake up in a big, new, beautiful home. You get out of bed and brush your teeth in your en-suite bathroom and then make breakfast in your spacious kitchen. Mr. Speaker, you head off to your job with the mine, with a six-figure salary that helped you pay for your new home.

It's well known that we have a deficit of appropriate housing in our territory. It's been discussed ad nauseam, but no matter how many homes we've built, unless we address the cause of the economic disadvantage that fuels the need for subsidized housing, the problem will only get worse. I'm not at all opposed to social housing. We need to support those who need it. But when there are healthy men and women in Whati who want to work, who want to earn a good income, and who want to provide for their families, then it's my priority to give them an opportunity to do that. The road to Whati is not a handout to a mining company. It's a way to support the creation of well-paying mining jobs and bring money and opportunity into a community. Despite how it's sometimes portrayed in this House, Road to Resources is not a pejorative term. Roads to resources are our best hope to turn our local and territorial economies around. Just think if we built the Slave Geological Province road when it was first discussed in the '50s or if we built it in the '60s or the '70s or at all. We wouldn't have a \$3.2 billion infrastructure deficit and a housing crisis and we wouldn't be sucking at the teat of the federal government, begging our residents to complete the census so we can get our headcount money. We would have a stable resource revenue stream, securing our people's future for generations to come. I didn't get into politics to put Band-Aids on our problems. I did it to get people working. I don't want to be part of another Assembly who couldn't do what was needed to provide for our territory, so let's build these roads and put people to work so they have the power to buy their own homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ULUKHAKTOK ARENA CLOSURE

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague for that statement. It's very meaningful. Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to talk about the Ulukhaktok arena closure. The arena in Ulukhaktok has been closed

since late last year when the hamlet council received the consultant's report indicating that the building is contaminated with mould. According to the Hamlet, "a significant amount of mould was found on surfaces in both the hockey and curling rink. The report also indicated that mould was found in the air quality test in the lobby, kitchen, washrooms, and change rooms." Mr. Speaker, mould spores occur naturally and can be found in the air both inside and outdoors. When these spores encounter a moist environment, they begin to grow and release toxins. Mould contamination can cause allergic reactions in some people, with younger people being more susceptible than most. Ice arenas, which have a high indoor relative humidity, can provide a perfect environment for mould growth. The hamlet did the right thing by closing the arena while dealing with this mould issue to minimize the potential health threat to children and other arena users. Unfortunately, the closure of the arena poses other risks to young people in Ulukhaktok, risks associated with boredom and lack of physical activity.

As we know, the benefits of physical activity in children and youth are extensive, with many direct and associated positive outcomes. Regular physical activity is associated with lower blood pressure and lower rates of obesity and diabetes. It is also positively linked to better mental health outcomes such as better social skills, improved academic performance and reduce rates of anxiety and depression. For this reason, it concerns me greatly to see Ulukhaktok's arena is scheduled to be closed for such a long time. The consultant's report revealed that it was a design flaw in the building, specifically, a lack of mechanical ventilation which caused the mould. The Hamlet is working to correct these issues and hopes to reopen the facility this fall. Later today, I will have questions for the Municipal and Community Affairs Minister about what the department is doing to assist Ulukhaktok to remediate the arena and re-open it to the public as safely and quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CONGRATULATIONS TO
ECHO DENE SCHOOL GRADUATES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we get near to the end of the school year, grade 12 students are looking back on the years past in the school, as well as looking forward to the next phase of their life. Echo Dene School in Fort Liard will celebrate their graduation on Thursday, June 9th at 6:30 p.m. I have been invited to attend and I'm very proud to say that I'll be attending. Unfortunately,

this means that I will not be in the House tomorrow, so some of you Ministers will not get any questions from me. That may make you happy. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I know all these three gentlemen. Ross, Ethan, and Keith need to be congratulated for all their very hard work and commitment in completing their high school requirements. What is really amazing, they were able to achieve their success in a small community where there are few resources, such as a well-stocked library, and fewer teachers and students to study and share their learning together.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in spite of this limitation, I believe the Internet has given these students in remote communities a chance to be successful in their home communities where they have friends and family for support. I thank the Minister of Education for providing support in that area. However, Mr. Speaker, the Internet is not the only reason for their success. We have to thank all the teachers, including the three that are retiring, recognized yesterday, principals, support staff from the Deh Cho divisional education staff, and other school support staff who work just as hard to get these three their success. I need to recognize and thank the community, their coaches, friends, and family, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who were there to encourage them along the way. As well, it's time for them to be very proud of their graduates.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to again congratulate these three men on reaching this significant milestone in their life. There will be many more, I'm sure. Enjoy this moment; you've earned it. As you move onto your next adventure, whether it is more schooling, entering in the workforce, or travelling, this is just the beginning and I look forward to seeing their future accomplishments in whatever field it is in. I wish them all the best and look forward to being part of their celebrations tomorrow. Mahsi cho.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
MIDWIFERY SERVICES IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Today, I'd like to talk about the long saga of midwifery services in the Northwest Territories, based upon the latest updates provided by the Minister of Health and Social Services. In 2012, the government responded to advocacy for community-based midwifery services with a midwifery review and expansion analysis report. That report recommended options for expansion of midwifery services under community, regional, and territorial models. In July 2015, the Minister said that the next

goal was to move forward with a territorial model based out of Yellowknife in 2015-16, so that the full rollout could be done in 2016-17. The exact nature of a territorial model was not defined in that 2012 report. Work on creating the territorial model appears to be stalled. To move it forward, two consultants were brought on in 2015 to flesh out the concept. Midwife positions were created and staffed in Hay River and Fort Smith. Rather than two Inuvik staff positions, the Beaufort Delta health authority decided to pursue other care models. Positions proposed for Yellowknife and Behchoko have yet to be funded. That's my understanding of where we are today.

The Minister stated in July 2015 that he was still committed to introducing midwifery services based in Yellowknife and would expand the program into the regions, starting with the Deh Cho and Behchoko. The word "midwife" does not appear anywhere in our 2016-17 budget, so there's been little progress on this issue. Recently, the Health Minister told midwifery advocates that, "The consultation process is currently being developed for the territorial midwifery program and consultation will take place during the fall/winter of 2016. Once completed, a proposal for territorial midwifery program will be reviewed and considered." Mr. Speaker, we're at least five years along from that decision that led to a 2012 report and recommendations. The 2015 work on two dedicated consultants has resulted in a proposal for further consultation in fall/winter 2016-17. That means that any incorporation into business plans is kicked down to at least 2018-19.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: My colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to a number of people in the gallery. All the language experts, language resource people, teachers, educators are here with us. I would like to thank you for being with us and more specifically for Camilla Bishop. Nora Wedzin is here with us. She's been in a language area for a number of years as well, and also, Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault. Same teacher over the years. Thanks for supporting our language and continue your success. Masi. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I couldn't say it better myself. Thank you for your remarks to our wonderful language workers and instructors throughout the Northwest Territories. Today I'd like you to join me in welcoming board members that sit on the Official

Languages and Aboriginal Language Revitalization Boards, which is very important work as we're moving forward in this government and was a priority coming out the 17th Legislative Assembly as well. I know they do really great work with our Aboriginal Language Secretariat as well. Please welcome me in welcoming Dora Grandjambe, from the Sahtu Dene Council. She's the chairperson of the Aboriginal Language Revitalization Board. Beverly Amos, chairperson of the Official Languages Board from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Emily Kudlak, John Catholique, Emma Amundson, Jonas Landry, Mary Ross, Tammy Steinwand-Deschambeault, Theresa Etchinelle, Nora Wedzin, Vance Sanderson. Also joining us here today are regional language coordinators, Barbara Memogana, from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation; Mary Ann Vital, Sahtu Dene Council; Violet Jumbo, from the Dehcho First Nations; William Firth from the Gwich'in Tribal Council; Nicolas Carrier, Federation Franco-Tenoise. Also, I believe up in the gallery is Shannon Gullberg, our Languages Commissioner and our great staff over at the Aboriginal Language Secretariat that's doing some great work. I'd like to welcome our staff for joining us here today and have all Members join us welcoming our great workers throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome Mary Ross and William George first to the House today. Thank you for all your work you've done for the Gwich'in language. Mahsi cho.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Dora Grandjambe, Theresa Etchinelle, and Mary Ann Vital. Welcome to the Assembly. Members of our home riding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, also, I'd like welcome everybody from the Official Languages Board members, Aboriginal Revitalization Board members, and regional language coordinators. I think we should put you guys to work in the translation booths. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome a fellow Inuvialuit, Beverly Amos, Emily Kudlak, and Barb McKenna. I'm always a big advocate for Indigenous peoples and while we advocate for the environment, we keep our language strong. Thank you. Welcome.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize a few other people in the gallery. We have Kelly and Todd Slack and the new addition to their family, Sam, probably one of the youngest people who has ever been in the gallery. David Wasylciw, who runs Open NWT, a valuable resource for political junkies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, would like to stand up here today and recognize a few constituents from my riding. Emma Amundson and Violet Jumbo and a shout out to Tammy Steinwand there. Thank you.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: To recognize John Catholique, representing the Akaitcho Territory Government, and Vance Anderson, NWT Metis Nation.

MR. SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Me too, I'd like to recognize several people in the gallery. The official Languages Commissioner; revitalization board; Jonas Landry, Emma Amundson, they work on the Aboriginal languages; and Violet Jumbo. She's working on the revitalization program. I'd like to recognize them for the hard work that they're doing. Thank you.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. I too, would like to recognize people for the Official Languages and Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Boards. First, I'd like to recognize John Catholique, also mostly known as "JC". Marci cho. Also, I'd like to recognize Vance Sanderson from the Metis Nation. Vance is my grandson's dad. I'd also like to recognize Angela James, from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Angela is part of my big family. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of Visitors in Gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleague, I want to also recognize residents of the Yellowknife North riding, the Slack family: Todd, Kelly, and Sam. Thank you for being here.

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

MS. GREEN: Masi, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize my constituent, Nicolas Carriere, who is with Franco-Tenoise and helps to keep the French language strong here in the territory. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery.

[English translation not provided.]

Mary Sundberg is a very strong advocate for languages. I would like to thank her. She really promotes the language. They all do a very good job in promoting our language. Thank you, very much. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 185-18(2): CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE FOR CHARLES TETCHO SCHOOL IN TROUT LAKE

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I received an email from Samba K'e First Nation council in Trout Lake, district of education party, regarding concerns about Charles Tetcho School expansion. Mr. Speaker, construction is scheduled to start in February 2017 and is going until the school year ends in June 2017. They feel that there is no space in the community that will accommodate all the school-aged students during this time and they're concerned that the students are going to miss out a lot of school while the construction is occurring. Mr. Speaker, they feel it is going to be very noisy and not safe for the children. I have some questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Is the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment willing to work with the Minister of Public Works to ensure that their staff gets into the community to discuss the construction schedule since the last time they were in the community was May 2015? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you. Mr. Speaker and yes, some of the 12 are doing in Moose Kerr School and in our other communities and we're looking at the capital planning studies for providing facilities and safe facilities for students. We want to make sure that we're doing it in the right way in terms of safety and environmental protections, so yes, the same commitment. We'll work with the school and the community and with Public Works and Services to ensure that we're doing this in the

proper way it's supposed to be done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Way too fast today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his answer. However, he didn't really answer the question; I was asking if he'd get his staff into the community. But I can ask that a little bit later on. Mr. Speaker, with the construction happening to the school, has the department come up with a plan to house the students during this construction phase?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I thought the Member had asked if I was going to be willing to work with PWS and I did answer that one, and of course, our staff will go into the community and work with the community and the school board. We'll get our superintendent in there. I'm also willing to make a commitment to go into the community and see for myself and work with Public Works and Services moving forward. Unfortunately, as the Member had stated in his preamble to the questions, space is an issue. We will be doing a phased-in approach when we're working, making the renovations and the work that needs to be done while construction has been happening. With the phased-in approach, the students will be housed in one section of the school while work is being done. Then, on the second phase, they'll be moved into the other part of the school while work is being done and we will be doing it within the best interests of the students of the staff, to make sure that the least disruption will be happening as we're making these renovations to this school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the government, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell the House how the department is going to address such issues as safety of the site and the noise level during school hours that will impact on the students?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The department, along with Public Works and Services, will develop safe work plans and safety plans with accordance to the WSCC guidelines and approval. As I mentioned, we want to try to do this in the proper way. It'll be a phased-in approach and we'll try to do it with the least disruption to the students and the staff and try to adjust the noise issues as we are developing these safe plans on the building of the school.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Minister for his answer. He's kind of answered, but I'm going to rephrase it a bit here. Will he commit to a timeframe when his staff and

the DPW staff will get into the community, consult with them? He's already made a commitment to come in and I'm assuming we're going to have to do that in the fall because we're in session right now, but will he commit to a time frame when the staff from DPW and Education get into the community and talk to the DEA and the council. Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes and unfortunately, we are in session nearing the end of the school year, but I've made a commitment to try to get out to all the schools, all the communities over the course of my term and I will commit to going into Trout Lake, working with the community, see how we can get this school built in the best possible way and you will bring staff in there.

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

QUESTION 186-18(2):

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister, NWT Housing Corporation, following my Member's statement. I'd like to ask if the Minister feels that the Housing Corporation has an effective communications plan for the people that they serve, specifically, the public housing clients at this point. I hear a lot of people come to me and indicate that it was difficult for them to report their income and they're having trouble with that because they would pay 30 per cent of their gross income towards rent. I know that hasn't been the case for quite a few years that the maximum rent is just a little over 19 per cent of their gross income, so I'd like to ask that question to the Minister. Does she feel she has an effective communications plan for the people in public housing? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister for NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think at the GNWT level that the Ministers and the Premier have addressed, have identified that communication within all of our departments is an area that we need to work further on. I have given direction to the Housing Corporation to develop a communication plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask if the Minister would consider looking at developing a housing plan which has all aspects of housing that we look at in the communities, meaning that they look at not only the public housing, but all of the home ownership in the communities and all of the market housing and all of the staff housing in any

particular community. I recognize that this would be a difficult task in a place like Yellowknife and Hay River, Inuvik. In the small communities where a high percentage of people are reliant on social housing, I'd like to ask if the Minister would develop a housing development plan for each community.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, the NWT Housing Corporation is committed to doing a community housing development plan, specific for every community. We will be looking within that to get answers from people who live in the homes, the LHO's within every community, the community government and the staff of course, of the corporation. As well, I will be asking feedback from our MLAs in, to also give feedback into the questionnaires within this survey before it is put out.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, recognizing that the Housing Corporation has a number of programs to address the housing needs across the communities, I believe there are four main home ownership programs. There's market housing initiatives. There are other staff housing initiatives and of course, public housing also. I'd like to know if within the point when the Minister is doing the community housing development plans, if there's any contemplation that perhaps it could change the programs and change the way they try to address core need at the community level. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, the Housing Corporation is actually... The reason that we're putting out the survey is to identify within each community what they define as their priorities because we do recognize that one size does not fit all and we need to take more of a community focus within our housing programs. We are open to looking at every program that we currently provide and other options that the communities may put forward.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister has there been any discussion with her senior officials at the Housing Corporation towards developing a plan for what we've been talking about through the mandate, aging-in-place for seniors. Thank you.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, the senior management within the NWT Housing Corp. also recognizes the aging-in-place for seniors issue is huge and that we need to address it. We are taking a really proactive approach to actually providing housing so that people can age in place.

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

QUESTION 187-18(2):

IMPROVEMENTS TO HOUSING CORPORATION

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the challenges of housing faced by the residents of the Northwest Territories and so did many of my colleagues. My questions, of course, are for the Minister of the NWT Housing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, in its 2008 audit of the NWT Housing Corporation, the Auditor General said, "we believe that good planning and relevant performance measures will assist the corporation to identify and address its challenges, engage the corporation's progress in meeting the housing needs of all Northwest Territories residents." Can the Minister explain: what are the key components of the department's approach currently to improving housing in the NWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The key component to addressing housing within the NWT at this point for the NWT Housing Corporation is to utilize the community survey that we will be sending out to identify the needs within each community and developing our plan based on each community's identified priorities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for her reply. Mr. Speaker, is the department's work on improving housing still being guided by its April 2012 strategic framework document?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: At this point, the strategic plan is actually expired, so we're looking to do the new plan and then of course the surveys will be utilized to develop our new plan.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Mr. Speaker, what is the department doing to work with communities to make sure land is accessible for developing more housing?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The NWT Housing Corporation land section works a year in advance to identify the land needs for the following year's projects. One of the strategies we also use is the buildings that need to be demolished. We consider that when we're looking at new buildings, and so often we'll take out a unit to put in a new unit within that, on that land.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for her reply. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, what is the department doing to reduce dependence on public housing and to promote

independent home ownership, particularly in the non-market communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We do have a program currently, called the PATH program that is providing assistance to territorial homeownership programs, that people can actually purchase homes within the communities. There's different rates depending on the community. We do an assessment of the building, based on the community and then the... I mean, sometimes actually the units are actually given just for the land costs. We're revisiting that as well because we do recognize that very soon the operating and maintenance money, CMHC funding, will be expiring. We need to come up with a plan. We're kind of looking at ideas around more home ownership programs and just seeing if we can work within the different communities to help them to give them the infrastructure so that they can take more ownership upon their own.

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

QUESTION 188-18(2):
SUPPORTING HOUSING FIRST CLIENTS

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe in Housing First, and I believe for Housing First to work, our government needs to play a very important part in the provision of central, clinical, medical services to support the clients. My question today is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Concerns have been raised that the department may not be providing these services to clients and support the model. Can the Minister confirm of the status of the provision of these services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Housing First Program includes providing participating clients with what has been termed wraparound services. Discussions have been had between the Department of Health and Social Services and the City of Yellowknife, where the City of Yellowknife has clarified that the intent of their Housing First proposal is to have 24/7 supervision and support of clients on site. That does not mean or does not include on-site clinical services 24/7. The Department of Health and Social Services has committed both publicly and in meetings with the city to ensure that all required clinical supports be made available to all Housing First clients through the city's proposed Housing First program. These may include medical treatment, mental health services, addictions counselling, or addictions treatment. All of these are insured services, Mr. Speaker, and are core

programs and they're available to all residents of the Northwest Territories. As far as costing, if demand for the services by the Housing First clients results in financial pressures for the system, this will be addressed through the business planning process. But at this time, we're not anticipating any additional costs because the city's planning to ramp up their Housing First from a low intake in the beginning to I think it's up to 20 by the end of the program. We'll have time to figure out what those costs will be. If there is a desire to provide some additional on-site clinical services, this is something that we may also have to have some additional conversation about incremental funding on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for the answer. How will the department be reviewing the provision of these services to ensure that they're provided in a timely manner and are effectively supporting the program?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, that's going to really involve what the RFP ends up coming back looking like that the city has currently issued. From there, we'll be able to have the conversation on how we're going to continue or enhance the services that we're providing, and as I said, some of this might involve some on-site outreach, which we're absolutely open to doing once we've quantified what it's going to look like. Until we know that, we don't really know what it's going to look like. We're looking forward to having those conversations with the city so that we can build a model here in cooperation with the city that works and is effective.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister willing to commit, at this point, to providing additional health resources or funding, as required, to support this program moving forward?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated we don't believe, at this time, it's going to take some additional funding. We need to actually get into the program with the City of Yellowknife to figure out how it's going to roll out. As the demand ramps up, we might require some additional funding, at which point we are going to come back to the business planning process and have that discussion with committee. Mr. Speaker, the department was an active participant at the April homelessness community partnership forum and is participating in the two different working groups that were mentioned in this House previously. One of the working groups, under the leadership of the city, is sorting through recommendations from the forum to identify priorities, cost out the priorities and establish a roadmap moving forward. We're clearly a part of that, as is the Housing Corp., as is the Department of Education, Culture and Employment,

and we will certainly be working together. There are some areas for critical action and we would be happy to discuss those with committee as we move forward.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I for one appreciate that the department is being proactive and the government's being proactive in the support; it's music to my ears. We know that the department will be supporting the Housing First project. How will the department be addressing homelessness moving forward in other communities outside of Yellowknife, across the territories, and providing the same kind of support to clients who are without homes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services is not the only department working on this and we are not going to be able to solve the problem, but we can be part of the solution, working with communities, working with other departments. In Yellowknife, there are a couple of things that were identified at the housing forum, the homelessness forum, that was held a couple weeks ago. Some areas for critical work that we're working on is addressing the shelter hour gap here in Yellowknife; that's one of the issues that was identified. We anticipate this might require some additional funding, which we'll be coming back to have discussions with committee. We also want to be able to make sure that the program that the city is proposing involves properly, as I've already indicated, and that we're working closely with the city. We also need to explore options for harm reduction programs to support clients in Yellowknife, including things like a wet shelter or a managed drinking program, and work with other partners to see how this might fit into the roadmap for action. Once we've done that work and we've applied it in Yellowknife where we have real demand, it is something that we certainly can look at exploring in other communities and regions throughout the Northwest Territories, but we do have to start somewhere. I can also say that the Housing Corp. is currently working to provide some shelters in communities outside of Yellowknife; they're looking at Aklavik, Fort Simpson, and Behchoko right now. Work is happening, Mr. Speaker. More work is required. It's going to take the will of both sides of this House to get this done and it's going to take some creativity and partnerships with cities, communities, hamlets, as well as other governments.

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

QUESTION 189-18(2):
IMPLEMENTING THE DELINE COMMUNITY
SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I ask the Minister responsible for self-government, Mr. Bob McLeod, on the preparation initiatives underway from the pre-implementation leading up to the Deline self-government in the next two and a half months. What undertaking is underway to assure this Assembly there's going to be a smooth transition? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member is aware, the Deline Final Self-Government Agreement will be coming into effect on September 1, 2016. That will become the first self-government agreement to be negotiated in the Northwest Territories on a community basis. In fact, earlier this week the Deline Got'ine Government held its first election and have elected Raymond Tutcho as its first chief. The GNWT is working collaboratively with Deline and with the Government of Canada to prepare for the September 1, 2016 effective date of the Deline Final Self-Government Agreement, the tri-party Deline self-government implementation working group is responsible for overseeing the completion of the tri-party work that will need to be completed prior to effective date. The GNWT has been assisting Deline and preparing for the effective date by providing income support in areas which it has expertise, such as elections, government operations, and land administration. MACA and Aboriginal Affairs have also formed a bilateral working group with the Deline self-government transition team. This bilateral work is intended to provide support and assistance to Deline in preparing for self-government and to keep one another apprised of progress on their respective pre-effective date activities. In addition, HR and Public Works and Services have been providing support in the area of human resource planning, policy reviewing, and information technology. The Departments of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations and Lands and the Deline self-government transition team have formed a bilateral lands implementation working group to ensure that all matters related to the transfer of Commissioner's lands to the Deline Got'ine Government are completed before the effective date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: Is this working group going to be looking after the remaining Sahtu communities for their self-government initiatives?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I would say that, overall, self-government negotiations in the Sahtu Settlement Area are going very well with several

significant milestones having been reached at several tables recently.

MR. MCNEELY: If things are underway and going smoothly, can I get a copy of the negotiating schedule, Mr. Speaker?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In Tulita, the negotiators for the parties recently completed a draft self-government agreement-in-principle, which is currently undergoing internal review. I expect to have the honour of signing the Tulita self-government agreement-in-principle in the coming weeks. The Deline Got'ine of Colville Lake self-government negotiation process and schedule agreement was signed in 2014 and negotiations on agreement-in-principle are well underway. Fort Good Hope self-government agreement negotiations, they've reached an agreement on a process and schedule agreement and expect it to be signed very soon. We are ready to begin negotiations with Fort Good Hope and Canada as soon as possible, and Norman Wells negotiations are working towards completing a full draft of an AIP, and I'll make this information available to the Member.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is that I look forward to working with the Minister to conclude the schedule so we can have target dates before us here to ensure that these dates are met, and any supports that we can provide from this Assembly to ensure that there's an open and transparent negotiating table in the process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I didn't hear a question; more of a comment. However, I'll allow the Honourable Premier if he wishes to answer.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to report that in Colville Lake, with the Deline Got'ine, we are in a pilot project for fast-tracking self-government negotiations, and I expect that we'll all benefit from that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 190-18(2):
REDUCING THE NEED FOR EMERGENCY
SHELTER SERVICES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my statement today dealt with the issue of migration and how there will always be some need for emergency shelters in Yellowknife, but probably and hopefully not to the extent that they are

available now. My question for the Minister responsible for Homelessness is: what planning is she doing with the shelters to reduce their bed nights over time? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for Homelessness.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's actually a few things that we're doing to reduce the shelter bed nights, the amount of people that are staying in the shelters within the Yellowknife community. For one, we are working with the City of Yellowknife with their Housing First project. We're also working with the shelters to implement a Housing First project within their own so that they can move some of the people that are in their units into more of an independent living structure. Finally, we are working within the communities as well to implement emergency shelters within the community, three identified this year, so that they will have options and they don't have to migrate to Yellowknife simply because they have no place to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. A dimension of my question is whether the Minister can foresee a time when funding for emergency shelters will decline because Housing First has taken effect in Yellowknife.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: That's actually a very difficult question because I recognize that the term of the government is only four years, which doesn't give us a lot of time and really hard to evaluate during that period of time. I am hoping that the next Legislative Assembly will carry forward the work and to move forward within the Housing First model and to get people more independently housed. There will always be a need for emergency shelters though, and that's just the reality of shelters throughout the world, and especially within the Northwest Territories because this community of Yellowknife is a very transient community with our mines, et cetera. We're a magnet community. That was acknowledged by the Member in her opening statement, so there will always be a need for emergency shelters within our community but, hopefully, as she stated, that will go down as long as we are more proactive in trying to move people, give them the skills and the assets so that they can live independently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Minister for that. Mr. Speaker, to give a specific example here, the Housing First project in Yellowknife plans to house 20 people in the next three years. Does that mean there will be a decline in the shelter capacity of 20 people?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to be able to say yes, that

there would be a decline by 20 people. However, in the short period of time that I have been a Minister, I have noticed that there's been an increase within homeless people within the community. I am not as optimistic, and I would have to say that probably this is going to be a long-standing issue that we will have to dedicate a lot of time within the next, not only the four years, but for a longer period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that. One approach that is taken in Calgary is to make it as a goal that people who live in emergency shelters won't spend more than five days there, that they have a rapid rehousing program. Can the Minister envision setting a goal of that kind where there is a commitment that people will stay in emergency shelters for short periods of time so that they aren't stuck on the housing continuum the way they are now?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would really love to be able to say that there would be a goal within a short period that says that people would not stay in emergency shelters for five years. However, like we had stated, we are working in partnership with the City of Yellowknife. Within three years, they plan to have 20 people housed, within the shelter format, we're looking to have 30 people, that's only 50 people. Even after those people are housed, we will still have a huge population of people that are homeless, so I think that the goal of five days within a shelter is still a ways off. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 191-18(2):

COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH MODULAR HOMES

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, follow-up to my Member's statement, I have two questions for the Minister of Housing. I'll use Tsiigehtchic as the first example, because this is the first community that was approved to have a modular home sent to the community. Mr. Speaker, it's been 10 months our community has been waiting to have this unit that's supposed to be shipped to the community in the fall. Mr. Speaker, there has to be added costs, and I'm sure we wouldn't find that out until the fall, by the time we actually get the unit in Tsiigehtchic. I'd like to ask the Minister what savings are we having getting these modular homes shipped up to our remote communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the modular homes were purchased, prior to my term and governance actually, we used the bid process and there was substantial savings, over 30 per cent savings, with using the modular homes. The cost of transportation, although there may be some differences, we still have to get those homes up by barge and stuff. There is still transport whether we use it to take the materials from the South or to bring the modular homes; there would still be a transportation cost within that, the amount I cannot state at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the community's been waiting. You know, there's going to be other challenges with NTCL having their challenges as well. What is the department planning as an alternative to getting these units shipped up to the communities?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The NWT Housing Corporation is well aware of the issues of the one barge going into some of the northern communities, and so we are really being proactive and trying to get all of our material for this year actually ready and to be shipped on the next NTCL boat that's going out.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned also, we're losing upwards of 20 jobs in our communities as a result of this. How can the corporation justify putting these people out of work, Mr. Speaker? Our small communities depend on these units being built in our communities; it's plain and simple. The employment rate is going to stay below 35 per cent because we're losing these jobs, Mr. Speaker, so how can the department justify that?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As stated, we do use the Business Incentive Policy to evaluate all proposals. We have sent out new proposals for this year and, coincidentally, the majority of all of the proposed proponents came in are actually northern businesses. This round will actually be all northern businesses. As well though, I do want to mention that the NWT Housing Corporation does recognize that we need to have jobs in the community. In an effort to provide jobs within each community and also to have better access to the corporation and to our services, we actually employ 128 people in the communities through our LHO local housing organization program. We chose to leave it within the communities and not make government positions, so that they are community-based programs and community-based jobs. One hundred and twenty-eight people within the communities are employed through that one initiative.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the numbers the Minister just gave me, that's throughout the whole territory, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about the small communities here, you know, my riding, three communities: Fort McPherson, Aklavik, and Tsiigehtchic. We're losing 20 positions here. I hope the department isn't planning to carry on this sort of practice here, because look at that, 10 months we've been waiting, Mr. Speaker. We could have built at least three to four times the amount of units while we've been waiting, Mr. Speaker. How long is the department going to carry on this practice? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, as stated, we are trying to support northern businesses. The next round that came in are all northern businesses that have applied. We didn't get any southern people that have applied for them, so you will see a change within this fiscal year.

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

QUESTION 192-18(2):
MIDWIFERY SERVICES

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I know that the Minister of Health is feeling a little bit under the weather today, so I've got some easy questions that I hope will make him feel a lot better. Mr. Speaker, my questions are about midwifery. The 2012 midwifery report recommended creation of midwifery positions in regional centres, including Yellowknife. Whether a regional or territorial model is pursued, positions should be staffed in Yellowknife. Will the Minister commit to bring forward funds in the 2017-18 business plan to staff positions for a midwifery program based in Yellowknife? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our goal is to build this on the success of the existing midwifery programs, to enhance access to birthing services, both pre- and post-natal care, and begin work on the development of a territorial midwifery program. We are doing that work now. We have been able to hire two midwifery consultants, which proved incredibly difficult. We had some significant turnover in that area, which really delayed our ability to move forward with the midwifery review that I had indicated in the previous government. We have those consultants in place, they are going through and they're working on evaluation frameworks, one

that's being done in Hay River. They're also working on a consultation schedule to go out and have some engagement with stakeholders, not to reinvestigate it, but to help us develop a territorial model. The report that the Member is referring to gave us a number of different models to explore; that was territorial, regional, and community-based. We have two community-based models. We have one regional model. Now we're looking at developing the territorial model. We're doing the work this Assembly, this fiscal year. I can't say for sure that we'll be in a position to come forward for financial submissions for the 2017-18 fiscal year. We will try, but I make no guarantees. There's a significant amount of work that needs to be done. We do have to compete against other priorities. In order for us to get money for this, we do have to look at where that money's going to come from, and look at other areas where we may have to make reductions in order to make this a possibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I appreciate the answer from the Minister and would like to try to help him try to find some money for that. Midwifery, because I've asked the Minister questions regarding cost savings, how they could be achieved by relying on community-based midwifery rather than pediatric care. His response was that boarding and travel costs have not been included in the analysis done to date. Boarding and travel costs seem to be some of the biggest costs for the current approach. Will the Minister consider these costs as part of the consultations to take place this year on expansion of midwifery services?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all costs will be factored into our analysis. One thing that the Member does need to remember is that bringing in midwifery services does not actually help us or result in a reduced number of physicians that are available in the Northwest Territories. There are no cost savings with respect to midwifery services replacing physicians' services. Physicians are still a key component of birthing in the Northwest Territories even with our existing midwifery services that we are providing in different communities. It doesn't mean that births that are difficult, complicated, or that they think there's going to be challenges with still don't come into a regional centre. Many of the births that are being facilitated still happen in Yellowknife, even though a lot of the pre- and post-natal care is being provided. This does not mean that I don't support midwifery services. I've been involved in implementation of midwifery long before I was an MLA. I actually helped write the job descriptions, I helped on the implementation of the Hay River model. I believe in the service, but we've got to make sure it's costed properly, we need to have a territorial program design that's going to

meet the needs, recognizing that people are still going to have to travel in and physicians are still a key part of the process. Midwives don't result in reduced numbers of physicians in the Northwest Territories.

MR. O'REILLY: In the area of midwifery services, Nunavut appears to be ahead of the Northwest Territories in meeting birthing service needs. Nunavut staffs midwives in the regional centres of Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, and Iqaluit, which seems to be at least partly based on cost savings. Would the Minister agree that having an NWT midwifery program focused on regional centres, including Yellowknife, would likely result in some cost savings, or will he research the Nunavut model to investigate this?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, midwives provide both pre- and post-natal. Much of the birthing that's happening in Nunavut is still happening in other centres. For instance, many of the births that are coming out of Kitikmeot are actually happening here in Yellowknife. We need to look at the whole picture. We can't just look at little pieces and components of it. The pre- and post-natal portion of the services that the midwives are providing is amazing services and provides better results when we're actually looking at building stronger families and having healthier families and kids. I mean, we support the initiative; we're trying to find a way to make it happen. We have to build a territorial plan. We'll build it and we'll have to come forward to this House and seek some support and some financial support to make this a reality, but at the end of the day, midwifery services is going to have to compete against all the other priorities that are coming up in this House for additional money. This is housing. This is all these other types of things that are coming. We believe it has value and we'll bring forward the case at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the response from the Minister. But we've been talking about this for almost 10 years now, and we only really have midwifery services available in two communities. Can the Minister commit that he will fast track these consultations that he's talking about this summer, to bring forward final recommendations and an implementation plan as soon as possible? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I feel that although we did have some delays, now that we

have our positions in place, finally we are able to get some qualified applicants to do the work. They are going at this as quickly as they can. This isn't their only job. They're also working on the evaluation frameworks that are being put in place in Hay River. If we're going to continue to roll out these programs, we must be evaluating the work that's being done; they're doing that important work. They're also working with physicians and the practitioners in Fort Smith, Hay River, and Inuvik, learning from what they're doing, and as I've already indicated, we're fully going to engage with stakeholders as we design this territorial model. The report gave us options for three different models, but it didn't actually describe what those models would look like or how they would be rolled out or how they would be funded. That work needs to be done. We need to build a business case; we need to do that in cooperation with the physicians and other stakeholders. It's going to take time. It is being done as quickly as it can. I can't guarantee we'll have something for the business plans next October, I believe it is, but we will do our best. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 193-18(2):
RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH FIRST
NATIONS HOUSING

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in my statement, I talked about treaty rights and obligations that are encumbered by the federal government and also the GNWT. My question is to the Minister of the Housing Corporation. Treaties of NWT are by nature bilateral between First Nations and the Government of Canada, and on the south of 60, we have a direct relationship between the federal government and First Nations in their communities in terms of their responsibilities to their citizens. Up here in the North, we have federal transfer payments that are received by the government on behalf of the people of the NWT, but also for First Nations. Now my question to the Minister: since taking over responsibility of housing from the federal government, what treaty obligations does the GNWT have for our First Nations in terms of housing? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that the treaty does state that the government will provide housing. However, the treaty does not state that housing will be free within that treaty. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for saying that, and perhaps, you know, the issue's not as simple as that. For example, in terms of jurisdictions, you know, sometimes because of jurisdictions we get caught up in red tape. Sometimes the fact is that we have to board up homes because of jurisdictional messes between governments and First Nations communities. Recently, there has been steps in terms of trying to sort out the jurisdictions, the red tape, to try to bring housing to citizens that need it, particularly on the Hay River Reserve. Could the Minister update this House in terms of ensuring that progress has been made on that front, and ensuring housing for people that need them, at the same time explain the role of the Minister and the department in terms of working with First Nations?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Specific to the Hay River Reserve, there was an issue where there were units that sat empty for many years because of land tenure. When I came into governance, and prior to me as well, it was brought up as an issue. We worked on it very diligently, and I'm really pleased to report actually that we've negotiated with the federal government so that we do have land tenure and that we can actually put those units to use within the community. There are still more... I think there's four more; I may be incorrect. But I think that we're still looking at working with that with the federal government to try to get all of the units so that we can actually use those within the Hay River Reserve. Because I'm in agreement: it's really inappropriate that these units are being stagnated because of the tri-lateral agreements that we had in place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's sometimes almost like a puzzle in terms of ensuring the immediate needs and critical needs of people are met. That's the obligation of this government that we have in terms of taking over responsibility from the federal government and ensuring that communities and families do receive houses. In terms of working with First Nations, you know... Some aspire to ensure that homeownership is a critical need, and that's their focus, but sometimes public housing, you know, people would rent their houses for a long time and not really perhaps aspire to own their own homes. What are the long-term goals of the GNWT in respect to self-government of First Nations in regards to housing? Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Self-governance is an aspect that I actually take personally, and that I do respect and honour and believe it is the right way to support First Nations people and give them back ownership of their people and all of their culture, et cetera. I am committed to working closely with the First Nations communities and seeing what we can do to

provide them, because at some point within self-governance, there will come a time, maybe not in this government, but soon, that they will need to take ownership of all of their services, housing, child protection, income support, all of those things. The more tools that we can give them beforehand so that they are successful in that, the better off they will be. I am starting to give consideration about what type of tools and how we will work toward it, how we will work with the self-governments so that they have the tools that they need so that when they are ready to take on housing. We will set them up to succeed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been a lot of progress in terms of self-determination of First Nations communities, ensuring they have responsibility for their citizens, and housing is one aspect of that. Could the Minister provide an overview to this side of the House in terms of how it's working with First Nations communities that aspire to have self-government agreements with the Government of Canada and what its role is?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: None of the community governments have approached me and said that they were looking to take on housing, but I know that it is something that we need to do in the future. Any of the governments that is actually wanting to take on the housing role, I am more than willing to support them with that, understanding that I don't want to set people up to fail, so I don't want to just dump it on them. I want to make sure that we have a solid plan that they can have the capacity to be able to take it on and succeed with that, and I would love to have a pilot government. If anyone wants to come forward, that would be wonderful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 194-18(2):
ULUKHAKTOK ARENA REMEDIATION

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the Ulukhaktok arena closure. My questions are for the Minister of MACA. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: what is the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs doing to assist Ulukhaktok with their remediation of its arena? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thanks, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the fall of 2015, the

Hamlet of Ulukhaktok identified mould issues in their arena facility. They had arrangements with the consulting company on an existing project in the community, and while they were there, they engaged them to help them deal with the mould, so they have done that. A regional office, we were in communication with them. We were comfortable with the approach that they were taking, so we left that with them. As to what MACA is doing to help the system, we provide the community infrastructure funding that they are able to utilize, but at the end of the day, the community of Ulukhaktok took ownership of this, and they took steps to ensure that it was dealt with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Mr. Speaker, my second question to the Minister is, and I appreciate the answer, my question is: has the department reviewed the consultant's report and discussed the issues with the Hamlet of Ulukhaktok, and what are the costs associated with the remediation?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have not reviewed the consultant's report. Again, that was a decision that was made by the community of Ulukhaktok, and if they had any questions or if they needed any assistance, then all they have to do is call our office and we will provide whatever assistance we can. But a shout out to the community of Ulukhaktok for taking ownership in this and dealing with it. We make our people available to them for any type of advice or technical assistance we can provide. As to what the actual cost is of the remediation, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is public tender was led for the remediation work through the Hamlet of Ulukhaktok with a consulting company they are working with, and the tenders are actually closing on Friday, June 10th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I thank the Minister for that answer. The importance of having recreation activities, especially far up north in small communities is very important, especially in the isolated areas that we live in. My region is furthest north in the territory and the impacts are native in very many ways. Mr. Speaker, my final question: will the Minister commit to assist the hamlet council to address this issue so that the people of Ulukhaktok will be skating and curling this fall?

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take the Member's point. We know the recreational facilities are very important to a lot of smaller communities, and I know a community like Ulukhaktok utilizes their facility quite often. We will make ourselves available to the community of Ulukhaktok should they seek

any advice. They are managing the issue. They are managing the project. They are providing our regional office with key milestone times throughout the project, and my understanding is the work is expected to be completed in this summer and fall, so they should be open for the winter season.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, reply to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address, day six of seven. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Replies to Budget Address

MR. BEAULIEU'S REPLY

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have to change the way we do business. I was really struck the other day when I heard what some of the current Ministers said about budget years ago when they were Regular Members. They wanted to change the way we do business. I know they are honourable and determined people and they must have tried to change the way we do business in government.

Mr. Speaker, we have now spent months reviewing business plans, working on a budget we are considering in the House. We all had input into it. Even if we don't like it all, we feel we contributed to things that the Finance Minister has mentioned in his budget address, and I thank him for that. In doing that work, we save a few jobs and some important programs that might have otherwise been cut. This is not a small thing. Those jobs and programs cost millions of dollars. We did that for the good of the people of our territory. We should be proud of that. I am proud of that and probably the Minister of Finance is too.

I think the Finance Minister knows that we did our best, but that is not good enough. We have to change the way we do business. To start with, I think it was a huge mistake. The government went out on a major campaign to cut \$150 million in the budget, with a big chunk of that coming this year, 2016-17. To this day, I don't know why the government did that or whose idea it was. I know it wasn't mine. The worst case I heard during the 17th Assembly doesn't even come close to the cut of \$150 million, so I guess I have to blame the current government, current Cabinet, since they proposed this cut. Proposing this monster cut has a very important effect. It made us all focus on the cut and how we could keep the damage to a minimum. I saw an editorial saying it should be pretty easy to cut \$150 million from the government's fat budget, but it's not. They have it all wrong. We are talking about people. We are talking about people's jobs,

programs that people need. The bigger the cut, the more pain it is going to cause, the more it hurts our economy, the more it impacts our population. We spend a lot of time and energy on this, just keeping what we have now. When you focus on cuts, you are not focused on what you can build, what things you can do, or thinking outside the box. The fact is, when you are fighting cuts, you are only inside the box, and you can't even see daylight. You cannot change the way we do business.

Mr. Speaker, I think when we talked about our priorities as 19 Members, we were talking about what we want to do. What we wanted to do most, what I wanted to do most was create jobs, especially at the community level. I want more jobs available to people so people have something to work for, some goals they can reach and to be proud of, so they can live well and do what they want to do. I want to do things that help people get jobs. That could be better education. That could be on-the-job training in daycares, addictions treatment, you name it. For babies and toddlers, it might be early childhood development. We all raise our kids the best we can, and we want them to grow up to be healthy and get good jobs. Mr. Speaker, if we could do one thing to change the way we do business, it should be to create jobs in small communities. Let's set some targets for employment and figure out how to get to those targets. Can you imagine if the employment rate in small communities was 70 per cent instead of 40 per cent? There would be very little need for income support. There would be less reliance on social housing. There would be less demand for health care. I have often said, "give people jobs and you will see the jails and the hospitals empty out and the schools fill up." I'm telling you this from my own experience. If you go to small communities and see what's going on, the people can't afford to buy gas for their skidoos to go hunting. Mr. Speaker, when you shoot a moose, that moose is basically worth seven to eight thousand dollars to the family. That's what you save on groceries, and it's like having a big cheque in your hand. It hurts me when I see a good hunter that cannot afford gas that he needs to put food on the family's tables. We should be doing something about it besides putting that hunter on income support and forcing him to ask the government to maintain his house.

We know we could do this, and we could do a lot more. We could put our young adults to work. We could hire a youth officer in every community. Mr. Speaker, we could start some daycares in our communities. That would create a few jobs. It would help young kids play and learn, and get ready for school. If we did that, the kids will do better in school. "Right from the Start," as our Education Minister says. We have to do it, not just say it. We have to do it. On top of that, the parents of those

kids could find work or upgrade their own skills to find work. Mr. Speaker, we need to invest in our youth in the communities where we have no youth crime. When we see a community doing right for the youth, we should provide them the support necessary. In one community where there has been no youth in court for several years, they want to start their own community development. They needed support from this government to do two or three major capital projects, but that was not in the government's plans. Shifting things around to support that community could not be done. The government did not have the will.

It is on the other end of the spectrum, our population is aging, and we need to take care of our elders. We should be doing everything we can so our elders can age in place in their own homes in their own communities. It might take a few simple things: a ramp, better railing, some basic homecare. Mr. Speaker, a two-hour visit to our elders a few times a week or every day would cost less than moving that elder to a home somewhere else, and it would be a lot better for them. This is what our elders want, and this is how life is lived in our communities. We should train our people who need to deliver home care, building on local skills and knowledge, including Aboriginal languages. We know we need to do this, but there is no new money for home care. If you moved money around into home care, you may actually stop the Health and Social Services budget from growing year after year.

Housing is another area that needs a lot of work. Compared to the rest of Canada, we have a high percentage of homes in core need. This is not good, especially since we don't have jobs for people that will enable them to take themselves out of core need. On average, 20 per cent of our homes are in core need. An improvement is needed in every community, including larger centres. But we can't seem to do that. Why not? Mr. Speaker, let's do things differently. One idea, for example, would be in the housing market communities. Let's provide \$5,000 for the basic improvements targeted to energy efficient or barrier free. Upgrade the homes up to \$10,000, \$20,000. People could leverage this money, resulting in spending two to four times greater than what the government's contribution will be. That would stimulate the economy, improve aging homes, create jobs, reduce the number of homes in core need, and cut our greenhouse gas emissions. All things we need to do. Instead of doing that, we spend our time working on the budget trying to save existing jobs. We pushed the Minister very hard and thought we got the message across. But every day, we hear layoffs are proceeding. We hear that casuals are losing their jobs. We hear that summer students are not being hired. We are cutting entry-level jobs, and

that is not right. The reality is: all those losses disproportionately hurt Aboriginal people in small communities.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear fire crews are reconfigured, it really means some firefighters do not get work. I never heard of a single senior manager being laid off. I don't hear the departments getting by with one less deputy minister or fewer directors. There has been no serious cutting at the top. Millions of dollars of programming may be cut, but not a single senior manager along with it. That is, I am sorry to say, business as usual. I know a guy that always says, "cash flows uphill," and I think that is true. Mr. Speaker, I do not want our entire term in office to be wiped out as we focus on budget cuts. That is the wrong focus. I do not want the business plan in the fall to be more of the same. I do not want next year's budget address to tell me we need a change. I want the next budget address to tell me we need to change the way we do business, and actually deliver on the promise. I do not want to spread doom and gloom, because our territory does not need that. It's not true. My people do not complain about the weather. We go out there and we do what we need to do when the time is right, and the time is right now for us to change the way we do business. We have more than three years left in our term. We need to decide what we want to achieve, and go out and do that. We don't want to achieve a bunch of reductions, especially reductions that take jobs from people, Mr. Speaker. What we need is to create jobs, to create jobs that are accessible to people that don't have jobs. We will need to help some of those people upgrade their skills, whether it's through education, on-the-job training, or apprentices. We need to match what we are doing with the results we want to get.

Mr. Speaker, our government must address our severe problem with alcohol. The Department of Health and Social Services must provide more tools to the communities to address alcohol abuse. Six or seven years ago, I asked a community health nurse, "what is the greatest health risk to your community?" Without thinking about it for a second she said, "alcohol." She went on to talk about the cost of alcohol to the health system, and I know all of those things are true. We all know the cost of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. A person with FASD is costing the system more than \$1 million dollars over their lifetime. In addition, consider the impact on their family and community. We also know that FASD is 100-per-cent preventable. Mr. Speaker, supports must be put in place to eradicate FASD. If we can do that, we will see so many benefits. I don't know where to start listing them off, but I'm going to sum it up. If we can really do that, we can change the way we do business, and we will improve the situation for our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, it was recently reported in the news that Canadians aged between 50 and 75 will inherit \$750 billion from their parents over the next 10 years. The generation leaving us is the richest in history, but that is not the case in our small communities. People that age barely have enough money to feed themselves. I want to close with this point, Mr. Speaker, so that everyone can think about it. This is our future, and we want to leave something positive for our young people. I think that we should do that. We need to change the way we do business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Replies to budget address, day six of seven, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN'S REPLY

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The difference of opinion between Cabinet and Regular MLAs with the 2015-16 budget reflects some unfinished business around the mandate. Our problem is what then-vice president George Bush Sr. described as "the vision thing." As an interesting aside, I want to provide some context for this quote. Bush was considering a run at the presidency as Ronald Reagan's second term in office came to an end. You might recall that Reagan was known as "the Great Communicator," but up to that point in 1987, Bush hadn't been very effective in articulating what he stood for, so a friend suggested he spend some time thinking about his fundamental values and beliefs. Then he could tell voters where he wanted to take them. Bush's response was dismissive. "Oh, the Vision Thing." We 19 MLAs spent hours and days coming up with a mandate for this 18th Assembly. We looked at the transition documents our colleagues in the 17th left us. We looked at the promises each of us had made to voters. We considered the briefings provided by government departments, and our draft mandate got bigger and bigger and bigger. The mandate included a section called fiscal context, which made the case for cuts in order to generate a cash surplus to invest in infrastructure. At that point, the question of how much cash and what infrastructure remained unanswered. We debated this point as a Caucus without coming to a common understanding of the issue. Government wanted it in. We Regular MLAs wanted it out. Ultimately, Regular MLAs voted to remove this section during the debate of the mandate in February.

In hindsight, this debate turns out to be most significant, the most significant the Members of the 18th Assembly have had to date. Almost everything we have done since has been related by the government to the need to create a surplus by making cuts to the government's operating budget. Despite taking out the fiscal context section, the

discussion about the need for a \$150-million surplus didn't and won't go away. The Minister of Finance told the House in February that, "unless we find a way to curtail our expenditures and/or grow our economy by approximately \$150 million over the next five years, the GNWT will continue to use short-term borrowing to pay for operating expenditures and to finance infrastructure investment."

The Minister of Finance also announced that there would be no new taxes, so the emphasis was on cuts. The regular MLAs interpreted this action as austerity and warned they wanted to see greater balance between generating new revenue and cuts. The government introduced a revenue options paper that dismissed most ideas as unworkable because they would increase the cost of living. Still, we wanted the government to take the public's advice on how to get this balance right. The Minister of Finance responded by setting up an e-mail address backed by a small-scale awareness campaign to gather their responses to four specific questions. They asked which programs and services could be cut, how to be more efficient, which taxes to increase, but most importantly, the balance that I just discussed. The Minister tabled that document with the budget last week. There were 36 responses from individuals and organizations, and I would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate. The responses don't represent a consensus on what to cut or whether new taxes are acceptable, and it is not clear how the Finance Minister incorporated their responses in the budget he delivered last week. I will say the budget he delivered last week is the budget he promised in February, a budget that marched us towards a surplus so we can invest in infrastructure. In the meantime, between the February sitting of the House and the budget delivered last week, Regular MLAs reviewed business plans developed by each of the departments and asked Ministers and department staff questions just the way we are now when we sit as Committee of the Whole. It soon became clear through this process that departments were also struggling with "the vision thing." Cabinet gave them targets for cuts. If there were principles for making cuts, it's not clear what they were. I can't find a way to relate them to the mandate priorities which should have been the overarching guidance. What we ended up with is a mixture of staff and program reductions. It is as if we went through the House to gather stuff for a garage sale. Whoa, there's this fondue set we got for a wedding present we never use. When was the last time anyone played this game? This was an expensive winter coat, but it never did fit properly.

Without a clear vision at the top, there wasn't a vision to share with the civil service about our

common values and there still isn't. As recently as mid-May, Regular MLAs warned the government that they were unconvinced that generated a \$150 million surplus was either realistic or necessary, yet in last week's budget, the Finance Minister said, and I quote, "our target is \$150 million in savings or new revenues to establish a short-term cash surplus position by the end of the 18th Assembly." Mr. McLeod goes on to report that the budget he presented last week represents 45 per cent of that total, so that means the exercise we've just been going through is going to come around again as soon as this fall when business plans for the next fiscal year are presented to Regular MLAs, and once again, we will be balancing cuts against tax increases in order to generate a cash surplus to invest in infrastructure.

There are some things we could do differently next time starting with the "vision thing." We as 19 MLAs need to make another effort to come up with a common vision for this 18th Assembly. The process that led us to create five priority areas, then 25 explanatory priorities, and 136 commitments is not helping us in this budget process. We need a strong, simple statement about what we are doing financially, and most importantly, we have to try to reach consensus on this point. This is the first time we have attempted to create an overarching mandate on the basis of agreed priorities, and it is fair to say it hasn't totally worked. We need to learn from this and adjust the process. A second change is to agree on what we are creating a surplus for. The Minister has reported an infrastructure deficit of more than \$3 billion. What are our priorities within that need? Houses, schools, health centers, roads? They are all vying for position. We need to create and agree on a list of priorities that reflect territory-wide benefits. I don't disagree with building a road to Whati. I just think the community needs housing more. A third change is about how the government communicates what it is doing with its budget. In the financial update delivered in February, the Minister said, "unless we make changes to expenditure management, we will not have the fiscal resources to make strategic economic investments, let alone sustain current programs and services." We have zigzagged from talking about impending crisis to a budget that, despite the cuts, delivers more spending than last years did. During that evolution, people who live, work, and invest in the NWT worried about their future, the future of government services, and the future of the territorial economy. Not that there aren't things to worry about with our volatile resource-based economy and small population, but it's time to better match words with the actions. We need to stop talking about an impending crisis and start talking about what is being delivered, which is incremental change. The budget address, I hope, will begin a new dialogue about our finances.

A fourth change is how to involve the public in budgeting. Historically, the Finance Minister has appeared at public meetings to hear what voters have to say in communities all around the NWT. He has met with lobby groups and NGOs to hear their thoughts. He has encouraged the public to write e-mails and letters. The Finance Minister needs to ramp up his efforts, to gather public input for the next budget. He also needs to find a way to reflect the advice he's being given. Consultation isn't only about listening. It's about synthesizing the input into coherent direction and making a clear response to the trends in that direction, and above all, it's about being willing to change the end result.

Mr. Speaker, we are, of course, going to press on with our consideration of the budget that is now before us. It is a budget that has more benefits than any of us expected, and some good ones such as increases to Student Financial Assistance, the creation of the NWT Child Benefit, and restructured daycare funding, to name a few that are important to me. Before we look at the budget for the next fiscal year, we need to revisit our understanding of our fiscal context to see whether we can come to terms with "the vision thing." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 56-18(2):
REPORT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
JUDICIAL REMUNERATION COMMISSION 2016

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I wish to table the following document entitled "Report of the Northwest Territories Judicial Remuneration Commission in 2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 57-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES STATE OF THE
ENVIRONMENT REPORT HIGHLIGHTS 2016

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Northwest Territories State of the Environment Report Highlights 2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Public Works and Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 58-18(2):
NORTH SLAVE RESILIENCY STUDY FINAL
REPORT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the follow document entitled "North Slave Resiliency Study Final Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE ON BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we wish to continue on with the consideration of Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017. Mr. Chairman, we would like to continue our deliberations on the Environment and Natural Resources, and time permitting, get into Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Does committee agree? We will continue consideration of the document after a short break. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We will continue with our consideration of Tabled Document 50-18(2), Government of the Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2016-2017, with the Department of ENR. Minister Schumann, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber? Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister Schumann, would you please introduce your witnesses.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you. To my left is Susan Craig, director of finance. To my right, immediate right, is Ernie Campbell, deputy minister, and to my far right is Erin Kelly, assistant deputy minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Welcome back, witnesses. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I have a few remaining comments on the corporate management activity that we agreed to yesterday. Therefore, I seek unanimous consent to return to page 87 in the ENR estimates. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. The Member is seeking unanimous consent to return to page 87.

---Unanimous consent granted

You may continue, Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, today there are or have been, since it's late in the day, 300 children in the Somba K'e Park here, in Yellowknife, for World Oceans Day, and the reason that they're there is because ENR has a public education program that is aimed at teaching children and people of all ages about the different aspects of the ENR mandate, such as wildlife, water, environmental protection, and so on. To that end, I'm very dismayed by the proposed loss of the part-time public education specialist in the department's field support unit, which we spoke about yesterday when we were going through the corporate management section of the plan. The loss of this position goes to principles that we do not want to see front line positions cut, especially a cut in headquarters which has repercussions for the whole of the NWT, and so, to that end, I am wondering if the Minister will consider reinstatement of that position. Therefore I have a motion that this committee strongly recommends that the government take immediate action to reinstate funding in the amount of \$21,000 for the proposed elimination of the public Education coordinator position in the field support unit under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under the corporate management activity. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. A motion is on the floor and is being distributed now. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Green.

COMMITTEE MOTION 30-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 50-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES, 2016-2017, ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES, CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES
(PG. 87), REINSTATEMENT OF FUNDING FOR
PUBLIC EDUCATION COORDINATOR IN FIELD
SUPPORT UNIT,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, as I said, I asked to return to this section because I feel that this position has tremendous value, not only to this region but to the whole NWT. It is a program in which education is

provided to people of all ages. It is a winner of the Premier's Award in 2010 for on-the-land training, and so the purpose of this motion is to ask that this position be reinstated. I realize that we are not able to add money to the budget, but I'm asking for agreement of the whole House that this position be reinstated and that we work out how the funding for that will happen at another point. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I know that when the business plan came forward to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, I'm pretty sure I asked about this position, and I was told by the department that they have other folks that would pick up the work that this position would normally carry out, and I was a bit skeptical about that. I've known the people that have been in that position probably for most of the time I've been in Yellowknife, which is close to 30 years, or that have been involved particularly in that field. They do very important work. I'm not sure if the MLA for Yellowknife Centre talked about the Tundra Science Camp that's run north of Yellowknife, where community elders come in, and there are scientists there, as well. There are some wonderful sharing experiences that take place with youth, as well. That work is largely coordinated by the education specialist position and is something that I'd really like to see continue. I do support this motion, and I would urge, certainly, all the MLAs on this side of the House to support it and Cabinet colleagues, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion. Minister Schumann, would you like to speak to the motion?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to speak to this based on the comments that the House has received. Upon reviewing all our positions for this up and coming budget session, we reviewed these jobs, and, previous to the proposal of the reduction of this one position, we had one and a half positions within our department for this specific need. What we propose is we've eliminated the half-time position and, with decentralization, we've actually created one whole new complete position for this in the South Slave, so we have more people serving in this capacity than we did previously. We're actually going to have two full-time people committed to this versus one and a half. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Schumann. To the motion. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for clarification, are Members able to question the

Minister at this point, relative to his comments, or is that not correct at this point in time?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Procedurally, I'm being told that's not allowed, Mr. Vanthuyne. We can only speak to the motion.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you. In the spirit of understanding what the Member is presenting in the motion is, what I would believe all of us want as it relates to making sure that the programs that are relative to those positions are still going to be fully delivered, what I'm understanding now from the Minister's comment is that the capacity within the department to continue to fully bring these programs forward and deliver them successfully is going, in fact, still be able to do, that they're still going to be able to do that. I guess I'm just wondering at this point what the presenter of the motion may have further comments in that regard now, having heard from the Minister. That'll be my comments for now. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the Minister had commented before that during the business plans that there was some discussion of this, and I think there were some questions asked of him at the time. The department obviously feels fairly comfortable that they would have this covered off. He did say at the time we have it covered off, or it would be covered off, and I, for one, take his word for it, and I don't think he would be saying it if he didn't have any reasoning for it or trying to pull the wool over committee's eyes. If he says that they're comfortable with this \$21,000 reduction, but the program is still going to be covered off by existing folks, then we should take that at face value, and so with that, Mr. Speaker, we will be voting against the motion.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister McLeod. To the motion. I see no more comments. We will proceed to the vote. Question has been called. I'll call upon Ms. Green to conclude debate on the motion.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no reason to doubt that the Minister is speaking to me in good faith a propos to what Mr. R.C. McLeod said. I happen to know the person who is in the position, and I know that she works more than half-time to deliver the programs here, in Yellowknife, and on behalf of the department around the Northwest Territories. I feel that, while it is very valuable to have an additional position in the South Slave, that it is also valuable to keep the regional and the headquarters at strength in this role in order to ensure that everybody is

well-informed, is well-educated, about the environment that we live in. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green.

---Carried

Since we returned to page 87, we need to once again agree: Environment and Natural Resources, corporate management, operations expenditure summary activity total, \$14,054,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We will now continue back on page 91, the environment sections. We will, as we've been doing, continue discussing the detail first. We will look at page 92. Comments or questions about the detail on page 92. Committee has no questions on page 92? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 92 there was a biomass energy tariff. There was \$150,000 taken out. Could the Minister please explain why this was reduced if we're talking about biomass as an alternative way of doing energy? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This money was remaining after the transfer of renewable energy funds to Public Works and Services. This was a project in Fort McPherson on biomass, and it was determined that it would stay with ENR until the project was complete. The project was complete, so the money has sunsetted. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Mr. Thompson asked the question I was going to, so thank you.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some questions about this government's climate change efforts. First, is there a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy? I know there's the greenhouse gas and emissions, but do we have a strategy that includes looking at the future costs of climate change, and does it plan for those costs? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Mr. Chair, there's two concurrent processes going on right now. One of them is the pan-Canadian framework for climate change, and the NWT is participating in that. But the Greenhouse Gas Strategy is being replaced by the climate change strategic framework, which will be going out shortly for engagement, and it will include a wide variety of topics related to climate change, including some of those which were mentioned by the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note that the adaptation plan under "Contributions" has seen a small increase. What exactly do we use that funding for? I note that it's for support planning actions by NWT communities, regional governments, and organizations. It just seems like that's a very small pot of money considering the significant need for climate change adaptation. My mind turns to our coastal communities, particularly Tuktoyaktuk which has seen a great deal of coastal erosion. I know the community there is struggling with properly understanding the problem and what's needed to solve the problem, and this seems like a very small pot of money considering many of those harbours and communities are at risk as coastal erosion continues, not to mention permafrost degradation in communities that are built atop permafrost. Is that funding adequate at this time? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funds that you're referring to here, Member, are for communities to take action to mitigate or adapt to climate change, but there's also other funds that come into the department through agreements with the federal government that are used towards that type of work, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Where would I find those funds? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Mr. Chair, those are information under Fund 3. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: I thank the department for their response, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased that we are working on this with our federal partners, as well, and I know that the federal government has made this a very large commitment. Is there a current set of proposals put together by the department to leverage our own resources with incoming federal funding? Do we have an ask to give the federal government to see some of this money flow north? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are currently discussions going on between ENR and the federal government related to the funding that is on page 109, additional funds from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Nothing further, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Next on my list, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, on the waste reduction line, there is no more money left in there. Could I get an explanation as to where it was picked up? Mr. Chairman, I'm asking on the general page. I guess the plan is to go back to the general page, ask more questions? Okay. I will then defer my questions until we get back to the general page in this section.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Yes, we're going to discuss the details in each division and then back to the general page, where we can discuss it and call it. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I guess I'm going to have to come back to this biomass as I'm really confused. It was done in Fort McMurray. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Fort McPherson. The project was set in Fort McPherson. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Sorry. I heard Fort McMurray, and I was trying to figure it out, so I had to ask the question again, just to clarify. Thank you, very much.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Further questions on page 92? Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as the department knows, Fort McPherson has done a lot in biomass over the last couple of years, and there were talks last year of possibly tying in the school or getting another unit for the school and the community. I'm just wondering if there's any further talks on that. I know Public Works has been leaning towards more biomass projects through the community, so I would just like to get a little update. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding with our division talking with Public Works is that there continues to be discussion with Fort McPherson on expanding that initiative in Fort McPherson. The initial setup of the current facility with the biomass boiler and the plan for harvesting the fuel wood around there, in particular the willows et cetera, and a small mill that's in place now are good initiatives. My understanding is they're still having some challenges implementing that stuff. However, the discussion on expanding continues, that once they have this current initiative worked out, they will expand. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I know the biggest challenges the community faces is actually having somebody on full-time, because in order to have them even on a part-time basis, whether it's working the afternoons or whatnot, I know the community is having those challenges. Would the department be open to other communities, like, for example, Tsiigehtchic, if they were planning to put a biomass system on the school and gymnasium, would the department be open to that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, with the energy initiative, alternative energy initiatives, they've been transferred to Public Works, so the discussion will have to be with Public Works. However, Environment and Natural Resources certainly will be available for the technical support to promote biomass. We're particularly interested in the technical aspect with harvesting of the fibre for the biomass initiatives in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know it's a great initiative. I also notice under the heading it mentions homes, as well, Mr. Chair, and I'd like to ask the department: How is that part of it moving forward? Is it with Ecology North, or who's actually heading up that section of it? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That aspect of the homes, the wood-burning initiatives, that transferred over the Public Works with the transfer of the alternative energy programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: That's about it, Mr. Chair. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Further comments or questions on page 92. I see none. Oh, Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Yes, I'm back, Mr. Chair. I just want to add to the biomass. Currently underneath construction right now, there's facilities and piles being done in two of the communities, one in Fort Good Hope to support the biomass structure there for the school and the school in Tulita, as well, and there's a number of buildings and a storage facility, a yard storing pellets to supply the need. Now, if the principle on savings is going to see this government realize benefits such as we are currently seeing on the solar panel project in Colville Lake, I think we should strongly consider continuous support for the biomass. If it is working, are we going to realize benefits and a reduction in fuel consumption?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Would the Minister like to respond? Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Like the deputy minister said, this initiative has been moved over to Public Works and Services, so I remind Members that questions on that initiative would be geared towards them. But the other thing is that on the fuel savings, I think it was predicted a 30 per cent savings on most biomass applications. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Anything further, Mr. McNeely?

MR. MCNEELY: None, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Seeing no one else on my list for page 92, we can move on to 93, page 93. Comments or questions on page 93? Environment, active positions. I see

none. We can turn back to page 91, Environment, operations expenditure summary. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. First, I want to start off by reassuring the Minister that in no way was I ever questioning his integrity earlier in the House and in the Committee of the Whole. The fact that we may agree to disagree or question things is no basis for questioning somebody's integrity. In any event, I firmly support the work of this department, but I did want to ask a question about the waste reduction line on page 91. Last year, we had \$100,000 in the budget, and this year there's none. I think it may be because there was some extra funding providing there to allow for some program development around electronics recycling, but a lot of that work is funded through the Environment Fund, which is supposed to be sort of a separate, self-sustaining fund. I just want to confirm whether that's what's happened here and that any further ongoing work with regard to adding more materials to the recycling basket, shall I say, would get funded from within the fund, the Environment Fund, itself. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This \$100,000 is a reduction, and the reason that that reduction can occur is because the program development money can come from the environment fund. The Environment Fund right now has a balance of \$2.1 million, so there's room in that fund for this work to be done through the Environment Fund. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Yes. Thanks for that. There's another page in here for the Environment Fund, so we'll have another chance to look at that, but I appreciate the answer. You know, we don't want to develop a fund and keep running a big surplus in it. That's not the purpose of it, so I'm fine with this. I know, earlier today, the Minister made a statement about the Climate Change Strategic Framework, and I think I heard that we had a climate change strategy at one point. We also had a Greenhouse Gas Strategy 2011-2015, and that's winding down, and that there's now going to be an effort to bring together all of these plans into, or strategies into, the climate change strategic framework. I just want to confirm that, Mr. Chair. Thanks.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, that's correct, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and, as I recall, the consultations on this climate change strategic framework are going to start very shortly so that they could feed into whatever positions that the government might bring forward in terms of the national work that's being done on climate change. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. We're going to be rolling this out as early as this month on the engagement strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: I look forward to that very much. Thanks.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I note under this activity we've got the science agenda indicated. I'm wondering what the department's efforts are in regards to attracting more scientific research investment in the Northwest Territories. We have untapped potential to attract more research opportunities here and if the department's role in leading the science agenda is looking at ways to open the Northwest Territories up to more research opportunities and investment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are efforts going on right now to revitalize the existing science agenda. Work is being done among the departments to revitalize that document, and the thinking is that the next step would be to define a science strategy that's more specific, that can be used to even further attract people to the North, researchers to do work with us on some of our science needs. Currently, that work is being done within the department and through our science advisor at ENR. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank the department for that. It's encouraging to see that we're taking this seriously. We have a partner in Ottawa who's very keen on innovation and scientific growth, and we have a federal agency here, in the form of CanNor, that's keen to invest in those

opportunities. Also, there's university partners across the country that could be making more use, and I know there are some legislative barriers to bringing more university dollars here, to the North. Will part of this work on a science strategy address legislative barriers and work on eliminating them so we can bring more university dollars here, in the North, and more funding opportunities, granting opportunities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are many partnerships that have been developed with universities through ENR and other departments, and I'm unaware of challenges with bringing some of that funding to the North. We've been very successful doing that over the past few years and, I think, in the past, as well. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the only... Well, I'm eager to see the strategy roll out and I hope that committee will be, and I'm sure that committee will be consulted. I hope also we do some public engagement of this and get it out to the scientific community and not just here, in the Northwest Territories, but in people doing northern research across Canada and potentially in international organizations, as well. I would encourage the department to actually look at those partners and not just keep it in-house and keep it in this building, as well, because those are the people we want to bring here and that's the kind of work we need to inspire and really see those opportunities role out and become a leader of northern science here, in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The department agrees with the Member and has been doing such work. One example is in the water strategy action plan, the new one, there will be a process with communities to identify research priorities with those groups and identify particular partners and have input from researchers into those research priorities. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Nothing further from Mr. Testart. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I notice in climate change is a \$150,000 reduction. If this is a priority of this government, why is this reduction occurring? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Kelly.

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my understanding that that is the sunset of the biomass funding and that's where that that sunsetted money that we referred to earlier went. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Kelly. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank Ms. Kelly for the answer. In contaminated sites and remediation, it's a reduction of \$218,000. Are the sites all cleaned up or... I'm just trying to understand the rationale for this reduction. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. When you compare main estimates from 2015-16 to 2016-17, it's a reduction of \$25,000, and that was a small reduction in our O and M funding there. No, not all the contaminated sites are cleaned.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Craig. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Okay, I guess my math is all lacking here because I got revised estimates of \$537,000 and the main estimates at \$319,000. I understand what you were looking at for your main, but you had to revise one, so could you please explain the difference so I could understand a little bit clearer? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, during 2015-16 the department was successful in receiving \$200,000 in devolution money to complete a project and do some research regarding the sites that were transferred as part of devolution, but that was one-time funding that we received during 2015-16. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Craig. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank Ms. Craig for the answer; that makes more sense now. I guess I should actually say where I get lines are. When I look at the environmental protection there's a \$195,000 reduction. This is... I'm going with the revised estimates, so can you explain what the rationale of what this reduction is? Considering if I look at the actuals for 2014-15, it was \$2.26 million.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is the reduction of one of our positions: the environmental protection officer in the North Slave. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Craig. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could the Minister for the department please explain why they would reduce this position if environment is one of our priorities and, you know, it's important for the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The environmental protection officer in the North Slave was or is a vacant position, and during the reduction exercises, we targeted that position. There's no incumbent in there and the department has other officers that have similar training to our environmental protection officers and we feel that those officers can cover off this role in the North Slave. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank Mr. Campbell for his answer. Because I guess I was a little confused because when we looked at the reductions on the activities on page 93 for staff there's no reductions at all, so it is a vacancy. I thank him for that answer. Regarding grants and contributions, I noticed a reduction of \$150,000. Can you explain the rationale for this reduction? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$150,000 reduction is the biomass funding that we've been speaking of in Grants and Contributions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Craig. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. All these things for that one number, so it's quite interesting. Thanks. Contract services: I notice that there's a \$343,000 reduction from the revised main estimates. Is there going to be less usage of contract services or what was the contract services used for? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Ms. Craig.

MS. CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the division has looked at their contract services and

have made adjustments to their internal budgets to reduce them. They will be performing those tasks more from within house with existing staff rather than contracting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Craig. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm good, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Further to page 91? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. My colleague's questions about contaminated sites made me just wonder: is this sort of like a program where ENR is responsible for cleaning up or remediating all contaminated sites that are GNWT responsibility or are those broken up by the department that may own the land or caused the contamination in the first place? Or what's that money actually used for? I understand that ENR does have some expertise in terms of assessing sites and developing policy and so on, but how is the remediation cost actually split up among various departments? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The money that's in the budget here is for some positions who are looking at the planning and oversight from the contaminated sites and developing policies and procedures, and then flow some of the funding towards those contaminated sites there's the Environmental Liabilities Fund as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I thank the department for their response. That Environmental Liabilities Fund... I'm sorry; which department is that with? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

DR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's with Finance.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I'll save up some questions then for the Finance Minister then. These guys are off the hook for now. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Seeing no other questions, I will call this page again. Environment, operations expenditure summary, activity total \$4,079,000. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Moving on to forest management division. Once again, we will wait to discuss page 95 and we will start on the detail on page 96: forest management, grants, contributions and transfers. Any comments or questions? Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just under fire damage compensation I see there's a \$100,000 there. How would that be... Like, say somebody's place burned down by a forest fire, how much would each individual receive under this program and how is it calculated as to how much they will receive? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Under that program, the maximum a harvester can receive is \$35,000 and it's broken down into a number of areas, one being the replacement of potential loss of their cabins. Another one for relocation costs to harvesting in new areas. The second one is for things like opening up trails and access, I guess, to harvesting areas. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, \$100,000, let's say five, six people lost their cabins, you know, it's going to be underfunded this pot here. A good example is all the cabins that were burned down around Yellowknife, for example, the last couple of years and, you know, around Providence. You know, out through this area here. You know, is that \$100,000 adequate for this program? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, the \$100,000 in some years is not an adequate amount. As you notice on the page in the 14-15 actuals, there it's much higher than the \$100,000. In those instances, if the department cannot find the funding from within then we would come back for an additional supp. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, I'm surprised to see that there's no money this year in the community protection research. You know, that sort of money is, you know, for firebreaks and whatnot, anything that'll... Back burning, that's something I'd like to see as a practice by some of

the communities. You know, why is there no money in there for this?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding with that money, it's been rolled into the following two projects: fire science and fire research projects. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Well, that sounds good. Thanks.

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

MR. MCNEELY: On the same page, page 96, Mr. Chair, just clarification on the \$75,000 designated for wildfire risk and management plans. Is the definition of this program for firebreaks around communities? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$75,000 is for communities to access to do mitigation work for wildfire. This is in our fund that we use to, of course, leverage partnerships with the community governments, with MACA there's a collaborative effort to implement the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This amount we've been using in the past to provide somewhat funding in particular to some of the most vulnerable communities and the smaller communities to do wildfire mitigation work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Which program is designated for firebreaks around communities, small communities?

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The dollars identified there is the program that is designated for the community protection efforts such as fire or fuel breaks. We also have our staff in the regions and as well as headquarters that provide technical expertise to the communities and MACA, et cetera, for implementing this stuff. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MCNEELY: I'll ask again, which program is designated for firebreaks?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If you want to go to program level, sorry, I misunderstood the question, in forest management division it will be the fire suppression program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. McNeely, are you good?

MR. MCNEELY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All right. Comments and questions for page 96. Mr. Thompson again.

MR. THOMPSON: Sorry. Just to clarify. It's in another section for firebreaks around the community? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have a number of programs in forest management division similar to other activities. For example, we have the suppression program, the pre-suppression. Pre-suppression is in preparation of fire events, so yes, that's the program. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is this wildfire risk management plan that what we're talking about here, or is there another section within this department? Thank you.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Under page 95 under the programs, under forest management division there, yes, it would fall under the program management pre-suppression, that program, the Community Wildland Fire Protection Plans.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Maybe we can discuss that when we turn back to page 95.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Would that be acceptable Mr. Thompson. Anything further on page 96? Nothing further? No? Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to get a status report. I know we're on the cusp of enhancing the biomass industry by establishing an industry activity in the South Slave area. I just wanted to see if the Minister could provide us an update in terms of the progress towards

establishing a wood pellet plant, in terms of his role in assisting communities to advance that proposed business initiative and how communities have been involved this far. Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Schumann. Or sorry, Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The forest industry initiative is at a point right now where we do have the forest management agreements in place with those communities. There's a number of steps there as well. At this point the community of Fort Providence, that business entity has a number of things in place. They've done a lot of the forest planning work to date. They've secured their land use permit. The proponents themselves have secured the land tenure for the site for the pellet plant and ENR is working with the community in attempting to assist the community and the proponent to reaching the establishment of a fibre agreement. Once the fibre agreement is in place then the other plans kick in, such as the harvesting, et cetera. We are planning on going into that community within the next two weeks to follow up at their request to meet with us. Again, the intent there is to continue to try to advance this file so that we end up in agreement between the community entity and the pellet mill operator there to come to that agreement with the fibre agreement. That's where it's currently at. Again, we're hoping that in the next short while there that these fibre agreements with not just Fort Providence, but with Fort Resolution here can be resolved. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. McNeely. Or sorry, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, thank you. I'd like to thank the deputy for providing an update. I know some communities have done some inventory analysis in terms of the potential for forest products within their territory, and whether the forest fires from the past two years have negated or significantly impacted their inventory in terms of, you know, working with the proponent and the community and whether that's become a factor or not. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Over the last few seasons, we've had quite severe fire seasons and it's burned a lot of the landscape. There has been impact to some of our inventoried areas. We have approximately one-sixth of our total forested landscape in the Northwest Territories inventoried, so yes, some of the fires impacted those inventories. For these two particular initiatives with the community of Fort Resolution and Fort Providence, those areas identified with the Forest

Management Agreement so have not been impacted by forest fires. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just maybe my final point or question is what's next in terms of the department working along with the communities and the proponent to ensure that, you know, there's a timeliness and at the same time successful stage in terms of ensuring the reality of the wood pellet plant being in operation? Mahsi.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Campbell.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The key to ensure this initiative becomes a reality is the completion of the fibre agreements with the community entities and the proponent for the pellet mill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Nadli. Nothing further. Seeing no more comments or questions, we can move on to page 97. Forest management, active positions. Questions? Seeing none. Back to page 95 where we will call this total. Actually, we'll discuss this page first. Page 95, forest management, operations expenditure summary. Comments or questions? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, just wanted to dig a little deeper into the reconfiguration of the fire crews and the loss of positions in the communities. I notice that there's still the same amount of firefighters and I knew that; the Minister had advised me of that. I'm wondering what process was used to determine that some communities would lose positions.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In 2012, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources undertook a program review, and through that process is where we had the recommendation to go down this road of creating crews that were five-man crews to four-man crews through that program review process. In anticipation of that and going forward with other jurisdictions in the country going to four-man crews as well, we managed our crew contingent with the expectation that was coming down the pipe. For an example, there was some of the communities where our five-man crews where there was permanent seasonal positions, if there was individuals that either resigned or the position became vacant we did not permanently staff those positions; we staffed them with casuals. The discussion with the communities in the regions,

they were aware that we were going down this road. We also undertook an exercise where we reviewed with our contract partners the personnel contracts with those Aboriginal governments and through that exercise as well, they were informed that we would be going from five-man to four-man crews to be more effective, more efficient, and to allow us again to go from 28 to 35 crews. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, that's good there's more crews, more efficient crews. However, the process of eliminating positions, whether they be casuals or not, at some point there are two less jobs in communities where there are two crews and there's one less job in a community where there is one crew. We are going through an exercise here at this point where we are talking about some half-time positions in Yellowknife, as an example. Some part-time positions in various communities across the NWT. We've been talking lots about the employment rates in small communities. Above all, there's one thing we don't want to see in small communities is lose positions. What happens is if the government determines that a four-man crew are more efficient, then shouldn't it be incumbent upon the department to make sure that the leftover firefighter is placed in the community in a PY, or else there's an actual loss of a person year in that community, which I'm opposed to. I think all Members of the Assembly from small communities are opposed to. We stand up in the House and we talk about the lack of employment in small communities, the low employment rates, the communities are having difficulties surviving without a lot of government subsidies. The government is prepared, at this point more prepared to offer income support, social housing, and other subsidies for an individual for a person to stay at home and what we need is we need people to have jobs. With this type of move then, this department has eliminated PYs. It doesn't matter that they only fill casuals in the last couple of years; that don't matter to me. The bottom line is: we lost positions. If they want to add crews in some communities, fine, I have no issue with that. I certainly don't have an issue with them bringing back an old crew that used to exist in Tsiigehtchic that was taken away at some point and brought back, but what I'm opposed to and will not support, is the positions being taken out of small communities. I will not support a budget that removes PYs from Fort Resolution, Lutselk'e, or Detah, or Ndilo. Thank you.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely there are impacts to some communities and there's benefits to others. Overall, we have more crews. We still have programs that, for an example, if a fire is threatening areas, whether it's the South Slave or the Dehcho or whatever, we have programs where we can, to increase our personnel we can hire extra personnel. We do know that over the years in many of our communities we've trained up a lot of firefighters. There's other programs where in the event of a fire that we would ramp up and hire more personnel. The other piece, I guess, you know, going forward with the community in the South Slave there in particular where we just recently talked about the forest industry initiative, at some point, you know, when the initiative is underway we would probably be forced to look at an increase in that community to protect that fibre supply, so. At this point, I certainly recognize the impact but again, the overall, collectively as a whole for the Territories, we are better off with this arrangement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I don't know where the positions went to so I don't know if we're better off. I don't know if the positions were taken out of communities that had low employment rates and put in the larger centres that have more crews. Larger centres that have more than four crews that could within themselves create... If they had 20 firefighters, for example, they could easily go from four crews to five crews without any impact. Or if there's three crews and there's more people needed they'd have to come from some community. All I know is that the impact is felt by communities and that's what the problem is. Is that, like, are we going to go through a process of reducing PYs in any particular community? If we want to look at the 97 seasonal positions then I'll ask the Minister: can you provide us with where all the shifts occurred? Where did the PY shift to? Did the PY shift to Hay River? Or did the PY shift to another community? What happened? How did this come about where the crews got smaller? Even if we were to be informed of the fact that we're moving to four-men crew, that's okay. But I need to know how we went through the process here in the House dealing with the Minister of Finance on this budget and not being advised that these PYs are being moved out of the position because they're only casuals anyway. Even casuals have families and we need to address that issue. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Your time is up. If you'd like to get back in the queue you can, but I'll let Mr. Campbell answer.

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Regarding where the positions ended up and where the communities have the crews and that, we certainly can provide that list. As far as how we went from five to four, again, I mentioned the program review. In particular, our rotary wing aircraft for initial attack for these crews, the configuration is where we can now be more efficient by doing initial attack on fires, where in the past we would use three trips with the water wing. With this arrangement, again we're down to two trips. It's the makeup of our resources that we have and our crews that allows us to be consistent with other jurisdictions across Canada to be more effective and more efficient. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. TESTART: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Nothing from me.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I'm trying to better understand the efficiencies here. We've gone to a four-man crew to a five-man... From a five-man crew to a four-man crew. Is the efficiencies in fighting the fire or is the efficiencies in saving money for the department? In other words, the helicopters, equipment, stuff like that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The efficiencies are actually in both fighting fire and, again, taking advantage of our fiscal resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Probably the deputy minister is going to have to explain how they're more efficient in fighting fires with a four-man crew compared to a five-man crew. If you have five people you're going to...

SOME HON. MEMBER: Twenty per cent more work.

MR. THOMPSON: Yes, there's 20 per cent more work. I'm just trying to understand the efficiency and how... I understand the efficiencies with the budget and saving money for the equipment and, you know, operations. I've heard the deputy minister say that, you know, there's two flights versus three flights, and I understand that. That's a cost saving; that makes sense, but when we're talking about efficiencies with a four-man crew versus a five-man crew, can a five-man crew not do a better job than

a four-man crew or is there some... I'll just leave it at that and I'll ask the next question after. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With our current arrangement, again, in particular with our water wing here, we initially attack fires. Even over the years, the majority of the time utilizing four people and there have been many occasions where that fifth person is left at home. I spent most of my career in the fire program as a firefighter a lot of times, and the old days we had the big medium helicopters, we can take two five-man crews, and as we evolved to the intermediate rotary wing, they've done it across the country, this is where we see the efficiencies. The initial attack process is to ensure that we gain control of that fire within the first 24-hour period and normally that's done within the first few hours. Again, the majority of our fires we end up utilizing four people. Again, we also, on the other side save an extra trip with the rotary. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell, and just a note to the committee: sidebar conversations are making it sometimes difficult to hear, so if you want to keep those to a minimum. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the deputy minister for that answer. It clears up things and I'm not questioning his expertise, because that I assume being a deputy minister and fighting fires that's why you're sitting where you are. I thank you very much for that and now I have a better understanding of what you're saying. Back to the firebreaks in regards to this here. Has the government looked at working with these small communities, especially after seeing what has happened in Fort McMurray, developing firebreaks in the community and utilizing the staff if it's a slow, and I'm praying we're a slow season, or working with the communities to fund them so that they can actually make a firebreak a little bit larger, like a kilometre away from their communities, to make it more safe. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we have. We work with MACA; we work with the communities on implementing their wildfire protection plans, and again, it's a joint effort. The communities, of course, are responsible for ensuring they're prepared for emergency events like wildfire. We provide a lot of technical advice. On the question with our own resources, we provide our resources as well to help to do the

mitigation efforts and fuel breaks in this instance. If we have a slow season, we also utilize our crews to work with the community therein enhancing those fuel breaks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank Mr. Campbell for that answer. I hear there's a partnership. Has the department looked at working with the communities to help them fund so they can do it themselves with the technical support of the department? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ultimately I guess what we're trying to do is to work with the communities and to see how we can leverage our funds with their funds and also to look at other areas where we can find more funds. An example will be a few years ago through a federal program we were able to, along with the communities, access funding where we had enough funding to build and enhance many of our few breaks that are in place now. Thank you, Mr. Chair

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Campbell. Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. Again, I was having a hard time hearing, and I apologize to Mr. Campbell. We're able to access funding for the federal government. I understand that and it was very successful; however, right now that funding, I'm assuming, is gone and so is the department willing to look at within their coffers to see if there's funding available especially for the smaller communities like the Trout Lakes, the Jean Maries, the Nahanni Buttes, the Lutselk'es, the Fort Resses, these small communities that don't have a lot of money and are, you know, a little bit strapped, and after I had seen what happened in Fort McMurray, that really scares me. If it happens there, we're going to lose communities, and so is the department willing to look at or even, and maybe it is shot for this budget, but next year's budget, so that we can work with the communities, have money available to do firebreaks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Absolutely we're willing to look at other possible opportunities here to gain those resources. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you very much. I thank the deputy minister and Minister for their answers and I'll be working and I'll be probably doing some Member's statements on it anyways, so I thank you very much and I appreciate all your expertise because it is very valuable to the government. So you can't retire for another five years. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Chairman, I move to report progress.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried. I will now stand and report progress. Thank you, Minister and your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017. I would like to report progress, with one motion being adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do we have a seconder? Member for Deh Cho. Motion is in order. To the motion. Question's been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

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

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Speaker, orders of the day for Thursday, June 9, 2016, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
 - Motion 15-18(2), Reappointment of Human Rights Commission Members
 - Motion 16-18(2), Appointment of the Equal Pay Commissioner
 - Motion 17-18(2), Extended Adjournment of the House to June 13, 2016
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Tabled Document 50-18(2), Main Estimates, 2016-2017
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House adjourns until Thursday, June 9th, 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

