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**Tuesday, February 14, 2017**

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**The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

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

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, February 14, 2017****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Hon. Tom Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Ms. Green, Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Hon. Bob McLeod, Hon. Robert McLeod, 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. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Honourable Premier.

**Ministers' Statements****MINISTER'S STATEMENT 129-18(2):  
ENGAGING WITH CANADA ON BEHALF OF  
NORTHERNERS**

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, a strong partnership with the Government of Canada is essential to ensuring Northerners can achieve their social, environmental, and economic goals. By working with our federal counterparts, the Government of the Northwest Territories will help create a Northwest Territories where all people can thrive and be healthy, where a strong economy provides jobs and opportunities for all our communities, and where a well-managed environment contributes to our economic well-being and quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, this past Friday I met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to discuss some of the issues we face as a territory. The Prime Minister understands our governments share the same goals of wellness, health, and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, Canada needs a plan for sustainable growth and development in the North that will help give Northerners the certainty that they can live and prosper here at home, now and into the future. The Prime Minister agrees that we need to unlock the economic opportunities and jobs, not to make money for southern companies, but to keep it here, in the North. We need a two-fold approach to unlock our abundant natural resources to grow and sustain our economic future, to lower the cost of living and develop training, education, and capacity-building opportunities. The Prime Minister agrees that an efficient and effective regulatory system is needed, and I look forward to working with him on this. While development of our non-renewable resources is important to our

economic prosperity, we must ensure that communities have access to local economies, marine and freshwater fisheries, tourism, and traditional economies. All Members agree a diversified economy is an important part of the Northwest Territories' economic future, Mr. Speaker. This is what it means to unlock our potential.

The Government of the Northwest Territories' vision for a sustainable Arctic is founded on balance, Mr. Speaker. Sustainability will be achieved only by strengthening communities by placing a priority on social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors. This is an interest we share with Yukon and Nunavut.

The North is built on partnership and collaboration. For decades, our government has recognized and worked with Aboriginal governments on shared interests that will improve the lives of residents in the Northwest Territories. Collaborative relationships and finding consensus to move forward is what has allowed us to achieve the success and growth we have in the North.

Achieving that balance and creating results for Northerners will require a vision and a plan that takes global realities and Northern aspirations into account. Recently, the Government of Canada took a significant potential economic development opportunity off the table when they declared a moratorium on offshore oil and gas development. The Prime Minister has committed to revisiting the moratorium in five years, and we look forward to playing a productive role in that review. We understand the reasons for the decision, and the Government of Canada is willing to work with us to develop comparable opportunities for our residents.

A shared vision for territorial sustainability and development would help us plan for the kind of future Northerners want, Mr. Speaker. It will let us assess the opportunities in front of us, foresee global trends, and then make deliberate choices about how to invest our time, money, and effort on creating a future for our residents.

Creating jobs and opportunities for Northerners is important to our success, and the Prime Minister acknowledged that they need to open other doors for Northerners when they close one, as with

offshore drilling. Building a green economy in the North could be one of the doors we open, and our shared commitment to getting remote communities off diesel and expanding our hydro potential to combat climate change will create long-lasting economic opportunities and diversify our economy and job force.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and my colleagues in Nunavut and Yukon agree that a collaborative approach to creating a vision and strategy for sustainable growth and development is needed, a pan-territorial sustainable development strategy created by the Northerners to meet northern needs. I look forward to working with Members to get your input on what the vision for our territory's development should be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 130-18(2):  
COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND SAFETY: ECE  
PROGRESS STATEMENT

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two of the key factors in community wellness and safety are education and partnership. Every person and organization across the Northwest Territories has something to contribute to help make our communities healthy and safe.

At the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, all of our programs and services follow a continuum of strategies, building on the foundation of others. These strategies are designed to address community and residents' needs from early childhood through to ensuring Northerners have the skills, attitudes, and opportunities for success.

Mr. Speaker, in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Right from the Start strategy is strengthening services, programs, and resources for families and caregivers with young children across the North.

We have worked closely with early childhood program operators to provide them with supports, new funding, and few administrative requirements so they can focus on developing quality programs for children in their care.

The Early Childhood Staff Grant program, ongoing since 2015, continues to encourage early childhood workers in licensed daycare facilities to upgrade their skills and education through incremental wage benefits. Over the 2015-16 fiscal year, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment provided grants to approximately 240 full and part-time early childhood workers. The goal of this program is to help licensed childcare facilities

provide a greater level of service to the communities and workers with a higher income and knowledge.

As well, since 2014-15, we have awarded 38 scholarships to post-secondary students enrolled in full-time early childhood development diploma or degree programs. This includes 13 scholarships awarded in 2016-17.

This is an investment in the critical early years, to ensure the children of the North have quality childhood workers committed to their safety and care.

Mr. Speaker, further to fulfilling our mandate commitments in community wellness and safety, we have had a strong focus on ensuring our schools are safe. Schools are central to many communities, but we know there are issues in every school. We can see this across Canada and around the world.

We have been working very closely with our education partners over the past few years and have engaged with experts in implementing safe and caring schools. We must ensure our schools are safe environments so students can focus on learning and feel supported and that staff can feel secure.

On September 1, 2016, the Territorial School Code of Conduct and Safe Schools Regulations came into effect. The regulations set a standard of behaviour for Northwest Territories students, school staff, and the school community. The department has provided education bodies with templates and exemplars to assist in the required development of the Safe Schools plans and is currently providing supports to education bodies in the development of emergency response plans to be implemented in the 2017-18 school year. These plans will be reviewed and updated annually.

As well, the department is working with non-government organization partners and education bodies to develop policies and resources that support students and staff from the LGBTQ2+ community.

In partnership with Health and Social Services, we are developing a renewed JK to Grade 9 Health and Wellness curriculum to address issues of mental health, healthy relationships, and the importance of physical activity. The curriculum will encourage teachers to build strengthened relationships between the school, the community and regional health, dental and mental health service providers, and other community organizations.

A key aspect of this new curriculum will be an increased emphasis on approaches to teaching and

learning that rely on student research of community-identified wellness issues.

As a further investment in community wellness, the Small Community Employment Support Program enables residents to either receive training-on-the-job, or through the community initiatives which provides formal training or a combination of on-the-job and formal training. This program helps residents with employment, allowing them to contribute to their communities and the ability to provide for their families. In 2016-2017, 200 residents received training-on-the-job and 69 residents received training through community initiatives. The proposed \$3 million investment, announced by the Minister of Finance in the budget speech, will allow us to target our investments to ensure we are meeting the needs of both our residents and of the Northwest Territories labour markets.

Mr. Speaker, senior citizens, the elders of our territory, have helped to build and grow the North, and we must support them to remain amongst their families and with their communities. At the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, we deliver two programs specifically in place to assist seniors: the Senior Home Heating Subsidy and the Senior Citizen Supplementary Benefit. The Senior Home Heating Subsidy ensures that lower income seniors, who own their own homes, receive a fuel subsidy that assists with the cost of heating their home. The Supplementary Benefit Program is a monthly pension for low-income seniors, to assist them with the cost of living, and allows them to age in place.

Mr. Speaker, community wellness and safety are paramount to the well-being and success of our residents and of the North. We and our partners across the territory have an obligation to ensure our residents have the opportunity to live healthy and productive lives in safe communities. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister of Justice.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 131-18(2):  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE PROGRESS  
REPORT ON MANDATE:  
COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND SAFETY

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government has committed in its mandate to pursue innovative ways to prevent and reduce crime. The Department of Justice recognizes that, to make a difference, our response must address the root causes that lead an individual to break the law in the first place. Based on the disproportionate number of Aboriginal people in the justice system, we know any

approach must also offer offenders the chance to reconnect with their culture and traditions. I would like to tell you today about a promising new program being delivered in our corrections service, and give you an idea of other work that Justice is doing to advance our commitment to reduce crime.

On examining the profiles of offenders in our facilities, it is clear that the most prevalent issue is substance abuse. Programming is available, but many of the programs take longer to complete than the average inmate spends in a facility. As a result, inmates are reaching their release date before they can finish our longer-term programs. As well, people who receive community sentences, and don't enter a corrections facility, are not able to benefit from the facility-based programs. I want to highlight a new program that attempts to address all of these issues.

The Substance Abuse Management program, or SAM, is designed to help inmates with shorter sentences, as well as those serving their sentence in the community. The SAM program model recognizes the importance of treating the person, not just the addiction. Sessions are presented in a non-judgmental, educational manner, allowing participants to focus on their learning, without having to be defensive about their history or current situation.

Participants are assisted to identify the triggers that most often lead them to abuse alcohol or drugs, as well as behaviours that they would otherwise try to avoid. They learn to apply this understanding to their daily lives. Offenders get help to develop a prevention plan that includes an inventory of resources that they can turn to as they continue their recovery.

The SAM program recognizes the importance of Aboriginal culture and traditions. Aboriginal liaison officers or elders attend the group session to assist participants, helping them reflect on their culture and learning. Currently, both the North Slave Correctional Complex and the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre offer the 12-session SAM program daily over a three-week period. There are plans to extend this program to the Fort Smith Correctional Complex in 2017-18.

The SAM program also extends support outside the walls of our correctional facilities. Inmates on probation who are returning to their community from a facility have support for successful reintegration, including the continuation of a program they know. Offenders who are serving their entire sentence in the community and have not been in a facility have an opportunity to access the SAM program helping them make positive changes.

To acknowledge some of the issues that returning offenders face, and to allow time for elders to be brought in to make important cultural connections, the community program is delivered over 12 weeks. At the end of these sessions, probation officers also connect participants with community supports available through Health and Social Services.

The SAM program is presently being delivered by probation staff to small groups of approximately five participants in Hay River, Fort Providence, and Yellowknife. Early indications are that this program is being very well received, and there are plans to expand it to the Inuvik probation office in the coming weeks.

This program does not stand alone. We currently have a range of supports for offenders in facilities and in the community. We will be adding more programs and continuing efforts to work with inmates to address the root causes of crime. We will also continue our important collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services and with local and regional providers on the continuity of care for addictions and mental health services.

As Members are aware, culturally appropriate correctional programming is not the only commitment that has been made by this government. The Department of Justice is taking action to reduce crime through many paths. I want to highlight just a few other promising approaches.

Specialized courts in the NWT include the Wellness Court that sits in Yellowknife, and the Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court that accepts offenders from Yellowknife, Behchoko, Hay River, K'atloodchee, and Enterprise. The Wellness Court has been sitting since October 2014, and as of mid-January a total of 63 individuals have been referred to the court. The Domestic Violence Treatment Options Court has also delivered encouraging results; as of this January, 79 individuals have participated in the program.

The Integrated Case Management pilot project in Yellowknife provides a holistic approach to supporting those in our community who are faced with a variety of complex needs. Participants are supported through a comprehensive assessment, and are assisted by their case manager to address these needs, including a lack of suitable housing or homelessness, poverty, substance abuse, and unemployment. Participants are referred by social program departments, and as of January, 103 individuals have been accepted into the program, with seven applicants currently being considered. The pilot project is under review with results expected by the end of March. I look forward to sharing the results with Members.

In other areas, I am pleased to report that policing action plans are in place in all NWT communities. These plans are a collaborative effort between the RCMP and local leadership. They work together to identify priorities specific to each community, as well as determining how best to address these issues.

The Government of the Northwest Territories also has a mandate commitment to improve access to justice. I can also report that progress has been made in collaboration with the Law Society to establish ongoing access to legal resources through a resource centre. As well, the Legal Aid Commission is continuing to offer outreach services in Yellowknife and across the NWT, with an expansion scheduled for this year that will enhance operating hours for the walk-in clinic, increase community visits, and introduce family law duty counsel services. These initiatives, along with efforts to reduce family violence and assist families who are separating or divorcing, are all part of the department's overall commitment to improve access to justice and our response to crime.

I think that we all recognize that a social response to crime reduction takes resources and the concerted efforts of all levels of government, local agencies, and community members. We also know that, if we don't address the root causes that lead to crime, we will continue to see some of the same people in the justice system again and again. Through these innovative programs and the support of this Legislative Assembly, we are making a difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Just in the nick of time.

---Laughter

Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [English translation not provided]. Mr. Speaker, Members, school boards, education authorities, and parents are seeking clarity when it comes to junior kindergarten.

We discussed these matters at length in the House last week. I don't want to tread over the same ground again but, Mr. Speaker, with so much information -- sometimes contradictory information is circulating -- I must briefly highlight three points.

First, the school boards and the education authorities face ongoing funding issues. NWT classrooms deal with higher pupil-teacher ratios than most of Canada even though our territory also has the second highest number of very small schools.

Second, NWT schools see higher rates for special needs accommodation. This kind of important educational work is covered under the NWT Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling. This work needs inclusive schooling dollars, yet inclusive schooling dollars are not part of the department's plan for funding junior kindergarten.

That brings me to my third point. While the department has said it will fully fund junior kindergarten, it's not clear how or if this funding will account for inclusive schooling or Aboriginal language and culture instruction, among other things. I've also heard from residents concerned that cuts will be made to the education system up to \$800,000. I understand too that the \$500,000 found internally came from the education renewal initiative; that is, it's a further reduction to the K to 12 system. That's on top of the department's decision to fund non-teaching positions at mid-point instead of actual salaries.

As we heard in the House last week, school boards are approaching their budget deadlines. We are pleased to hear the department's final decision to fully fund junior kindergarten but, Mr. Speaker, the devil is in the details and we need to sort those out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF THE AURORA  
COLLEGE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to address the cancellation of the social work program at Aurora College. We've heard that one justification for the decision is based on low numbers of graduates from the program, so perhaps the Minister believes that represents a poor return on public investment and therefore this program can hit the chopping block to meet reduction targets. On the other hand, enrolment has increased, which is an indication of how important and needed the program is.

In fact, low numbers of grads may be a problem within the program itself in that new social work students may not be equipped to meet the standards set for a diploma linked to the University of Regina undergrad program. Higher enrolment rates lead me to believe there's demand and popularity for the program. Low graduation rates

lead me to think there is work to be done with student preparedness as they move through the program.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, let's consider the need for such a program. In today's NWT's society, social work is a fundamental human process in need. It's a core element of what our communities need to function better.

I recently received an e-mail from a constituent, a graduate of Aurora College's social work program. She wrote, and I quote, "I completed my first practicum at YHSSA with social workers with Master's degrees from southern schools who did not understand residential school, the effects of residential school. They did not even know the difference between someone who was Metis or Gwich'in. How are we expected to improve and grow in the North when we are not even offering the opportunity for growth? I know several students who recently enrolled and several more who are planning on doing so next year. They will now have to take their SFA loans from ECE and hand the money over to southern schools rather than putting the money back in to the North."

Mr. Speaker, with this decision our future social workers may be recruited and trained in southern Canada, so by definition they'll arrive here at the start of a new learning curve. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I wonder, will southern students participate in week-long cultural camp, on the land, with elders? Will southern students know how empowering it is to participate in a feeding of the fire ceremony? Will graduates from southern schools understand the cultural barriers to northern social work? Will they have familiarity with the impact of residential schools here in the North? These questions are already answered when we support a made-in-the-North social work program.

Mr. Speaker, I find myself unable to support this decision and I urge the Minister of Education to review and re-evaluate this decision with some urgency. I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to public in the gallery. We have with us Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford, former commissioner, Speaker, Minister, Sergeant-at-Arms and honorary clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

We also have a former Member, Jane Groenewegen, Deputy Premier, Minister, Member

of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

Last but not least we have Ms. Sandy Lee, former Minister and Member of the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. We have a total combined years of legislative experience 40-plus years. Masi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thanks for being here with us. Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
COURT RULING ON SIXTIES SCOOP  
SURVIVORS

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to speak on a terrible time in Canadian history and part of our national history that we must acknowledge, and I'm doing so today because of a recent court ruling that found in favour of those Indigenous peoples who were victimized by what is known now as the Sixties Scoop.

Mr. Speaker, the Sixties Scoop was wrong, a by-product of the ignorance of colonization, and those affected deserve to be compensated, and I'm pleased to see that the courts have ruled on the right side of history.

Mr. Speaker, the Sixties Scoop placed Indigenous children in non-Indigenous homes from 1965 to 1984 under terms of federal-provincial agreements. Some were sent from their traditional territory and families to places as far off as Europe or the southern United States. Some were purchased for up to \$30,000 while others were given away callously as so-called freebies, and some were placed in the foster system, going from group to group, group home to group home, always alone and never knowing that they had those who loved them and wanted them awaiting them in their traditional homes. They were forced to give them up to a heartless and misguided policy.

Canadians can never apologize enough for the unnecessary pain caused by the Sixties Scoop, nor should we ever stop apologizing, but we can begin to take ownership of the wrongs committed on behalf of all of us by our government of the day and continue the process of reconciliation with Indigenous people affected by this and the legacy of colonization across the country. Courts will compensate them financially through this new ruling, that is clear, but we can do more.

We can assure that cultural identity will never again be stolen by misguided policies of colonial thinking. Through our education system, we can ensure that our teachers tell the truth of our history, even those parts that are difficult to hear. We can assist our social workers tasked with helping those dealing with the trauma from our own history and our own

misguided policies, but we cannot begin to do this, Mr. Speaker, without ensuring that these initiatives for reconciliation are properly resourced and supported by this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
PAUL STIPDONK MEMORIAL SOCCER  
TOURNAMENT 2017

**MR. THOMPSON:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the Paul Stipdonk Memorial Soccer Tournament. As I explained last year, this tournament is a bit unique in that they don't keep score, nor do they have winners or losers. The focus is on the athletes having fun and playing the sport. Besides playing the sport, the youth are given the opportunity to attend a couple of skills development sessions and a skills competition.

This year, we had athletes from Trout Lake; Fort Liard; Annex, Alberta; Grande Prairie, Alberta; Nahanni Butte; and Fort Simpson.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that parents and families of the athletes from out of town did an amazing job. They were great athletes, sportsmen, and ambassadors of the community. It was amazing to see all their smiling faces and the fun that they were having this weekend.

As well, I would like to say the Fort Simpson Bompas athletes were great hosts, great team players, and really enjoyed the games and, most importantly, making new friends from the region.

Mr. Speaker, it was great to see all the parents out there supporting all the teams. Whether it was the U14 division or the U12 division, it did not matter which team was playing. They were cheering on all the athletes and encouraging them on.

Mr. Speaker, a special shout-out goes to the recreation staff from TSS School and the TSS students and volunteers who ran the concession and meal program for the out-of-town athletes. A great job done by all.

I would like to thank the Fort Simpson High Performance Soccer players and parents who were helping with the coaching and refereeing throughout the weekend. It was great to see this capacity being built. I take great pride when I see younger athletes paying back to the sport. The same can be said about the young coaches and chaperones from Fort Liard, Chase Berrault, James Duntra, and Arlene McLeod, and Samba K'e's

coaches, Beth Jumbo and Tyler Jumbo. I say a big thank you to you.

To the Mackenzie Recreation Association, Municipal and Community Affairs, and the Village of Fort Simpson, thank you for funding and supporting this event. Money well-invested.

In closing, a big special thank you to Jackie Whelly and Ashley Gillis for helping organize and running this whole tournament. Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues to give them a big round of applause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE ELECTRICAL  
POWER IN THE DEH CHO REGION**

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, GNWT... [English translation not provided].

Mr. Speaker, access to affordable power is one of our biggest barriers to economic development and one of the main drivers of our cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, the Town of Hay River recently sought a new franchise agreement with an electrical power provider. This process led to the selection of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Whether NTPC takes over all of the assets of Northland Utilities, the town's current power provider in the region is unknown at this time. We also don't know what impact that may have on the Hay River Reserve, Enterprise, Kakisa, and Fort Providence. Deh Cho communities are concerned about who is going to keep the lights on.

Mr. Speaker, NTPC... [English translation not provided].

Mr. Speaker, the immediate concern of people in my riding is how they will continue to be supplied with electricity and at what cost. The PR campaign by NTPC and Northland Utilities on electricity rates affects consumers. It is adversarial, not constructive, and they don't know who to believe.

Mr. Speaker, small Deh Cho communities like Kakisa have potential to switch to renewable energy sources successfully, but that is only part of the puzzle.

Mr. Speaker, as leaders of the NWT, we have an immediate opportunity to make good decisions about the future of NTPC, the future of power provision in our territory, and how we communicate that to the public. For decades, we have needed energy solutions for our small, remote communities that fit into the specific long-term goals and future energy planning for the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, right now, Deh Cho communities need to be enlightened and want answers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
RIGHTS UNDER THE INUVIALUIT FINAL  
AGREEMENT**

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1984 the Inuvialuit Final Agreement became the Northwest Territories' first settled land claim.

It guarantees its members certain rights over a vast area of land that spans parts of the Mackenzie Delta, the Beaufort Sea, and the Amundsen Gulf. It includes the communities of Aklavik, Ulukhaktok, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Tuktoyaktuk. The people who have lived there for generations have the authority to govern matters such as wildlife harvesting rights, socio-economic initiatives, and Inuvialuit participation in wildlife and environmental management regimes.

The agreement was a major achievement for the people who worked tirelessly with the Government of Canada to negotiate the terms of this settlement. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement has set the example for land claim agreements that came after it.

The Inuvialuit received ownership to approximately 90,600 hectares of land, including 13 hectares of subsurface rights. Beneficiaries received \$152 million in capital transfer payments from the Government of Canada, which helped establish the Inuvialuit Settlement Region as we know it today.

The Inuvialuit have certain wildlife harvesting rights in the region, including the exclusive right to harvest game and furbearers on Inuvialuit lands.

Mr. Speaker, the rights of Canada's First Nations to govern their traditional lands on their terms is an extremely important area of focus for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Settling land claim agreements has long been a top priority, and we must continue to work toward the goal of settling land claims throughout the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvialuit, Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories are currently negotiating a full self-government agreement. Beneficiaries are working toward the goal of this self-government becoming a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage the ongoing efforts in this area and want to accomplish all we possibly can in the term of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SUPPORT FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIMS

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the last sitting I drew the Assembly's attention to the findings of a report by YWCA Yellowknife. It's called "Hush Hush No More: Improving NWT Community Response to Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls." I pointed out a number of the report's troubling findings and its recommendations for improvements. The report documents a continuing culture of secrecy and non-disclosure surrounding violence. It's hush-hush when fewer than 10 per cent of victims report what happened to them to the police. Without reporting, victims say they feel powerless and blame themselves for what happened. To change this outcome, the report says it's important to non-judgmentally support people who disclose sexual violence, and government departments need to effectively respond to victims who report being assaulted.

Recently, a local woman came to me with her story of physical and sexual assault, of the intimidation she has suffered from her accused attacker, and of the ineffective response by police and the court. Despite being released on condition of staying away from her, the accused has repeatedly harassed and intimidated her. She has reported to the police about being intimidated a total of four times. The result? Nothing. The conditions of release are violated. The victim complains. The abuser continues to walk the streets.

I'll quote a few of the remarks given to me describing this situation:

"When I started this whole process of going to the police due to domestic violence, I was assured protection. I was naive. I didn't realize on how many levels I was not going to receive protection and feel victimized repeatedly."

Here is another quote:

"The people who are in place to protect me are sick of my reporting to them. I hear it in their voices. I see it in their eyes. I, in turn, am sick of being treated like a chronic complainer."

Another quote: "I now wish I had not gone to the police because the system's gross insensitivity towards the victim now makes me feel more vulnerable than ever."

Finally:

"Despite their 'domestic violence is a crime and we can help' posters that are everywhere, I cannot in

good conscience send some poor vulnerable woman there because they will be more exposed than ever."

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Hush Hush No More. It is hard to imagine a more damning indictment of the protection of victims. When a victim who reports is made to feel a nuisance, when conditions of release are violated with no consequence, enforcement practices must change. I will have questions for the Justice Minister. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
ROLE OF REGULAR MEMBERS IN FEDERAL  
GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Regular MLAs have become accustomed to the lack of consultation around this government's engagement with the federal government. Examples of this include:

- no consultation prior to signing the pan Canadian framework on climate change;
- no input into the NWT position before signing off on a 10-year health accord that means less than the original offer;
- no consultation on priorities taken to Ottawa during a week-long entire Cabinet visit on climate change priorities; and
- very few meetings of Regular MLAs with federal Ministers during visits to the Northwest Territories.

I will look at just one of these examples of Cabinet's inability or unwillingness to work with Regular MLAs. All of Cabinet went to Ottawa November 21-24 last year. No representative of standing committees was invited to attend. We found out about this trip just five days before the trip while some of us were at the Geoscience Forum. We were sent an e-mail with a letter informing us that the three priorities to be pitched were as follows:

- expanding and joining the Taltson system to southern grids;
- renewable solutions for off-grid communities; and

- all-weather roads for adapting to climate impacts.

None of these projects will deal in a significant way with greenhouse gas emissions from the Northwest Territories, where 24 per cent of emissions are from non-renewable resource development. Replacing diesel in communities is definitely a good thing and will help reduce the cost of living, but this is a relatively small portion of emissions. In any event, a better priority would have been a major housing energy retrofit program that would put people to work in their own communities, reduce the cost of living, and improve our housing stock.

While criticizing Cabinet for not working with Regular MLAs on federal engagement, I do have solutions, Mr. Speaker. The following would be a good start:

- rather than just giving Regular MLAs notice of upcoming meetings with federal Ministers, ask committees what issues and positions should be put forward;
- regular reporting on meetings with federal Ministers and any results that would be helpful; I thank the Premier for his Minister's statement this morning, earlier today, on his meeting with the Prime Minister;
- recommend and help arrange for federal Ministers to meet with Regular MLAs, possibly through relevant standing committees; and
- consult with Regular MLAs on GNWT negotiating positions before final sign-off on federal-provincial-territorial agreements.

I will have questions for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations to seek commitments on working better with Regular MLAs on federal engagement. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT MCPHERSON COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every summer, a community somewhere experiences a devastating wildfire that threatens lives, homes, and important infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, Fort McPherson's Wildland Fire Protection Plan was finalized in 2012. It recommended improving the community's fuelbreaks and helping people reduce fire hazards on their properties by getting rid of dead brush and controlling the vegetation growing around their homes.

Mr. Speaker, Fort McPherson's fuelbreaks were established in the 1980s and are overgrown and ineffective.

Mr. Speaker, in 2014 the community was ready to do work necessary to improve the firebreaks, but then forest fires broke out in the southern part of the Northwest Territories, and in the record-breaking season that followed the Fort McPherson plans were put on hold, Mr. Speaker.

Again in 2015, efforts were focused on the southern part of the Northwest Territories. Again, Fort McPherson has had to wait. The fire hazard for the main part of the community itself is relatively low, except for the southwest corner. The east cabins outside the community, along the Dempster Highway, are at an extreme risk. The wooden structures are surrounded by dense spruce forest.

Mr. Speaker, we saw in 2014 and 2015 forest fires can be virtually unstoppable. The fire in Fort McMurray this past year showed how a large, well-resourced community can be destroyed in just a short time. Mr. Speaker, Fort McPherson is in a remote forested area of the Delta. It is still in a lot of danger if a wildfire was nearby. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. Mr. Speaker, community wildland fire protection plans are becoming a national standard for responsible wildland fire management. This critical first step will only reduce homeowners' and communities' risks if they take the next step. A plan is no good if it is not put into action. Climate change is leading to more and more severe forest fires, as well as longer fire seasons.

Mr. Speaker, it may be cold out now, but spring is just around the corner. Now is the time to commit to do the work required to protect Fort McPherson and other communities from the threat of the coming fire season. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to forest fires, no one should be able to tell us we did too little too late. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later today.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON GROUND AMBULANCE AND HIGHWAY RESCUE SERVICES

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has become a tradition of mine to make statements in this House about the government's lack of support for ground ambulance and highway

rescue services. Today the tradition continues. I wasn't planning on continuing it today. It has become frustrating and exhausting, frankly. I have brought this issue up during every business planning session, during the deliberation of the main estimates, during departmental briefings, and during many, many committee meetings.

During the last briefing we received from the department, we were informed that the little funding directed toward highway rescue was being cut from the budget, despite the Minister acknowledging that a real fix to the problem will cost millions. Luckily, that meagre sum was added back to the budget, and communities can still apply for a pittance to help them do millions of dollars of work on the GNWT's behalf. That is a great deal for the government.

Despite my frustration with all this, I decided to do another statement because in my research I came across some exciting and encouraging news. I came across the fall edition of the MACA update, and it reenergized me. Let me read from it:

For several years, community governments and other stakeholders have raised concerns about the lack of a comprehensive coordinated system of ground ambulance and highway rescue services in the North and about the need for clarity with regard to service levels, responsibility for service delivery, and associated funding. There have been several studies done on this issue which have proposed a series of options ranging from maintaining the status quo to a legislated program delivery mandate supported by the GNWT. MACA and the Department of Health and Social Services are working towards a legislative framework and coordinated program delivery. The departments are currently engaged in data collection and establishing monitoring mechanisms to determine uses and costs of current service delivery.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this is the type of progress we need.

Now if the Ministers of MACA and Health and Social Services are a little confused it's because they might not be familiar with this publication. If they would like to be brought up to speed, I suggest they talk to the two former Health and Social Service Ministers in the gallery because this update was published during their terms in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, why do I have to ask the government to do what they said they were going to do 10 years ago? I'm going to have questions for the Minister of MACA later because that's where this file seems to have landed, and I hope the answers I receive

aren't read by another MLA 10 years from now in the same position. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Members' statements. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in gallery.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MR. SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the people in the Gallery.

I am pleased to recognize a group of trainees attending a Tlicho interpreter/translator course from Behchoko. We have with us Terry Nasken, Margorie Black, Regina Lafferty, Joe Beaverho and Henry Mantla. They are five of the 25 students who are training to be interpreters and translators. Also, trainees from Goyatiko Language Society: Jeannie Martin, Alice Wilfladt and Dennis Drygeese. Their program instructor Maro Sundberg is with us as well. Masi for joining us.

Colleagues, I'd also like to recognize that all the delegates are here today from across the North who are participating in the Daughters of the Vote, which is an initiative of Equal Voice Canada; a national multi-partisan organization dedicated to electing more women to all levels of politics. I'd like to welcome them and masi for being here with us.

Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife North.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to welcome and recognize all the participants of the Daughters of the Vote program. In particular, I want to take this opportunity to welcome Yellowknife North residents Emily Smith and Coco Paulette. Also, as you alluded to earlier, a man of many accolades and distinguished titles but also a Yellowknife North resident, I'd like to welcome Mr. Tony Whitford, and, of course, it's very nice to see former MLA Sandy Lee and Jane Groenewegen in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge the Daughters of the Vote delegates who are in the gallery today, and I'd like to give special thanks to Jane Groenewegen and Sandy Lee for the trailblazers that they were in sitting in this House and serving it with great distinction. Thank you.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize some young ladies from Daughters of the Vote. First I'd like to recognize Laney Beaulieu. Laney Beaulieu is my brother Danny's granddaughter. I'd like to recognize two other young girls whose families originate from Fort Resolution: Jaylene Delorme-Buggins, Olivia Villebrun. Also, I'd like to recognize Dennis Drygeese and Maro Sundberg. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Great Slave.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to recognize a resident of the Great Slave riding as well as a delegate of the Daughters of the Vote initiative. Ms. Nha Ly, thank you so much for being here today. Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to acknowledge some of the people who I consider role models at the Legislative Assembly: Mr. Tony Whitford, for all his service that he's provided to us; Sandy Lee and Jane Groenewegen, for being role models to all women to say that we need to get into political life, into the Legislative Assembly.

I want to also welcome the Equal Voice Canada here. I want to acknowledge the Daughters of the Vote, huge that they're there, and, of course, Olivia Villebrun, who will be our representative going to Ottawa to take part in 338 women taking part in the Equal Voice, which is important.

I want to say that 1960, the year I was born, was the year that Aboriginal women got their right to vote, and it's really exciting to see. That may seem a long time for you; for me it's like the day I was born.

---Laughter

So in my short lifespan it's exciting to see that we've gone from a place that we actually got the right to vote to having almost 20 young women sitting in the audience taking part and considering sitting in my chair and Julie's chair. Thank you.

**SOME HON. MEMBER:** And my chair.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** And his chair.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Almost sounded like a Member's statement.

---Laughter.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, monsieur le President. I, too, would like to recognize a constituent in the gallery, Jacq Brasseur. She is one of the delegates for the Daughters of the Vote group here in Yellowknife that's working with Equal Voice Canada. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Inuvik Boot Lake.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize and welcome all the delegates for Daughters of the Vote. We do have two participants from Inuvik, who knows, might be taking over the Member for Range Lake's position here. Ms. Alyssa Ross and Ms. Raven Firth, welcome, and I hope you enjoy the proceedings as well as take a very good understanding role in the work that we do as the 19 legislators of the Assembly.

I'd also like to recognize Ms. Sandy Lee, Ms. Jane Groenewegen and Mr. Tony Whitford for all the work that they've done in this House and I would also like to thank the participants from the interpreter and translator program, a very important program continuing our languages of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome the Daughters of the Vote from NWT, in particular my riding Reannda Cli. Then, of course, I have to lump and tell a little bit of a story because there are four ladies who actually I've had the opportunity to work with through the Youth Ambassador's program: Alyssa Ross, Raven Firth, and Olivia Villebrun, and I'm supposed not to embarrass her so I will not do that. As well, I'd be remiss -- I would be really remiss not to recognize Jane Groenewegen because she's done that a number of times when I've been up there. So thank you very much.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, as others have, recognize the past Members Tony Whitford, Jane Groenewegen, and Sandy Lee for all their contributions to this Assembly. In addition, I'd like to recognize all the Daughters of the Vote delegates here, in particular Olivia Villebrun of Fort Smith. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River South.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to welcome all of the

participants of the Daughters of the Vote, in particular Kiera Boulanger-Rowe from Hay River South who also participated in the Hay River session, I believe, for getting women into politics.

I, too, would like to also recognize Jane Groenewegen, Sandy Lee, and Tony Whitford for all the work they've done, and I'm going to take this opportunity to wish my wife happy Valentine's Day.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize a former Member for Kam Lake, Mr. Tony Whitford. I'd also like to recognize, along with the many honourable Members here, the Daughters of the Vote; those who will come after us and take these seats. Thank you for letting us keep your seats warm.

I'd also like to recognize Mrs. Groenewegen and Ms. Lee for their many years of public service and their contributions to political life in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to welcome everyone, all the girls from Daughters of the Vote and, in particular, Chukita Elias-Gruben who is my cousin from Tuktoyaktuk. Welcome. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Hay River North.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lots of constituents in the crowd today. I would like to welcome Jaylene Delorme-Buggins who is here with Daughters of the Vote; Beatrice Lepine; Myrtle Graham; and, of course, Jane Groenewegen; and someone who seems to be here all the time, my father, Rocky Simpson.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. If we missed someone in the gallery, welcome to our proceedings. It is always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Happy Valentine's, everyone. Item 7, acknowledgements. Member for Nahendeh.

### Acknowledgments

ACKNOWLEDGMENT 16-18(2):  
FEMALE SOCCER PLAYERS ON U16 NORTH  
AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES SOCCER  
TEAM

**MR. THOMPSON:** Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate four young female soccer players who are being selected to the U16 North

American Indigenous Games soccer team. They are Leona Berrault, Briann Nelson, both from Fort Nelson; Akasha Hardisty-Norwegian from Fort Simpson; and Shaznay Waugh from Fort Simpson. As well, we have two who were selected as alternates, Mikala McLeod from Fort Liard and Emily Hardisty from Fort Simpson. On behalf of the communities, their parents, and coaches, we are very proud of their accomplishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Congratulations to the athletes, as well. Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

### Oral Questions

QUESTION 559-18(2):  
RIGHTS UNDER THE INUVIALUIT FINAL  
AGREEMENT

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier my Member's statement was on the rights under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, and my questions are for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. Mr. Speaker, my first question is: what is the update on the status of the negotiations between the Inuvialuit, Canada, and the GNWT? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Honourable Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to report that the negotiations on Inuvialuit self-government between the Inuvialuit, Canada, and the Government of the Northwest Territories are going very well. As a matter of fact, negotiators are meeting this week in Aklavik, and the negotiations are going so well that we expect that a final agreement can be concluded within the next few months. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I appreciate that answer from the Premier. Mr. Speaker, my second question is: what additional rights would this agreement provide the Inuvialuit?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** The Inuvialuit self-government agreement, once finalized, it will implement the inherent right to self-government in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. This agreement will provide the Inuvialuit the authority to deliver a broad range of programs and services, including social envelope authority such as K to 12 education, child and family services, and income support.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I appreciate the response. Mr. Speaker, my third question is: once the agreement is settled, how does the Minister expect

the Inuvialuit's relationship with the GNWT to change?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** This agreement will begin a new phase in the relationship between the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Inuvialuit government, and that relationship will continue to evolve as the Inuvialuit take on more responsibility for the delivery of programs and services and pass their own laws, similar to the evolving relationship with the Deline Self-Government Agreement.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response. Mr. Speaker, my final question on the agreement is: what implications would the final self-government agreement have for the Legislative Assembly and the role of the MLA from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region? Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our expectation is that the Legislative Assembly will continue its role as the public government in the Northwest Territories, including representation from communities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. As the Member knows, the Prime Minister recently signed a new declaration, the Crown Inuit Declaration, I think he called it. This is a reflection of their new, improved, ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal governments. We are looking forward to seeing how that all rolls out going forward.

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

QUESTION 560-18(2):  
ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE ELECTRICAL  
POWER IN THE DEH CHO REGION

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier I spoke about the status of the electrical transmission that is affecting my riding. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. What is the status of NTPC's takeover of the Hay River power franchise, and how will it impact power rates in Fort Providence, Kakisa, Enterprise, and the Hay River Reserve? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this House well knows, the Town of Hay River has decided several years ago to seek other providers for the franchise in Hay River. Currently, that matter has gone to arbitration to determine the

price. So evaluators are being hired and, ultimately, the arbitrator will make a decision as to price.

That, of course, is only for the Hay River franchise. My understanding is that the other franchise arrangements that ATCO and Northland has will not be affected by that, but we believe that, assuming a reasonable valuation of the assets comes in and is provided to the arbitrator, that ultimately the price of power in Hay River will decline. Thank you.

**MR. NADLI:** In the meantime, communities remain uncertain in terms of the fate of the assets that perhaps could affect the price of electricity that is delivered into the homes, so communities are asking what resources are available to help community governments understand their power franchise agreements and how they work?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** If there are other franchise agreements, as I understand there are, they are subject to negotiation between the parties. I am assuming the municipal governments that entered into these arrangements did the proper research. Of course, ultimately, decisions are made by the Public Utilities Board.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you to the Minister for his reply. Can the Minister describe the Government of the Northwest Territories' working relationship with Northland Utilities?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** The Government of the Northwest Territories does recognize that Northland Utilities is a good corporate citizen. I can advise that the Premier and I did have the opportunity of meeting with senior management of Northland and ATCO, I think it was a couple of months ago. It was an amicable meeting, and we have a good relationship with them.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is: what role does the government envision for Northland Utilities in the future of power supply in the NWT? Mahsi.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Northland was involved in the energy strategy. I understand they made submissions and had meetings with the government. As to what will take place in the future, that is to be determined. We do recognize that they are a good corporate citizen. We value their participation in the energy industry.

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

QUESTION 561-18(2):  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON DEMOCRATIC  
REFORM INITIATIVES

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently the Prime Minister of Canada visited the Northwest Territories, and one of the discussions we have been having across the country and in this community is on democratic reform. Certainly, there are many constitutional challenges with some models of governance in the Northwest Territories, but today I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency if this government has a position on democratic reform that they've shared with the Government of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** No, we haven't.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you to the Minister. I'm thankful that we don't have a position because I didn't know about it and I don't think my honourable friends know about it as well.

Does the Minister feel that this is a discussion that we could bring forth to Northerners? Certainly, there are fewer constitutional challenges with proportional representation or alternative voting here in our jurisdiction. So is the Minister considering public engagement on democratic reform in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** As the Prime Minister found out, this is a real jungle. For hundreds of years we've had the first-past-the-post system, and I think it's served us quite well. I don't think the government wants to engage in that sort of massive overhaul of the voting system.

**MR. TESTART:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a big difference between a system that encompasses 34 million Canadians and a system that encompasses 40,000 Northerners. I think that we have options here, and national opinion polls show that the majority of Canadians want to engage in this discussion; they want to be consulted. This is an area I think that we've seen a lot of attention. So given that the Minister's job in this portfolio is open government, can he commit to at least starting to look at a discussion paper that could be shared with Members on this side of the House and with members of the public on options for democratic reform in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** This is a very busy government. All of the MLAs are very busy. People may want reform, but there doesn't seem to be any obvious solution in the sense that when asked people have many different ideas about what a new system of voting could look like, and I just don't

think that this government feels that changing the current system, which has worked well for many years, would be a high priority or a priority at all.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister sits on the Standing Committee of Rules and Procedures; they're currently looking at a report that recommends 43 changes to our electoral system. Is the Minister saying that he categorically refuses to acknowledge any of those recommendations and will not be proceeding with any of those changes, or is he only talking about proportional representation?

I think it's clear he answers that question. I'm not asking him to be the Prime Minister of Canada here and address a national concern; I'm asking him to address issues here at home. We do have this report and he has seen it; he's certainly on that committee. So can he answer if he accepts that report, some of the -- and how much of that report he accepts? Thank you.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, there can always be changes to and improvements in the manner in which we conduct voting in the Northwest Territories. The change that I think is suggested by the Member opposite would, I think, tie up the Assembly to such an extent that it would not be worth the effort.

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

QUESTION 562-18(2):  
PROPOSED ELIMINATION OF THE AURORA  
COLLEGE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. As I mentioned in my Member's statement, the cancelled Aurora College program contained specific content that was inclusive of northern communities and our cultures. Mr. Speaker, does the Minister believe that sending students to southern schools for training and social work can replace the crucial cultural content that's important for working in northern communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I don't. Any students who go through our current education system go through an Aboriginal language culture-based education, so they get all the relevant information, the experiences, on-the-

land programs, languages in their schools and their communities, and anyone who hasn't received it and comes back to the Northwest Territories GNWT does also have a cultural awareness program through the Human Resources Department. As well, we do have teacher cultural orientation days that our department has made mandatory to anybody who comes and works for the department of ECE. That includes southerners who have never been in the North before, and it's mandatory. You learn about residential school experiences, the education system. So we're preparing our teachers and our workers for the communities that they will be working in.

Currently, we do have 19 Northerners who are attending the social work program out of the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** I thank the Minister for his fulsome reply. Mr. Speaker, while the graduation rates of this program were low, enrolment rates seem to be trending upward, indicating that there's significant interest in the program. What steps has the department been taking to ensure that enrolling students are prepared for the demands of this program?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** We're always in consultation with the executive and the staff over at the Aurora College, looking at their programs and how we support one another and some of the tough decisions that do have to be made. Any students who are looking at going into a social work program or any program that is post-secondary, we have career development officers in our regional offices, employment transition officers. We also have career guidance counsellors in the schools, and our CDOs are actually going and working in the schools, and that's an emphasis that we did put on them. So there are many areas that we're working with students to get them in the right direction to get them to post-secondary education, whether it's at Aurora College or another institute across Canada.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thanks to the Minister for his reply. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, it's clear to all of us in this Assembly that, as a society, our social ills in the NWT seem to be worsening. How is it achieving our mandate goals as a government and, in particular, our obligations under the calls to action on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to cancel this program? What kind of effects is that going to have on us? Cancelling this program, what kind of effects is that going to have in us meeting our mandate priorities and our TRC obligations?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I do believe we're meeting our mandate as well as some of the recommendations that came out of the TRC Report. They are recommendations, but our government was doing a lot of this work already. We did present

this to our Council of Ministers of Education across Canada this past summer. A lot of jurisdictions took interest into the work that we're doing here in the Northwest Territories in our curriculum, in our early childhood programming, so that they can look at what we're doing to meet those recommendations, and I feel that we are a leader across Canada meeting some of those recommendations out of the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

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

QUESTION 563-18(2):  
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION  
FUNDING

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement I talked about the funding for junior kindergarten. I'd like to ask the Minister questions along those lines. The Minister said that junior kindergarten is fully funded, but we keep hearing from the boards and that that there is no inclusion of inclusive schooling or Aboriginal instruction with the four-year-olds who are going into junior kindergarten. So I'd just like to ask the Minister what "fully funded" means? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the Budget Address this government did commit to fully funding junior kindergarten, and based on questions around inclusive schooling, Aboriginal language culture-based education, as the Member has mentioned. Our department continues to name those funding levels. So inclusive schooling is self-funded. What we are funding, it is actually above what we are legislated to do. The Aboriginal culture-based education, we are continuing to fund those as well. When we are talking about the implementation of junior kindergarten, we took into consideration a new funding model that included student enrolments, staff complements, teacher salaries, as well as some of the changes that we have done through the Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling that has since changed since we first initially wanted to do the implementation of junior kindergarten to where we are now. There has been a lot of research and a lot of work done to get this moved to this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Can the Minister tell the House what the original budget for junior kindergarten was when it was first budgeted? What was the original budget when the plan to roll out junior kindergarten was first hatched?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** That goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. I don't have that initial detail,

but I can get that number for the Member and get back to him.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** The Minister explained inclusive schooling and the funding levels as per the NWT Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling. I think it was indicated that 15 per cent would be the amount for inclusive schooling. Education is funding at 17 per cent. Having said that, I think that, even if we fund junior kindergarten at 15 per cent, it would still be fairly significant. My understanding is that the original budget was over \$7 million, if not higher. If you just calculate 15 per cent on that, that seems to be -- I am not understanding how the fact that they are funding K to 12 at a level higher than the directive has any positive impact on the funding of junior kindergarten. I am asking again if the Minister can tell us what the funding level includes, not the fact that they are funding over, but what does it include when you add the junior kindergarten students into that school system in NWT?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** The money that was allocated during this government to implement junior kindergarten was \$5.1 million. We are currently working with education boards to see how we are going to roll that out with the enrolments of students and families putting their four-year-olds into the school system. Junior kindergarten itself will not have an impact on inclusive schooling. As we mentioned before, the four-year-olds will be in the school system, so they will have access to extra resources, extra supports throughout the entire school.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was hoping to clarify the funding model for junior kindergarten, but I think people listening to this will just be more confused. I don't understand how we could exclude something and then still indicate that it is funded. The greatest bang for the buck that education could spend would be on the youngest students that we have. If we are excluding inclusive schooling, if we are excluding Aboriginal language, among other things -- my understanding is money was taken out of education renewal to fund some of the junior kindergarten. My question is, originally, when junior kindergarten was rolled out or portions of junior kindergarten, about \$2 million was needed in order to roll out the first portion of junior kindergarten. Is that \$2 million no longer considered to be part of the funding of junior kindergarten? Thank you.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That money helped roll out junior kindergarten to 20 of our 33 communities across the Northwest Territories and is an ongoing funding that we are moving forward with. It is the same with the new

dollars that are coming through. As we roll out junior kindergarten, it will be funding that will be provided to our education authorities. With inclusive schooling, it seems like it is a concern of the Member. We also work with the Department of Health and Social Services to provide a range of programs and services to diagnose and support children with disabilities and developmental needs. We are very flexible with a wraparound model to help support children and youth with complex needs in the years when they enter the school, transitioning into the high school, and throughout their school careers.

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

QUESTION 564-18(2):  
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION  
FUNDING

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment because I am going to ask him some follow-up questions on inclusive schooling and junior kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, we have heard the Minister talk about this \$2 million. Where did this money come from, from the very beginning, when it was developed? Was it from the government or was it from the school boards, so the school boards had to take the money that we gave them and come up with \$2 million? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, it was a decision of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, so it was something that came out of the initiative from the Department of Education at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I guess at some point I am going to have to follow up on that question to totally understand where that money came from. Mr. Speaker, the Minister was talking about inclusive schooling and the ability to tap into other resources out there that exist with our schools. However, what happens, like we have Johnny here who needs a special assistant and he is taken off to work with the kindergarteners? Does the government have a plan in place if this doesn't work, if this inclusive schooling doesn't work presently and they need to fund it?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I mentioned, the department continues to maintain the funding levels for inclusive schooling. We work very collaboratively with the Department of Health and Social Services to do assessments, support children with disabilities, developmental needs. We

are developing and revising a JK to Grade 9 health curriculum in order to ensure preventative approaches to children's health are included. A lot of areas we are continuing to work on to address some of the concerns that are being brought forward.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for his answer. We have heard in this House the Minister talk about inclusive schooling, that we are above the national average at 17 per cent. However, in this budget, on schedule 2, page 3 of 12, we see a reduction of \$1.8 million. Can the Minister please advise this House what this reduction does to the percentage as per our legislation?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Currently we are legislated, as I have mentioned before in this House, to fund inclusive schooling at 15 per cent. We are currently funding it at 17.1 per cent, 2.1 per cent over the legislated level. We don't have the numbers of the students who are going to be enrolled, the JK students, so we can't have an answer for that at this moment because schools are still recruiting students and we don't know what the enrolment rates are.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his answer. I would have hoped that the department would have actually estimated where we were and how that was going to be impacted. As well, on the same page, it talked about Aboriginal Language and Learning Secretariat, and there is a reduction in this. Can the Minister explain why this funding is being cut as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, we always review our programs, our services, how much money is spent in previous budgets to this year's budget. Looking at the reductions with some of the education authorities, there was administration area in the amount the Member mentioned of the total contribution. So it was about \$800,000 of the total contribution of \$155 million, or about 0.52 per cent of the total contribution provided to the education authorities.

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

QUESTION 565-18(2):  
ROLE OF REGULAR MEMBERS IN FEDERAL  
GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. The Process Convention on Communication states:

Except under extraordinary circumstances, Members of the Legislative Assembly should be made aware of and have opportunity to discuss significant announcements, changes, consultations, or initiatives before they are released to the public or introduced in the Legislative Assembly.

Would the Minister agree that there is a need to improve communications and involvement with Regular MLAs when it comes to engagement with federal Ministers? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to reassure the Member that we signed the Health Accord, which is more than the original offer, and we communicated that in writing. The Member would seem to suggest that we can control federal Ministers and their travels. Nothing can be further from the truth. We just had the Prime Minister come, and we had the Minister of Health, and the meetings are confirmed a day before they are here. The Minister of Health requested the meetings, and she did not say what she wanted to talk about.

This has been an issue. We have raised it before with the Government of Canada, that federal Ministers come and go and they are not required to check in with us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I know it is a special day, and I am really feeling the love from the other side of the House. Can the Minister, though, commit to consulting with Regular MLAs on GNWT positions and negotiations on federal-provincial-territorial agreements?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** We adhere very closely to the priorities and mandates that are set by this House. We have a federal engagement strategy that we have shared with the standing committee, and we follow the protocol that is set out in the Guiding Principles and Process Conventions.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I think every single session I have been here, I keep raising these issues and concerns. I just don't seem to be getting anywhere with my Cabinet colleagues. I have tried to suggest a number of constructive ways of improving this working relationship. Can the Minister commit to regular reporting on meetings held between GNWT Ministers and federal Ministers and the tracking of results, for example, the kind of statement that the Minister made today?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** I believe that, with all of the responsibilities that Ministers have, there are probably about 25 to 30 federal-provincial-territorial meetings that occur on an annual basis. I believe that, in every instance, there are press releases

and communiques that come out of them. Certainly, I understand that we share those with Regular Members, and we will continue to do so.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the Minister that, if there are communiques and so on, that we don't always see that kind of material, so I would certainly encourage him to share it with this side of the House. Again, can the Minister commit to recommending to federal Ministers and their staff that during visits to the Northwest Territories there be meetings with Regular MLAs through the appropriate standing committees? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will communicate that to the Prime Minister.

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

QUESTION 566-18(2):  
SUPPORT FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIMS

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice. My Member's statement outlined a recent catalog of judgmental action, or inaction rather, suffered by a woman who has asked repeatedly for protection from intimidation by a person who is accused of having sexually and physically assaulted her. In holding these experiences up against the findings and recommendations of the Hush-Hush Report, I must conclude that safeguards for victims are lacking or nonexistent. Can the Minister tell us what victims should do when they feel threatened by a person who is supposed to be restrained by an emergency protection order or conditions of reconnaissance? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Justice.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise that the Crown attorney's office and the RCMP do treat these breaches of undertakings, in particular, very seriously. If a person feels threatened or there has been a breach of conditions, they can go to the RCMP. My experience over five different decades in the court system is that these breaches are treated very seriously, often leading to a hearing in which the accused person who is charged or accused of a violation of his undertaking, that is the conditions of his release, then has to establish, the onus is on that person then to establish why they should be released.

So these are treated very seriously by the RCMP and the Crown attorney's office. In addition, we

have victims' assistance workers in, I think, six of the communities, and they can be of great assistance in these types of matters. Thank you.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that answer. I think that he has had a more positive experience, or his clients have, of this court system than the woman I have been working with. In this instance that I cited in my Member's statement, the victim had to visit the RCMP three successive times to report just one instance of intimidation, each time requesting interviews with more senior RCMP members and then finally getting the support of the Status of Women. Only then did the police take action to enforce the conditions of release. My question for the Minister is: why should it be so hard?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** I of course cannot speak about individual cases, but, again speaking from my own experiences, the police and Crown attorneys do treat these matters very seriously. In fact, if I recall, approximately 40 per cent of those in custody are on remand, often for violating terms of their release and being held in custody.

If a person, an individual, is not satisfied with an RCMP investigation into their complaint, they can make a complaint to the local detachment, which usually then goes to the senior RCMP officer in G Division.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that response and for talking about the complaint process. I want to repeat one of the dismal remarks from this account that I have given:

"I now wish I hadn't gone to the police because the system's gross insensitivity towards the victim now makes me feel more vulnerable than ever. I am never going to encourage any woman to go to the police due to domestic violence."

What can the Minister say in response to that?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Of course, I can't address the individual complaint. As I mentioned, there is a process. If a person does not feel that a matter has been properly investigated by the RCMP, they can go to the local detachment head and that matter would likely be passed on to the senior RCMP officer within G Division. However, if a person is not satisfied with the results of the RCMP investigation, they can ask for an independent review by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, the CRCC, so there are avenues to deal with complaints about the way in which a case has been handled by the RCMP.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for his response. I recognize that there is a process in place to try to get better service from the RCMP if we feel that the service we are getting is not adequate. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that fewer than 10 per cent of women who have been sexually and physically assaulted report, just exactly because of the onerous nature of trying to follow up the conditions of recognizance that are placed on the accused. I didn't hear from the Minister that he acknowledges that this may be a problem or what he might do to fix it? Masi. Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, the Member opposite has raised an important issue. I just repeat that we do have victim's assistance workers who are of great assistance to those in these types of very difficult situations. I can advise again, in my many decades before the courts, that a lot of these supports were not available 30 or 40 years ago, so we are getting better at assisting those who are victims of crime, as I mentioned, the victim's assistance workers. Also within the Crown attorney's office, they have those who assist witnesses in preparing for the trial. Everybody knows these types of trials, domestic violence or sexual assault trials, are particularly difficult. All I can say is that our support is mostly from the federal government in the PPSC and our government in the form of victim's assistance workers.

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

QUESTION 567-18(2):  
FIREBREAKS

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister how our plans for pre-suppression activities, like fuelbreaks, are prioritized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been working with the communities to update their firebreak plans. The Member pointed out before, quite correctly, that the last one, I believe, was done in 2012. They are working with the communities now to update their fire protection plans. I know for a fact they are going to be up in the Member's community this summer working with them to evaluate the fuelbreaks that are there and see if they can take ways to mitigate them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** As I mentioned in my statement, the community did put forward a proposal, which was so close to being approved, but then things got so busy with the fires down in this area. What resources are available for communities to implement their community wildland fire protection plans?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I think if there is some need within the community, I believe, through the money that we provide to the communities there are opportunities there. ENR is working to identify funding that might be made available to communities with their fuelbreak. We were growing a forest full of trees but they went up in the great fire of 2014.

**MR. BLAKE:** What steps does Fort McPherson need to take to get its fuelbreaks completed, or start doing the work this year?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** As I said before, our focus will be in the Member's riding this summer working with them to identify some of their needs as far as fuelbreaks go and then work with them. Again, ENR has committed to try to identify any types of funding that we might be able to provide if there is a need for it.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years the department has had in the neighbourhood of \$50 to \$60 million each year, so I am sure that the department can find some funds available. Moving forward, would the department set aside some funds for communities throughout the territory to complete their firebreaks to protect their communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member talks about resources. My comment before was actually our forest full of money trees that went up in smoke in 2014 to the tune of over \$50 million, so we have been fairly challenged. We recognize the importance of fuelbreaks. That is why we are going into communities, working with the communities to update all their fire protection plans and evaluate what condition their fuelbreaks are in, and if there are opportunities, identify some resources to put towards that.

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

QUESTION 568-18(2):  
GROUND AMBULANCE AND HIGHWAY RESCUE  
SERVICES

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about ground ambulance and highway rescue, as I have done many times. Just to bring everyone up to speed, I would like to recap what we have learned so far from my previous questioning. No single department is delegated with authority over this issue. Twenty-seven communities don't have ground ambulances. Community governments provide highway emergency services far beyond their own borders, mostly out of their own pocket. There has been \$1.8 million to provide community governments since 2007 to deal with the issue. The issue is going to cost millions of dollars to fix. There is no timeline to address this issue. The government needs to save money, so it can't provide any further support. That is what we have learned from the previous questioning.

I may not have many questions if there has been nothing going on, but I will give it a shot. Since the last questioning, last October, what steps have been taken to create a coordinated and adequately funded service delivery regime for ground ambulance and highway rescue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, we have been doing some movement on this file. The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that it is an issue. We don't want to leave people stranded and we want to make health and safety our priority, to take care of people.

We have met with the municipal government of Hay River to hear their concerns. We have also met interdepartmentally with Health and Social Services, Transportation, Department of Justice, and Municipal and Community Affairs. We have committed to hiring a consultant to go in and do an action plan; not a research project, this has been researched to death, but to actually do an action plan to see how we can support ground ambulance within the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Usually I hate to hear that the government is doing another action plan, but in this case it is better than what has been going on. The regional centres are providing the highway rescue services for large areas. That is because 27 communities don't have ground ambulances. The Minister said the departments have been in talks with some of the communities. Have they been in

talks with all of the communities to address not only the highway rescue but also the ground ambulance part of this equation?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** We will be meeting with some of the communities, but the five tax-based communities is what we will be focusing on, recognizing that there are 33 communities within the Northwest Territories. However, not all of those 33 communities have road systems, and we are talking about ground ambulance, not highway rescue.

**MR. SIMPSON:** There is an action plan in development. Can the Minister provide us with a timeline of when we can expect the action plan to be completed, but also when we can start seeing the effects on the ground, whether it be money rolling out to the communities or legislative changes or anything in that manner?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** We will be starting the project in the spring of this coming year. There are a couple of issues. There are a few things that we are looking at as difficulties; for example, the municipality of Hay River seems to have issues with collection of fees, yet the municipality of Yellowknife has no issue with the collection of fees. We are trying to figure out what the difference is. We are looking at gaps. We are looking at overlaps. We have heard that even those we have given up boundaries and said, "These are your limits to pick up people," we are hearing that three communities are going to the rescue. It is not only about the funding. We will be looking at the funding formula, but it is also the coordination of ground ambulance and highway services.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister mentioned that Hay River has trouble with collections whereas Yellowknife doesn't. Yellowknife has a much bigger staff. So would the Minister commit to funding another position in Hay River that's responsible for collection of ambulance fees? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** As Members should be aware, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs worked on a new deal -- what was called a new deal many years ago, I believe it was 2007, where the communities actually decide for themselves what they want. We provide funding for that. If the municipality of Hay River would like to hire somebody out of their own, then we would more than support that decision from the municipality.

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

QUESTION 569-18(2):  
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN IMPLEMENTATION  
FUNDING

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask more questions on junior kindergarten. Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated that the first group of schools that started junior kindergarten rolled out kindergarten at their own expense. So \$2 million was taken out of the school boards. Is the Minister saying that that \$2 million is not part of the fully funded -- the term "fully funded" that's been used by the GNWT right now to fund junior kindergarten, that \$2 million spent by the school boards is no longer in the mix? Is that the case? Thank you.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, the \$5.1 million is only money coming to this government to fund junior kindergarten 2017-18. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I didn't even mention the words \$5.1 million. I'm asking the Minister, \$2 million was put in by the school boards against their own judgment. They said that they couldn't afford it but the department made a decision that they would have to fund it themselves. I'm asking the Minister if that \$2 million is part of the full funding?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I mentioned, those initial dollars helped set off the implementation of junior kindergarten in 20 of our 33 communities, so it's ongoing funding from the beginning, the onset, and if the Member and committee would like a briefing on it, a detailed briefing on junior kindergarten, I'd be more than willing to do that.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I'm going to assume that that \$2 million is not part of what the government is referring to as fully funded from the answers I've got. Mr. Speaker, in 2000, teachers went on strike. One of the results of that strike was a ministerial directive on inclusive schooling. Since then that inclusive schooling has been eroded. Can the Minister tell me what the initial money for inclusive schooling was put in place for and what was the reason that directive was put out by the Minister of the day?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Inclusive schooling, the funding is allocated for students who do need extra help in the classroom to offset some of the concerns and developmental concerns that we're seeing in some of our students. So initially it was there to provide assistance to help our students achieve better outcomes. So that's initially what the dollars were implemented for.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister if he would release up-to-date final summary documentation to advise all interested parties on how junior kindergarten is fully funded. Thank you.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Currently we've got information out there to all parents who are enrolling their four-year-olds into junior kindergarten. We're getting information out to the board chairs. We're meeting with superintendents to see the rollout of how junior kindergarten is going to look in 2017-18 school year, so we're working with the stakeholders to make sure that it's a smooth transition.

Obviously, we've still got to wait for some numbers of students who are being enrolled. As you do know, it is an optional program for schools, and they also have the option of a half day or full day, so some of the things that still need answers to. When we do have it we will share it with the House and the Committee.

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

QUESTION 570-18(2):  
ELECTRICAL POWER RATES ESTABLISHED BY  
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation. We heard earlier today that the Minister alluded to the idea or fact that, when Northland Utilities is no longer going to be the distributor of power to the Town of Hay River, quite confidently, the Minister indicated to the House that Hay River rates will go down or be less.

Mr. Speaker, as a Yellowknife resident, the portion of our power bill that is responsible for or comes under NTPC, which is about 75 per cent of our power bill, has seen an increase of nearly 30 per cent over the last four years and is going to see an addition 8 per cent increase in the coming two years. How can the Minister so confidently suggest that rates in Hay River will go down while ours will collectively have gone up by a compounded rate of 40 per cent over six years? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for NWT Power Corp.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, once the arbitrator works out the price of the assets to be acquired in Hay River we are confident that that figure will, in fact, lead to a reduction of rates in Hay

River. As everyone knows, all rates are, however, subject to PUB scrutiny. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you to the Minister for reminding us that all rates are subject to the PUB, because I've actually heard the Minister say in the past that it's not them that are responsible for the rates getting set; that it is, in fact, the Public Utilities Board. So it leads me to believe once again, while we're suffering in Yellowknife from never-ending increases in rates, how there can be such confidence in suggesting that the Town of Hay River is going to get lower rates when we know it's the Public Utilities Board, according to the Minister, that sets the rates. So how can he, once again, confidently suggest that they're going to get lower rates?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** The rates set by the Public Utilities Board, of course, are set after consultation with the public and submissions by the public. We are very confident that, assuming the assets in Hay River can be acquired at a reasonable amount, and that is our belief, that once the PUB looks at that we are very confident that rates in Hay River will fall. Our estimate is they will fall between perhaps 15 and 30 per cent, somewhere in that range.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** I'm considering now moving to Hay River, quite frankly. They've got a good golf course there, too.

Mr. Speaker, it seems like the Minister is pre-empting a little bit of the Public Utilities Board's work in making such strong suggestions. You know, I wonder, to some degree, if the Minister believes that the Public Utilities Board, in fact, even has a position in setting rates in the Northwest Territories anymore?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, of course, Mr. Speaker, rates are established by the Public Utilities Board, an organization that is independent of the territorial government. The Member opposite made reference to the rates in Yellowknife. I'd like to point out and remind all Members that rates in Yellowknife were massively subsidized during two dry seasons, so it's not as though the citizens of Yellowknife have had to bear any additional cost as a result of that, and therefore, I am confident that the rates in Hay River will, assuming the arbitrator decides to allow the acquisition of the disputed assets at a reasonable amount, very confident that that will lead to a reduction of rates in that community.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Minister that a subsidy for the City of Yellowknife to the tune of

\$50 million is a subsidy for the territory because we know that the rates for the rest of the territory are based on Yellowknife. That said, we can see that the Public Utilities Board is basically a pawn to some degree, Mr. Speaker. The Minister already got rid of, at his discretion, the public representative board of the Power Corporation. He said that was to save \$1 million. Why don't we just get rid of the Public Utilities Board, turn the Power Corporation into a fully GNWT-operated entity, and bring its business plan to this House on an annual basis for approval and for funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, there's a long tradition across Canada of Public Utilities Boards setting rates. It is an interesting proposal, what the Member opposite has suggested, however.

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

QUESTION 571-18(2):  
TERRITORIAL ELECTRICAL POWER  
GENERATION ASSET EXPANSION AND  
REPLACEMENT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this topic today, I attended a luncheon with the president of the Canadian Electricity Association, and there were some facts that he brought forward; namely, that the Conference Board of Canada believes that it will take \$350 billion to renew electricity infrastructure and support the growing demand for energy. Does the Minister know what our current infrastructure deficit is in power infrastructure in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** No, I'm not aware of that figure, but I can certainly look into this matter for the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** I would appreciate if the Minister could share that with us all. Does the Power Corporation have a plan to renew this infrastructure across the Territories?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes. Of course, the Power Corporation is aware that assets depreciate and, in addition, the government has been looking into a new energy plan and consulting with utilities. Mr. Speaker, again, I will look into this matter further for the Member opposite. I don't know if there's a figure out there as to what it would cost to replace the entire system, but again, I will look into it.

**MR. TESTART:** Also, in the process of acquiring the Northlands assets in Hay River, is the Minister, or the Power Corporation, or anyone, aware of the

state of that infrastructure and whether it needs renewal in the short to immediate term? Are we going to be taking on additional costs in renewing that infrastructure? Is the Minister aware if those questions have been asked?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Of course, all assets are depreciating, but one of the things that is going to be taking place as this matter goes to the arbitrator is there will be an evaluation made of those assets which, I assume, will take into account depreciation.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess what I'm getting at, there's a growing infrastructure need for power generation. Our rates continue to go up. Our rate base is not increasing, given our low amount of population. Is this government going to prioritize power generation, and starting with the Taltson expansion. We know they've gone to Ottawa. We know they've had those discussions with our federal counterparts. Have we made any progress on that, and is the Minister prepared to announce a Taltson expansion deal by the end of this Assembly? Thank you.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, I can advise that we have, of course, as the Member opposite mentioned, engaged with the federal government. Also, there have been preliminary discussions with officials in the Province of Saskatchewan. We are waiting for the federal infrastructure budget to see if we can access those funds for major development.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Time for oral questions has expired. Before I move on to written questions, colleagues, since our last sitting day, I have had time to reflect on the written questions filed on Thursday, February 9. Before I proceed with the written questions, I would like to take a moment to remind all Members to use this item appropriately.

According to Rule 44(1), written questions should be reserved for those questions "which would be likely to require a detailed or complex answer, or which would not reasonably be assumed to be within the present knowledge of the Minister." To quote former speaker Paul Delorey, "Written questions are not intended to be an indirect way of extending oral question period."

On one hand, to interpret this rule too stringently may have the undesired effect of curtailing full and open debate in this House and limiting the information available to Members. On the other hand, to interpret this rule too loosely may lead to the misuse of the privileges enjoyed by Members.

Colleagues, if you have any uncertainty about potential written questions, or other items, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with either

myself or my staff. As your Speaker, it is my duty to ensure that all written questions conform to the rules and practices of the House.

I will allow the written questions filed on Thursday, February 9, to stand, as I believe it is important for Members of this House to have the ability to seek important information from this government.

I remind all Members in these Chambers to pay close attention to the form and content of their written questions in the future. Masi.

Item 9, written questions. Member for Frame Lake.

### Written Questions

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 19-18(2): POSITION VACANCY AND OVERTIME STATISTICS

**MR. O'REILLY:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources.

Can the Minister provide the latest available information on the status of public services staffing, specifically the number of full-time indeterminate positions vacant each month to date in the 2016-17 fiscal year by department or agency, and:

1. The number of active staffing actions to fill vacant indeterminate positions in each of these months;
2. The total number of hours and costs of overtime paid during each of these months;
3. The total number of hours and costs of overtime paid during each of these months in positions where backfill is required owing to the positions providing essential services, for example, nursing, corrections, highways maintenance; and
4. The total number of sick days for essential service positions referenced in question number three above?

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Written questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 20-18(2): FUNDING FOR JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment regarding funding for the implementation of junior kindergarten. The Minister has said that junior kindergarten will be fully funded, yet there are additional costs the government has not yet agreed to pay. Will the Minister provide an

analysis of the additional funds schools will require to cover the cost of inclusive schooling for all grades starting with junior kindergarten, and:

1. Provide an analysis of the additional funding schools will require to cover the cost of busing children as young as three years eight months who need seat belts and extra adult supervision;
2. Provide an analysis of how implementation of junior kindergarten will accommodate existing programs that serve four-year-olds without jeopardizing the financial viability of those programs; and finally
3. Provide an analysis on assigning a subsidy to each four-year-old -- equivalent to the cost of fully funding junior kindergarten on a per-child basis -- for parents to spend on the program of their choice and a rationale for rejecting this option?

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committee on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Member for Nahendeh.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 275-18(2):  
LETTER FROM GRAND CHIEF OF DEHCHO  
FIRST NATIONS SUPPORTING DELIVERY OF  
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SOCIAL  
WORK PROGRAMS AT AURORA COLLEGE

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table a document from Grand Chief Herb Norwegian with regard to post-secondary cuts to the Education and Social Work programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Nunakput.

TABLED DOCUMENT 276-18(2):  
RENEWING THE COMPREHENSIVE LAND  
CLAIMS POLICY:  
TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING  
SECTION 35 ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

TABLED DOCUMENT 277-18(2):  
STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON THE FEDERAL  
APPROACH TO MODERN TREATY  
IMPLEMENTATION

TABLED DOCUMENT 278-18(2):  
CABINET DIRECTION ON THE FEDERAL  
APPROACH TO MODERN TREATY  
IMPLEMENTATION ROLES AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table a document from the Government to the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation: "Renewing the Comprehensive Land Claims Policy: Towards a Framework for Addressing Section 35 Aboriginal Rights."

As well, a "Statement of Principles on the Federal Approach to Modern Treaty Implementation." Modern Treaties are a key component of Canadian nation building. Also, "Cabinet Direction on the Federal Approach to Modern Treaty Implementation Roles and Responsibilities."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration of Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 7, Bill 13, Committee Report 6-18(2), Tabled Document 261-18(2) with Member for Hay River North in the chair.

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

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 216-18(2), NWT Main Estimates 2017-2018 with the Department of Health and Social Services. Mr. Chairman, if we are to conclude the Department of Health and Social Services, we would like to get the Minister's comments on Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** We will take a short recess and begin with consideration of the document after. 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 261-18(2), Main Estimates, 2017-2018. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Yes, please, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses to committee.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, on my left is Jeannie Mathison, the director of Finance, on my right, Debbie DeLancey, deputy minister of Health and Social Services.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the witnesses. Committee, we left off on activity, community social programs, on pages 172 to 174. We will consider the entire activity at once. Please indicate which page you are referring to when you bring up a line item or have a question about something in particular so that the Minister and committee can find it easily. Do we have any comments or questions on community social programs, pages 172 to 174? Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to talk a bit about Child and Family Services. I had an opportunity to listen to some of the presentations, of course, delivered by the Minister and staff and wanted to get something on the record. I am trying to determine how the system -- by "system" I mean the department -- sees a correlation between child apprehension, foster care, and poverty. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there are a multitude of reasons that a family might find themselves in difficulty, where they either need to enter into a voluntary service agreement or, in worst case scenario, there are abuse issues and the child needs to be apprehended. In many cases, it may be as a result of struggles the parents are having around addiction issues or other issues. Often we find, but don't have a correlation, that often people are in situations of neglect or abuse. Many of them are

faced with poverty. It is an issue that we obviously try to address here in the Government of the Northwest Territories with things like income support.

I think one of the important things to recognize with Building Stronger Families, what we are trying to do is provide support to families when they are having difficulties. We recently opened a pilot up in Behchoko where, if a family is in a public housing unit and they are having difficulty paying their rent, traditionally they probably would have been evicted, which means they would have probably been in a situation of child apprehension or family services would have had to engage. We are working with those families now, and in some cases helping them with their rent, to avoid having a situation where they have to move out and then we would be in a situation where a voluntary separation or apprehension might be necessary. We are trying to address the poverty issue to some degree, but certainly poverty is far broader than child and family services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, there is a substantial budget in place for Child and Family Services, as we can all see. I almost view Child and Family Services or child apprehension 100 per cent preventable. I am wondering if the Minister could commit to doing some work on more than just what appears on the surface and reasons for apprehending children and looking deeper into the reasons behind the child apprehensions or even the reasons behind how the department and the families end up with a plan of -- I can't remember the term that the Minister just used, but the plan, then to try to avoid all of that cost by trying to link it, developing some sort of a pattern? I am willing to bet, although I don't know, but I am willing to bet that child apprehensions are uncommon with families with high incomes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I feel that Building Stronger Families is moving in the exact direction the Member is referencing. We have done the analysis, and in the Northwest Territories there are more children and families accessing services as a result of neglect, which may be related to struggles families are having around things like poverty or other issues like addictions. We know that residential schools and colonization have had a huge impact on residents of the Northwest Territories and some of them are struggling in this area.

Through structured decision-making, we are looking at supporting families and trying to get to a place where we don't have to apprehend children. I obviously put a caution on there. Where there are cases of abuse, it may be necessary for Child Safety to remove a child from a family. In the Northwest Territories, we do know that mostly it is neglect as opposed to abuse.

I think we have an opportunity to take those steps that the Member is talking about, working with the families, supporting the families, providing them with the tools that they need so that they can do what I think they want to do, which is raise their children in healthy, happy homes where everybody has an opportunity to stay and live together. We are third year of five moving forward with Building Stronger Families. Do I think it is perfect today? No. Do I think we are moving in the right direction? Yes. Do we still have a lot of work to do? Of course. I believe, through the tools that we are putting in place and the attitude we are trying to change, I think we will get to where the Member is describing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Any further questions? Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** No, thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is fine for this section. Thank you.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. These questions are in relation to family violence. Over the last 10 years the proportion of re-admission to shelters has increased by 25 per cent, mostly in the past five years. In addition, the number of children found to be re-victimized has been trending upwards for the past two years. Despite this, there have been few, and now only negligible, increases in the support to family violence shelters, which are the first point of contact for many of these individuals. In addition to being a safe place, the shelters serve as transitional housing. Because of their access to those in need, they are uniquely positioned to provide a myriad of services that can help reverse this trend, this upward trend.

On page 172, there is a line item for \$3.63 million. There is another line item labelled family violence on page 173, and there is an increase in the HSS Authority funding of \$120,000 that I believe is earmarked for family violence shelters. The first question I have is: is the total of these amounts, about \$4.145 million, the total amount allocated to family violence initiatives or is it just the \$3.63 million found on page 172? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the amount on 172 of \$3,630,000 is the money that is going towards all the initiatives focused around family violence in the Northwest Territories. The number on 173 of \$395 is how much will flow to some of the different organizations across the Northwest Territories to support family violence. It is all in the \$3,630,000. One is a grant. This section has gone up by \$120,000, which is some additional contributions we are providing to three of the shelters based on some forced growth.

More importantly than the small increase, I made a commitment to the shelters last year that there has been a lot of talk about having a solid, set formula on how we fund shelters. It has been a little vague to date. I made a commitment that, once we had the single authority in place, that we would be able to work together to develop a formula in partnership with those family violence shelter organizations. I made a commitment that we would move on that basically a year after we had gone live with the shelter. I made a commitment that, starting in August, we will start to have those conversations with them on how to develop a formula to properly and adequately fund those shelters moving forward. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. That answers questions three, four, and six. Last June you also said that \$2.5 million flows to the shelters. That was in response to an oral question that I posed. The department's business plan indicates that there are two initiatives related to family violence, supporting family violence shelters with funding, training, and capacity, and the What Will It Take social marketing campaign. If the \$2.5 million goes to shelters, is the other \$1.1 million spent exclusively on this marketing campaign? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there is a wide range of different marketing campaigns and other initiatives that we are using those additional dollars for. I will go to the deputy for the list and the detail. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Deputy Minister DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. About \$3 million is rolled to the family violence shelters through the authorities. Another \$395,000 is rolled directly to the family violence shelters as per page 173. Then there are a number of smaller projects.

About \$325,000 is used to support, for example, we fund FOXY to do the social marketing campaign. We fund the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority for the Children who Witness Abuse program. We have funded the Deh Cho region for a pilot project on improving safety for victims of violence in a region where there is not a shelter. We give some funding to the Status of Women Council, some funding to the Tlicho Community Services Agency, and some funding to the YWCA. There are a number of smaller projects that are included in that overall budget, as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Deputy Minister DeLancey. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you for that answer. You said about \$3 million to the family shelters through the authorities, plus another \$395,000 directly. That is about \$3.4 million, and in the response to my question it was \$2.5 million. So has funding to family violence shelters increased by \$900,000 in this budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'm going to have to get some additional detail from the Member. Did we provide that number of \$2.5 million? Because that's not what we have in front of us.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson?

**MR. SIMPSON:** The number \$2.5 million is in Tabled Document 130-18(2). It's a response to an oral question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we will commit to getting a reconciliation of the numbers for the Member to explain where we are, but ultimately in this section we have increased by \$120,000, which is the only significant change to this budget line from previous years; but we will look at the response to oral questions and reconcile the numbers. I apologize for any confusion.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you for that answer. Yes, there is \$26 million; it doesn't really tell you what it is. So it's always troubling to me when I look at this and we're supposed to be voting on a \$26 million line item that says Health and Social Service Authority Funding for Community Social Programs and I really don't know what that means. So I was

just trying to get some clarity. I guess I'll probably make this my final point. The family violence shelters are basically receiving money so that they can continue to operate, but there are issues with the facilities often. I'm not sure if this is a capital budget question or if this is something that you guys would do in O and M as a contribution, but if the family violence shelter just needs a new building, they have no money to store away and save up for that, how is that accounted for and how does the department deal with that? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'll use Hay River as an example. I have had an opportunity to visit the Hay River Family Violence Shelter and talk to the staff and understand their concerns. The Department of Health and Social Services and the Housing Corporation are in discussions with them to explore all opportunities for them to find a new location. I can't tell you what that's going to look like across the Northwest Territories because it would be different pretty much in every location depending on what assets are available, what assets aren't available, but we do know that we need to work with them and we are working with them to explore options. Right now, we don't have a solution for you, but we are working with them.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Any further questions, Mr. Simpson?

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you to the Minister. No further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I noticed that the adult support services line which includes the Office of the Public Guardian is losing a small amount of money this year and it seemed like a good time to ask the Minister about the progress of his review of the Public Guardian's office which was due by the end of the calendar year; that was the deadline that he gave us. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there is no real increase or decrease here; we're pretty much status quo. I think it's \$2,000 down. You will notice that it's down from the 2015-16 actuals when it was \$1,354,000. Those are actuals and we did have a salary overspend in those years that had to be accounted for; but the

budget has been pretty much consistent for a number of years.

The operational review that the Member is talking about was conducted by some external consultants and a final report was provided to the department in December 2016. The recommendations for improvement to business practices and administrative procedures have been accepted and we are acting upon those. There were a number of other recommendations that may have some financial or legislative implications, and they are being reviewed by the department and figuring out how we can move forward on those.

We're hoping to post an executive summary of the report online shortly, but we wanted to be able to do that with some of our analysis of those recommendations as well, and I'll certainly be sharing that with committee before we go online. Thank you. Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well, it's interesting that I ask today because I don't know how else I would have known that this report was done and that there was in fact a plan to share it with the committee. I want to go directly to the service component of this. When we spoke about this issue in June, the Public Guardian was looking at 72 referrals for service. What is the number today, please?

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I don't have that number at my fingertips, but I will commit to getting that to committee.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. These may also be questions that the Minister needs some additional time with. I'd like to know the number of assessors who are dealing with that backlog of referrals and also the number of staff who are dealing with what I'm going to guess is an increased caseload based on looking at those referrals, so could he please commit to giving us a rundown of how those referrals are being dealt with, by whom, and what the staff capacity is there? Thank you.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe we talked about this a number of months ago. We have added a number of

assessors, but I will get the exact number for the Member and I will also provide an outline of the caseload and where we are to date. As far as the report, we got the report. We've been doing our analysis and my intention was always to get it to committee as soon as we can do that analysis. We're hoping to have that done soon so that we can share with committee and post online. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So in the event that, in order to address this backlog of referrals, there's a need for additional resources either in the form of additional assessors and/or additional staff to review the caseload, where will those resources come from? Thank you.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. There are resources in this area already. What we need to do is make sure that we're utilizing those resources to maximum benefit. Certainly as we move forward and we look at these recommendations and we try to address the backlog, we'll get a better sense of what the continual demand will be and we'll certainly be in a position to have some discussions based on information, probably during the next business planning cycle. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Chair, the next business plan cycle is approximately nine months away, so I'm wondering if in the interim there is still this backlog, which the Minister referred to in June of last year as unacceptable in all ways, I'm looking for some assurance that there are the resources in place now to deal with this backlog? We're talking about services to very vulnerable people. That is the basis of a Public Guardian application. It's not for the likes of you and me. So I'd like to think that people are not continuing to wait months and months for service in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the Member's position. I will say that we have taken her position a number of months ago when this first came up, we have made changes within, we have got the report done, but waiting for the report we didn't stop and do no work. We did increase the number of assessors and we have moved forward to increase the number of assessments. We have been able to fund from

within to this point, which we're prepared to keep doing as we move forward to get rid of some of the backlog.

What I'm indicating to the Member, and I hope I'm clear, is that as we've done this work we've been able to get to a point where we can start quantifying what we think future demand will be, and that's what we'll need to discuss the next business planning cycle. What we've done and what we'll do till then is cover from within in order to meet the needs. Once we get the numbers stabilized so we have a general sense of what's coming in without increased backlog, we'll have far better information to make some decisions on what we will need moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Ms. Green, anything further?

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a different topic, so I could go back on the list for that topic or I could keep going.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Green. You can just continue speaking.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. I'd now like to ask some questions about the Child and Family Services program audits. We have received information about the audit results and we've also received copies of plans, but there are two regions that did not supply plans to address the issues that were raised in the audits. So I'd like to know how the department is dealing with the question of compliance from the regions that have not produced plans to address their deficiencies in the area of child apprehension and foster homes? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Green. The Minister has indicated that Ms. DeLancey will answer this question. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, it's true that both the Sahtu and the Tlicho regions were unable to produce action plans due primarily to staff vacancies at the time that the audits were completed. In each case, the chief executive officers at the time, who are assistant directors under the Child and Family Services Act, met with the director of Child and Family Services. It was agreed that they would implement improvements based on the findings of the other audits and then they will be undergoing a full audit on the 2016-17 fiscal year, as will every other region. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. I appreciate the answer from the deputy minister. So what action does the

department take to follow up the plans that were submitted to ensure that the actions committed to were in fact taken?

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

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, the status of the action plans are reviewed at quarterly meetings of the directors of social programs from all the regions with the director of Child and Family Services, and then secondly, the improvements that were committed to in the action plans will be addressed when the audits are done for the 2016-17 fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, there are different levels of urgency that are presented in the plan. Some of them are for immediate attention and others are more sort of suggestive. So are there also different levels of enforcement, or what does enforcement look like, if there is even such a thing in this area? Thank you.

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

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Enforcement rests with the authority of the director of Child and Family Services, which is a statutory appointment. So if the director feels that the appropriate actions aren't being taken, the director certainly has the ability to direct an assistant director in a region to make changes; but for the most part the action plans are being implemented collaboratively with support from expertise at the department, with the best practices work that's being done on structured decision-making and with improving our ability to ensure information is up-to-date through the new Child and Family Services system. So we're really trying to emphasize best practice and improving practice as opposed to enforcement. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that answer. I think that that is the right direction to go, rather than a punitive direction. However, some of the immediate problems were pretty alarming. In the Sahtu audit, for example, there was a recommendation that children who were apprehended were not receiving a medical examination immediately. So my question is: what is the department doing with those more -- it's not a paper compliance problem, it's a more immediate problem. What do they do with those? Thank you.

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

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. For those kinds of situations, the director of Child Welfare would deal with them on a case-by-case basis. So for example, with the example that the Member raised, the director would be in close contact with the regional supervisor or the regional assistant director and asking for verbal reports to ensure that those situations have been turned around, as well as, again, having a special focus on that issue in the follow-up audits that are done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. Ms. Green, 47 seconds.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess finally I'll just end with a comment. I appreciate that the information is collected and acted on. I just always am mindful of what the Auditor General said to us in a different context about not providing data for its own sake. So I'm glad to hear that there is quarterly follow-up on these reports and I would encourage that all the data be reviewed on that quarterly basis so that the information that is collected is dealt with in real time and problems are addressed in real time. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Time has expired. Next on my list is Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions here under page 173, under Family Violence. The community of Tsiigehtchic and a couple of other communities, were looking to maybe have a pilot project in the area, in Tsiigehtchic, for example, to offer a safe place for those in need when they're dealing with violence. Would the department be open to that sort of proposal? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're open to discussing anything, but I'm not sure exactly what the Member is referring to. Is the Member referring to, like, a safe house or is the Member referring to a family violence shelter? I mean, there are so many possibilities here. In the region, we have a shelter in the community of Inuvik that is available to the region. So it really depends on the nature and scope to which the community is referring.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, I was referring to a safe house. You know, I recall a

number of years back almost every community that I could recall had one, and that's something that the community is looking at, to have a place in the community that is open to anyone who finds themselves in this situation. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Without committing any financial dollars at this point, we're certainly open to an outline of what the community is proposing. We could see how it might work in that community and other communities across the Northwest Territories, recognizing, of course, you know, we have to spend our money wisely, but I'd be certainly interested in seeing what the community is proposing and see where we can go from there.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Next on my list I have Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our colleague from Hay River North was talking about a list of projects, and the deputy minister provided some of them. Is the Minister able to commit to giving us the list to see what these projects all are? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's my intention that that would be included in the reconciliation I've already committed to provided committee on how the dollars in that area are spent.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his commitment there. I look forward to that.

I guess I'm still trying to understand how the family violence shelters work. We don't have any in our region right now. How is the department willing to work with the authority, I would assume, the wellness committee, on trying to establish one in the region? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister. The Minister has indicated that Ms. DeLancey will be fielding this one. Ms. DeLancey

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So in the Dehcho region where there isn't a family violence shelter we have actually funded what was previously the authority and through the Dehcho region to conduct a pilot project that began in 2014-

15 to develop community-specific protocols. So in the absence of a family violence shelter is there a safe house, who do people call, who does staff contact to get someone out of town if need be? That was seen as a pilot that could then be applied in other regions like the Sahtu that don't have family violence shelters. So that work is ongoing.

This year they're focusing on training events, looking at building community capacity to respond to emergency situations. I don't have a lot more detail, but we can certainly provide a more detailed report. We had hoped to have this work roll out in the other regions without family violence shelters in the last fiscal year. That work was slow to get going, but it is under way this year. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the deputy minister for that answer. Actually, it is encouraging. I guess my next question would be: how are we promoting this information out there in the communities? Because I haven't heard of a lot of it, so I would like to know how it is promoted and maybe how we can work together to get that message out there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to go to the deputy for detail, but I think the important thing here is that obviously there is an opportunity for us to work with MLAs in those regions to get that information out. We will certainly have further discussions on how we can get that information out. For some more specific detail, I will go to the deputy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. So it is certainly being, as protocols are developed, the information is being made available through front-line staff, being shared with other agencies like the RCMP. In terms of public awareness, there hasn't been a lot other than some of the work we have invested in, for example, the family violence rants and the What Will It Take training sessions, which, of course, do provide people with numbers and advice that, if they are dealing with issues of family violence, it tells them who they can contact in these agencies so then would have the information on these protocols. We certainly can provide more information about what has been done to date and what we hope to do when the protocols are completed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister and the deputy minister for their answers. I guess my last question in regards to this area here: how are the community wellness authorities being consulted and worked with so that they can promote the information as well? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is early days for the individual regional wellness councils across the Northwest Territories, and we have been focusing on training them on different programs, services, their role. As time rolls out, we will be providing them with briefings on all the different files that are under their jurisdiction or under their purview, and they will certainly be encouraged to distribute information but also provide feedback and input on how to customize or modify.

Can I say that they have had a presentation on this particular topic in the Deh Cho? No, I can't say that at this point because there are so many presentations and so much information that have to be brought to them. The intent is to make sure they are always up to speed on those types of things. It will take us a bit of time to get there so that everybody has got all the information they need, but they will be sought for helping us get that information out there but also providing guidance on how to tailor and custom per region and community.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** No, I thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for his answers, and the deputy minister has helped clear this up, so thank you very much. No further questions.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Next, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple of more questions on Child and Family Services programs. One of the things that keeps coming up with me in my riding is that, if there are issues with children and then the relatives intervene and end up taking control of the children, they are not eligible to have any support unless it goes through the court system. I understand that they are also not an approved foster home, and I know that is what the issue is.

I am wondering if the Minister could tell me if there has been any work done towards approving the approval process of foster homes in this type of situation, where an uncle or an aunt take control of the children to save them from apprehension, actually, if there was a quick method the department has to approve those particular homes as foster homes. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we have heard an awful lot over the last number of years of the importance of grandparents and extended families and trying to get children placed with grandparents and extended family first as opposed to, say, necessarily going into the foster care system.

In order to get grandparents and extended family members compensated for when they do take a child, we have put in an expedited referral process, so an expedited assessment process, for family members so that we can consider them foster parents and place the children with extended family, e.g. grandparents. This can be done through voluntary agreements, as well, so it doesn't have to go to court. It might, if it is an apprehension, but if it is a voluntary service agreement, it would not.

We have got evidence. We have been able to do this for some clients, and we are looking at continuing to do that to make it easier for grandparents and extended families to be part of the solution and help keep kids in their communities, in their regions, living their culture. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have recently encountered a situation like this, and the individual was not able to get support for him and his wife taking three children, so I would like to maybe find out -- I will do this separately. I don't think we need to talk about that here. If there is an expedited approval process, I will go to the Minister privately to get that so that these individuals can get hold of the proper officials. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. The Minister would like to respond.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it is important that we don't talk about individual or specific cases, so I appreciate the Member is going to come, and we can try to work on the resolution for his constituent.

Having said that, there is still an approval process and there are reasons that an individual or family may not be approved. At the end of the day, we have to focus on the best interests of the kids. So, although we have an expedited approval process, it doesn't mean everybody is approved every time. We still have to focus on the best interests, safety, health, well-being, of the child, just so we are all aware that it does not mean it is guaranteed every time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, one more question: are individuals living in public housing eligible to be foster parents?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, they are eligible. I am not 100 per cent certain whether it actually impacts the rent that they might pay, because they are paid some money. I don't believe it does, but I would really need to verify that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, can the Minister provide that information on whether or not they can go in, considering the occupational standards that the Housing Corporation uses to house their people and also if there is any impact on that on rents?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you. Yes, absolutely, Mr. Chair. I will get the committee that information. The reason I am not saying hard and fast is I remember us having a discussion around this in the past, and I am pretty sure that we dealt with it so that foster support wouldn't be counted against rent, but I honestly can't remember what the resolution on that was. So I will get the committee and the Member that information. I am pretty sure we dealt with it, but let me get it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Seeing nothing further from Mr. Beaulieu, I believe I have Mr. Vanthuyne next on my list.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am just wondering, on page 172, the program detail entitled Adult Support Services for the amount of \$1.287 million, we describe the adult support services as programs such as the day shelters, transitional housing, life and career

development skills for adults. I wonder, maybe, can the Minister provide some explanation as to where the \$1.287 million is being expended in the expenditure category below? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Some of those dollars are going to a number of different group homes around the Northwest Territories. Some of it is compensation. I can certainly get the Member the specific detail on which group homes and which areas those dollars are going into. I will commit to getting that to committee. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Just for the future consideration of all of these documents, it might be a good idea for the departments to have this type of information on hand because, so far, we have had to set aside a few discussion items because that information wasn't available and it was promised at a later date. Just a note for the future. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To be fair, and with respect to the point you are raising, that is not information that I am going to require, just so the Minister is aware; that is not what I am asking. Further to my point that I was raising, I don't require that information at this point, but I am just wondering, maybe, is this the pot then that we have Housing First as an initiative that we are supporting as a government along with the City of Yellowknife? To my understanding, now they are up to 10 people enrolled in the Housing First program. The territorial government has advocated in the past that we will support on an as-and-when-needed basis wraparound services for those who are in Housing First. I am just wondering: is this adult support services pot the pot where those as-and-when-needed support services for Housing First would come from? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you. Adult support services is basically the opposite of public guardian, and some group homes are basically what those dollars are being spent on. We don't have a budget for Homes First. Any clinical support work we are providing is provided through on clinical lines, not allocated in this particular area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** That is good. I appreciate the explanation. No further questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. I have no one further on my list. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I apologize, Mr. Chair. My colleague from Yellowknife talked about in regards to adult services, if we could actually get that information to committee so we can have that. Can the Minister make that commitment, please? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have already made the commitment. I am happy to live up to that commitment. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson, anything further?

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you. Mr. Vanthuyne said he didn't want it, so I just wanted to make sure it didn't go away to the side. I thank the Minister for his commitment and look forward to that information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a follow-up: can the Minister indicate to us whether there has been any requirement to date for support services for Housing First for those who have been housed in the Housing First program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I can't say. We have clients who are accessing services. Some of those clients may indeed be accessing Homes First and they may have had appropriate referral from Homes First to access those services, but I can't tell whether client X, Y, or Z was referred by Homes First, but if they are, they will receive the services that are available. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Nothing further. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. Seeing no further questions or comments, I will call this activity. Health and Social Services, community social programs, operations expenditure summary, \$27,522,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We will continue on to activities beginning on pages 175 to 177, diagnostic and therapeutic services. We will consider the activities as a whole. Please indicate which page you are commenting or questioning on. Do I have comments or questions? First on my list is Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to diagnostic services on page 176, we see an increase in there. Can the Minister explain what the increase is, or why we have this increase on it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair that is as a result of forced growth on different supplies that are needed to provide services in this area. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for his answer. I guess my next question leads to diagnostic services. Where are these services based out of? Yellowknife? Or is it based out of all the regions? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it is across a number of the different regional offices as part of the NWT Health and Social Services Authority, as well as Hay River and the TCSA, whenever we happen to have a diagnostic services lab, imaging, those types of things. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that answer. Specifically to Nahendeh and the Deh Cho, are there these services available, or do they actually have to go out to either Hay River or Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Most of the samples and whatnot are actually going from the Deh Cho to Yellowknife. Some of them may have to be referred south depending on the nature of the sample taken and time that the sample is viable, if you will. For the most part, many samples can be taken in the Fort Simpson Health

Centre or other health centres and shipped to Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Seeing nothing further from Mr. Thompson, I have Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Same page. One line down there is a reduction from 2016-17 to 2017-18 for pharmacy. Can the Minister or his officials explain the decrease there? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have decided people don't need drugs anymore.

---Laughter

I am just kidding. Bottom line is it is a procurement consolidation as a result of moving to a single authority. We were able to purchase together as opposed to purchasing in part. We recognize some cost savings by doing so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I could bank some quips there, but I won't. The only reason is because we are having some greater efficiencies in purchasing drugs, no other reductions or efficiencies being found there? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, it is not a reduction that is anything other than a reduction due to shared procurement, an opportunity to buy bulk instead of individually at one authority level like we used to. There has been some decreased demand on some of the different types of chemo drugs that are out there. This is purely a reduction based on consolidated purchasing and some demand. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. What additional kinds of efficiencies could we see here if we had a national pharmacare program, and what are we doing about that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, at this point I don't believe the federal

government has any interest in a national pharmacare strategy. I feel that that is a mistake, but that is just my personal opinion, not a government position by any stretch of the imagination. I have had an opportunity to talk to a number of the different provinces and territories who would like to see a national pharmacare plan put in place.

Having said that, given that, prior to this current government, we didn't really have a relationship with the federal government at a provincial or territorial level, having conversations about purchasing pharmaceuticals and those types of things, this federal government has actually joined part of the Pharmaceutical Purchasing Alliance that exists between the provinces and territories. That is a group that has been established by the provinces and territories, now joined by the federal government, who is looking at making some legislative changes that should help us control costs around bulk purchasing pharmaceuticals across this country. It is not pharmacare, but it is certainly an improvement of what has existed up to this date. So we continue to be part of the Pharmaceutical Purchasing Alliance. We are seeing some benefits of that. Our purchasing compared to some of the other jurisdictions is way down compared to others. As far as national pharmacare, we are the only nation with Medicare that does not have pharmacare, and at some point the federal government may want to look at pursuing that.

In the meantime, we are going to continue to provide supplemental health benefits to seniors, and we are going to continue to provide it to Metis. We are looking for a way to, obviously, address low-income families, but we have a long way to go on those types of things. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. So I think I heard the Minister say that he is personally interested in trying to push a national pharmacare program. Is that the position of the Government of the Northwest Territories? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, pretty much every province and territory that I have had discussions with is looking and interested in a national pharmacare. We have had some discussions in the previous government, and I was given the authority to participate in those discussions in the previous government. I have not asked this government if I can continue; I just have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Yes, I would certainly encourage the Minister, whether he has the permission of his Cabinet colleagues or not, to continue to push for a national pharmacare program and work with provincial and territorial Ministers towards that. I know we had the federal Health Minister just here, and I hope he took that opportunity to talk with her about a national pharmacare program. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Seeing no further comments or questions, I will call this activity. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Just for the record, Mr. Chair, the Minister of Health, federal Minister of Health, clearly knows my position, as does the Minister responsible for Social Services, as does the federal Minister responsible for Addressing Poverty, as does -- they all do. I have no problem continually mentioning the value of a national pharmacare strategy. I did raise it in our last social services FPT, where we were talking about poverty. It is certainly an opportunity to help this country address poverty, having a national pharmacare strategy. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Seeing no more comments or questions, I will call this activity. Health and Social Services, diagnostic and therapeutic services, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$24,275,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. Moving on to nursing inpatient services, starting on page 178, continuing on to page 180. Comments or question on this activity? Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 179, they have an increase of \$162 for long-term nursing care and then a reduction of \$162 for medical and surgical nursing. Could the Minister explain the rationale for the reduction and increase in these two areas? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for the record, the two aren't related. They are for different reasons. There are some forced growth costs in long-term care to help us deal with the fact that we are running two extended long-term care units in Hay River until we get the new Woodland built.

The drop in the medical and surgical nursing, you don't always know why something ends up in a particular line, but the reason this one is going down is, now that we have moved to a single authority -- I know this is going to sound weird, being the medical and surgical nursing section, but we have been able to avoid having to pay GST in some of our authorities. Some authorities pay GST. Some didn't pay GST. Now that we have rolled into a single authority, we have been able to make the case that we shouldn't be paying GST.

This recognizes the saving we are anticipating and getting from not paying GST in some of those authorities. When I looked at it, I was, like, that is an interesting line for it to be in, but for some reason that is where it shows up. I am not an accountant, so I cannot explain why it is in that line, but that is where it is. So, thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for that clarification. Yes, it is a bizarre place to have GST, in medical and surgical nursing, but I have heard about the GST being an issue for other authorities previously, so I thank the Minister for that answer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Do I have any further comments or questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. When I tried to raise this earlier, in the main estimates, I was told to come back here. I want to ask the Minister and his staff about midwifery services. I think the last time I asked about this he said that they had hired some consultants. I am not sure exactly what they were doing, but can the Minister give us an update of where we are with the territorial midwifery service and particularly with regard to service here, in Yellowknife? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the positions have been filled, the ones within the department that are doing the consultation and analysis. We have had a discussion paper put together with different options for a territorial program. That public consultation is going to be starting right away. I think we have got one date confirmed, and we are about to go out and announce some of the other dates, both in Yellowknife and in communities that would be receiving benefits from a territorial program. We have started receiving some input from all of the stakeholders, like physicians and others, so we are going to get all that information on proposed

models and figure out where to go from there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, that is great to see that we are finally going to go out. Does he have a timeline, though, for this work? Like, this has been dragging on for years, so is there a timeline for these consultations? When is there going to be a report that comes out of the consultation, and then probably you have to develop an action plan, then it has to go to FMB for funding, like, this is just going to go on forever. Does the Minister actually have any particular timelines? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I will certainly be sending a letter to the Members once the last date of the last consultation is booked and confirmed. The consultations, we are expecting, will be completed by the 14<sup>th</sup> of March. We expect that we will be able to have some sort of analysis of what we heard and some direction on where we need to go early in the next fiscal year. I can also get the deputy to go into some specific detail on steps and actions being taken moving forward. If we can go to the deputy, that would be great.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. So we, as the Member noted, had committed to doing consultation by the end of the fiscal year. We are planning to hold focus groups in I believe it is eight communities. The delay we have had has been simply working community governments to nail down appropriate dates because this is a busy time of year and there is a lot going on in communities.

We will advertise through community radio, through radio, through newspapers, through social media, and we will be sending notices to MLAs. In each of those communities, we will hold as many focus groups as there is public demand for, so no one will be turned away who is interested in participating. There will also be an online survey.

As the Minister noted, our timeline is tight because we want this wrapped up by mid-March so that we can have a report very early in the new fiscal year out of that on a design of a territorial midwifery program. Then we will look at our ability to implement that within existing resources or go forward to the business planning process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that detail from the deputy minister. I think I heard her say that the department is prepared to look within, internally, for the money to actually implement the program. Is another option to actually bring forward a supplementary appropriation? Is that something the Minister is considering? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We don't believe we will be ready for a supplementary appropriation during the next fiscal year. Once we get a model approved, then we have to do the design, do the implementation, job description writing, that will help us quantify what the costs will be so that we can come forward, identify what can be covered with existing funds, what we may need additional funds, so that we can have an informed discussion during business planning, looking at all of our services from a holistic point of view. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Sorry. Thanks, Mr. Chair. So it sounds like the earliest there's actually going to be any funding made available is 2018-19, is that what I'm hearing? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** That would allow us the time we need to do proper implementation, design, and move forward with potential rollout, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, it's good to get this out now. I think there's going to be a number of unhappy people but, look, I do appreciate that this is moving along even if it's at a snail's pace, but good that it's still moving. I don't think this is going to keep some folks very happy, but I appreciate the responses from the Minister and his deputy minister. Thank you. That's all I've got for now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Seeing nothing further I will call this activity. Health and Social Services, nursing and in-patient services, operations expenditures summary, activity total, \$34,140,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We will continue on to supplementary health programs, pages 181 to 183. Do we have comments or questions on supplementary health programs? Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 182, extended health care, there's a reduction of \$350,000. Could the Minister explain the rationale for the reduction in this area? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'll go to the deputy for the detail on the changes to the Metis health benefits.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The change in Metis health benefits is not an actual reduction. What's happened is that there is a greater demand on the program than the budgeted amount, so we did get supplementary funding in 2015-16, but that was not ongoing forced growth. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's my fault, I sent us on the wrong rabbit hole here. It was the extended health benefits, and that's the \$350,000 reduction. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Or perhaps I misheard. So the \$350,000 reduction is associated with savings that we plan to find associated with pharmaceutical costs. We are going to negotiate a new agreement with the NWT Pharmacists Association and we are hoping to find some efficiencies through those negotiations. We know that we have the opportunity to save some costs by moving to 90-day dispensing, which will reduce some of the charges associated with dispensing drugs, and we are looking at changes to over-the-counter drugs in the NIHB formulary, and if we can't get those changes made through the formulary we are considering switching to the Alberta formulary so that we can reduce some of our drug costs through that means as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you. Ms. DeLancey. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the deputy minister for her answer. It wasn't

your hearing; it was me on a different track there, so I apologize for that.

So my next question is medical travel. I notice it's an increase of \$379,000. Is this a forced growth or is this what we're expecting, unexpected costs coming up that we're not aware of? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's forced growth, but for any more detail I will go to the deputy.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Deputy Minister DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is forced growth. We have in the past received some one-time forced growth or supplementary funding for medical travel to address some of the increased costs associated with the air ambulance contract and just the increasing pressures, and so we now have got forced growth funding which is stabilizing our budget, we hope, and is now in as a base adjustment in our budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank Ms. DeLancey for her answer. I have no further questions on this page. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Looking at page 182, extended health benefits, these are benefits for people over the age of 60. The NWT basically provides them with healthcare. There are people who don't have government healthcare plans, you know, people who worked in private industry who had private healthcare plans, who paid their \$75-\$100 a month and had healthcare. When you turn 60 in the territory, though, there's not much of an incentive to keep paying that \$100 a month. It seems like if we could somehow encourage those people to hold on to that through a tax break or something the GNWT might save quite a bit of money on health insurance. Has this been a topic of discussion for the department at all? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a good point and it's certainly something we should be exploring. We don't require that they

keep it, but we require them to utilize it first if they have it. So if they have insurance, they utilize it first before they access extended health benefits.

I remember a number of years ago there was some work around this that didn't make it too far, but I take the Member's point that we need to do something to encourage people to keep their insurances for as long as possible, if not forever, to help us offset some of these incredibly high costs of this benefit that is provided in the territories and virtually nowhere else in this country. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's good to hear that the Minister thinks that they should be doing that. Will the department do that? Will the department look into that? Has there been any analysis of any potential cost savings? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we're committed to doing a supp health review. I think we're required under legislation to do it every couple of years. Was it legislation?

**MS. DELANCEY:** No, it's in the mandate.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Oh right. Sorry, mandate review, Mr. Chair. We're committed to doing a complete supp health review, figuring out those types of things that the Member has described in 2018-19, and we will certainly do that at that time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Minister. My next question is on medical travel. How does the department determine what airline they're going to be transferring patients with? Say if someone is in Hay River and needs to be sent up to Yellowknife. Well, obviously there's only one airline now, but how is that determination made? Is there a standing offer? Is there some deal with a particular airline or is it open to the lowest bidder? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I know we have standing offer agreements with airlines like Canadian North and First Air, whichever is the cheapest and the most appropriate for the time. So in Hay River the

individuals would fly up on First Air and then if they need to go to Edmonton they would fly out on either First Air or Canadian North, whichever is cheaper. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So theoretically if another airline wanted to come and start flying the route from Hay River to Yellowknife or Hay River to Edmonton, First Air or whoever you have the agreement with could just undercut them until that airline was no longer viable and the government would have to go with First Air because of the agreement and so it essentially keeps other airlines out of the market. Am I understanding this correctly? Is that how things would work? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe it was in the last government that this particular standing offer agreement was established. It is reviewed every couple of years. I do believe the discussion around whether or not we go for standing offer agreements in the future is coming up. It might be six months. It might be a year. I can't remember the exact date, but I know that it does have a finite time limit.

I will confirm what the duration of this particular standing offer agreement is. I hear the Member's concern, but I could also argue that it might go the exact opposite. They have got a captive market as a result of the standing offer agreement. They might charge more.

Bottom line is, we look at this every couple of years. We try to figure out what is best for the North, best for the residents, and most affordable. I've had some individuals in places like Fort Smith suggest that it would be great to fly Northwestern Air Lease rather than having to come up to Yellowknife, or in Hay River. Coming up to Yellowknife, it might be better just to fly direct. These are things that we're looking at as we move forward in the future with the new standing offer agreement, should we choose to go that direction. It might be better if we just went lowest bid, whichever is most convenient to get us south, which might open us up to West Jet, or Air Canada, or Northwest Air Lease. I'm prepared to look at all options to help us control costs of medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. How do you get these conversations that happen where you say it would save the government money by not having

a standing offer agreement? It just feels as though the market is really held captive by the standing offer agreements and no new airlines are going to start flying out of Hay River, is what I'm concerned about. That's why it is \$1,000 return for a 25-minute flight, and it seems like something has to change, and this might be the first piece now. This is something that I will be pursuing a little bit further, and I'll follow up with the Minister to find out when the standing offer agreement is going to be looked at again. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll get the information update on when this particular round of standing offer agreements ends. As I said, I think we must be open to look at alternatives to ensure that medical travel remains as supportable as possible, but that we're not adversely affecting other airlines or the existing airlines in any negative ways. I think we have to look at the market, for sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Mr. Simpson.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and you might have to adversely affect some of the airlines, otherwise it's protectionism, really, so you have to look at what's best for the governments, and the bottom line, as well as, obviously, the services that you are providing. I guess that is the end of that line of questioning. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think we are agreeing. I think we need to look at it all, and think about the clients. With the health system moving to a single authority, one of the things that we've been very clear and consistent on is this is about client care. Our system needs to be client-focused and client-driven. Are we there? No, no. No, we are not. Can we get there? Yes, yes. Yes, we can. Do we have a lot of work to do? Yes. I think we have all heard frustrations people have had with medical travel, and clearly, we have got to be focused on trying to make sure that the experience is not negative and is positive, if possible, which means we have to explore all opportunities around airlines. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Any further questions? Next, we have Mr. Nakimayak.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The questions asked for the previous Member answered most of my questions on medical travel. Sticking with medical travel, I don't know if this is the line to

ask, but with the high cost of medical travel being this high, do you think that in the future, longer -- in my region of Nunakput, the cost of travel is high, and sometimes it's days. I am just wondering if this is the right avenue to ask, if having longer doctor visits in the region would bring these costs down a bit to balance it out a little bit to ensure that clients get the care they need? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as I have indicated, moving to a single system is our over-arching theme, or our goal is client-focused. Focus on the patient, client-based, a client-based system. Having said that, because not every service can be provided in every community, medical travel is going to continue to be a necessity. By working together as one authority, we've had the opportunity to look at different standards, different practices, having authorities cooperating, including Stanton, to a greater degree, with some of the remote communities and some of the work done.

We also put in a program called Med Response which is basically the first program of its type in Canada where we have professional staff available to community health nurses and others, including access directly to a doctor. If somebody calls from Nunakput, as an example, they could call Med Response, talk immediately to a doctor. Med Response has actually helped us reduce some issues, or some demand for Medevac, but also has been able to help us avoid medical travel when proper diagnosis can be done on-site.

We have a long way to go here, and I think we've already seen some benefits of the single authority in helping us curb some of the utilization of things like med travel and air ambulance. We are still early days, so we need to continue to encourage our residents to use the quality control mechanisms. When they are frustrated, we need to have the residents continue to work with us to share their frustrations, but also their good points, so that we can do continual quality improvement moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister. Getting back to medical travel, also in my region, sometimes language is a barrier, as well as across the territory. Sometimes medical travel requires the need for an escort and also medical travel to understand the specific needs of Indigenous peoples, and people who sometimes cannot speak or read English properly. I just want to hear what

the Minister has to say on that portion of medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Language limitations, unilingual people, that is one of the criteria for an escort, a non-medical escort when needed. If an individual is unilingual or has some limited capacity, they're certainly eligible for one. From time to time, I have heard of individual situations where somebody who met that criteria was not approved an escort. We do have an appeal mechanism now that was not available to us before, so they can challenge the decisions of medical travel staff if they feel that they have not been properly assessed. We just continually need to hammer, and hammer, and hammer on everybody that there is an appeal mechanism. If you have a question or concern, utilize that so that we can make sure you get a medical escort. Language is one of our criteria. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the response. More just a comment: I look forward to seeing what the information on the appeal mechanism, as sometimes this happens on weekends when sometimes the service is not available. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Noted, Mr. Chair, and we are always looking for opportunities for quality improvement. If you have got individuals who are willing to flag that, please have them flag it so that we can include it and take it from anecdotal to reality so that we can move forward on that.

I guess when it comes to language, the only recommendation I would have for individuals who wish to have non-medical escort as a result of language barriers is do not also take a unilingual person with them. Try to find someone who is bilingual. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Next, we have, Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just have one question on medical travel: is that 100 per cent of the budget that we have here in front of us? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It doesn't include GNWT staff in that number. GNWT staff are covered by the Department of Health and Social Services as opposed to the Department of Health. They are covered by Human Resources instead of Health and Social Services. There are some revenues that come in that are not here as well, but total costs are a bit higher. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Abernethy. Any further questions, Mr. Beaulieu? Thank you. Next, we have Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to go back to medical travel in regard to it being opened up, or it is going to be opening up, I guess, for competition again for it to be contracted out. Is the department looking at local businesses as well, local airlines, or are they just focused on the main ones like Canadian North, First Air, and Air Tindi? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I believe we have a contract with the travel agent who books the flights, but we do have a Standing Offer Agreement with Canadian North and First Air, so the travel agent's requirement is to book on those two. Occasionally if there's some unforeseen circumstance or other driving issues, we can go to Air Canada or WestJet, but our Standing Offer Agreement says first and foremost Canadian North and First Air.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My deputy just pointed out that I completely answered a completely different question, so this time I'll try to answer the question that the Member asked. When this service agreement ends we're certainly open to exploring what is best for the people of the Northwest Territories including, as I said to the MLA from Hay River, other airlines, other opportunities to help control costs and provide the best services to the clients possible. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. I was going to ask a different question when you answered that other one, but I greatly appreciate hearing that. Are you looking at regionalizing medical travel or does it have to be the global territory picture? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me be clear that I'm talking about medical travel, not air ambulance or medevacs. Air ambulance and medevacs, we've already gone on with an RFP. We've got a 10-year contract which covers that. What we're talking about is right now we have a standing offer agreement with two airlines for medical travel, so when someone has to travel to Yellowknife or south. What I'm indicating is I don't know what it's going to look like, but I'm certainly open to all potentials, which could mean different airlines, local, regional. There's been a lot of talk about an airline like Northwestern Air Lease might be an appropriate one, maybe some in the Deh Cho. I don't know, but we have to be open to all of them recognizing affordability, safety, and quality for our clients.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. Yes, I was talking about medical travel because I'm looking at, in my riding, there are a couple of airplanes that are actually suitable for flying doctors, nurses, and MLAs, twin engines and that. So the question was asked, and so I'm glad to hear that. In regard to this medical travel and when you talked about the medevacs, is that part of this medical travel in this contract, this money in here? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The air ambulance is in here, as well, the annual costs, and as Mr. Beaulieu was asking: is this the total amount? Like I said, no, this isn't the total amount. A bunch of it is offset by NIHB, who can be charged back travel. So the actual cost over a year not including GNWT employees is about \$41 million, but this is the amount we require to cover our portion that isn't offset by other things. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. I see nothing further by Mr. Thompson. I have Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I was glad to hear the Minister mention NIHB. Can he just give us a bit of an update of where the negotiations are at in terms of changing that or updating it or whatever? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** The Minister has indicated Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our current contract to administer NIHB on behalf of Health Canada actually expires at the end of March of this fiscal year. We have had discussions with Health Canada and we have an agreement to extend that contract for an additional year while we go through contract negotiations. We've already had preliminary discussions with Health Canada. We have identified where we would like to see improvements in the contract in terms of administration. The reality is that we probably have very little ability as a government to influence the NIHB formulary or the levels of coverage. Those issues that are of concern right across Canada, and I know AFN has just a review as well, but where we do hope to have some influence is improving some of the speed with which approvals are given, and some of the coverage for the administrative costs that we incur in administering this program for the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. DeLancey. The Minister would like to add something.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I would, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, over the years a number of MLAs have raised issues about what's covered in the formulary and what's not covered in the formulary, and we'd always hoped that we might have an opportunity to influence that. What's becoming particularly clear, as the deputy alluded to, is that we're not going to be able to have too much influence over what is in the formulary.

Having said that, they change the formulary all the time and they don't tell us necessarily what they've done or what they're changing. So apparently in December as I was writing letters to MLAs and others saying, you know, progressive lenses aren't covered, the federal government was in the process of changing their formulary to cover progressive lenses, which we were only notified that that is now covered in the NIHB formulary in late January. So I've asked the department to draft up a letter to the MLAs letting them know that progressive lenses are now covered and will be covered, and I've asked the department to also draft me letters to all the constituents over the last number of months who wrote about progressive lenses, a letter indicating that it looks like progressive lenses are now covered.

So I haven't got that information to the MLAs. This seems like as good a place as any to let you know I have asked the department to draft up letters and those should be coming to you soon, but, hey, progressive lenses are covered. Whoo. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm going to let the Minister personally deliver that good news to a couple of constituents who have already shelled out of their own pockets for progressive lenses. Look, okay, good thing. How do we change that crazy system, like where we don't find out about these things? There are things that we've been trying to change for years. I personally know medical personnel who will shell out of their own pocket because of the ridiculous turnaround times or what's covered or not covered. How do we get a critical mass to change that ridiculous system? Sorry, there's a little bit of frustration there and I'm sure that the Minister probably shares that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We just keep trying to encourage them to make reasonable choices and to apply common sense. Unfortunately, common sense is so rare, it might as well be a super power, but we keep trying to encourage them to look at some of the realities as medicines change, as products change. As far as notifications, like this case apparently made the change in December and the notifications came out in January. We didn't see it until January, so unfortunately I sent out more letters to constituents saying this is not something we can cover at this time and apparently they could, not us but NIHB, but we'll be able to help facilitate that now. So I hear the Member's frustration; I share it. We'll keep trying to encourage them to utilize the super power known as common sense. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I wanted to ask, I believe I heard the deputy minister talk about switching to an Alberta formulary, so I just want to get a little bit more detail about what would we be switching from and whether it's going to leave any of our residents short in any way if they're not covered by personal plans or insurance and so on. Just a little bit of explanation would be helpful. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. The Minister has indicated that Ms. DeLancey will answer this one. Ms. DeLancey.

**MS. DELANCEY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Right now our policy is that we apply the NIHB formulary to all of our extended health benefits programs, and the rationale behind that policy is that it provides equity so all residents of the NWT who are on a non-

insured health benefits program are getting access to the same benefits. I am not the expert, so I'm not going to drill down into details, but generally when we had a review done by Alberta Blue Cross looking at where we might achieve some savings with respect to pharmaceuticals, there are some opportunities for buying lower cost drugs that are not included on the NIHB formulary, are included on the Alberta Blue Cross formulary.

So one of the things we're looking at is whether we want to actually make a policy change. This would then mean that eligible residents would remain on the NIHB formulary as we administer that program, but residents who are enrolled in one of our supplementary health benefits programs might have access to a slightly different suite of pharmaceuticals, medications, and supplies. We can certainly provide some examples in writing, but I don't have the detailed knowledge to speak to the details today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'd be interested in getting that information. Just maybe one last question on this is before making a switch: what formulary might be used? Is that something that the Minister and staff would bring to the Social Development Standing Committee before making the change? I would hope that the answer's going to be yes. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to be clear, no decision has been made on this at all. We're just exploring opportunities, and I mean absolutely I think this is a big deal. It could be perceived as two-tier healthcare, which we don't want to create, but we have to make sure that remains affordable. So this is absolutely something that I would have a discussion with the social committee before finalizing or moving forward.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Do we have any further comments or questions on supplementary health programs? I see none. I would call this activity. Health and Social Services, supplementary health programs, operations expenditure summary, activity total, \$33,513,000. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. Next we have a series of information items beginning on page 184, funding allocated to Health and Social Service authorities. Comments or questions? Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. On page 184, I notice we're looking at a \$1.5 million increase over the three authorities there. Could the Minister explain how these numbers were calculated? Because some regions seemed to have disproportionate increase compared to the collective, so if the Minister could please explain that process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. These are accumulating totals of the previous pages; everywhere where it says basically transfer to authority, this is just the accumulated total. The Member is right; that's true. Some regions, like the Sahtu as an example, have a number of positions being added to cover the long-term care. Hay River has one position for their facility as well, so there is some growth in some regions of the Territorial Health Authority compared to others.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. I guess I'm just looking at the NWT Health and Social Services Authority. You've got an increase of \$716,000, and then the Tlicho had \$607,000, and so I'm trying to understand. We have four communities in the Tlicho and one in Hay River, and then the rest is the Northwest Territories. So I see an increase, but I see it as a disproportionate. Is there a rationale for this? Is it just because there are new beds or new jobs that are offered, or new services that weren't accounted for before? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think to understand the increases and decreases you have to go through each line because there are offsets, there are sunsets, there are reductions, there's forced growth. There are a number of things that are included in this. What I can say about the Tlicho is there are a number of beds being opened in the Jimmy Erasmus Long-Term Care Home, but the same is true in the Sahtu which is in the larger number, even though the larger number appears to be growing at a slower rate. If you factor in the sunsets and the forced growth and then the additional positions and all those types of things, it's more like a wave than a direct line as far as how these totals are attained. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the Minister for the clarification. It's helped a lot. Thank you.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I wanted to ask the Minister if the recent agreement with the federal government is reflected in work performed on behalf of others or is it reflected somewhere else in this budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister. That's on page 186. So I see no further questions for page 184. We'll skip that. We'll get to 186 after 185. We'll go page-by-page for these information items. Do we have any comments or questions for 185, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, lease commitments? I see none. We'll move onto page 186. Mr. Beaulieu, continue.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** My question, I see home and community care as one item here. I see mental health and addictions, but as an information item, so I'm just wondering if the recent agreement signed with the federal government is reflected as work performed on behalf of others or if it's reflected just within this overall budget somewhere else?

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the agreements haven't been signed. They're not recognized in this budget. Once they've been signed and we actually know what's going to be allocated on a fiscal year basis we'll be able to update probably by way of a supp in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nothing further.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Anything further on worked performed on behalf of others, pages 186 to 188? We can return to page 155, the total department. There are also some information items on pages 156 through 158 associated with it, including position summaries and revenue summaries. Comments or questions first. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, before we finish discussion on this area, I want to address three areas in which the Regular MLAs would like to see some additional investment, and

I'm just going to go over them briefly. There have been detailed questions. First, we're looking for additional money for our Youth Mental Health Strategy to help young people who are facing mental health issues and also perhaps concurrently addictions. We are looking for additional money for the anti-poverty fund which would extend the good work this fund does at the grassroots level to combat poverty in our communities which as we know the poverty is at a very high levels.

Finally, Mr. Chair, we are looking for an investment in homecare. We know that the Minister is currently working on a continuing care plan, but we also know that homecare resources are stretched very thin right now. For example, there are fewer homecare resources in Yellowknife than there are in the Beaufort Delta, so that we know an investment is required sooner rather than later. Certainly that's what I've heard very consistently from my constituents, and they're talking not only about nursing but personal support workers as well. So as I say, before we leave this page I would like the Minister to again consider these specific areas of investment that we have requested, and I'm pleased to answer any questions that he may have arising from this. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Recognizing the time is now 6:00 p.m. I will rise and report progress. We will resume this discussion tomorrow and will be taking more questions and comments on this section, but being 6:00 p.m., we don't have the authority to go past 6:00 p.m. So I'd like to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. I will now rise and report progress.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates 2017-2018. I would like to report progress and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Do I have a seconder? Member for Yellowknife Centre.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 15, 2017, 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. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
  - Bill 13, Marriage Act
  - Committee Report 6-18(2), Report on the Review of Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
  - Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 15, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

