



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**Tuesday, May 30, 2017**

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**The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Monfwi)

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*Minister Responsible for the Workers'*

*Safety and Compensation  
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(Hay River North)

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(Kam Lake)

**Mr. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendeh)

**Mr. Cory Vanthuynne**

(Yellowknife North)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Tuesday, May 30, 2017****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:32 p.m.

**Prayer**

---Prayer

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

**Ministers' Statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 182-18(2):  
STRATEGIC PATIENT-ORIENTED RESEARCH  
SUPPORT UNIT FUNDING FOR HOTII TS'EEDA  
ELETSE'EHDEE**

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services continues to be committed to improving the health and the lives of Northerners. To achieve this goal, Health and Social Services, along with the Tlicho Government and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, submitted a proposal to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to establish a Strategy for Patient Oriented Research SUPPORT unit in the Northwest Territories. In February 2016, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research approved funding over five years to the Tlicho Government to establish this unit. This funding is made available under Canadian Institutes of Health Research's strategy for patient-oriented research. While similar units have been established in all provinces, this is the first territorial unit. It is unique in Canada due to its shared governance structure and its focus on Indigenous health research.

The goal of the Strategic Patient-Oriented Research SUPPORT Unit is to support health research that is relevant to improving outcomes and leads to innovation in the health system in Canada, which is responsive to the needs of patients, communities and governments, and creating a culturally competent health system. The unit is housed within the Tlicho Government, but staff will be embedded in other Indigenous government offices across the Northwest Territories. The unit has a facilitation role to bring together stakeholders and provide a platform to support researchers in the

Northwest Territories. It will accomplish its goals by identifying local research priorities and then identifying researchers that can help address those priorities. It will provide a critical mass of methodological expertise to support this research through partnerships and affiliations and will support the training of new researchers, which will build capacity in the Northwest Territories. It will also support the application of research findings through knowledge translation activities. Today the governing council of this unit hosts its first gathering of Indigenous, community, and regional caregivers, elders, and health professionals in Detah. This gathering of the Hotii ts'eeda, which means "working together for good health," will provide an opportunity to share best practices in Indigenous health research methodologies and to set priorities for the first year of operations.

Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal governments are important partners with the GNWT, and we continue to work with them to foster our government-to-government relationship and provide better services and supports to their people. Through our sponsorship of this innovative initiative, the Department of Health and Social Services hopes to promote greater understanding and improved health outcomes for NWT residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 182-18(2):  
ARSENIC MONITORING IN THE YELLOWKNIFE  
AREA**

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources recognizes that legacy arsenic contamination in the Yellowknife region has many residents concerned. To this end, ENR continues to conduct monitoring, in collaboration with universities and the Government of Canada, on arsenic in water, sediments, soils, and fish in the Yellowknife region. Under-ice water sampling was done by Environment and Natural Resources at seven sites on Kam Lake and three sites on Grace Lake in April. Results from Kam Lake are consistent with recent Surveillance Network Program sampling done by Miramar Northern Mining Limited under its existing water

licence. Another round of sampling at both lakes is being done this summer. The department, in collaboration with the University of Alberta, is also working to determine the concentration of metals, including arsenic, in fish from several lakes near Yellowknife and along the Ingraham Trail. A report on this three-year study will be prepared and made available to the public when it concludes in 2018. Three additional monitoring projects, funded through the Northwest Territories Cumulative Impact Monitoring Program, are also examining arsenic contamination in water, sediments, soils, and fish in the Yellowknife region. This work is being done by Queen's University, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Carleton University.

Preliminary results of these projects will be publicly available. Mr. Speaker, the department recently met with the Department of Health and Social Services to identify ways to improve interdepartmental and external communications to ensure information is shared in a timely manner. This provided a good opportunity to share and confirm both existing and new sources of data. Based on the meeting, Health and Social Services will be updating the map of arsenic concentrations measured in Kam Lake, as well as other nearby lakes. Moving forward, both departments will be refining their information-sharing process to ensure future public health advisories are accurate and are released in a timely manner.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, additional work on the human health and ecological risk of contamination in the Yellowknife area is also being undertaken through the Giant Mine Remediation Project. I assure you and Members of this Legislative Assembly that the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources and Health and Social Services will continue to work collaboratively on this matter and ensure the public is kept informed with accurate and timely information on legacy arsenic contamination in the Yellowknife area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 184-18(2):  
APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, as residents considering their future, our economy is top of mind. As both a promoter and contributor to the NWT economy, our government is working to spark economic growth across all sectors and to foster an environment in which companies and individuals feel confident investing in northern opportunities and jobs. Our agenda for economic development is threefold: we are working to responsibly unlock the potential of our non-

renewable resources in a way that will both power and sustain the economic future of our territory and its communities; we are supporting companies and residents who are enhancing and growing their communities and economies through their investments; and we are investing in the diversity of our economy overall, targeting sectors that will improve the cost of living and the quality of life for NWT residents while strengthening our economy at the grassroots.

Mr. Speaker, the foundation of our economy is and must continue to be a strong and stable resource sector. In addition to funding government programs and services through royalty payments and corporate income tax, mining contributes billions in exports, hundreds of millions in economic activity, and thousands of well-paid jobs for the NWT each year. The mineral potential of our territory remains strong and includes so-called "green metals" like lithium, nickel, and cobalt, which will be needed to meet the demand for clean technology. If our territory is going to have producing mines in the future, we need to discover and develop new mineral deposits. Improving the investment climate for new exploration and development has to be a priority for the economic development.

We have committed to supporting mineral exploration and the mining sector through the implementation of the NWT Mineral Development Strategy. This means increased funding this year for the mineral incentive program, as well as additional investments in geoscience, marketing, and Aboriginal capacity. We have also initiated work on a standalone, made-in-the-NWT Mineral Resources Act that will establish clear and modern rules for mining in our territory and fulfill our commitment to match our legislative and policy framework to our vision of land and resource management. Similarly, we are working to realize the potential of our oil and gas resources. We have committed to advancing an Oil and Gas Strategy to attract oil and gas development back to our territory, and will be engaging NWT residents and stakeholders this summer on its implementation and proposed evaluation framework. We know that these are challenging times for this sector. We must confirm our right to negotiate on the potential that exists off our Arctic coastline, and to ensure the future of economic development in the petroleum-rich regions of our territory. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the economy of the Northwest Territories extends beyond resource development. Our approach to economic development also includes attracting and retaining a healthy, vibrant population.

The government has committed in its mandate to increase the number of immigrants working in the Northwest Territories, and increase investment by immigrants. Together with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, we have

completed work on a formal immigration strategy for the NWT, and are now developing a marketing plan aimed specifically at increasing the number of immigrant entrepreneurs living and investing in our territory. We know that as investment and residency in the NWT grow, so too will opportunities to expand and diversify the NWT economy in other sectors. Mr. Speaker, the challenge of converting economic opportunity into tangible development is one best met by NWT entrepreneurs and small businesses. We are working to support and strengthen this important backbone of our economy. Our role is to establish a competitive business environment in which economic opportunities can be identified, pursued, and realized by NWT residents willing to invest, take risks, and prosper. We were successful in protecting the interests of our small businesses sector in the negotiation of the new Canadian Free Trade Agreement and in retaining recognition for the unique economic conditions that exist in the North, even as we are maximizing the benefits that trade agreements offer to expand our small domestic market.

We have increased the amount of funding available to individual applicants under the SEED policy, and introduced a new stream of strategic economic support that will advance economic development and diversification. We have invested in our new tourism markets: training, skill development, and infrastructure. As visitors increase, so does the demand for service products. In response, our industry has grown in size and capacity, and the value of our tourism sector has climbed to new heights. Meanwhile, we are also setting the stage for investment and growth in our territory's manufacturing and film sectors, with targeted approaches to help residents capitalize and benefit from their own ingenuity, hard work, and investment. Working with the NWT Manufacturers' Association, we have developed marketing and promotional materials for the NWT manufacturers and their products, and are now addressing the commitment to develop a manufacturing strategy. Meanwhile, thanks to renewed investment, our film sector is thriving, and the increased competencies that we have committed to realizing are being increasingly recognized. NWT films are garnering awards and recognition for their creators, our industry, and our territory. Four major film projects have now received funding support under the NWT Film Rebate Program, and over \$200,000 was invested in 2015-2016 in individual film initiatives and projects. Mr. Speaker, the winning formula for economic development in our economy is to replace imported products with made-in-the-NWT alternatives. It reduces costs, promotes entrepreneurialism, and enhances economic diversity. The development of our territory's first-ever Agriculture Strategy and our planned

revitalization of commercial fishing on Great Slave Lake both fit this model of regional economic development, to improve the quality of life and reduce the cost of living for our residents. We have committed to expanding the agricultural sector by developing and implementing an Agriculture Strategy. First, we must put processes and regulatory frameworks in place to guide and protect it, and we need to develop food safety and inspection guidelines and regulations. We are now taking these important first steps. Likewise, we have committed to finalizing and implementing the Commercial Fisheries Revitalization Strategy. Changes in our fishers' support program have seen increases to catch volumes on Great Slave Lake. We are advancing work on marketing strategies for the NWT's Great Slave Lake fish, and a training program in Hay River is developing the first of a new generation of fishers that we hope will invigorate our industry. Mr. Speaker, entrepreneurs and private business operators engaged in traditional harvesting bridge the gap between the wage and subsistence economies in our most isolated communities, where costs are highest and conventional cash incomes are the lowest. We are committed to supporting this sector by promoting NWT products to international markets.

In April, the fur industry's biggest auction drew nearly half a million in sales for NWT wild furs sold under the government's Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand. That is nearly double the sales total from 2016. The results can be credited to new buyers from Asian and European markets, engaged by our presentation of NWT furs at the China Fur and Leather Products Fair in Beijing in January. Meanwhile, following a long and concentrated lobby effort by our government, the immense purchasing potential of the European Union is now open to Inuvialuit-harvested sealskins and sealskin products, just in time for the cruise ship season, which we are also supporting with training, event infrastructure, and funding. Mr. Speaker, there is no single way to address the economic well-being of our territory but, as we work to build our future, we know that a balanced and stable economic foundation is paramount. The economic agenda defined by our mandate is one based on the direct and indirect contributions of the non-renewable resource sector, the diversity offered by investments in renewable resources, and most importantly, our support for the men and women who own and operate the many small and medium-sized businesses that make up our economy and empower our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON OPEN AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if there was one thing we heard loud and clear during the election, it was that people of the Northwest Territories want the government to be more open. The Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency is currently in the process of holding a series of public engagement meetings. At one of these recent meetings, the Minister was challenged on the transparency of Cabinet and its deliberations. His response was that, basically, everything was okay. Clearly, based on the input he received at that meeting and what I am hearing from constituents, everything is not okay. In taking a look at the Minister's accomplishments thus far, it is my view that he should be further along the process than he is at this point. The government has succeeded in launching its online mandate tracker. As well, the government has been successful in improving gender parity in board appointments and in launching this searchable website for these appointments, commendable indeed. However, this positive progress has been overshadowed by a lack of progress on other key initiatives. I am reassured that the government is taking steps to bring forward ombudsman legislation, but I remain concerned that the Minister has fallen behind on the commitment to have the legislation in place within two years.

Mr. Speaker, while the public engagement process is under way, there is no substantive progress on the development of an open government policy. This was to have been completed by the second quarter of 2017. Similarly, there has been no apparent progress on making residents aware of an appeal process existing under legislation. This online directory is supposed to be launched in the third quarter of this year. A new website reporting on ministerial travel and meetings is about six months behind schedule, but I understand that its launch is imminent, which is a good thing. Finally, perhaps most importantly to the public, I have seen no evidence of progress on how the government intends to report on the ways that public participation has shaped government decision-making. With so much work left to do in the area of transparency, I would encourage the Minister to listen carefully to the input he receives from the public and make this work a top priority for the remainder of his term. If it is done correctly, this 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly will be remembered for its innovations and progress in opening government up to the people it serves. After all, public business should be public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK 2017

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories offers many natural wonders, a rich and vibrant culture, and a completely unique experience that draws in tourists from Canada and the entire world. It is appropriate that we give special mention to our spectacular Northwest Territories on the occasion of National Tourism Week. Tourism Week in Canada is a grassroots initiative that brings attention to the economic opportunity created through travel and tourism. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge the public policy challenges preventing the sector from capitalizing on those opportunities and challenging governments on their approach to supporting this vibrant sector of the economy. It is no secret that our territorial tourism sector is a growth industry, exponentially increasing year-on-year to become a \$146.6 million industry, rising to our most promising path to future prosperity and a key sector as the government pursues greater economic diversification. More than 93,000 visitors come for northern adventures in our territories, and that's up from 64,000 only five years ago.

Mr. Speaker, National Tourism Week is also an opportunity to celebrate our communities, and I would like to take a moment to tell you a few of my favourite things to do in the City of Yellowknife, a place I am very proud to call home. Yellowknife has a vibrant local cultural scene with plenty to do for our residents and tourists alike. We have outstanding musical performances at the annual Folk on the Rocks festival and world-class filmmaking on display at the Dead North Film Festival. Why not enjoy a refreshing craft-brewed beverage at the NWT Brewing Company, recently recognized in Red Racer's Across the Nation Collaboration national celebration tour with their Miner's Refresh Grissette? In the winter months, there is no finer place to see the aurora than here in the capital, or how about watching The Canadian Championship Dog Derby on the side-lines or throw on some long underwear and join in the festivities at the Long John Jamboree. These are just a few of the reasons I love my hometown and why Yellowknife has become a premier destination for tourists the world over.

With so much on the go in Yellowknife, I often find it hard to keep up. I'm thankful that visitors to Yellowknife have access to a fantastic visitors centre in the past to help them connect to these local events and to adventures all over the NWT; however, it is a sad day when that institution is forced to close. The Northern Frontier Visitors



Centre has delivered premium tourism information services for many years and, in its absence, it is sorely missed. I'll have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment on the long-term plans for tourism information services here, in the city of Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NUTRITION NORTH PROGRAM

**MR. THOMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, there are without any doubts impediments when it comes to accessing quality food for affordable prices in the North, especially for the economically disadvantaged. It is such a problem that even food banks are now charging a user fee for each flat of donated food that an individual or family will receive. It is understandable that being in remote communities causes higher freight and transportation costs for retailers and so they must mark up their products to compensate for the additional costs. Although these mark-ups are implemented to ensure the retailers maintain their profits, they cause inflated food costs to the public and do not correlate with better quality foods. Much of the produce and other perishables sold at retailers in the North have a very short shelf life. There is also a percentage of the population that is below or near the poverty line and, as a result, cannot afford much of their basic needs especially food due to these price mark-ups. Mr. Speaker, Nutrition North was implemented to ease the consequences of these overpriced, low-quality foods to consumers and was proven ineffective. This program was proven unsuccessful for many reasons, such as the lack of information the public received about the program and its implementation, and the regulation of the program, including which products were subsidized. Most residents noticed that some of their most essential food products, such as flour and baby formula, were not subsidized and, alternatively, many affluent food items were. There has been a lack of accountability on the retailers' part in terms of reporting of spoilage and actual costs prior to the application of the subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, another issue is the availability of the program in the Nahendeh riding. Only Nahanni Butte and Smbaa K'e were recognized for this subsidy, and it served neither community at all. This raises yet another issue with the program: there are limited vendors that retailers can purchase from. Mr. Speaker, this program must be fixed to ensure all residents are able to attain their basic necessities, nutritious food being of the most important, from the sources they want to deal with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF RUSSELL AND MARY KING

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1966, a 23-year-old Russell King and his wife Mary King opened King's Service, a welding and mechanical repair shop, out of their home-based workshop at Mile 5. Earlier today, after five decades of hard work, Russell King was officially inducted into the Order of the NWT. I want to congratulate Mr. King, but I also want to express my regrets that this honour was not also bestowed on Mrs. King as well because, since King's Service opened in 1966, it has always been Russell and Mary.

Mr. King was inducted into the Order of the NWT for his contributions to business in the territories, so I am obliged to mention that, from King's Service, Russell and Mary built something of an empire, which included the Hay River Esso station, Kingland Ford, Tire North, Kingland Freightliner, King Manufacturing, and Klasic Autobody, and they expanded their operations to Yellowknife and the diamond mines. I apologize if I have left anything out. I grew up in Hay River, and I can attest that everyone knows the names Russell and Mary King. Those names are intertwined and inseparable from Hay River itself, and not just because of their business ventures. There have actually been quite a few successful businesses to come out of Hay River. There have even been other dealerships in town, but the reason Mr. King received the Order of the NWT today is the same reason that Hay River remains a Ford town. It is because of how Russell and Mary treated people. As a customer, you knew you would be treated right. Not only did customers know they were getting a fair deal, they were made to feel like a priority. That is just how business was done. Mr. King was also known to take chances on people if they were just starting out in life and did not quite have the credit needed to purchase a new vehicle.

As an employee, you felt equally appreciated. The Kings always made it a priority to hire locally and to develop that local talent. Their five decades of hard work and dedication to Hay River and the Northwest Territories have created hundreds of permanent, well-paying jobs in the territory and, I imagine, thousands of residents who have been happy to, at one time or another, work for Russell and Mary. It goes without saying that their contributions are not confined to just their customers and employees, as they have always been big contributors to any community event. Mr. Speaker, I would like this House to join me in both congratulating Mr. King for being awarded the

Order of the NWT and in showing appreciation to both Russell and Mary King for their 50 years of contributions to Hay River and the entire Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. I would also like to say congratulations to the King family for all their years of services. Masi. Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EDUCATION SYSTEM INDICATORS

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well said, and I totally agree with my previous colleague, Mr. Simpson, on those remarkable historic words. Mr. Speaker, education is the most valued possession one can have. This learning capitalization gives you lifelong abilities for creating a wide range of prosperity, life choices, independence, and above all, security. The education system, and more important, "delivery." Our indicators of engagement on measurable is in the hands of community, regional, and territorial leaders. Mr. Speaker, it has been said many a times, education starts at home.

In 2013, 79 per cent of students in the communities were operating below standards in math. Students in Yellowknife were operating at 43 per cent. Mr. Speaker, our NWT graduation rates are also below national averages. Mr. Speaker, as a first-term MLA, and I am still learning myself, but also glad our Sahtu schools began the 2016-2017 academic year with initiative courses in Math, English, Social Studies 30-1 and 30-2. As I understand, a minimum requirement for southern institutions. I think we can no longer ignore our system, but it is certainly questionable, and delivery principles need reviews on efficiencies. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of ECE on the progress of this new initiative in the Sahtu region. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL POVERTY CONSULTATION

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, poverty is a national issue which requires national solutions. The federal government has acknowledged this fact by working on a Canada-wide poverty reduction strategy. Yellowknife is a focus of special attention in this effort because it is the location of one of six case studies on poverty across the country, and there have been several consultations here in the last month. Mr. Speaker, today I am going to talk about the public consultation hosted by the No Place for Poverty

Coalition and Vibrant Communities Canada. About 30 people attended, including some of my colleagues here, as well as advocates, people who live in poverty, and those who work on the front lines. Participants were asked to identify priority areas for poverty reduction efforts. The top two are food and housing. People noted that, in the NWT, we have both a food availability problem and a food affordability problem. This is not news to Members who have seen increasing food insecurity firsthand and through media reports. There is a need for both a short-term solution and systemic solutions to hunger. There is also an urgent need to revamp the Nutrition North program, as my colleague said earlier today.

On housing, the waiting list is long and getting longer rather than shorter. The federal decision to reduce support for the operations and maintenance of social housing is an obvious problem, as is the scheduled end of the program in 2038. Mr. Speaker, the federal government has a leading role in addressing these two areas, but this government has a role to play as well. Our mandate commits this Assembly to increasing the availability of affordable housing and improving food security. These are areas that need urgent and sustained attention if people are going to get out of poverty, stay out of poverty, and give their kids hope for a different future. In order to make the most of federal interest in this area at this time, the territorial government must consider how to align its poverty reduction efforts with those in Ottawa. That may be self-evident, but there is not a word, not one word, about these issues in the territorial government's federal engagement strategy. Mr. Speaker, we can build roads to every community in this territory, as outlined in the engagement strategy, but you can't eat a road, and you cannot sleep in it, either. The need for more housing and more food is not going to go away. The GNWT and Ottawa have to work together to make a difference. I will have questions for the Minister responsible for Poverty. Mahsi.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RACE THE PEEL CANOEING CHALLENGE

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, all over the country, we are seeing Canadians get ready to celebrate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in a little over one month. People are booking campsites, planning parades, and learning more about the country's history. Mr. Speaker, in my riding of the Mackenzie Delta, our Canada 150 celebrations will feature our own amazing race, the Race the Peel canoeing challenge. The Hamlet of Aklavik is organizing the race between that community and Fort McPherson, and the race will

include cultural games and activities and games on the banks of the Peel. It's not only fun and games, Mr. Speaker, it is for a good cause, a very important cause. Race the Peel will also raise awareness for the Save the Peel Campaign that grew out of the Peel River Watershed legal case. It is also raising awareness of the urgent ongoing work to save the Porcupine caribou herd.

What better way to celebrate Canada 150 than to enjoy the Mackenzie Delta's beautiful lands and waters, and take action to protect them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONCERNS OF K'ATLODEECHE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**MR. NADLI:** Recently, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, and I had an opportunity to speak with teacher Rebecca Aylward and her senior high school students at Chief Sunrise Education Centre on the K'atlodeeche First Nation. The students' names are Edmond Buggihns, Selena Buggihns, Shawna Sabourin, and Trinity Cayen.

These bright students asked questions about the roles and responsibilities of MLAs and about issues and concerns facing their community. The students are approaching graduation and have some concerns about their community. They are concerned about limited employment opportunities on the reserve. Besides the store, daycare, or band office, there are really no opportunities to work, unless job seekers travel outside their home community. While there are jobs available in Hay River, finding a way into town is another issue. The commute is 17 kilometers. Many people do not have transportation. As a result, many KFN residents have perished while trying to make their way into Hay River. There have been traffic accidents, drownings, and dangerous encounters with wildlife.

Students have concluded that a pedestrian bridge is essential and critical. If a pedestrian bridge was established to link the KFN with the town of Hay River, many residents would benefit. It would provide a safe way for KFN residents to go to town to access recreational facilities, healthcare, employment, and other services. The students also have concerns about the environment. They would like to see many more recycling facilities in the community. They would like to be able to recycle paper, plastics, and metals. They are concerned about the dump and its location. They wonder if the dump is affecting the groundwater and river, since it is located so close to the river.

The students are also alarmed by global warming and want to make a difference. They would like to know if there are opportunities to help them establish a green roof on their school, or to help produce more food organically for the community. The students are also wondering why there are no treatment facilities in the North. They see firsthand how devastating addictions are in their community and wonder why the treatment centre located on their reserve is not a viable option for the North. Mr. Speaker, I was impressed with the thoughtfulness of these young people and I enjoyed hearing them talk about matters that are important to them. I would encourage all Members of the Legislative Assembly to listen to the concerns of our young people. They are our future. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SUPPORT FOR THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITIES

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, or NWTAC as it is commonly referred to, was established in 1966 when municipal leaders from Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River, and Inuvik formed an association to represent community governments in the Northwest Territories. Since its beginning, the NWTAC has grown to represent all 33 communities of the Northwest Territories' incorporated communities. It is registered as a not-for-profit society and is governed in accordance with its own by-laws. Acting on its own democratically adopted resolutions, the association advocates for the interests of its member communities to the federal government and the GNWT, and through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The NWTAC provides support to community governments in a number of ways. As the municipal operating environment becomes even more complex, the NWTAC provides advisory services to its member communities in the areas of legal support services, human resources, and procedural and governance advice. The NWTAC provides insurance services to the member community governments through the Northern Communities Insurance Program. It also provides discounts on supplies needed by municipal governments through its NWTAC purchasing program.

Through its advocacy efforts, the NWTAC takes action on issues that are important to municipalities in the Northwest Territories, such as devolution, community funding, climate change adaptation, and emergency planning. As well, the NWTAC provides professional development and training opportunities for municipal staff and elected officials. Mr.

Speaker, the NWTAC does invaluable work that is especially important in smaller communities, where the capacity is always an issue. The association held its most recent annual general meeting in Inuvik from May 11 to 14, 2017. At this meeting, Mr. Speaker, two of my constituents were voted in as members of the board of directors, Councillor Ryan Yakeleya from the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk, and Ray Ruben, the mayor of Paulatuk, is the vice president. I want to congratulate both men on their appointments, and I also want to congratulate the NWTAC on another successful annual general meeting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANADIAN ZINC ROAD ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SITE LIABILITIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Canadian Zinc's Prairie Creek project is now in its seventh environmental assessment, which makes that a new record for project splitting. The project has eaten up an enormous amount of public resources and time. The environmental assessment of Canadian Zinc's all-weather road began in May 2014, and it is now more than three years long. An interesting timeline on the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's website shows that the company has been responsible for about 26 months of the ongoing review and has caused numerous delays. This process is drawing to a close and a report of environmental assessment is likely to fall on the desk of the Minister of Lands as early as September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Canadian Zinc is now in overhold tenancy in its surface lease. Our government assumed responsibility for this lease with devolution. There are clearly insufficient financial securities to cover current environmental liabilities under this lease and the operation's water licence. This shortfall of about \$7 million or more places our government and all of our citizens at risk. The devolution agreement provides opportunities for our government to turn back properties to the federal government in the case of insolvencies, but the more our fingerprints are on decisions regarding any project, the more challenging it will be to make a successful case for Ottawa to pay for liabilities.

I am particularly concerned that, if the Minister of Lands makes decisions on the current surface lease and the upcoming Canadian Zinc all-weather road, this will increase our financial exposure on the Prairie Creek site. These costs could be huge. While Ottawa may have been in a position to assume such liabilities, our government cannot do so and must proceed with extreme caution. I will

have questions for the Minister of Lands later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Members' statements. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to people in the gallery. I am pleased to recognize Mr. Kunihiro Tanabe, Consul General of Japan. He is accompanied by Ms. Noriko Ikeyama, Consul for Economic Affairs, and Ms. Rebecca Ro, Economic Analyst. Masi for joining us. Item 4, reports of standing and special committees. Member for Nahendeh.

#### Reports of Standing and Special Committees

##### COMMITTEE REPORT 10-18(2): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF BILL 16, AN ACT TO AMEND THE EDUCATION ACT

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Social Development is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act, and commends it to the House.

#### Introduction

Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act, proposes to enshrine the Junior Kindergarten Program in the territorial "education program" and to regulate entitlement of access for junior kindergarten students, who could be as young as three years and eight months. The bill also proposes to reduce the mandatory minimum for school instructional hours.

The Standing Committee on Social Development has heard from parents and guardians, educators, school boards and education authorities, and community-based childcare and early childhood education providers on these matters. We regularly heard strong support for northern students and teachers, as well as the frustration with the government's delivery of the program services. The bill's progress has been unorthodox. Junior kindergarten remains controversial, with some stakeholders still opposed to implementation and others troubled by the potential impacts on existing providers. Respecting instructional hours, Northerners have struggled to access clear, accurate information. Indeed, the Government of the Northwest Territories entered into a memorandum of understanding attached to a collective agreement with the NWT Teachers' Association, without advising Regular Members of this MOU's implications. The department then directed education authorities to comply with the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices pilot project STIP, a project requiring amendments to the Education Act that had not yet received the

required standing committee review, the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, or the assent of the Commissioner.

Standing committees provide oversight to government activity. They do not rubber-stamp initiatives. Witnesses echoed this, expressing frustration that the government appeared to presume upon the committee's authority and to force a choice between teachers and students. Nevertheless, the committee believes it is possible, through exercise of its legitimate authority, to act in support of teachers as well as students and their families. We have striven to hear and explore each of the many, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives brought forth. This report is the outcome of that work. At this point in time, I wish to turn over the reading of the report to the Member for Yellowknife Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

### **Public Engagement**

The committee held public meetings in Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Hay River, advertising these through newspaper, radio, and social media, and held its public clause-by-clause review in Yellowknife on May 25, 2017. Both Yellowknife meetings were also streamed live through the Legislative Assembly's Facebook page, receiving more than 1,000 views together. We have also received 237 written submissions and completed a media scan, and have published related correspondence with the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. These are available on the committee's web page on the Assembly website.

Outside our review of Bill 16, we previously received public witness presentations and written submissions on junior kindergarten, and also held a public meeting in December of 2016. The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has made a number of commitments in response to collaboration between the committee and himself. We thank him for this and for his department's continuing work.

### **The Status Quo is Not an Option**

We are all stakeholders in education. Between 28,500 and 36,700 jobs will be opened over the next 15 years, with 78 per cent of those requiring post-secondary education and/or significant work experience. Yet we are currently ill-equipped to meet this demand. Although overall graduation rates have risen, low rates in small communities continue to decline, while school attendance, achievement, competitiveness, and resourcing weigh heavily on Northerners' minds. Mr. Mike

Harlow, president of the Children First Society board in Inuvik, said, "The last thing this region needs is reduced spending on education. The reality is that we need jobs. We don't have jobs, so the best investment in this region is education."

Ms. Elizabeth-Ann McKay, chair of the Fort Resolution District Educational Authority and who travelled from Fort Resolution to Hay River to address the committee, said, "When new things are proposed, it never comes with a price tag. We're struggling. There's no new money. We're getting more reductions from the GNWT. Education, being the key priority, needs to be really looked at and funded accordingly." Mr. Adrien Amirault, executive director of the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association, spoke in favour of the bill and advised the committee that, "The status quo is not an option." Other witnesses, although speaking against the bill, also argued that current practices do not suffice. Our role as legislators is to consider views brought forward by those "on the ground" in tandem with proven best practices to assess whether Bill 16 will ultimately bring the territory closer to the change we need.

### **ISSUES**

#### **The Role of Standing Committees**

With rare exception, bills creating or amending legislation cannot become law without referral to the appropriate standing committee for review. Several witnesses echoed the committee's own feeling that, with Bill 16, the department has presumed upon the committee. The bill's unorthodox progress has also made it difficult for interested parties to participate in consensus government. Witnesses in Yellowknife and Hay River questioned the purpose of the committee's review if, as the department has previously indicated, the proposed changes will proceed regardless. Either the department found tolerable the risk of being able to deliver only a fraction of the "up to 100 hours" committed to during negotiations with the NWTTA, or it presumed the committee would accommodate the legislative needs required to fulfill the government's bargaining promises. Neither is acceptable to the committee.

#### **School Funding Formulas**

We repeatedly heard that new programs like JK cannot be implemented without adequate funding. Although the GNWT has committed to "fully fund" the cost of JK implementation in the 13 communities that do not currently offer the program, the department acknowledges that its funding formulas are tools to determine funding allocations, not tools to determine the adequacy of those allocations. JK funding falls short.

To implement JK, schools are expected to stretch Inclusive Schooling and Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education funding for 13 grades (K to 12) across 14 grades (JK to 12). Indeed, although the department funds inclusive schooling above the legislated minimum, territorial board chairs have already flagged this funding as insufficient and in continued decline. They have collectively called on the department to restore it to 2012 levels. Although the department previously suggested JK students following a play-based curriculum may require less support, ECE's data on resident children's school readiness contradicts this claim. Significant transportation costs are also anticipated. Mr. David Wasylciw, president of the Northwest Territories Montessori Society, also expressed concern that the department's intention to fund JK at a pupil-to-teacher ratio PTR of 12 to 1 is not enshrined in legislation and so lacks staying power. Because an amendment related to PTR would fall outside the scope of the bill and so be ruled out of order, the committee sought the Minister's commitment that JK be funded at a ratio of 12:1 or better for at least the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Minister has made this commitment and pledged to share current school funding formulas with the committee. For this, we thank him.

The committee also sought the Minister's commitment to assess JK-specific inclusive schooling, Aboriginal language and culture-based education, and transportation costs and to bring forward a supplementary appropriation bill in the next sitting to ensure adequate funding for these services in the 2017-2018 school year. Revision of current funding formulas would be required for surety beyond 2017-2018. In partial response, the Minister has committed to seek increases to inclusive schooling funding should current funding prove insufficient and that the department will cover transportation costs when those costs are determined. We thank him for these commitments and will continue to press for truly full funding in the outstanding items. I would now like to turn the report over to my colleague, the MLA for Mackenzie Delta.

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

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability**

The committee assessed departmental documents, independent research, and public submissions, and is persuaded that the quality of instruction is generally more important than the number of instructional hours delivered "quality over quantity." The committee is also persuaded that, to achieve quality instruction, schools must be adequately

resourced and teachers assured of time to perform non-instructional duties such as class preparation, marking, report cards, the implementation of student support plans, and assessment, without the stressful expectation of unpaid overtime.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that the three-year STIP pilot project did not originate in the Education Renewal Initiative, which makes only general reference to teacher wellness. Instead, it came from collective bargaining and reflected the government's fiscal targets. We feel strongly that this should not detract from the concerns of educators seeking a healthier and more effective workplace, but also that a project so lacking clarity of purpose is at risk of failing to serve either teachers or students.

To address this, the committee sought the Minister's commitment to provide a detailed monitoring, evaluation, and accountability plan for STIP, addressing both student achievement and teacher wellness, by the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The Minister has made this commitment, and for this, we thank him. During the clause-by-clause review, an individual Member also proposed consideration of an amendment in keeping with STIP's pilot status and helping to address parents' concerns. The proposed amendment would require, at the end of STIP's three-year term, a formal review by a committee of the Legislative Assembly, which would then make recommendations to the department.

### **Communications**

Departmental communications on the bill have been inadequate. Although an agreement-in-principle was first reached with the NWTTA in mid-2016, the committee and the general public learned of STIP in early 2017, when the project was launched. JK implementation policy changed from day to day during the last sitting of the Legislative Assembly. With instructional hours, students and parents were left in doubt of territorial diplomas until rigorous questioning on the floor of the House secured departmental commitment that our equivalency with Alberta would be protected. It is not surprising that confusion and apprehension has flourished in this environment. Ms. Denise Hurley of Yellowknife told the committee that she was, "frustrated and frankly enraged at the level of misunderstanding surrounding Bill 16...The practicality and reasonableness of the implementation of Bill 16 has been lost in the communication debacle surrounding the legislation."

The committee itself has dedicated significant time and effort to interpreting and clarifying the bill and its potential impacts on our constituents. Although we heard relatively few submissions on JK during

our review, we do not consider this evidence of a lack of interest. Several witnesses reported that they had previously raised various concerns but still felt that the government had not heard them. Ms. Lesa Semmler of Inuvik said, "I've spoken vocally and locally on the JK. There's not much more I can add to that." Mx. Jacq Brasseur of Yellowknife also highlighted a shortcoming in both the department's engagement and our own: a lack of direct engagement with students themselves. While the opportunity to present and to provide a written submission to standing committees is open to every Northerner regardless of age, and this opportunity was advertised in various mediums, we recognize that northern youth represent an often-untapped resource demanding particular attention.

The committee sought the Minister's commitment to regularly and publicly report on the outcomes of both JK and STIP, including reporting on identified performance measures. The Minister has made this commitment, and for that, we thank him. We look forward to the tabling of these reports in the Legislative Assembly.

#### **Accommodation of Existing Programs**

We heard concern from childcare and early childhood education providers that JK implementation would negatively impact their operations. In Yellowknife and in the regional centres, daycares and non-profit organizations such as the Yellowknife Playschool Society, the Northwest Territories Montessori Society, and the Children First Society were apprehensive of having to fundamentally alter their enrolment models, of lacking sufficient enrolment to continue operations, and/or of receiving critical government direction with little to no advance notice. The committee is also aware of apprehension among community-based providers of after-school care, who may not be prepared to accommodate JK-aged children. There is also the matter of the Aboriginal Head Start, AHS, program. The 2016 final technical report on JK recommended that, "A holistic strategy for early childhood learning and development (which includes JK, where appropriate) needs to be developed, in consultation with the community, to address diverse community needs and contexts (one size does not fit all)."

The department proposes to address this by proceeding with universal JK and encouraging combined half-day programs, that is, half-day AHS and half-day JK, both optional for parents. Yet while some AHS programs are comfortable operating in tandem with JK, others are uneasy. We heard concerns that in communities with only a handful of three- and four-year-old children, competition between programs is inevitable, with worry that Aboriginal Head Start will emerge on the losing side. Aboriginal Head Start is also uncomfortable

with the idea of altering their enrolment model to accept younger children. For combined half-day programs to succeed, close and sincere government collaboration with Aboriginal Head Start is required, including continued government support as well as advocacy to federal funding partners. Particularly given that departmental funding of Aboriginal language and cultural instruction does not currently include JK students, we feel that Aboriginal Head Start provides critical and commendable services to children, as its mission statement describes, "living proudly as Aboriginal people in the lands of their ancestors." Mr. Speaker, I now hand this over to the Member for Deh Cho. Thank you.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Cost and Availability of Childcare**

We heard that Bill 16 would negatively impact families by creating irregular childcare demands, e.g. professional development days throughout the year and after-school care for JK students. Although the government proposes that JK will fulfill its mandate commitment to explore options for free play-based care for four-year-olds, and that parents of JK students will be able to enter or re-enter the workforce sooner, costs, availability, and potential lost-work time remain stressors for families. Further, JK is not childcare. Childcare is outside the "education program" defined in the act, and so outside the scope of the bill, and though pre- and after-school care challenges many northern families, these fall to the government to address through its other mandate commitments, not to territorial schools.

#### **Impacts on Teachers**

We heard that Bill 16 would positively impact teachers. The NWTTA, as well as individual teachers, described significant challenges posed by excessive workload, limited resources, and the need for time within regular working hours to complete non-instructional duties, collaborate with other educators, and participate in professional development, all with the goal of enhancing their capacity to meet the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms.

Although many other witnesses felt Bill 16 was flawed, those same witnesses repeatedly emphasized their belief that territorial teachers play a vital role and must be supported. Where these witnesses presented alternatives, they largely suggested that the government must be held to its bargaining commitments, but that this should be done by hiring more teachers, not by reducing instructional hours. This appears consistent with

Alberta's practices. In 2013, then-Premier Alison Redford capped teacher instructional time at 907 hours, stating in published correspondence that "government is not willing to consider reducing the hours students spend learning to get a labour agreement."

### Impacts on Students

We also heard that Bill 16 would negatively impact students, particularly that the proposed reduction in instructional hours would limit students' ability to complete Alberta's curriculum and reduce their post-secondary competitiveness. Given the territory's low attendance and graduation rates, some witnesses were also skeptical that reduced hours would serve students. On February 17, 2017, the department assured the House that no action on its part "would jeopardize the validity of a high school diploma." The committee takes the department at its word.

### Comparisons with Alberta

Although the Northwest Territories and Alberta share a common curriculum, we know that a broad range of factors affect student participation and achievement. With more than 15 times as many students in the Alberta education system as there are people in the Northwest Territories, the scale of territorial operations alone is very different. Currently, in the Northwest Territories, students in grades 1 to 6 must receive at least 997 hours of instruction. Students in grades 7 to 12 must receive at least 1,045. Further, territorial schools vary in instructional hours actually delivered. Several witnesses described the importance of tailoring school calendars and practices to the unique needs of their communities. As with junior kindergarten, it is apparent that one size does not fit all.

In Alberta, students in grades 1 to 9 must receive at least 950 hours of instruction. Students in grades 10 to 12 must receive at least 1,000 hours. However, the province's "Moving Forward With High School Redesign" project has allowed roughly two thirds of Alberta high schools to spend more or less time on course material or instruction, as needed. Like our own schools, Alberta schools vary in hours actually delivered, and Alberta Education has not documented exact instructional hours in each one participating in the redesign. However, the province is tracking a suite of performance measures. These measures include high school completion, drop-out rates, diploma exam participation and performance, student-teacher-parent-satisfaction, course completion, and intellectual engagement.

During the clause-by-clause review, an individual Member also proposed consideration of a potential compromise: to proceed with a 100-hour reduction

to the statutory minimum for grades 1 to 9, but to set the minimum for grades 10 to 12 at 1,000 hours. This would match what is mandated in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will now turn it over to my colleague, the MLA for Nahendeh. Mahsi.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague from the Deh Cho.

### Recommended Actions

1. That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment review and adjust its school funding formulae to ensure that additional funding accounts for new JK students in Inclusive Schooling, Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education, and transportation funding from the 2017-2018 school year on;
2. That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment report annually on the implementation of the Strengthening Teacher Instructional Practices pilot project and the Junior Kindergarten Program, including an account of collaboration and engagement with existing childcare and early childhood development service providers, and that these reports be tabled in the Legislative Assembly; and
3. That the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, in its ongoing work toward an action plan for universal daycare by March 2018, account for community-by-community needs for after-school care, including care needed on an irregular basis, e.g. on professional development days.

### Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Social Development recommends that the government provide a comprehensive response to this report and its recommended actions within 120 days.

### Conclusion

The committee has learned that, when similar changes to instructional hours were initiated in Alberta, they elicited many of the same questions we have heard from witnesses and from our constituents. How will students access the hours they are entitled to? How will students be empowered to succeed? How will boards distribute existing resources and/or obtain new resources to meet both the government's labour commitments and statutory requirements? Similarly, the committee observes that various jurisdictions in Canada and in the United States are grappling with the challenge of implementing effective,



meaningful, and accommodating educational programming for three- and four-year-olds. Here at home the issue has been fraught. Certainly there is much at stake. As the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh said during the committee's clause-by-clause review of Bill 16, "no matter what the outcome, we recognize that there are two sides to this issue and both sides want the best for the children."

This concludes the committee's report on Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act. All committee reports are available online at the Legislative Assembly website: [www.assembly.gov.nt.ca](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca). Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 10-18(2): Standing Committee on Social Development Report on the Review of Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The motion is on the floor. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Member for Nahendeh.

MOTION TO RECEIVE  
COMMITTEE REPORT 10-18(2) AND MOVE INTO  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,  
CARRIED

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive rule 100(4) to have Committee Report 10-18(2): Report of the Standing Committee on Social Development on the Review of Bill 16: An Act to Amend the Education Act, moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Member is seeking unanimous consent to waive Rule 100(4) to have Committee Report 10-18(2) moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration later today.

---Unanimous consent granted

The Committee Report 10-18(2) is now moved into Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

Masi. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Frame Lake.

COMMITTEE REPORT 11-18(2):  
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF STANDING  
COMMITTEE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND  
TRANSPARENCY

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of Standing Committee Public Engagement and Transparency.

**Introduction**

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures was tasked on February 25, 2016, by Motion 10-18(2), with recommending a process for standing committee public engagement and transparency, taking into account public input and a review of other jurisdictions. Much of this work was described in the committee's interim report, presented on November 1, 2016, and is not repeated in this final report. The committee's work on this matter is paralleled by a similar effort by Cabinet to increase the openness of government.

The goal of measures taken to date and of those now recommended is to promote greater public understanding of committees' work and enable greater participation in the democratic process, with increased transparency and opportunities for public engagement. This is particularly important in our Legislative Assembly, where standing committees play a critical role in our unique consensus system of governance.

**Background**

Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly recognize the need for greater transparency and accountability. We are committed to providing the public with more information about our decision-making process and better opportunities to take part. As noted in the committee's interim report, "the ultimate goal is to promote a culture of openness in which citizens provide input, monitor progress, and see that their participation is valued by decision-makers."

The Legislative Assembly and its committees regularly use a variety of tools to engage the public and provide information, including our website, news releases, social media, in-house television broadcasting system, radio and television rebroadcasts of proceedings, publication of Hansard, which is also used unofficially and free of charge by OpenNWT, town halls, public meetings, and public requests for comments on specific reports and legislation. Of course, the Assembly's public gallery is open during session, and the Legislative Library will assist anyone in finding information. Recommendations in this report are intended to improve and expand upon these

activities, particularly to benefit public interaction with standing committees.

### **Public Transparency and Engagement in the Work of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**

Soon after the committee began its work on public engagement and transparency, Members of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly amended their Guiding Principles and Process Conventions to state that "the business of consensus government should be carried out in public, unless there are compelling reasons to meet in private. Public meetings should be the rule and not the exception." This convention has been successfully implemented.

In its interim report, the committee recommended that, working with Legislative Assembly staff, each standing committee should:

1. Improve the ease-of-use and access to committee web pages and add the following information to what is currently provided:
  - a. known schedule, and public matters being considered; and
  - b. meeting notices, agendas, witnesses' submissions, and presentation materials.
2. Specific requests for public input and contact information for the committee should be prominently displayed and readily accessible.
3. Identify, in advance, whether a meeting or a portion of a meeting may be held in camera, and how this will be reflected in the agenda. A committee may decide to hold an in camera meeting or portions of a meeting in camera to:
  - a. deal with administrative and personnel matters;
  - b. consider correspondence or a draft report, including the committee's own reports;
  - c. receive a background briefing;
  - d. deal with subject matters requiring confidentiality, such as budget items or bills that have not yet been introduced in the Assembly;
  - e. do strategic planning, including sessional meetings of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning, which focus on preparing for business in the House; or
  - f. any other matter that would or would likely entail private or privileged information.
4. Ensure that consideration is given to the use of plain language and summaries where appropriate in public communications and

reports.

These measures have been enacted or are in the process of being implemented. Committee web pages are being much expanded, with a prominent access link on the Assembly's main page. The committee provided guidance to Legislative Assembly staff on committee website content, navigation, and public schedules. The new committee pages are undergoing pre-launch testing. Additions to the committee pages include a meeting calendar, information about public participation, committee business, agendas and materials for public meetings, committee reports, and news releases. Committees have heard that meeting notices and supporting material should be posted earlier, but notice is not always received well in advance. All committees and Cabinet should try to improve public notice of meetings.

Standing committees also experimented with Facebook Live to air public briefings. Since January 2017, the Legislative Assembly provided live video of public committee meetings to viewers on social media. As of May 15<sup>th</sup>, 17 public committee meetings were streamed live on Facebook, with an average of 400 views per video. The most-viewed was the first, featuring the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning's press conference about the 2017-2018 budget. In light of the success of the pilot project, live-streaming of public standing committee meetings and other events is now our practice. The Legislative Assembly's Facebook page has more than 700 followers.

Since the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures' interim report, we sought additional feedback from the public and Members of the Assembly. Submissions were solicited on the committee's web page, on Facebook, and by other means, but none were received. As part of the process, the chair met with a transparency advocate.

The committee also received a presentation from the Minister of Transparency and Public Engagement on the Open Government Initiative, which may produce findings relevant to standing committee procedures.

As a result of this additional engagement, the committee considered several other issues:

1. Providing Members' attendance information in a spreadsheet format that can be easily analysed: this information is already publicly available, but not in spreadsheet format because no such software is used to compile the data.
2. Publishing standing committees' travel expenses: committee travel expenses have

been available on request. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that these expenses be regularly posted on each committee's web page.

3. Digitization of Hansard transcripts of proceedings prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly: Hansard transcripts are searchable on the Assembly's website back to the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Hansard was first produced digitally during the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly, but the document formatting is inconsistent with current requirements. Digitizing Hansard prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly is an even larger endeavour. The committee notes that this topic is outside the scope of its mandate, but agrees that adding earlier Hansard transcripts to the Assembly's searchable website is desirable if it can be done cost-effectively. All Hansard transcripts are currently available to the public by request to the Legislative Assembly Library.
4. Indexing of Hansard: It was suggested to the committee during its consultations that indexing of Hansard, suspended several years ago as a cost-saving measure, be restored to improve searchability. Assembly staff informed us that this is a goal of the new Hansard production team. Again, this topic is outside the scope of the committee's mandate, but we recommend completion of this project.
5. Producing and publishing records of decision by standing committees or summaries of committee business: audio/video recordings of public committee meetings are available on the Legislative Assembly's YouTube site and by specific request. The committee suggests that the Standing Committee on Government Operations produce summaries of its work or records of decision on a pilot basis. Should this prove successful, it could be adopted by other standing committees.
6. Publishing committee correspondence: Submissions to standing committees respecting public hearings on legislation and other matters will be published on committee web pages; previously, they were available on request. Other correspondence may be published at committees' discretion, subject to the provisions for in-camera matters described earlier.
7. Consistency of processes for public engagement and transparency: the committee suggests that chairs of the standing committees discuss each of these processes twice annually, with a view to potential improvements. Each standing committee should also review its public engagement and transparency at least annually, against a

common checklist of questions such as those developed by the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures to solicit input for this final report.

I would now like to turn the report to my colleague, the MLA for Frame Lake.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President.

### Conclusion

Public engagement and transparency of standing committees is being improved on an ongoing basis. New methods and technology will arise over time; change is the only constant. Standing committees must adapt to their current circumstances and provide timely, useful information to the public in convenient ways. The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is confident that the work done in this area over the past year represents a significant improvement on what was previously available, and establishes a sound foundation for future evolution.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 11-18(2): Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures' Report on the Review of Standing Committee Public Engagement and Transparency, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is on the floor. All those in favour? All those opposed? Motion carried.

---Carried

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 5, returns to oral questions. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife South.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Paul Crookall, executive director of Excellence Canada, and his wife, Kate. Paul and Kate are accompanied by Penny Ballantyne, recently retired from the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize, of course, all of our fantastic recipients of the Order of the NWT, but in particular Mr. Paul Andrew, who originally from the Sahtu is now a resident of Yellowknife North, and I

want to congratulate him on his award. I also want to acknowledge now world traveller, former secretary to Cabinet, and a Yellowknife North resident, Penny Ballantyne. Welcome. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Mr. Fraser Oliver, president of the NWT Teachers' Association and Kam Lake resident. He just will not go away, and I am really pleased about that. Keep it up. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Did we miss anyone in the gallery? Thanks for coming to our proceedings. It is always good to have an audience. Item 7, acknowledgements. Member for Deh Cho.

### Acknowledgements

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 21-18(2): RECOGNITION OF JEFFERY PHILIPP, ORDER OF THE NWT RECIPIENT

**MR. NADLI:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Jeffery Philipp, who is a recipient of the 2017 Order of the NWT. I am very proud of Jeff today. Jeff was born and raised in Fort Providence and now lives in Yellowknife with his family. Jeff built the North's premier broadband technology company, SSI Micro. Jeff and his company have helped many organizations throughout the NWT and Nunavut, such as a computer lab for the Deh Gah School and contributions to Northern Youth Abroad. Jeff is also a strong advocate for consumers' rights. Congratulations, Jeff. Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Congratulations go out to all Order of the NWT recipients today. Masi. Colleagues, before we continue with oral questions, I am going to request a short recess. Masi.

---SHORT RECESS

**MR. SPEAKER:** Item 8, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 780-18(2): DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS HOUSING CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during my visit back home, I had the opportunity to talk to a number of residents, and they had some concerns. Mr. Speaker, as more and more housing situations occur, I have been more perplexed on why things happen with the

Housing Corporation. Just recently, I was informed the contractors have the first right of refusal to the extra material for housing contracts. This does not seem right, since the clients have to pay some sort of cost for these projects. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation please advise this House if this practice is something in a written policy or something the corporation just implements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The allocation of the materials that are left over from units is a decision that is based on how we contract, so, if it is a design build and the contractor takes on the project, the contractor has first right to that material because he is charging for that material. If it is a maintenance, then often the local housing organization will hold that material. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for her answer. Mr. Speaker, is this something that is explained to the clients before they sign the necessary contracts, so are they well aware of this process?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I am making the assumption, then, that the Member is speaking about home maintenance repairs. In that case, then often they might not be knowledgeable of it. I would be leery about a change in the policy to allow them to have the extra materials because they, too, get charged for that stuff. Some of our smaller communities, it is very, very expensive to get maintenance done, so if we give a repair program for \$10,000 and we spend all the money just getting the contractor into the community and giving them extra materials, then I worry about what work is actually getting done. I am seeing that there are a lot of expenses already just getting contractors to communities, so I am leery of any kind of policy that would put more expense on people in housing.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for her answer, and I understand her concerns. However, we are talking about people in their own homes, who need these potential materials to help them with other stuff or fixing up later on, renovations. Can the Minister advise this House if this issue was brought up during the survey that was just recently done?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** The issue has been brought up, not only in the survey. It has been brought up in a couple of other areas that I have heard but, when I do let people know that if we were to leave the materials there would be a cost

incurred by the client, then people have not been as eager to take advantage of it.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for her answer. I guess I am a little concerned, though, that it is not information that is shared with all clients. I know in my riding a number of the clients have asked, looking for a small part, you know, a small portion of material like tiles and that. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister be willing to look at or engage her department in looking at this as an opportunity to discuss this with clients and maybe in the future that they have that option available to them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is looking at doing a full review of every policy and every program. When the policy comes up onto home repair, we will take the Member's comments into consideration and see if there is some way that we can either communicate better or provide tenants with the option to be able to purchase leftover materials if they so wish.

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

QUESTION 781-18(2):  
NORTHERN FRONTIER VISITORS CENTRE

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The benefits of visitors' centres to a local economy are indisputable. They increase tourism spending on average by 10 per cent. In Yellowknife, that means \$10 million; as much as \$10 million is infused into our local economy. Can the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment explain what efforts have been made to date in order to preserve that vital service for our community? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this House is well aware, the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre had to be shut down due to structural issues with their building. We have met with them, along with the City of Yellowknife, to have discussions. A short-term fix to this situation, agreed upon by all parties, is to move into the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, which is going to be taking place today and tomorrow. The visitors centre will be open on June 1<sup>st</sup> of this month. That is a short-term solution. Moving forward in the long term, we will be sitting down with the City of Yellowknife and the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre to figure out a long-term

solution that is viable for everybody in this situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** The current agreement for the museum arrangement, the short-term solution, is very short-term. It expires October 1<sup>st</sup>. That is my understanding. What is the Minister doing to prepare the visitor information services post-October 1<sup>st</sup>? Can we guarantee we are going to have some sort of brick-and-mortar location for visitors who are here in the Northwest Territories?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** The intent is to definitely keep the visitors' centre in operation going forward. This is a file that involves not just the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre; it also involves the City of Yellowknife, who plays a big part and who is the biggest beneficiary of the centre. As I have said, we were going to sit down and work with them. Hopefully, the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre can work with us and identify a delivery model that meets the needs of visitors over the long term for the City of Yellowknife and residents of the Northwest Territories.

**MR. TESTART:** I want to ensure that we have something for our aurora season, which is perhaps the highlight of our tourism year, although, as I said earlier, there is plenty to do in this town any time of the year. When it comes to government funding of visitors' centres across the territory, we have seen different models. The ones that work best seems to be the ones where the building is owned by the government and the staff is provided on a contracted basis. These are efficient models that seem to work very well. Is the department considering that in addition to their talks with the NFVA?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As I have said, we want to identify a model that meets the needs of the visitors over the long term, for the residents of Yellowknife and the tourism sector that comes to the Northwest Territories. We are open to all ideas and considerations moving forward, and we will look at anything that is proposed to us.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate that the Minister is keeping an open mind about this. Back to the initial people who provided the service, the Northern Frontier Visitors Association. They are still on the hook for remediating that site, and there is still a very large cost to demolishing the building, remediating the site, and making sure it can be handed back to the government. There has been no commitment made from the government to support those needs. The

honourable Members representing Yellowknife constituencies have made that appeal to the government and asked them to provide that. Is the Minister in a position to comment on that? Will he provide financial relief to this organization that for decades has been providing a vital service that our government has not been in the business of doing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member has pointed out, yes, the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre is responsible for the lease. When they signed that lease a number of years ago, that was with a totally different government, the federal government. Now that we have taken over through devolution, it is in the realm of what we look after. The Department of Lands is responsible for this lease now moving forward. The Department of ITI and Department of Lands, and hopefully the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre, will sit down together and figure out a best way forward of how we are going to help them meet their lease requirements and what we can make available to help and assist them.

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

QUESTION 782-18(2):  
ALCOHOL AND DRUG TREATMENT

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I made a statement on behalf of students from the Chief Sunrise Education Centre on the Hay River Reserve. They made the remark and noted the devastating impacts that alcohol and drugs have had throughout the NWT society. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Social Services: could the Minister update the House in terms of just what it is that this government is doing, along with the First Nations, in terms of determining the future needs of the old treatment centre that has been situated on the reserve, and would it serve a purpose? Mahsi.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reserve has actually submitted a proposal on the use of that particular building on the reserve. Their design includes turning that into more of a wellness centre to provide different types of programming for residents of the Northwest Territories, in particular the South Slave. We have received that proposal. We have reviewed it, and we are working with the band now to turn the building over to them, so that they can move forward with the plan that they have put forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NADLI:** How is this government addressing the crisis of alcohol and drug addictions in the NWT? It is quite clear we do not have a treatment centre that is made in the North for the North.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** As I have said many times, in the last Assembly, the Minister of Health and Social Services conducted a working group of stakeholders to go around the Northwest Territories and talk to people about what they foresee or what they would like to see with respect to supporting individuals with addictions. What was clear is that facility-based treatment centres is not the only option that we needed to consider. We heard loudly and clearly from residents that they want options, not one program that is going to be appropriate for everybody. One of the key things that was identified was more on-the-land programming.

In the Northwest Territories, we support on-the-land programming as an option. We have a mobile treatment option that can go around and use existing facilities, which is an option. We have medical detox available in a number of our hospitals and health centres in the Northwest Territories, and we are looking at seeing how we can expand that over time. We do have counsellors in place in all regions and most communities in the Northwest Territories. We have great partners outside government who are providing different types of programming. We have contracts with treatment facilities in the South that can provide a range of programming that we have never been able to provide in the Northwest Territories due to economies of scale.

We are currently looking at implementing a sobering centre here in Yellowknife. That would be a great transition for individuals who are struggling with addictions today who need a safe place to sleep, but can also start to receive counselling and supports that can lead them to taking up some of the other options, whether it is on-the-land programming or some of our facilities in the South. If that program works here in Yellowknife, Mr. Speaker, there are certainly options to looking at expanding that to the South Slave and to the Beaufort Delta, as examples. There is a lot happening, Mr. Speaker. There are more programs today than there have ever been before. The Member is right; we need to continue to do more, but there is a lot happening.

**MR. NADLI:** The Minister has stated that there is lots happening in terms of dealing with the crisis that we are facing in the NWT. One reality that we are facing is that, within the period of a year, we will likely see the legalization of marijuana. Perhaps that could precipitate statistically more people using marijuana and perhaps enhancing the problems that we already have. With this government, at that

point, I would seriously consider the idea of a treatment centre for the North.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** With the legalization of marijuana in Canada, one of our primary foundations in moving forward is promotion and awareness of the negative impacts of marijuana. This is one of the things that we are going to be working on. Currently, marijuana use is already normalized both in the Northwest Territories and across Canada, which is, I think, one of the reasons the feds may have considered moving forward in this way. The message is still the same, Mr. Speaker. We have heard loud and clear from residents that they want options, and we are looking at providing the widest range of options possible and practical in the Northwest Territories. Things like the sobering centre, on-the-land programming, community counsellors, great partners outside government, as well as the facility-based treatment options that we have with our southern partners -- which provide, honestly, a wider range of programs than were ever able to be provided here in the Northwest Territories -- do provide our residents with choice.

I am not saying we have gone all the way. I am saying that a treatment facility in the North is something we are always going to have to keep on the radar. It might get to a point where it is feasible, practical, and beneficial, but there are other things that we need to keep doing in the interim, including sobering centres and other options for people who are suffering from addictions.

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

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the students that we work with on the reserve have this question in mind, and most likely all residents of the NWT. Perhaps this is the opportunity for the Minister to directly respond to this question to the students and people of the NWT. The question is: why will the GNWT not support a treatment centre in the North for the North? Masi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have actually constructed, built, and run four treatment centres in the Northwest Territories over the last 20-plus years. Where we have had capacity for 32-plus clients in these treatment facilities, at any given time, we might have had a dozen individuals in these facilities. Given the nature of these facilities, a real treatment facility has to be able to provide a wide range of programs, including psychiatric and psychological support, as well as dietary programs and other programs. In the Northwest Territories, we were never able to get a psychologist or psychiatrist to be permanently located in these facilities. There just was not the demand. Also, with

an average of 12 people who are choosing, it is important to recognize that, for a treatment facility, you have to be ready. You have to choose to go to those things. We did not have the numbers to sustain them and keep them operating.

Meanwhile, we have entered into contracts with four incredible facilities in the South that provide a range of programming that has never been equalled here in the Northwest Territories with respect to treatment facilities, and we are getting really positive results. I have had an opportunity to meet individuals who have attended these facilities, who have indicated that they like the supports they are getting from these facilities. They appreciate the programming because it is meeting their needs. I even had some of them make reference to some of the treatment facilities that they attended here in the North, and their indication to me at the time was night and day as far as programming.

I am not saying that the Northwest Territories will never reach that point where we can actually fully fund and fully operate with psychologists and psychiatrists and a range of programs in the Northwest Territories, but at this point, the numbers do not work and make it very difficult to run something that will be successful. We acknowledge what our residents have told us, which is options, Mr. Speaker. We have moved forward with more on-the-land programming, more counselling supports, facility-based mobile treatment options using existing facilities. We are looking at sobering centres. We are looking at a number of different options so our residents can choose which option works best for them. The feedback that I am getting from people who are actually suffering from addictions is that, when they are ready and they use these options, they are getting positive results. We always need to do more, Mr. Speaker, but right now, I do not think there is a justification for the construction of a dedicated treatment facility. It has not worked for the past, and I do not believe we have turned a corner, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 783-18(2):  
EDUCATION SYSTEM INDICATORS

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is just following up on the statements made earlier by the Minister of ECE. Can the Minister clarify for me whether NWT students graduate from high school with an Alberta education diploma? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, NWT students who do meet the required courses graduate with an NWT senior secondary diploma. The NWT has set its own criteria and standards for a high school diploma, and although similar to Alberta's graduation diploma, it does have some differences. We are working with Sahtu communities to ensure that we work on supporting and having access to some of these core courses for the students in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MCNEELY:** That leads me to the other question here on course curriculum delivery. As mentioned here, the beginning of the academic year in 2016-2017, we have seen particularly Math, English, and Social Studies 30-1 to 30-2. Is that being delivered, and what is the progress that we have made so far with the schools that are delivering that criteria?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Mr. Speaker, the four largest Sahtu schools that are in Norman Wells, Tulita, Deline, and Fort Good Hope all offer the basic courses necessary for students to obtain their senior secondary diploma. As for updates on where we are within the school, I can get the specifics and share it with the Member. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, we also met with the leadership with the Sahtu Secretariat. We did offer coming back into the community and having a more formal discussion on how we can work together to improve student outcomes and achieve student success in all communities in the Sahtu region.

**MR. MCNEELY:** I look forward to the Minister's information. My next question is: can the Minister tell me if any Sahtu schools are part of this NWT e-Learning initiative?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Currently no, but I can assure the Member that in the 2017-2018 school year, the school in Fort Good Hope, Chief T'selehye School, has agreed to come on board. It is a great opportunity. We are seeing some very good successes in all the schools that we are providing e-Learning. It is an opportunity to have schools in the small communities be able to obtain and have access to higher academic courses that will get them prepared for post-secondary education.

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

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question: will the Minister provide that information along with the other previous questions and answers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and yes, we can provide that information to the Member, as well as share with the Member when

we do come up with a date to sit down with leadership in the Sahtu to look at addressing other education concerns and work on successes and how we can work together to address some of these education concerns.

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

QUESTION 784-18(2):  
NATIONAL POVERTY CONSULTATION

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for Poverty Reduction. The GNWT has had a poverty reduction strategy for the last four years, and now Ottawa is creating a national strategy. What is the GNWT doing proactively to align these two? Thank you.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yes, the federal government is moving forward on the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction. I have had the opportunity to meet the federal Minister responsible in cooperation and collaboration with my provincial and territorial counterparts, where we had an opportunity to explain some of the realities that we face in our different jurisdictions, talk about some of the actions that we are undertaking, and provide some advice on a broad approach on addressing poverty at a national level.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the federal government has also been doing a number of engagements across Canada, including the Northwest Territories, and we have had our staff attend, sometimes as observers. Where many of the events that the feds were having were invite-only, we have asked that we be there as observers so that we can hear what people are saying and bring that information back to our people who are working on poverty reduction here in the Northwest Territories, but also as an opportunity for me to prep for the next meeting with the federal government where we will be talking about their poverty reduction plan at the next FPT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** As I mentioned in my statement, we need federal help in two priority areas: food and housing. I am wondering how the GNWT is planning to leverage Ottawa's interest in reducing high rates of poverty in the NWT by making changes to programs such as lobbying for changes to Nutrition North and the CMHC declining funding?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The federal government has already indicated that they have already begun flowing some dollars to the



Northwest Territories to address housing specifically, some dollars that they have flowed to the IRC. The Minister responsible for Housing is going to a meeting with Minister Duclos, I think next week, where they are going to discuss the exact issues the Member is referring to, housing. With respect to Nutrition North, Mr. Speaker, we have had different individuals from Cabinet talk to their federal counterparts about our perspectives and trying to make a program that works for residents of the North.

**MS. GREEN:** If the Minister could share that information, that would be very useful to us. In the meantime, I am wondering what it will take to get these issues introduced into the federal engagement strategy along with roads.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** These items are in our mandate. These are issues that, as individual Ministers, we bring up at the appropriate time at the appropriate FPTs to make sure that the federal government is aware of our realities, but also the realities of Canadians from other jurisdictions. We do raise those issues on a regular basis, and we are going to continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to re-ask that question because I did not hear an answer. We have a federal engagement strategy. It talks about infrastructure. Housing is infrastructure. I am wondering if we are going to see some of the issues raised in the poverty consultation in the federal engagement strategy. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal engagement strategy is part of the work that we do as the Government of the Northwest Territories. We engage with stakeholders from all over the country, including Aboriginal governments here in the Northwest Territories and the federal government, on a regular basis. I have a number of mandate items that I am responsible for that did not appear in the federal engagement strategy, but that in no way, shape, or form limits my ability to raise those issues and fight on behalf of the residents of the Northwest Territories, which I and my colleagues are committed to doing and will continue to do, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 785-18(2):  
CANADIAN ZINC SITE LIABILITIES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today, I spoke about the current unsecured environmental liabilities at the Prairie Creek site. There are numerous buildings and pieces of infrastructure at the site that would require remediation. Can the Minister of Lands tell me the current amount of financial security held under the surface lease and water licence for this site? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise that the amount held is in excess of \$2 million, broken down as follows: \$1,550,000 is held as a guaranteed investment certificate under the water licence; \$250,000 is held as cash under the surface lease; and an additional \$275,000 is held as cash under land use permits, for a total amount of \$2,075,000. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I appreciate the response from the Minister, and that agrees with his written response to a written question I asked last year in the House. In doing some extra research, I noted that the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, in a June 14, 2013, decision on a water licence and land use permit by Canadian Zinc, found that the environmental liability at the site for what is there on the ground right now is about \$9 million. We only hold a little over \$2 million. That is a \$7 million gap, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell me: what is his department doing to close that security gap between the liabilities that are at this site and what we actually hold?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, I understand that the most recent cost estimates were carried out in 2013, where it was found that the current site liability is \$9 million, and I understand that the way that we are looking at this is we are ensuring that the proponent is in compliance with all current security requirements. However, as the project proceeds, there may be a need for more security in the future.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I am worried about the liability that is on the ground now, and clearly, security that we have in place does not cover that. There is a \$7 million shortfall, and I did not really hear a plan from the Minister to deal with it. I know that, as I mentioned earlier today, the surface lease for the site is in overhold tenancy. If our government moves to extend or renew the surface lease for the site, we may incur some additional liability. Will the Minister commit that he is going to seek legal advice to ensure that, by dealing with that lease in some way, it is not going to make us responsible for all the remediation at the site, and will he share that

legal advice or opinion with the Regular MLAs on this side on a confidential basis?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Currently, the proponent, of course, is responsible for all remediation. The proponent holds the lease for mine site maintenance. The Government of the Northwest Territories is currently protected from the historic liability through the terms of the Devolution Agreement. Now, at some point in the future, Canadian Zinc, the proponent in this case, if they wish to begin negotiations for us to receive a surface lease authorizing the company to commence actual mining activities at the Prairie Creek site, the full amount of reclamation securities to cover the existing and historic liabilities for the mine site would be assessed by the GNWT. Now, it is a complicated legal issue. I will seek further legal advice on this, which I may share with the Members opposite.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** That is a tough act to follow, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I think I actually heard the word "will," not "may," but it is hard to say with the Minister. I look forward to chatting with him offline about that. That is one thing that, when we start to touch the surface lease in some way, we could be incurring some liability, but he is going to get something even sooner on his desk, perhaps. The Prairie Creek All-Season Road is going through an environmental assessment, as I said, and I don't want to put him in a difficult spot here.

That report of environmental assessment is going to land on his desk in the next several months, so what are the implications for our government in making a decision about that environmental assessment? As I had mentioned earlier, every time our fingerprints start to come out on these sites, it is going to become more challenging to convince the federal government that they are responsible. What are the implications of making a decision on the environmental assessment, with regard to our government's risk of incurring remediation liabilities? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The road involved, of course, does not only go across territorial lands, but also part of a national park. Now, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada will sign the decision letter for the Prairie Creek road environmental assessment, and we will contribute to the decision process, so it is a combination of us working with them once this is determined. I do share the Member opposite's concern about this. I think we all recognize that there can be downsides to development, but hopefully there is a sufficient regulatory system and security in place to allay those concerns.

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

QUESTION 786-18(2):  
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY  
INITIATIVES

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency. Earlier today I spoke about some of the good work that the Minister and his staff are doing with regard to this. I also mentioned that there is a need to accelerate a number of the initiatives that we have made commitments to. I understand that the Minister and his staff are in the process of holding public engagement on the open government policy. I wonder: can the Minister inform us if this policy will be coming forward as a draft to the standing committee? In other words, when will Members see a copy of the draft? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member opposite is quite correct; we have been holding public engagement meetings throughout the Northwest Territories. We had the opportunity of visiting all of the ridings, and there was a total of 13 meetings; actually, 15 meetings, because there were two extra ones in Yellowknife, meetings with NGOs and the media. We are now preparing a What We Heard document. The last meeting with the public here in Yellowknife was a mere two weeks ago, and we are still receiving comments. A What We Heard document is in the process of being prepared, which will be tabled in this Assembly. Then Cabinet will be preparing a policy which we will, of course, take to the appropriate committee. Thank you.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you to the Minister for his reply and for his commitment to bring forward a draft policy to the respective standing committee. We, of course, look forward to seeing what the department has heard during their consultation period. Mr. Speaker, for the record, can the Minister advise this House when he is planning to introduce ombudsman legislation?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** One of the commitments of this legislature and included in our mandate, of course, which was developed by all of us together, is to establish the office of an ombudsman. We have sent a legislative proposal to standing committee, and we are looking forward to their response.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** To be frank, I think that the standing committee has kind of given a response already to the Minister with regard to the LP

information, but I am going to move on. The Minister knows that the mandate calls for this government to find ways to report to the public on how their input is influencing government decision-making, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell this House the approaches that he is considering to fulfill this commitment, and when he might see the results of this work?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** The position on this is multi-faceted. There are many things that we are doing. I mentioned already that we have been having public engagement with respect to open policy. I have referred to the ombudsman legislation, which hopefully will come forth in due course. Also, we are looking at improvements to the ATIPP Act. I can advise also that, quite apart from those initiatives, of course, Cabinet has been going out and we have held five open meetings with the public in Norman Wells, Inuvik, Hay River, Fort Simpson, and Yellowknife. Further meetings of this type are being planned. I also, with respect to this issue, don't think I could forget the good work that is being done by the Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure, which is opening up the committee system.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I appreciate some of the things that the Minister has identified as the initiatives that we are doing as a government and that are under way, but there is one that is specific, and I am going to give the Minister another opportunity to maybe clarify, and that is: we have indicated that the mandate calls for us to find ways for the government to report to the public on how their input is influencing government decision-making. Again, I would like to know from the Minister if he can tell the House the approaches that they are considering to fulfill this commitment, and when we might see the results of this work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, an important element of the Open Government Policy was public engagement. We went around to the communities, and one of the things we did hear was concerns about, when information was provided by the public, how it was dealt with by the government. We wanted to make it clear that there were different types of engagements with the public. There were sessions in which information was merely provided, and others that we were seeking their input and engagement, so that helps us form legislation and policy. Engaging with the public is an important element of what we have been doing, and it will be reflected in the What We Heard document and policy.

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

QUESTION 787-18(2):  
STATUS OF HAY RIVER HEALTH AUTHORITY

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been quite a talkative question period. I wasn't sure I was going to make it up here. Mr. Speaker, last week I discussed the benefits and the challenges of bringing the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority into the NWT Health and Social Services Authority. The Minister stated that the roadblock to this was the cost of bringing Hay River's authority's pension into the public service, probably somewhere north of about \$20 million now. Meanwhile, the government is topping off this pension to the tune of \$1 million a year. Today, I want to address some questions to the Minister of Health, to begin determining how this issue is affecting Hay River.

First off, I believe it is possible for employees of the NWT Health authority to work in any region covered by that authority. Are there impediments to employees from the Hay River Authority working at NWT Health and Social Services Authority facilities, for example, for professional development purposes and vice versa? For example, if Hay River needed a position covered for a certain amount of time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it certainly is more complicated for a GNWT employee to do a transfer assignment into an organization like the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, because it is outside the collective agreement. It is outside the public service. If an individual within the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority was looking for a developmental opportunity, we could put him or her on a transfer assignment, which really would have no impact on the benefits. They would still be employees of the public service, and we could move them into a different job for a developmental opportunity.

If we wanted to do the same for an employee of Hay River, for instance, we wanted one of our RNs in Hay River to maybe come to Stanton and spend some time in the emergency room, which has a higher level of acuity and more challenging cases, that person would likely have to leave or at least go on a leave from the Hay River Health and Social Services, which could have adverse effects on their pension. They wouldn't be earning pension with Hay River, and then come on a job opportunity which they would probably have to apply for through normal processes.

There are certainly some drawbacks for the employees of the Hay River authority, if they want to go to other areas of government and gain some skills. The same is true back, Mr. Speaker. We have an individual in one of our communities in the Northwest Territories, including Yellowknife, who wanted to go to Hay River for a developmental opportunity. They have a fantastic dialysis unit down there. Because it is a different public service, it would complicate our ability to put that individual in there. There is difficulty both ways.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you to the Minister for that answer. As a follow-up, there was recently a health crisis in one of the regions, and staff from Stanton was dispatched virtually immediately, as far as I understand, to provide assistance in that region. Does the fact that Hay River is not part of the Territorial Health authority mean it would be more difficult to do this for Hay River, if we needed emergency staff in Hay River?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** We would find a way to make it happen if there was an emergency situation in Hay River and they needed immediate support. We would find a way, but it would be more difficult. You would probably have to involve a number of memorandums of understanding to allow health professionals from outside that authority to actually work in that facility and provide care in that facility. It is possible. We would do it because we don't want the residents of Hay River and the surrounding area to be adversely affected. From an operational point of view, it would definitely be more complicated.

I would like to say that there is significant goodwill on both the department and territorial authority when working with Hay River, and great goodwill back, but it is certainly a more complicated situation.

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you to the Minister, again, for that answer. The Hay River Health Centre serves a large area of the South Slave, and because of the size and sophistication of the new facility, it has the capacity to house additional services, including services that are currently only available in Yellowknife. This would allow South Slave residents to be treated in Hay River, which would save costs on travel and justify the costs of the new health centre. Would bringing the Hay River Health authority into the NWT Health authority facilitate new and expanded services being implemented at the Hay River Health Centre?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** With the single territorial authority here in the Northwest Territories, it gives us an opportunity to re-evaluate the programs we are providing and where we are providing them with the possible opportunities to reach out with additional services, given that we

have a collaborative system. That is obviously complicated in Hay River, recognizing that they are outside the public service, but it is a fantastic new hospital. It has a long life. It was built to grow and meet the changing needs of the region and the community. In short, Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, it is an area that would be great for expansion, but there are complications given that they are outside the public service.

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

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally, the Hay River health authority has problems attracting physicians. It seems like we are always understaffed. We are always relying on locums to a greater extent than, say, Yellowknife. Hay River is competing to hire from the same pool as the NWT health authority. Is the Minister aware if the underperforming pension at the Hay River health authority is a factor in its inability to recruit staff? Has he heard of this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, medical professions in the Northwest Territories are at a different collective agreement, a different bargaining block, and they have different pension plans and a different salary system. We don't really have that problem with physicians at a territorial level. They can go to Hay River; they have rights in Hay River and Stanton. Where it is a problem is with the staff, the unionized staff within the Hay River Authority, but unionized staff and staff outside the Hay River Authority. I have had the opportunity to talk to individuals who would really like an opportunity to work in the Hay River Authority, because it is a great new building. It is a great community. There are lots of opportunities there, but are unwilling to consider employment in Hay River because they don't want to lose their GNWT pension, which is a Cadillac compared to the K-car that is the Hay River pension that we have to put new tires and do a tune-up on every year just to keep it on the road. There are individuals who are worried about going to Hay River, and, at the same time, there are employees within the Hay River Authority who would probably like the opportunity to do developmental assignments outside the Hay River Authority, but leaving that employ will impact their pension and their future retirement, so there are concerns.

These are issues that are not new. I have made commitments in this House before that I am committed to bringing Hay River into the public service. I have directed the staff to redo the business case in light of where we are today to see if we can find a way to bring that forward. It is going to have to compete against a lot of different initiatives, but I believe it is the right thing to do. We

will continue to work to find a way to make that happen.

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

QUESTION 788-18(2):  
MACKENZIE DELTA FOREST FIRE  
OPERATIONS

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, with the fire season upon us, I would like to ask the Minister: when does the Minister expect our fire crews in my riding of the Mackenzie Delta to start up for the season? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That level of detail, I do not have at my fingertips. I will follow up with the department and see when they are mobilizing, but I would assume that, because it is starting to warm up, they are probably getting ready for the fire season. I will confirm that, and I will share that information with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, returns to written questions. Item 11, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 378-18(2):  
2016 ANNUAL REPORT OFFICE OF THE FIRE  
MARSHAL

TABLED DOCUMENT 379-18(2):  
25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY NWT OUTSTANDING  
VOLUNTEER AWARD RECIPIENTS 1991-2016

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "2016 Annual Report Office of the Fire Marshal" and "25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary NWT Outstanding Volunteer Award Recipients 1991-2016." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 380-18(2):  
NWT MINERAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015-2016

TABLED DOCUMENT 381-18(2):  
2017-2018 CORPORATE PLAN NWT BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT  
CORPORATION

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "NWT Mineral Development Strategy Annual Report for 2015-2016" and "2017-2018 Corporate Plan NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation."

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 382-18(2):  
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
CANADA TECHNICAL PAPER ON  
THE FEDERAL CARBON PRICING BACKSTOP

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table the following document entitled "Environment and Climate Change Canada Technical Paper on the Federal Carbon Pricing Backstop." Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 28:  
INTERPRETATION ACT

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, I will move that Bill 28, Interpretation Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 29:  
MISCELLANEOUS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT  
ACT, 2017

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 1, 2017, I will move that Bill 29, Miscellaneous Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017 be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Member for Frame Lake.

BILL 30:  
HEALTH STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT  
(CREMATION SERVICES)

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, I will move that Bill 30, Health Statutes Amendment Act (Cremation Services), be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

### First Reading of Bills

BILL 27:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE ENVIRONMENT  
PROTECTION ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Environment Protection Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is on the floor. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 27 has had its first reading. First reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 24:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE CORONER'S ACT

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Coroner's Act, be read for the second time. This bill amends the Coroner's Act to allow for the assembly of a jury panel from which an inquest jury may be selected, outline the procedure for selecting jurors from the jury panel, allow persons to be excused from jury service in certain circumstances, allow the chief coroner to create rules of procedure for inquests, and improve the clarity and readability of certain provisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 24 has had its second reading and is now referred to committee. Second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

BILL 25:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE RESIDENTIAL  
TENANCIES ACT

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 25, An Act to Amend the Residential Tenancies Act, be read for the second time. This bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act to adjust the definition of "tenant," provide authority to rental officers to correct minor errors in their orders and decisions, require that orders and decisions of rental officers be filed in accordance with the regulations, allow for regulations to establish methods for filing orders and decisions of rental officers, and address inconsistencies and improve the clarity and readability of certain provisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 25 has had its second reading and is now referred to committee. Second reading of bills. Minister for Infrastructure.

BILL 26:  
AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING FUNDS  
ACT, NO. 2

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2, be read for the second time. This bill amends the Revolving Funds Act to establish a revolving fund for the purpose of meeting the capital, operating, and maintenance requirements for providing marine transportation services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. First off, I would like to start by saying that in no way am I opposed to our government operating the marine transportation system, and I believe that we had to do it at the time. I do support us operating the system and continuing to supply our communities with fuel and other supplies as necessary.

What I am opposed to, though, is setting this up as a revolving fund. My objections, Mr. Speaker, really stem from two things. First off, by setting it up as a revolving fund, capital spending will be removed from the regular capital budgeting process, and I believe that this will remove our ability as Regular MLAs to have thorough oversight of capital expenditures. For that reason, I am opposed to the bill.

Secondly, the purpose of the bill as specified here is for the purpose of meeting the capital, operating, and maintenance requirements for providing marine transportation services for the movement of cargo on Great Slave Lake, Mackenzie River, and throughout the Arctic coastal region. What I believe that this bill has not spoken to, and we certainly raised in the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment, is whether these funds could be used to pay for remediation of many of the contaminated sites from the previous operator that our government has now inherited. By limiting the purpose of the revolving fund to these purposes alone, I don't see remediation of contaminated sites in here. I am not suggesting that that be a core purpose of the revolving fund but, if this operation were to generate excess profits of one sort or another, I don't understand why they could not be used to offset some of the remediation costs. Otherwise, they are going to come back to the taxpayers of the Northwest Territories.

We raised this at committee. There was no movement from the Minister on rejigging the purpose of the bill, and so I will continue to oppose the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The motion has been carried.

---Carried

Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 74(2) and have Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2, moved into Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill 26 is now referred to committee for further consideration. Masi. Second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act; Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act; Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services

Professions Act; Bill 26, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2; Committee Report 10-18(2): Report on the Review of Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

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

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Committee would like to consider Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We will take a very brief five-minute break and resume. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I will now call the Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act, as amended and reprinted. I will ask the Minister responsible for the bill to introduce it. Minister Abernethy.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to be here today to introduce Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act. The current Health and Social Services Professions Act is an umbrella statute that will regulate a number of different health and social services professions. Before the act can come into force, amendments are required to address some oversights that were missed during the original drafting. These amendments were not identified until the department began developing the first profession-specific regulations.

The amendments addressing the oversights include:

- requiring professionals to maintain continuing competency records;
- authorizing the registrar to inspect, examine, or audit records to ensure a professional is fulfilling their continuing competency requirements; and
- authorizing the Minister to approve items such as exams, programs, and guidelines for each

profession.

Since statutes cannot be repealed or revised by regulations, Bill 18 also proposes consequential amendments on behalf of the first two profession-specific regulations for emergency medical services providers and psychologists. Since a bill was required to address oversights and consequential amendments, the department took advantage of this opportunity to expand and clarify existing registers in the act and the information that should be disclosed to the public in relation to a complaints and discipline process.

These proposed amendments include:

- clarifying the information that must be included in the registrar's public register, including when the registrar places conditions on, suspends, or cancels a licence;
- expanding the information a complaints officer must record in their register to include the entire complaints and discipline process; and
- identifying what complaints and discipline information the complaints officer must direct the registrar to record in the public register.

Finally, amendments are proposed to restrict the use, collection, disclosure, and communication of personal health information throughout the act to ensure sensitive information is protected. Mr. Chair, I am happy to answer any questions Members may have.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. I will now turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Social Development, the committee that considered the bill, for any opening comments that he may have. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Standing Committee on Social Development conducted public hearings on Bill 18 on April 6<sup>th</sup> in Yellowknife, on April 10<sup>th</sup> in Inuvik, and April 12<sup>th</sup> in Hay River. A clause-by-clause hearing was held on May 25<sup>th</sup> on the bill and was subsequently amended and reprinted. Members may have additional comments, or we may proceed with the bill. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

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

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On my right is Lisa Cardinal, the director of planning and evaluation with the Department of Health and Social Services, and on my left, Thomas Druyan, who is legislative counsel.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I'm sorry, Minister. Could you please repeat those names?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I went too fast? On my right is Lisa Cardinal. She is the director of corporate planning and evaluation; on my left is Thomas Druyan, who is legislative counsel.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. I open the floor to general comments. Do we have any general comments on Bill 18? Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I beg forgiveness from the Minister here. I had a constituent complaint not that long ago from a veterinarian. Are veterinarians covered under this legislation? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** No, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Mr. O'Reilly? Nothing further for opening comments from Mr. O'Reilly. Anything further from committee? I see nothing. Does committee agree there are no further opening comments? Agreed.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Can we proceed to a clause-by-clause review of the bill? Thank you, committee. We will defer the bill number and title until after consideration of the clauses. Please turn to page 1 of the bill. I will call out each clause, and committee may respond "agreed" if committee agrees. Clause 1.

---Clauses 1 through 16 inclusive approved

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. Committee, to the bill of the whole, does the committee agree that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act as amended and reprinted, is now ready for third reading?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. Bill 18 is now ready for third reading. Does committee agree that this concludes our consideration of Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health



and Social Services Professions Act as amended and reprinted?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to your witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

What is the wish of committee? Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that we report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion on the floor to rise and report progress. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** We will now rise and report progress.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act, and would like to report that Bill 18 is ready for third reading as amended and reprinted; and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Do I have a seconder? Member for Kam Lake.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

### Third Reading of Bills

#### BILL 17: AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. Member for Kam Lake.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to request a recorded vote.

### RECORDED VOTE

**MR. SPEAKER:** The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. There has been a request for a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** The Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, the Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Yellowknife South.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the vote, 16 in favour; zero opposed; and zero abstentions.

---Carried

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

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** Orders of the day for Wednesday, May 31, 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

- Bill 27, An Act to Amend the Environmental Protection Act

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

- Bill 15, An Act to Amend the Tobacco Tax Act
- Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act
- Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act
- Committee Report 10-18(2)

## 21. Report of Committee of the Whole

## 22. Third Reading of Bills Matters

- Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act

## 23. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, May 31, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 4:46 p.m.