



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

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(Monfwi)

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(Thebacha)
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Tuesday, October 17, 2017****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

---Singing of O Canada

Prayer

---Prayer [English translation not provided]

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Mr. Clerk, would you ascertain if the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret M. Thom, is prepared to enter the Chamber to open the Third Session of the 18th Legislative Assembly?

Commissioner's Opening Address

COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Margaret M. Thom): Please be seated. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, Ministers and Members, ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour to welcome you to the third session of the 18th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

This session comes at approximately the halfway point in the life of the 18th Assembly and follows the recent review and adoption of the revised Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019. Yours is the first Legislative Assembly to have formally adopted a mandate to clearly set out its plan for achieving the priorities you have selected on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories.

I commend and congratulate you for this new step in improved transparency and accountability and for your continued commitment to better serving the people of the Northwest Territories. The revised mandate adopted at the end of the Second Session of the Legislative Assembly on October 4, 2017, includes changes proposed by both Cabinet and the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning and discussed among all Members in Caucus meetings.

These changes take into account both the progress made on mandate commitments over the first half of this Legislative Assembly, as well as new challenges and opportunities that have arisen since the mandate was first adopted in March 2016. With your revised mandate, the 18th Legislative Assembly now has a strong and clear plan for

advancing its shared priorities during the remainder of its term. In its revised mandate, your government has renewed its commitment to grow, diversify, and modernize the NWT economy so that territorial residents have the jobs and opportunities that they need support themselves and their families.

The knowledge economy will become an increasingly important part of the NWT economy in the future, and your government has made a commitment to foster and develop this sector. Actions to support the knowledge economy will include supporting the development and growth of post-secondary institutions and programs available in the NWT.

Your government will also support the feasibility of creating a Northern Centre for Excellence to promote and support research, innovation, and use of traditional Indigenous knowledge. Supporting local food production is another area for economic growth that will also help reduce Northerners' cost of living and promote health.

In partnership with other organizations, your government will support the creation of a central repository to research, store, and share knowledge and best practices for Northern farming and greenhouse technology. Recognizing that resource development will continue to be an important foundation of the NWT economy, your government will also ensure high-quality geoscience knowledge is available to support exploration and discovery, and will increase public awareness about how NWT renewable and non-renewable resources can be developed in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Northerners expect jobs and opportunities in small communities in every region, not just in Yellowknife or regional centres. That is why your government has made a commitment to enhance job creation programs in small communities, build community capacity, and support new economic opportunities.

The new Rural and Remote Communities Committee established to bring together Cabinet Ministers and small community MLAs will be an important source of ideas and advice for helping the residents of the NWT's smallest communities.

NWT residents expect their government to provide them with good, accessible opportunities for

education from the earliest ages so they have the tools and learning they need to achieve their hopes and aspirations. That is why your government has renewed its commitment in its revised mandate to continue investing in quality early childhood development and supporting the JK to grade 12 system.

Your government has also renewed its commitment to expanding opportunities for post-secondary education, trades-oriented learning, and northern educational institutions. Its commitments include developing legislation to outline a quality assurance system to support the recognition of post-secondary institutions and completing the Foundational Review of Aurora College.

Through Aurora College and other educational partners, your government has also committed to develop and promote post-secondary programs designed to meet needs in high-demand occupations identified in the Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment (2016).

Cost of living has a direct impact on Northerners' quality of life and opportunities for economic growth, and that is why your government has renewed its commitment to focus on cost drivers that directly affect families in its revised mandate.

Addressing the urgent need for affordable housing is a particular priority for your government, and it is making a new commitment to reduce the number of households in core housing need in the NWT by 250 households per year for the next three years. As part of this, your government will create a comprehensive and fully costed plan to reduce core need, develop housing programs and services to deliver households from core need, and ensure that they reflect community values and priorities.

Your government will also address the shortage of market housing in tax-based communities through collaboration with stakeholders, including the private sector, other governments, and third-party organizations. The high cost of energy is another burden on Northerners, and your government is committed to increasing the production and transmission of renewable and alternative energy.

Your government will implement a new NWT Energy Strategy that will include renewable and alternative energy solutions and actions to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets and a 10-year strategy for investing federal and other funding.

Your government will also continue to develop and advance initiatives to displace diesel generation, including Taltson expansion and the Inuvik High Point Wind Project, as well as other hydro, wind, solar, and biomass projects.

Your government has also renewed its commitment to making childcare available and affordable, including creating an action plan for a phased-in approach. It has committed to support the creation of new child care spaces and programs in all communities and to ensure the sustainability of existing early childhood development programs.

Your government's revised mandate includes a new commitment to support communities in crisis by providing appropriate responses to suicide, including forming a crisis response network and providing specialized trauma-informed training and critical incident stress debriefing training. It will build surge capacity so there is coverage for team members and use the expertise of the crisis response network to promote enhanced suicide intervention activities.

To continue its work to reduce poverty, your government will work collaboratively by funding community-based partners and convening meetings of stakeholders. It will collect and report annually on indicators for assessing performance in reducing poverty and will ensure continuous quality improvement in the administration of the Anti-Poverty Fund.

Your government has also made new commitments in its revised mandate to implement a territorial 911 program and to develop and implement the policy, program, and legislative regimes to support the legalization of cannabis in the NWT.

Your government's revised mandate renews its commitment to improve governance in the NWT by improving accountability, transparency, and collaboration. That includes recognition of the need for improved communications between Cabinet and Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly and a revised commitment to ensure early, regular, and open consultation by Cabinet with Regular Members and committees of the Legislative Assembly.

The revised mandate continues your government's commitment to collaborating and fostering government-to-government relationships with Aboriginal governments. It continues to be committed to advancing, finalizing, and implementing land, resources, and self-government agreements and to building stronger relationships with community governments and stakeholders.

The revised mandate also continues your government's commitment to supporting initiatives to increase the number of women running for elected office in the NWT. Taken together, the commitments set out in the Revised Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, 2016-2019, provides a clear plan and road map for achieving the priorities of the 18th Legislative

Assembly in the areas of economy; environment and climate change; education, training and youth development; cost of living; community wellness and safety; and governance.

I wish you well in your efforts and look forward to the progress that you will make on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories. During this session, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be introducing the following bills for consideration by the House:

- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2017-2018;
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2017-2018; and
- Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2018-2019.

The government considers these bills essential to the good conduct of government business and, as such, I recommend their passage. As Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I now declare open the third session of the 18th Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Mahsi Cho, Quanani, Koana, merci beaucoup, thank you.

---Applause

MR. SPEAKER: On behalf of all Members of this House, I would like to thank Commissioner Thom for opening the third session of the 18th Legislative Assembly. I would also like to thank Mrs. Alphonsine McNeely from Fort Good Hope for leading us in prayer, and I thank Katie Schauerte from Yellowknife for her beautiful rendition of the national anthem.

Colleagues, earlier today, Mr. Fred Carmichael was inducted into the Order of the Northwest Territories for his work in business. Mr. Carmichael was the first Aboriginal person from Canada's Arctic region to receive a commercial pilot's license and during his 60-year career in aviation he has proved himself to be a valuable mentor, teacher, entrepreneur, and a business leader. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Carl Michael on his many achievements and an inductee into the Order of the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Colleagues, this Chamber is and will continue to be a place for lively debate, powerful questions, and meaningful answers. However, this Chamber is also a place of great honour and respect. It is a great honour that we have been elected by our people to represent them here. Masi. Respect for

institution and for each other, for our constituents, and all of the people of the Northwest Territories. Our actions and our words can carry great meaning and have lasting effects. We must choose them wisely. Masi. Item 3, Ministers' statements. Minister of Justice.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 1-18(3): NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX INMATE CONCERNS

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week an unprecedented package of 70 letters from inmates at the North Slave Correctional Complex were addressed and delivered to myself and several MLAs.

These letters outlined common themes that focus on issues surrounding programming at the facility, as they work to make positive changes in their lives. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that these concerns from inmates are not being taken lightly. I have directed the department to respond to each of these letters without delay. In fact, last week, the warden of the facility has started to have direct conversations with the inmates regarding these concerns.

We have a well-established process within each of our correctional facilities for inmates to raise concerns and report back on how they can be addressed. I can confirm many of the issues they have raised in these letters have not been brought forward through the inmate advisory committee meetings. This does not mean that the inmates' concerns raised in these letters are being discounted. As I have said, we will be communicating with inmates to ensure that they know how they can access programs, as well as how they can continue to prepare to reintegrate back in their community.

Mr. Speaker, within our correctional facilities, programs have been created to allow offenders to help address the root causes that lead an individual to criminal behaviour. Programs are delivered in a way that recognize the importance of culture, and take into consideration the short time that most territorial inmates are incarcerated.

We have not reduced programs available at the NSCC. In the past three years, we have seen 330 inmates access or enrol in educational programs at NSCC. Since April 2014 to today, 278 inmates have completed a variety of programs, including sex offender programs and the new modular programs to address violence prevention, substance abuse management and respectful relationships. In addition to these core and educational programs, 11 other programs, including Alcoholics

Anonymous and the John Howard Society workbook series, are offered.

An adult literacy basic education program is also available for those needing this support. For others who may be a few courses away from their high school diploma, teaching staff will work with them to work towards obtaining required credits. This includes access to the regular high school curriculum. A traditional counsellor continues to offer cultural programs within the facility, while the larger yard security issues are being addressed. This restriction of use of one outdoor area is time limited. It is expected to be re-opened by the end of the year, once necessary security upgrades are in place.

Members are aware that we have challenges in the North delivering programming to inmates due to the average sentence of less than three months. For most, it can seem like they just get started and then their sentence is complete and they are released. Since I have been Minister of Justice, new modular units of programming were created, taking into consideration the sentences of our territorial inmates. For example, with the support of trained probation officers, work to address violence prevention, respectful relationships, and substance abuse management is able to continue in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am ready to work with any Member who needs more information in order to assist their constituents' concerns. These inmates need to know they are not left without resources. I commend them as they try to better themselves, and I am committed to ensuring they know how to access the tools that are in place to allow that to happen. Staff in our corrections services are dedicated to providing the safe and secure custody of inmates, and supporting the successful reintegration of inmates upon their release. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue this work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, that Minister's Statement 1-18(3) delivered by the honourable Louis Sebert regarding North Slave Correctional Centre inmate concerns be moved into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

The motion is carried. Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 2-18(3):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING
CORPORATION STRATEGIC RENEWAL**

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on the progress of the Strategic Renewal that is being undertaken by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. The Housing Engagement Survey was used to identify what is working, what needs improvement, and what is missing for housing programs. Each policy and program is currently being revised in consideration of these needs, as well as ensuring that programs meet the mandate commitments, are effective in meeting their objectives and are appropriate and efficient through considering alternative design and delivery approaches.

Action on Strategic Renewal is already under way. As one fellow Member of the Legislative Assembly has stated, "We are starting to pick the low-hanging fruit." One key issue we heard was the need to improve customer service. Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. This is especially true when providing a critical support, such as housing, often to the most vulnerable in society. In response, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is now providing customer service training. All program, finance, and technical staff, senior management, and our Local Housing Organizations partners will have access to this training on an annual basis.

Members of the Legislative Assembly identified, and the survey confirmed, financial challenges as an obstacle for homeowners and many residents. In response, we have made changes to address the cost of living. Households earning under \$60,000 per year will no longer be required to make a co-payment for repair programs.

We are launching a Fuel Tank Replacement initiative. The initiative will assist homeowners to cover the cost of replacing above-ground fuel tanks that do not meet current standards or are in poor condition, through a one-time forgivable loan. We have made policy improvements to allow family members to take over the forgivable loans of their parents or siblings who have either passed or need to move to access long-term medical care. This change will help ensure the continuity of community housing, avoid family hardship, and decrease vacant housing.

We will be addressing affordability in market communities through two approaches. One will be

expanding financial partnerships with non-government organizations to provide rental payment assistance and housing stability support within a Housing First model. We will also re-launch the rent supplement program, which will contain stronger supports and be streamlined to ensure better access.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of living is often felt hardest by our aging population. It is critical to provide support for seniors to continue living independently in their home communities. As such, seniors will now be able to access a new repair program specifically designed to extend the longevity and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. This funding can be accessed on top of our Contributing Assistance for Repairs and Enhancements program. We will also be completing a senior housing planning study over the next few months in order to define demand and urgency as well as to identify design features desired to meet seniors' needs for a new home.

We also need to promote wellness and healthy choices. We want to retain our young people in our communities and build our knowledge base, so we need common sense solutions to support students in public housing. Students can now go away to school for four years without having to worry that they will lose their unit or have to fulfill a residency requirement upon their return to their community.

All of these initiatives begin today, and we will continue this work in the near future. In the coming months, a new program will be finalized which will support tenants in purchasing their homes that they live in. Creating pathways from public housing to homeownership was a prominent theme throughout the survey. There are public housing tenants that have the capacity to own and maintain their own home, but there is no market in their communities. This initiative will provide a homeownership option for residents who may not be able to access traditional lending sources.

We are developing online home maintenance training materials for residents and increasing the effectiveness of our website and social media presence. We are working on a pilot project to have a housing support worker engage one-on-one with tenants facing eviction, to assist them in successfully maintaining their housing.

We now have a Community Housing Support initiative that partners with local and Indigenous governments to implement innovative and community-driven housing projects and, to further support, we are creating individual Community Housing Plans.

Mr. Speaker, corporate change is a long and challenging process. This change began with the

previous governments, which set the stage for renewal by stabilizing and rationalizing the operations of the Housing Corporation through improved systems and rigorous financial accountability. Now, we must build upon this progress to become even more responsive to our residents.

We are leaving no stone unturned in our actions. A variety of options are being considered, including new programs, educational components, pilot projects, research into challenging issues, and policy improvements. We are planning focused, fiscally responsible investments in the short-term, while striving for adequate, affordable, and suitable housing for all residents in the long term.

Mr. Speaker, I have been driving the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation hard to make these necessary changes and I am pleased to see the progress made so far. We still have much more to do, and I am excited to lead them on that progress over the next two years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 3-18(3):
INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, more than 50 years ago Prime Minister John Diefenbaker announced his goal to connect Canada coast to coast to coast.

Today, I am pleased to announce the official opening of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway will be held on November 15, 2017. Canada's first highway to the Arctic Ocean will finally connect the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk to our all-season highway system, while allowing for new economic opportunities, increased tourism, improved accessibility to health care, and a lower cost of living for residents.

The success of this project can only be attributed to the dedicated crews who have put in long days and nights during some of the coldest and darkest times of winter. Their dedication has allowed the project to proceed as planned. Before I get into the details of the official opening, I'd first like to reflect on the immense benefits the project has already brought to the Beaufort Delta region.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the project up to 600 people have been employed, and 74 per cent of that total have been residents of the Northwest Territories, with an estimated 10 per cent of the people employed being women. Not only were we committed to hiring locally, we also trained local. Roughly 185 people have received training and educational opportunities throughout the project,

such as wildlife monitoring and heavy equipment operation. These training opportunities underscore our government's commitment toward developing a strong northern workforce.

In total, there have been over 136,000 person days of employment since the start of construction, 98,000 of which were NWT residents. This does not include employees who have worked for 41 subcontractors, of which 83 per cent were awarded to northern companies. While construction of the highway has already benefited the region's economy, this is only the beginning, Mr. Speaker. Through the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, our government is working to position residents and businesses in the Beaufort Delta region to capitalize on economic opportunities from year-round road access.

The new highway will make exploration of oil and gas more feasible. In fact, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation is currently seeking federal funding to study the possibility of developing gas fields along the new route. From a tourism perspective, this new connection to the Arctic Ocean will attract visitors interested in exploring the natural beauty of the Beaufort Delta. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment is already planning to promote this spectacular experience, and is working with the community of Tuktoyaktuk on a proposed tourism-focused celebration of the opening of the highway during the summer of 2018, as well as to identify and fund tourism products and infrastructure needed to meet the increased demand and opportunity that more visitors will bring.

Mr. Speaker, the opening celebrations this fall will be of national significance, as we mark the first time Canada will be connected by highway from coast to coast to coast. Significantly, the project has been designated as one of four Canada 150 signature infrastructure projects by the federal government. As we approach the official opening on November 15th, the Department of Infrastructure is working closely with the Town of Inuvik and the Hamlet of Tuktoyaktuk, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, other GNWT departments, and the federal government to prepare for this historic day.

A multi-stakeholder committee has been meeting on a monthly basis to organize and prepare for the official opening of the highway. Celebrations will start with the opening ceremonies and a ribbon cutting, followed by a reception in Inuvik. Those activities will be followed by a historic symbolic drive along the new highway to opening ceremonies, fireworks, and a feast in Tuktoyaktuk. Our government is also proud to support a local documentary that will be screened at the opening celebrations. The film focuses on the history of the former ice road and the importance of the new all-

season road. These celebrations in Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk will ensure maximum participation from both communities. A separate ceremony will take place in the summer of 2018 to celebrate the tourism opportunities the road will provide.

Mr. Speaker, expanding our transportation system will help us connect residents to new social and employment opportunities, stabilize the cost of living in the territory, increase our resiliency and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and provide better access to natural resources. We hope everyone will join us on November 15th in celebrating this national infrastructure achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MID-TERM REVIEW OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 1997, the Legislative Assembly held a mid-term review, and it wasn't until every single Member who was involved in that process finally left office 18 years later that another mid-term review was held. I don't think that was a coincidence. This Assembly held a mid-term review 12 days ago, and I have a feeling that, until all 19 of us are gone, there won't be another. Regardless, the review is now behind us.

Mr. Sebert received a vote of non-confidence, and we must decide how to move forward. In the system of government based on political parties, a non-confidence vote means that the opposition gets to kick the government out of power. However, we are a consensus government. Cabinet is not a ruling party, and the Regular Members are not the opposition. We are all MLAs with specific roles working together to try to improve the lives of our residents.

One of the roles of Regular Members is to ensure that the Ministers are doing their job. In my opinion, a non-confidence vote highlights our failure to do that. Holding one performance review and then removing a Minister does not fulfill our obligation to ensure good governance, in my opinion.

I am not letting the Minister off the hook, however. It is an honour and a great responsibility to hold his position, and we should not be satisfied with anything less than maximum effort on his part, and the non-confidence vote shows that we aren't.

So the question is: will replacing Minister Sebert with one of the current Regular Members improve

government more than working with the Minister to improve his performance? History indicates that a removal motion can deepen the tension between Cabinet and Regular Members and undermine future prospects for consensus. Taking that into account along with the considerable challenge of taking over a department halfway through a term, I believe we are better off using the tools available to try and improve the Minister's performance, which so far in this Assembly, we haven't done.

The Premier will meet with Regular Members at our request to discuss any issues we may have with the Minister. In past Assemblies, the Premier would take these criticisms and work with the Minister to address them, and it was effective. Say what you will about our Premier, but I have been told by many constituents that Premier McLeod was the best deputy minister they have ever worked under. He knows how to manage people, and he knows how to get results, so let us utilize that. If Minister Sebert retains his position, the next few months will be a major test for him. If there is no improvement in his performance when this House meets again in February, then I'll be leading the charge to remove him. Until then, let's do our job and make government work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. NADLI: Mr. Speaker, today marks the start of Family Violence Awareness Week across the NWT. This year's theme is Healthy Relationships and Healthy Communities. Teaching healthy relationships between men and women, and fostering respect for women, through public programs and traditional values learned from our elders can help curb family violence in the NWT, and I encourage everyone to play their part. Together, we can bring an end to family violence.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of critical importance and urgency. Families are the basic unit of our society, and the relationships between grandparents, men and women, and children form the fabric of our communities. When people ask for help, this government must ensure that programs and services are available.

Here in the NWT, we have the second-highest rate of police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence in the country. NWT women, our fellow citizens, are victimized at a rate seven times the national average. This violence can take many forms. There is physical harm, but abuse can also be emotional or psychological, or take the form of threats or isolating victims from resources, friends,

and opportunities. In the wider community, lateral violence such as intimidation, gossip, and bullying also takes a toll.

It is clear that we are all affected by family violence, but, Mr. Speaker, Indigenous people are affected the most. The family bonds that I spoke of earlier were broken by the residential school system. Our parents and grandparents suffered abuse there, and we were not taught the traditional values, the love and respect, that is vital to our traditions. While Canada's overall crime rate is going down, the incarceration of Indigenous people is increasing; a population that represents roughly 4 per cent of the national population represents 36 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men held in custody. First Nations people, marginalized after years of colonization and cultural oppression, are more likely to experience violence, including family violence.

Now, what can we do? Mr. Speaker, this week I must also speak from my own personal experience, as I have done in this House before. The society we live in has strict ideals for what it means to be a man. Men are proud; they want to do things for themselves, and reaching out for help is rare. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. NADLI: Thank you, colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The society we live in has strict ideals for what it means to be a man. Men are proud; they want to do things for themselves, and reaching out for help is rare. However, in my own personal wellness, and I share this because I believe men need help, I must tell you that admission is truly the first step towards that help. I must tell you that there are people who care. There are resources out there. Get the help you need. I went through the Domestic Violence Treatment Option and the A New Day Program, and I continue counselling in my journey of healing and wellness.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to the many people who have helped me, and I encourage both men and women to seek help if they are experiencing violence in their families. It can be done, Mr. Speaker. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FAMILY VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague, Mr. Nadli, I am drawing attention today to the fact that this is Family Violence Awareness Week, and I am going to take

this opportunity to raise awareness of a recent report on this issue.

Two Aurora College researchers interviewed 56 frontline service providers across the NWT to document the needs and service gaps of women experiencing violence from their intimate partners. What they discovered is that there are three social processes that contribute to our shocking rate of violence against women. First, women put up with violence because they feel locked in by a lack of housing and poverty and, as a result of these two factors, a fear that their children will be apprehended. This is especially true in small communities. Second, women shut up about violence because society is not speaking out effectively about violence in intimate relationships. Forces such as historic trauma, the normalization of violence, gossip, and community and family retribution together keep women quiet. The third social process is described as "getting on with life," meaning that because of the lack of resources to make change, getting on with life is a way of coping. Of course, there are women with the courage to tell their story to police, shelter workers, and victim services, and they overcome these barriers to make changes for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, there is more that the GNWT can do to help keep women safe. It is time to finalize the standards for family violence shelters and to provide permanent stable funding that will allow the shelters to meet these standards. It is time to establish family violence shelters in the Deh Cho and Sahtu so that safety is available and close to hand in those regions. It is time to establish a death review committee that will review intimate partner deaths and discover patterns that may aid in prevention.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, we have to push back against the idea that intimate partner violence is normal and that there is nothing we can do about it. Violence against women in the NWT occurs at many times the national average. It has been at that rate for years. It is time to make investments to make sure that women are safe in their homes and their communities. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker, this week is Small Business Week, a time to celebrate and thank northern small and medium-sized businesses for their enormous contributions to our territorial economy. They invest in our communities; bring new ideas, products, and services; and foster the economic opportunities that create long-lasting

careers and economic growth. This is no more evident than in my riding of Kam Lake, the hub of our territory's small businesses. Since its humble beginnings until the present day, small businesses are everywhere you turn throughout Kam Lake; so much so that I would state that my riding acts as an economic indicator on the growth of our entire territory. When Kam Lake prospers, so does the rest of the North.

Mr. Speaker, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce is holding their 71st Annual Business Award Gala, a long-standing event that demonstrates the strength of our economy and acknowledges the contributions of our hard-working business sector. I applaud the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce for keeping this tradition going strong for 70 years and continuously advocating for small businesses in Kam Lake and around the North. Some of the great Kam Lake businesses nominated this year are Arctic Farmer Nursery, Ron's Auto Services Limited, Weatherby Trucking, Polar Tech Recreation, All West Glass, Bassett Petroleum, and Paul Brothers NEXtreme. I congratulate all of them for these well-deserved accolades and wish them the best of luck.

The roots of any stable economy, Mr. Speaker, are its small businesses. Nationally, they make up 98 per cent of all business operations in Canada, employ over 70 per cent of the total labour force in the private sector, and contribute more than 30 per cent to our gross domestic product. This week, the federal government has lowered the small business tax, a measure that I have been advocating for since I first took office, and it is something that is in our mandate that we are going to do to give back to our business community. Mr. Speaker, the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce agrees with me, and I tabled their letter calling for a more competitive tax system last year.

Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of Small Business Week, I want to call on this government to give our businesses a nice present and cut the small business tax, in line with what the federal government has done, so that we can ensure competitive rates and future prosperity for our business community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MACTUNG MINE LIABILITIES AND CLEAN-UP

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. In August, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued a request for proposals to clean up the former North American Tungsten Company's Mactung property. This government purchased the property for \$2.5 million under

special warrant in the summer of 2015 after the company went belly-up and left its mess for the taxpayers. A partial clean-up contract for Mactung was issued for \$87,455, but I am told that I can't see the details because they are protected as third-party business under ATIPP legislation. The request for proposals details a list of abandoned junk, waste fuel and barrels, chemicals, tent frames, and the like.

It is unclear to me whether the government knew the environmental state of the property before buying it. At my urging, the Lands and ENR departments performed a site assessment in the summer of 2016, even though the bulk of the property is on the Yukon side of the border. Presumably, the contract to clean up the site came about as a result of that GNWT reconnaissance. The Yukon Government had inspected the site in June 2015 and found it out of compliance with its mining land user authorization. A non-compliance letter was written to GNWT about Mactung on February 4, 2016.

Last year, I asked the ITI Minister what work is under way to sell this property and was told that ITI is working with the geological survey on "expending geological knowledge of the property." In a May reply to my oral question last February, the ITI Minister said, "The decision to proceed with marketing is related to the insolvency which linked the business asset of Mactung to securities for environmental liabilities of the Cantung Project." Our government accepted a promissory note for financial security on the Cantung mine.

We bought the Mactung property without the consent of the Legislature, with no clear idea of its environmental state. We are now spending public money to do the cleanup the company should have done and cannot even unload it because it is wrapped up in the Cantung insolvency. What a mess.

So what about the future? Can we at least learn yet another lesson from this latest contaminated site on the public purse? Will we ensure that fully cost guaranteed and unencumbered financial security is a requirement for future mining and exploration projects? I will have questions for the Minister later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND AWARENESS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of increased incidents of suicide in my riding, I would like to take the opportunity to address the importance of mental health awareness.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding and throughout the NWT, we have some amazing counsellors in our health systems and have beneficial services for those affected by mental health or mental illness, but what is evidently lacking is awareness in the communities. In my riding, between the months of January and September, there have been six suicides and at least 34 attempted suicides that I am aware of. Six suicides in 10 months is unheard of in the past, and this truth is devastating; suicide should not be a regular occurrence. According to Stats Canada, the national average for death by intentional self-harm in 2013 was 11.5 per 100,000 population, while for the NWT, it was 17.8 for 100,000 population. There were only eight reported deaths by suicide that year. I can surely say those numbers have increased for the year of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, it has been unfortunate these suicides affect the entire community and not just those immediately related to the victim. What we need is more education and awareness of mental illness. I would like to see the community capacity built for dealing with mental illness, and there needs to be more local training. Members of communities require the education of telltale signs of mental illness, including depression and anxiety which can lead to suicide. There also needs to be training on how to aid someone who is contemplating suicide. This training would provide more accessible services and limited reliance on so many outside services.

Mr. Speaker, mental illness is most often very easily overlooked and coming forward upon experiencing depression and anxiety requires a lot of courage. Many people who deal with depression suffer silently. We need to educate our community members about the help that they have. We need to really let our constituents know that they are in safe spaces and can bring forth their ailments and know that they will get the support they need. There have been many cases where an individual will book an appointment with the counsellors but end up not attending. It is necessary to look at what is stopping those seeking counselling from going on in their scheduled appointments. I will have questions for the Minister of Health at a later time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SAHTU REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

MR. MCNEELY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. The Sahtu Regional Health Center is a building that is very near completion and transitioning the ownership. Mr. Speaker, the building will provide sound economics through staff housing, growth in population, employment positions, examples of

GNWT Department of Education Culture and Employment Skills 4 Success vision, readiness for career positions in the health and social services sector.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu residents will see improved healthcare. Long-term clients will now be brought back closer to their loved ones through the combination of this building. Later, Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like my colleague, the Member from Kam Lake, I want to acknowledge that it is Small Business Week. This is a time to celebrate entrepreneurs and to focus on the importance of small business in the northern economy.

Mr. Speaker, both my parents were independent businesspeople, and they instilled the entrepreneurial spirit in me. They taught me that hard work equals reward. Not only monetary reward, other rewards can be even more valuable, like the chance to pursue an idea and see it grow from nothing to something; the reward of being your own boss and decision-maker; the reward of flexibility, and the freedom that it provides; the reward of inspiring others, helping them step into the risky world of business. That is the gift my parents gave to me.

I am a small business owner myself, Mr. Speaker, and I am excited that staff from my company will be part of this week's Small Business Week Conference hosted by the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Speaker, the program and exciting line-up of panelists at the conference shows an important fact about our economy: it is no longer all about resource development. With world-class resources, mining is and will remain a critical backbone of our economy. But, Mr. Speaker, a healthy economy needs to provide opportunities of many different kinds, and many of them will be represented at the conference this week.

I have spoken frequently in this Chamber about the important growth of our tourism sector. Tourism has been growing by leaps and bounds, in all seasons, across the NWT. Agriculture is another growing success story. I have visited the Northern Farm Training Institute and the Polar Eggs plant in Hay River, and I am very encouraged by the huge potential of this sector. Our film and television industry is another bright spot. Many projects, including two feature films, are among the

achievements driven by a dedicated and growing group of northern media professionals.

This week's conference will tackle such diverse subjects as online marketing, encouraging Indigenous entrepreneurship, and the role of marketing and promotion in business success. It is an exciting conference with something for business people in all areas. Mr. Speaker, this week's small business conference embodies the importance of our mandate commitment to support a diversified economy. It also demonstrates how exciting it can be to build on ideas and creativity, the very foundation of entrepreneurship. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce and all the conference participants for their ongoing support of small business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Scientific American reports this week that the fight over the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is back. For many in the North, though, Mr. Speaker, that fight never went away. A couple of years ago, the international newspaper the Guardian brought the Alaska Refuge to the world's attention in a long feature article. What might have seemed like new information to the southerners has been a part of Indigenous life in the Arctic for generations upon generations. Whether living in northern Canada or in Alaska, Northerners are no strangers to far-and-away lawmakers trying to impose their will on the Arctic.

The refuge itself covers 19.6 million acres across north-eastern Alaska. It is a sacred place, home to wonderfully unique northern ecosystems. A nature reserve that receives no more than 300 human visitors per year while the surrounding region is also home to the Gwich'in, residents of both the U.S. and Canada. The most recent American attempt to open 1.5 million acres of coastal plain within the refuge to drill is extremely troubling.

Mr. Speaker, Gwich'in on both sides of the border between our two countries are afraid right now. They are afraid that their rights will not be respected and that the regions lands and animals, especially the Porcupine caribou herd, will be hurt beyond repair and beyond compensation if the changes pushed by the current American administration go ahead. As northern Indigenous people, the Gwich'in are spiritually and physically linked to the caribou. In recent years, we have seen the Bathurst, Bluenose, and Barren Ground herds

decline dramatically. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BLAKE: The World Wildlife Fund calls the decline of the Arctic caribou one of Canada's greatest wildlife concerns, and we have not seen sufficient herd recovery nor GNWT action to show that caribou will truly be protected. Human activity posed a credible and severe danger to the Porcupine caribou. That herd is now dependent on us as human beings and as Northerners to protect the Arctic refuge and ensure their survival.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just an American problem. It affects the people of Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Aklavik, and Inuvik, as well as Gwich'in living in the Yukon, all who rely heavily on this herd for subsistence and to continue their traditions. Their voices must be heard and, as leaders in this House, we must amplify those voices for the global stage. The threat of the Arctic refuge is as real today as it has been on the first day. It was made a refuge in perpetuity for a reason. We must act now. The present American administration has gained renewed strength to push to drill. As a territory, we need Canada's support to be heard in its decision making. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later today.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON BLANKET EXERCISES AND RECONCILIATION

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples issued its report. One of its key findings and subsequent recommendations was that education on Indigenous history be recognized as essential to reconciliation.

That is still true, Mr. Speaker, and we still have a long way to go. I recently learned about an educational program that grew out of the findings of the Royal Commission, and it is one I would like to see more in the Northwest Territories communities. In the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, participants join in an interactive crash course on 500 years of Indigenous history.

The exercise integrates physical movement, walking over blankets that represent traditional lands, with reading and role-playing to personally engage participants with the ongoing history of European colonization. Program designers also highlight the importance of working with local Indigenous groups to deliver the program and the need to engage with and learn from local elders.

Earlier this year, a blanket exercise session took place here in Yellowknife, with non-Indigenous participants reporting a profound change in their perspectives, Mr. Speaker. One told CBC, "Reconciliation is not something that just happens. The government doesn't create a reconciliation portfolio and then it's done. It's something that we as individuals and communities and collectively," Mr. Speaker, "our countries have to be willing to do."

My questions today will be for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to explore how this exercise might be integrated into both teacher training and the territorial curriculum. However, Mr. Speaker, there is value in this exercise for every Northerner, and those in public service, including this Legislative Assembly, could surely benefit, as well. Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Item 5, reports of standing and special committees. Member for Frame Lake.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees

COMMITTEE REPORT 1-18(3): REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER'S REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2015 TERRITORIAL GENERAL ELECTION, SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS, AND THE WHITE PAPER ON THE INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures is pleased to provide its Report on the Review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2015 Territorial General Election, Supplementary Recommendations, and the White Paper on the Independence and Accountability of Election Administration in the Northwest Territories.

Introduction

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of the Northwest Territories issued three reports, tabled by the Speaker on May 31, 2016, February 28, 2017, and June 1, 2017. These reports contain 107 recommendations for changes related to election administration, including many legislative amendments. The first report, the only one required of the CEO under the act, is entitled "Modernizing Election Administration in the Northwest Territories." It stems from the conduct of the 2015

general election and sets the theme for all three reports.

It is the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures' responsibility to review the reports and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. Because the CEO's two reports and the White Paper are closely related, the committee opted to carry out a coordinated and comprehensive review. The committee now offers its findings and recommendations as a platform for a coordinated response from the Legislative Assembly.

The committee notified former candidates, interested stakeholders, and media prior to the publicly advertised hearings with the Chief Electoral Officer in Yellowknife on September 9, 2016, and June 12, 2017. Public submissions were also received from Norman Snowshoe and David Wasylciw (personally, and as chair of OpenNWT). Additional submissions were sought following the tabling of the White Paper from stakeholders and via the committee's website. The committee thanks the CEO and her staff, and all who provided their comments and attended the hearings.

Review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2015 General Election

The CEO's report, "Modernizing Election Administration in the Northwest Territories," includes 42 recommendations to amend the Elections and Plebiscites Act (the act), and one recommendation to repeal the act and replace it with a new one.

The Committee notes that the current act is relatively modern, having come into force in 2007 with the addition of provisions for plebiscites. The act has been strengthened by each assembly since that time, assisted by many thoughtful recommendations from previous CEOs and the public. While prescriptive where necessary, the act is broadly enabling and flexible, allowing the CEO great latitude in conducting elections and managing Elections NWT.

Committee members believe that many of the amendments proposed by the CEO will further improve the act, and represent by far the most efficient means of regulating and adapting the territory's electoral process to current needs.

Another very significant change was proposed by OpenNWT at the committee's first public hearing a year ago, to move to a ranked system of voting for candidates. Such a system would ensure that to win, a candidate must have the support of the majority of voters. It is currently possible for a candidate to win despite a significant majority

voting for others. By contrast, ranked voting can result in a candidate with fewer first choice votes than another to win the election based on strong second choice support. However, requiring voters to rank their preferences also necessitates a more elaborate balloting and vote-counting system.

Ranked voting is not widely used in Canada, but there are notable examples: the federal Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party use it to elect their leaders, and the City of London, Ontario, has adopted ranked voting for its 2018 civic election. To date, ranked voting has received very little attention in the Northwest Territories. At minimum, such a fundamental change should be widely and publicly debated prior to a decision being made to adopt this system in the NWT. The necessary public discussion has not taken place.

CEO Term of Office

The CEO's first recommendation is to approximately double the length of the term of office, which at four years matches the shortest of any province or territory. While there are advantages to a longer term, the committee notes that the CEO may be reappointed, and the term extended up to six months after its expiry. The four-year term is also consistent with those of all other statutory officers of the Assembly except the Information and Privacy Commissioner, whose term is five years. The committee is satisfied that the four-year term and options for continuity are sufficient.

Elector eligibility and residency requirements

Only the three northern territories have a 12-month residency requirement for citizens to qualify to vote. In seven provinces the requirement is six months, and less in all others. The CEO recommends adopting a residency requirement of six consecutive months. The committee received no public comment on this recommendation, and notes that previous CEOs suggested an even shorter, three-month residency requirement to enable as many residents as possible to vote. Committee members support the six-month compromise, which is in line with most of the provinces.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to establish an elector residency requirement of six consecutive months on or before polling day.

Polling day and alternate polling day

The CEO recommends a Saturday polling day to remove barriers to elector attendance, address security issues at polls located in schools, and

expand the pool of returning officers and poll workers. Similar advice was given by the previous CEO after the 2011 election. However, no Canadian jurisdictions have weekend elections so there is no evidence of its potential impact. Members fear that a weekend election might either discourage traditional pursuits on the land or reduce voter turnout in small communities where turnout is typically very high.

Members are nevertheless convinced that our current Monday polling day is not ideal, due in part to reduced weekend media attention and the reluctance of candidates to campaign vigorously on Sundays. Eight other provinces and territories have polling days on other weekdays. British Columbia, Manitoba and Newfoundland/Labrador have Tuesday polls, and Members feel this option is the best fit with the rhythm of life in the Northwest Territories.

Since 2007, when the timing of federal elections was nominally fixed, two of three elections have been held in October (with the other in May). In the event of overlap of the normal, fixed territorial election period with the federal election, the act requires that the territorial election "must be the third Monday in November of that year." This was the case for the 2015 election. The CEO points to weather-related complications and recommends a spring or summer alternative. The committee agrees that winter weather posed challenges for candidates' campaigns as well, and that late November is not a suitable alternative. One option is to move the alternate date forward somewhat, as was suggested during our public hearing.

Another option is to hold our territorial election on a fixed date regardless of the date of a federal election. In 2015, the federal election was held on October 19th and the NWT's followed on November 23 instead of the first Monday in October, which would have resulted in holding the territorial election on October 5th. In retrospect, this earlier date would have been preferable despite the overlapping campaign periods; November weather proved too disruptive, as noted by the CEO on page 65 of her report.

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to set the first Tuesday in October as polling day, and that the November alternative polling day be eliminated.

Register and list of electors

The CEO pointed out that in some communities there is a substantial difference between the voting-age population and the number of registered voters.

The greatest discrepancies are in Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Behchoko. The committee agrees with the CEO's Recommendation 10 to codify current practices and improve maintenance of a permanent list of electors. It may also be beneficial to extend the deadline for revisions of the list, as was suggested during our public hearing. This would provide more time for electors to register in advance, and for names to be struck from the list if they are no longer eligible to vote in the NWT.

The act currently provides that the list of electors may only include certain personal information, including the elector's full name, address, telephone number, gender, birth date, and date of NWT residence. The act also strictly limits how an elector's birth date and gender information may be used. The CEO recommends that the act be amended to permit Elections NWT to collect electors' email addresses as well.

The committee agrees that collection of electors' email addresses is potentially a useful tool in improving the list of electors, but cautions that internet service and use of email vary considerably from community to community. The use of electors' email addresses should be restricted under section 54(5) of the act, ensuring that they cannot be provided to candidates or used for general distribution of information. Committee members also note that sections 54(2)(d) and 54(5) refer to use of an elector's gender as a means of identification. This practice is no longer necessary or appropriate, and the committee recommends that references to identification by gender be removed from the act.

The CEO also recommended changing the act to further restrict inspection of the list of electors containing only names and addresses. This was the subject of much committee discussion. Inspection of the preliminary list of electors is a feature of almost all Canadian election legislation, ensuring some public scrutiny of the very basis of electing representatives. This measure is a safeguard of election integrity. In 2011, our previous CEO recommended that section 65 be amended to include authority for the CEO to communicate the contents of the list of electors by the best possible means. This change was not made, as our predecessor committee was content with the existing provision. It is also significant that the Local Authorities Election Act requires that the list of voters be posted in five conspicuous places in the electoral district at least 30 days before the vote. These local voters' lists are essentially components of the NWT's list of electors. It does not make sense that the list of electors is fully confidential at one level and fully public at another. The committee recommends that public access to the list be maintained at the territorial level.

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended per Recommendation 10 of the CEO Report on the Administration of the 2015 Territorial General Election, to reflect current practices of maintaining a permanent list of electors; and that the act be amended to remove references to identification of electors by gender.

Campaigning and third-party advertising

The CEO recommends amending the act to limit third-party advertising, as is done in most Canadian jurisdictions and echoing the advice of the previous CEO. Typically, regulation involves a spending limit, registration, and post-campaign reporting. Currently, third parties may advertise their support for or opposition to a candidate or candidates, or public policies, with no spending limit and no requirement to report to the CEO or the public. This has not been a significant problem in our elections, but our system is wide open to influence by people, corporations or organizations with ample resources and a political mission. The committee agrees that proactive change is necessary. We emphasize that the goal is to ensure fair elections, not to impede political discourse or freedom of expression.

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to limit and regulate third-party election advertising related to candidates and/or policy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to hand over to the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Absentee ballots, electronic voting, expanded voting in the Office of the Returning Officer, and location of polls

Timeliness of mail-in ballots has been an issue in every election of this millennium, despite the low number of total ballots involved. However, use of absentee ballots has increased; 244 were requested for the 2015 election. Ballots were available for one month, but after allowing for return time the window is effectively shorter. Of 146 absentee ballots received by Elections NWT, 35 (or 24 per cent) arrived too late to be counted. While absent electors have some responsibility for timeliness, mailing times are not entirely within their control.

The CEO recommended amending the act to permit electronic voting and greater use of technology to manage and report the vote. The committee Chair and CEO witnessed Prince Edward Island's use of electronic voting for a plebiscite in 2016. The province's chief electoral officer reported that the vote was well-conducted and accurate, but also flagged significant risks in a detailed audit report tabled in the legislature. The associated Independent Technical Panel on Voting Integrity recommended that use of online and telephone voting for federal or provincial elections should be limited to absentee voters for "the immediate foreseeable future."

The Gwichya Gwich'in Band in Tsiigehtchic initiated electronic voting in a 2015 referendum to replace proxy voting and as an option for all electors, along with mail-in ballots and traditional polling stations. The system allowed for telephone voting and online voting. The method enabled greater participation by electors living away from the community. Following this successful trial run, the band is considering use of the technology for future council elections.

Electronic voting represents an opportunity to improve the timeliness of votes from absent electors, should they wish to cast their ballots electronically instead of on paper. It is important, however, that electors have the option of using a paper ballot or voting electronically. In the committee's opinion, technological change may most benefit the absentee ballot system and reduce the need for some special voting opportunities, which have not all been particularly effective. For those who choose a paper absentee ballot, Elections NWT should consider use of prepaid courier services or express mail. The committee supports amending the act to allow for the option of electronic voting for absentee ballots in the NWT when a reliable, practical system can be tested and implemented.

Extending the opportunity to vote in the Office of the Returning Officer from the close of the nomination and withdrawal period till the second day before polling day may also reduce the need for absentee ballots and special voting opportunities. Allowing voting from the close of the nomination and withdrawal period to election day certainly makes it more convenient for residents to vote, particularly those who work at remote mining camps. However, this convenience comes with a risk that early voters will be less informed than those who cast their ballots after campaigning is complete. Early voting may also be an advantage to incumbents who have been in the public eye due to their service in the legislature over the previous four or more years.

The committee therefore urges caution with respect to extending early voting opportunities too much. It

may be wise to set a date that allows all candidates a chance to publicize the key elements of their campaigns before early voting begins. Additionally, the committee agrees with a public submission that in districts with public transit, polls should be easily accessible from a transit route. Polls should also be easily accessible on foot, clearly identified, and visible from a reasonable distance.

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to:

- Allow for the option of electronic voting for absentee ballots;
- To provide an elector who has requested an absentee ballot to cancel his or her application in favour of an ordinary ballot on polling day; and,
- To extend the period for voting in the Office of the Returning Officer.

Candidate banking and a discretionary period for financial reporting

The committee agrees with the CEO that the requirement for every candidate to establish an account at a bank or other institution for monetary campaign contributions may be a barrier to potential candidates who live in small communities lacking these services.

However, the CEO also informed the committee that financial reporting is the source of the most problems for candidates in meeting the requirements of the act. Candidates/official agents must provide financial reports to the CEO within 60 days of polling day. The requirement for candidates to file statements from a bank or other approved institution has only been in place for one election. It is the result of an amendment passed by the 17th Assembly in an effort to improve candidates' financial reporting.

Results in the 2015 election were not encouraging: only 31 of 60 candidate/official agents filed their financial reports on time, a remarkable decline from 2011 when 41 of 47 reports were timely and complete. The current CEO informed committee members that in 2015 many reports were initially incomplete, resulting in substantial expense and effort to ensure compliance with the act. The committee also heard several times that financial reporting instructions and forms could be improved by Elections NWT and we believe this will decrease the amount of time required for processing and ensuring compliance. None of these changes require legislative amendments.

The CEO also proposes amendments to the act to allow latitude for the CEO to grant extensions to elected candidates who miss the deadline for financial reports and must apply to the Supreme Court of the NWT for an order allowing an authorized excuse. The act currently requires compliance with these provisions before an elected candidate can sit in the legislature, a relatively strict measure that may also penalize the electorate of the district in question. For unelected candidates, the act already enables the CEO to extend the filing deadline.

While the committee agrees with the CEO's proposed amendments, discussed above and set out in Recommendations 33, 35 and 37 of her report on the 2015 election, they do not fully solve the problem of late and incomplete financial reporting. Election campaigns solicit money from trusting members of the public and there must be thorough and transparent accounting of these funds.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to replace the requirement for candidates to file statements from a bank or other financial institution with a practical, reliable requirement that ensures accountability and transparency; and

That the act be amended to provide the CEO with discretion to extend elected candidates' deadline for filing accurate and complete financial statements for up to 15 calendar days.

Campaign expenses, candidate contributions, and reimbursement of candidates

Most Canadian provinces reimburse election expenses of political parties or candidates, or both. All but Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Nunavut and the NWT reimburse part of a candidate's election expenses. Reimbursement from the public purse is based on the candidate receiving a certain percentage of the vote.

This aspect of campaign financing was addressed by the former CEO David Brock in his Auxiliary Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 2011 election. However, he made no recommendation to adopt a system of reimbursing a portion of candidates' campaign expenses.

The average campaign in 2015 cost about \$8,000, down from almost \$10,000 in 2007. However, there is great range in 2015 campaign spending from the \$1,897 average for Mackenzie Delta candidates to the \$19,945 average in Yellowknife Centre. The cost of campaigning in the NWT may deter potential candidates from running for election. This opinion

was expressed in OpenNWT's submission to the committee, supporting partial reimbursement: "Financing of elections this way...would increase the viability of campaigning for those who would not normally consider putting their name forward. In line with the 18th Assembly's mandate commitment to improve access to elections for women, this would improve the ability of those candidates that might not have access to personal funds to enter NWT politics."

At the same time, there has been no great public outcry to subsidize the cost of campaigning in the NWT, and no hard evidence that the cost is a significant barrier to candidacy. This report may serve to begin public discussion of the issue, but it is premature to recommend that public funds be spent in this manner.

Elections NWT mandate

The CEO recommends expanding the mandate of Elections NWT to include the administration of the Local Authorities Elections Act, currently the responsibility of the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. The CEO suggests that consolidating responsibility for all elections under Elections NWT would be fiscally efficient, build capacity, and improve the list of electors. Similar systems are used in about half of Canada's provinces and territories, where electoral management bodies administer smaller electoral events as well as general elections.

The NWT's Local Authorities Elections Act applies to municipal councils and District Education Authorities, including those in charter communities and authorities subject to the Tlicho Community Government Act. On the advice of Cabinet, the Commissioner appoints a member of the public service as Chief Municipal Electoral Officer. The appointments, along with two deputies, have been MACA employees who also advise communities on governance and serve other functions.

After the 2003 election, CEO David Hamilton recommended a review of potential benefits of Elections NWT administering the Local Authorities Elections Act. In 2005, the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommended "that a review be undertaken to consider the efficiencies and sharing of resources that could occur with the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer assuming the administrative responsibility for elections of community governments under the Local Authorities Election Act." Preliminary research was done; CEO Sandra Arberry commented in 2007 that "much groundwork will be required" and "implementation will require...a transfer of resources and additional personnel" as well as legislative amendments.

During the course of the Committee's review of the current CEO's report, advice was received from the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs that dialogue with her department, the NWT Association of Communities, and all community governments should precede any further interest in a consolidation of election responsibilities. Similar advice was received from the NWTAC. The committee cannot consider expansion of Elections NWT's mandate in the absence of appropriate research and evaluation of options.

Recommendation 7

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the CEO consult with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the NWT Association of Communities, and a broad range of community government representatives with respect to consolidation of responsibilities for the administration of general and local elections; and; that the results of this research, when complete, be included in the CEO's subsequent report to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn the reading of the report over to my colleague from Nahendeh. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

Housekeeping recommendations

The committee agrees with a number of recommendations made by the CEO for the sake of efficiency and clarity of processes. These include such matters as voting compartments, materials, multi-district polling officers, multi-district ballots, advance polls by community, and various others.

Recommendation 8

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended in accord with Recommendations 2, 10, 13, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, and 38 in the CEO Report on the Administration of the 2015 Territorial General Election.

Mr. Wasylciw suggested that nomination packages for candidates should be available for review before the writ is dropped. This would allow potential candidates to study the packages and identify questions or concerns before the election period begins. The committee agrees. The act does not establish when nomination forms are to be released. Forms are updated from time to time, as they were in 2015. It does not appear that a change of the act is necessary for Elections NWT to implement this.

In addition, the committee agrees with several of Mr. Wasylciw's housekeeping recommendations:

1. Eliminate duplication of information required in forms for financial reporting by candidates/official agents;
2. Investigate the possibility of issuing electronic tax receipts for campaign contributions;
3. Restore the categorization of campaign expenses used on financial information forms in previous elections;
4. Information for residents sworn in at the polls should be entered into the digital record system so it is immediately available, rather than on paper;
5. There must be opportunity for candidates or their designates to scrutinize the count of all ballots, including advance polls;
6. Elections NWT should consider providing open sessions for potential candidates and/or official agents in between elections to provide general information about the process and inform them about changes to the act; and
7. Elections NWT should solicit input from candidates and agents directly before preparing the CEO's post-election report.

These measures can be implemented by Elections NWT without changes to the act.

Review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Supplementary Recommendations on the Administration of the 2015 General Election

The CEO provided four additional recommendations to the Assembly on June 1, 2017. One was to remove the requirement in the act to establish bank accounts for campaign contributions. This issue is addressed in the committee's Recommendation 6, already discussed.

Third party certification of candidates' financial reports

The CEO's proposal to require that candidates' financial reports be certified by a qualified third party is not an acceptable solution to the problem of incomplete and inaccurate reporting. Accountants and auditors are even scarcer in small communities than financial institutions. Neither is the committee convinced that the proposal to subsidize candidates' costs for certification of statements would be effective and efficient.

Non-compliance penalty

The committee agrees that the current \$250 penalty is not a meaningful deterrent for failure to file financial reports, and that the cost of enforcement is typically much greater than the penalty. Raising the penalty to \$5,000 or \$10,000 as proposed, matching British Columbia's, seems unduly harsh and likely to result in some large, uncollected fines. Committee Members propose increasing the penalty to \$500, with additional daily fines to a maximum of \$1,000.

Returning officer appointments

Experienced returning officers are a key factor in conducting NWT elections and they are a great resource to our electoral system. The committee shares the CEO's opinion that there is little logic in reappointing veteran returning officers for each election, and notes that three provinces and the Yukon appoint returning officers for life. Revocation provisions in the act already ensure that returning officers can be removed when necessary.

Recommendation 9

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that section 257.1(1) of the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to increase the penalty for non-compliance to \$500, plus a daily fine of \$50 to a maximum of \$1,000; and that the act be amended to establish that the term of office for returning officers expires with resignation, change of permanent residency to outside the Northwest Territories, revocation, or death.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this point, I would like to turn it over to the honourable Member from Thebacha.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Thebacha.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT:

Review of the White Paper on the Independence and Accountability of Election Administration in the Northwest Territories

The White Paper is the first document of its kind in the Northwest Territories to comprehensively review election administration. It was prepared by Lorne Gibson, an electoral management consultant and former CEO in Alberta. Mr. Gibson was commissioned by our CEO to provide an independent review of our legislation and the autonomy of Elections NWT. The report includes 60 recommendations that lead our CEO, Ms. Nicole Latour, to conclude that Elections NWT is "an agency bound to government and not truly independent as intended." In her opening remarks at the committee's public hearing in September, 2016, Ms. Latour stressed that "the overarching requirement...is allowing Elections NWT to make its own decisions and act in its best interest, free from

government policies, systems and administrative interference."

After further research and much discussion, the committee does not share that view. Some of the White Paper's recommendations and comparisons with other jurisdictions overlook important conventions of the NWT's Assembly, our system of approval for appropriations, the role of the Commissioner, other legislation, and practical operation of our consensus government. Other recommendations address authorities already present in the current Elections and Plebiscites Act.

However, the committee considered the implications of all the recommendations and found that many would codify or clarify current practices and potentially improve our legislation.

The CEO is one of several officers of the Legislative Assembly who are appointed to provide an independent service, oversight and/or advice, free of political influence. This independence is critical to the integrity of their work, which is also subject to considerable public scrutiny. The various statutory officers of the Assembly are established by respective legislation setting out their terms and authorities. Their funding is provided by the Legislative Assembly; administrative support is provided by staff in the Office of the Clerk. These arrangements are reviewed by the Board of Management and ultimately included in the public review and vote on the Legislative Assembly's budget.

This system clearly meets Mr. Gibson's standards that "independence exists when there is no political consequence for the actions of a Legislative Officer who is fulfilling the mandate of his or her office," and that "independence is usually less complete with respect to such administrative matters as budgeting and staffing, where an election management body is often required to negotiate with other parts of the governmental system and follow established merit-based hiring practices, classification systems, and compensation formulas applicable to other public servants." These comments assisted the committee in assessing the appropriate degree of independence and accountability to recommend for the CEO and Elections NWT.

The committee was also mindful of the Elections and Plebiscites Act's flexibility and adaptability to circumstances. It is not desirable to shift the balance toward a prescriptive act, an outcome that could be the result of over-codification of current practices. In short, the committee is reluctant to fix things that are not broken.

The CEO, Office of the CEO (OCEO or Elections NWT), and powers of the CEO

To start, it is essential that the establishment of the CEO's position, office and major duties are clear in their intent and practice. As mentioned earlier, the act provides the CEO with great latitude in conducting elections and managing Elections NWT. Over time, previous CEOs have developed sound practices. Conventions have evolved under the broad umbrella of what is permitted under the act. The White Paper includes recommendations that many of these practices be codified or clarified, for the benefit of both consistent election management and public understanding of the CEO's role. The committee agrees to the extent outlined in the following recommendation.

Recommendation 10

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended as needed to provide that:

- The CEO is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly;
- That the CEO shall take an oath affirming that she or he will impartially and faithfully exercise the powers of the CEO and perform all duties fairly, objectively, and with due care;
- That no proceeding may be commenced against the CEO, or a person acting for or under the direction of the CEO, for anything done or omitted in good faith in the exercise, intended exercise, or performance of a duty, responsibility or power under the act;
- The Office of the CEO (OCEO or Elections NWT) is established to ensure impartial administration and conduct of elections and plebiscites;
- The CEO administers and manages the business of Elections NWT;
- The CEO shall examine all statements, reports, forms and other information filed with the CEO;
- The CEO shall publish reports filed pursuant to this act on Elections NWT's website, or in such a manner determined to be effective by the CEO;
- The CEO shall formulate policies regarding the conduct of elections;
- The CEO may prescribe forms for use under this act;
- The CEO may engage the services of professionals or experts such as counsel or accountants as necessary to carry out the CEO's duties under this act, within the appropriation for Elections NWT; and,

- The CEO shall submit annual estimates of the funds required to operate Elections NWT to the Board of Management via the Speaker.

The White Paper proposes a significant increase of the powers of the CEO and autonomy of Elections NWT. This includes elevating the CEO to the classification, authority, salary and benefits of a senior deputy minister; the power to establish human resource policies, job classifications, and pay scales; and an exemption from the Human Resources job evaluation process. Implementation of these recommendations would require expansion of staff, duplication of available services, and increase the operating costs of Elections NWT. The committee considers these measures ultimately counter-productive, with high risk of unintended consequences. In some cases, these are powers the Legislative Assembly itself has not exercised, due in part to the lack of scale required for efficiency. Not only is Elections NWT very much smaller, but its operation is strongly cyclical, with needs that are often short in duration.

Several recommendations (including some referred to previously) address the relationship of the CEO to the Assembly's Board of Management (BOM), chaired by the Speaker. This relationship is established by the act and BOM's mandate. The committee wishes to be clear that the views it expresses should not be interpreted as infringements of BOM's jurisdiction or decision-making processes. Such views will therefore not be accompanied by official recommendations to the Assembly.

The White Paper suggests that the act should require the Board of Management to consult with the CEO respecting Election NWT's annual budget, and, should BOM recommend a lower appropriation than requested, the act should enable the CEO to submit a written objection to the Speaker. It is normal practice for the Board of Management to meet with the CEO to discuss Elections NWT's annual budget. This is BOM's practice, and control of its own practice should not be fettered by the Elections and Plebiscites Act. The act is silent on the issue of a written objection to the Speaker; it is not prohibited. Anecdotally, the committee has heard that such objections have occurred in the past. It is common sense that the CEO may correspond with the Speaker or BOM about Election NWT's annual budget. Moreover, this budget is reviewed by the Assembly Chamber, in public, as part of the Legislative Assembly's proposed appropriation. Members may question any item. The committee is satisfied that the current system is effective. Similarly, the White Paper recommends that the act be amended to require the CEO to submit an annual business plan and subsequent performance report to BOM. This office

is part of the Legislative Assembly's annual business plan development, and a budget proposal is submitted to BOM annually, in preparation for the budget discussed above. The committee is not convinced that this proposed amendment is necessary, but the Board of Management may determine otherwise. In the same category is the White Paper's recommendation that BOM conduct an annual performance review of the CEO, with constructive feedback concerning expectations and achievements. We repeat our caution against creating an overly prescriptive act.

The act provides that the CEO is appointed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly (as is the case for other Assembly officers). The Board of Management is responsible for the selection process, and ultimately recommends a candidate for the Assembly's consideration. The White Paper recommends that the act be amended to require that another selection committee be established to conduct a merit-based competition for candidates it would recommend to the Board of Management. Such a decision rests with the Board of Management, which currently employs the same practice to recruit and recommend all officers of the Assembly for appointment.

It is also proposed that the ultimate appointment of the CEO be made directly by the Assembly, without the Commissioner's involvement. It should be noted that the Commissioner's role is not political and should not be confused with executive government. In the case of the CEO's appointment, the Commissioner acts on the Assembly's recommendation and lends the prestige of her or his office to the occasion. The committee sees no need to remove the Commissioner from the traditional appointment process, which is in legislation for all statutory officers of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to turn this over to the Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

CEO reports to the Legislative Assembly

The White Paper includes several recommendations to improve the CEO's reporting to the Legislative Assembly and to ensure the timeliness of the CEO's advice, which is particularly important when legislative amendments might be needed. Clear and timely reporting requirements have the added benefit of increasing accountability and the information available to the public.

Recommendation 11

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to:

- Require the CEO to submit an annual report to the Legislative Assembly describing work done under the direction of the CEO pursuant to the act;
- Require the CEO to submit a report to the Legislative Assembly after each election or plebiscite about the conduct of the election or plebiscite;
- Provide the CEO with the option of combining his or her reports into one in the year of an election or plebiscite;
- Provide that the CEO may report to the Legislative Assembly at any other time, on any matter that the CEO considers necessary; and
- Provide that any of the CEO's reports to the Legislative Assembly may include recommendations for legislative amendments to improve the administration of elections under this or any other related act.

Powers of investigation and enforcement

The CEO's powers of investigation and enforcement under the act were considerably enhanced by the 17th Assembly. The trend to sharpen the CEO's authorities in this area continues with ten recommendations in the White Paper.

Section 279 of the act gives the CEO broad authority to investigate any matter that comes to her/his attention that may be an offence under the act. Similarly, the CEO has great latitude to investigate to the extent he or she considers warranted. Although the CEO may begin an investigation without a complaint, complaints have historically driven the need for investigations. Complaints may be made to the CEO by anyone, within a year after polling day. However, section 284 of the act prevents commencement of the prosecution of any offence more than one year after the date of the offence. This could result in the inability to properly investigate and prosecute an offence stemming from a complaint registered shortly before the one-year anniversary date.

The White Paper recommends that the act be amended to set the deadline for prosecution at one year after the date the CEO has reasonable and probable grounds to believe an offence has been committed. This proposal could result in an extended investigation followed by up to a year's consideration before a decision to proceed with a prosecution. This is not timely by Canadian standards, and the Supreme Court of Canada has

stressed the need for timely prosecutions of offences. Further, the limbo created in such circumstances is not in the public interest.

The committee notes that the deadline for complaints, within a year after polling day, effectively provides for less time for any offense that occurs after polling day, such as those related to filing financial reports. To resolve this issue and to improve timeliness, the committee recommends that complaints should be made to the CEO within six months of the alleged offence.

With respect to prosecution of an offence, the committee recommends that the CEO should have authority to begin a prosecution up to one year from the date of the alleged offence. The CEO has the power to compel witnesses to appear, give evidence, and produce documents in the course of an investigation. However, the act falls short of making it an offence to obstruct an investigation authorized by the CEO. This omission should be remedied.

It has been the general practice of CEOs to make public the results of investigations of potential offences under the act. The White Paper suggests that the act provide some guidelines for publication of the outcomes of investigations; the committee agrees.

Recommendation 12

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to:

- Require the CEO to notify the complainant in writing, with reasons, if the CEO decides not to conduct an investigation of a complaint;
- Make it an offence to obstruct the CEO or her/his designate in carrying out an inspection or investigation under this act, or to withhold, conceal, or destroy any records, documents, or things relevant to the investigation;
- Provide that when the CEO believes it is in the public interest, the outcome of investigations may be published on Election NWT's website or by other means the CEO considers appropriate, and information provided may include the name of the person investigated and the nature of the matter;
- Provide that complaints respecting omissions or offences under the act may be made within six months of the alleged omission or offence; and
- Provide that the deadline for the CEO to commence a prosecution under the act is one year from the date of the alleged offence.

Materials for schools and students

Section 8 of the act directs the CEO to implement a program to inform electors about elections. This might be interpreted as an impediment to informing students, as some would not yet be of voting age. The White Paper recommends revising the act to specifically enable outreach to schools and students. Statistics in the CEO Report on the Administration of the 2015 Territorial General Election show that approximately 2,800 people aged 18 to 25 are not registered electors, a number equivalent to about 10 percent of all registered electors in the NWT. A very significant number of our young people are not exercising their right to vote. The committee agrees that building our young people's knowledge of basic civic rights might improve the turnout of young voters.

Recommendation 13

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to enable the CEO to develop and make materials available to schools for distribution to students who have reached voting age or will soon do so, including information on the NWT's electoral process, the right to vote, how to have one's name added to the register of electors, and any other matter that the CEO considers useful to electors and prospective electors.

Use of new voting technology

New voting technology has significantly changed voting methods around the world. With these changes have come new challenges in ensuring the integrity and security of the vote. The White Paper recommends that for by-elections the CEO should have greater flexibility to deploy different technology than is required by the act for general elections. The committee agrees that by-elections represent an opportunity to put election-ready technology to use and gain valuable experience, or to use potentially more efficient methods in a smaller election and/or plebiscites.

Recommendation 14

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to enable the CEO, at a by-election, to direct use of voting equipment, vote-counting equipment, or alternative voting methods that differ from those required elsewhere in the act.

Obtaining and sharing elector information

Elections NWT's register of electors is created from data acquired from various sources through information-sharing agreements. These sources include Elections Canada, agencies of three GNWT departments, and the City of Yellowknife. In her

report on the 2015 election, the CEO notes it may also be useful to obtain information collected under the Motor Vehicles Act, and to enter agreements with Aboriginal governments and more municipalities. This practice has been in place for some time, but is not specifically described in the act.

The White Paper recommends codification of this current practice, enabling agreements with "any person, government agency, or institution." In addition, Elections NWT seeks authority to make agreements to provide address, mapping, demographic, geographic or geospatial information to these parties.

The committee believes that the register of electors could be much improved. As full enumeration is becoming a last resort, usage of resident data from other reliable sources is necessary and should be specifically sanctioned in the act.

Recommendation 15

The Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to:

- authorize the CEO to enter agreements with any person or government department or institution to obtain information, including personal information, to update the register of electors; and
- permit the CEO to enter agreements with any person or government department or institution to provide address, mapping, demographic or geographic information, including geospatial information; and
- ensure appropriate protection of the privacy of personal information.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to turn it back over to the Member for Frame Lake. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Frame Lake.

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

Conclusion

The three reports from Elections NWT and reviewed by the committee contain more recommendations to the Legislative Assembly than from any CEO in the history of the Northwest Territories. However this fact is not an indicator that our election administration is in crisis, or even in need of substantial overhaul. Elections in the NWT are very well-organized, reliable, and firmly based on competent legislation. The committee is confident that the recommendations in this report will help ensure continuity in that regard, provide

additional flexibility to adapt to new technology and methods, and improve the CEO's ability to enforce the act. The committee is also confident that these changes can be made in time for the next general election.

Considerable work will be necessary if the Assembly accepts the committee's recommendations. Many amendments to the act will have to be drafted, considered by the Assembly, and implemented well before the next election. In addition, consultation and research on the consolidation of responsibilities for administration of general and local elections is a very substantial task for Elections NWT and relevant stakeholders.

Public comment and feedback confirms the committee's view that NWT elections are on a very solid footing. The input we received was very thoughtful and helpful, but only a handful of citizens felt the need to provide advice despite several available occasions and means of doing so. The committee very much appreciates all the suggestions received, as well as the assistance of the Chief Electoral Officer and her staff. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Frame Lake.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 1-18(3) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that Committee Report 1-18(3): Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures, Report on the Review of the Chief Electoral Officer's Report on the Administration of the 2015 Territorial General Election, Supplementary Recommendations, and the White Paper on the Independence and Accountability, be received by the Assembly and moved into Committee of the Whole for consideration. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Motion carried. Masi. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

COMMITTEE REPORT 2-18(3):
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2015-2016

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to read an executive summary for the committee review into the public accounts.

The Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to present its report on the review of the 2015-2016 public accounts of the government of the Northwest Territories.

The review took place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, from April 3, 2017, to April 5, 2017. The committee notes that the consolidated 2015-2016 Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories received a clean audit opinion from the Auditor General and commends the Government of the Northwest Territories for this achievement.

Members of the standing committee would like to take the opportunity to thank officials from the Office of the Auditor General who travelled from Ottawa and Edmonton to assist the standing committee with its review. The standing committee also wishes to thank officials from the Office of the Comptroller General in the GNWT'S Department of Finance for their appearance before the committee on April 4, 2017.

2015-2016 recommendations

As a result of this year's review of the 2015-2016 public accounts, the Standing Committee on Government Operations makes the following recommendations to the Government of the Northwest Territories:

1. The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the table titled "Completion of Entities Consolidated within the Public Accounts" be included annually in the unaudited financial statement discussion and analysis section of the public accounts.
2. The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Office of the Comptroller General in the Department of Finance work with all GNWT public agencies to assist them to complete their audited financial statements to meet statutory reporting deadlines and to seek the necessary extensions where those deadlines cannot be met.
3. The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories continue to include information in the Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis section of the public accounts, indicating how the GNWT has met

the provisions related to debt servicing and infrastructure financing in the Fiscal Responsibility Policy.

4. The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Minister of Finance work with the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency to develop plain language materials that summarize the public accounts for a given year, in a manner that is understandable for an interested, non-professional reader, focusing on the key financial highlights and significant audit issues arising for that year.
5. The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Finance, after consultation with the Information and Privacy Commissioner for the Northwest Territories, reconsider amending the non-consolidated schedule of bad debt write-offs, forgiveness, and student loan remissions to protect the privacy of individuals by removing the names of those who have received student loan remissions and reporting only the amount of the remissions.
6. The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION THAT COMMITTEE REPORT 2-18(3) BE DEEMED READ AND PRINTED IN HANSARD IN ITS ENTIRETY,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Committee Report 2-18(3), be deemed read and printed in Hansard in its entirety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Introduction

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories' Standing Committee on Government Operations (the committee) has a mandate to review and report on the Government of the

Northwest Territories' public accounts. This review helps ensure that the GNWT's fiscal management practices and issues are publicly examined and scrutinized to promote government accountability.

In the course of its review, the committee makes recommendations to the Government to improve financial management reporting and practices. The Standing Committee on Government Operations is pleased to present this report on its review and looks forward to receiving the Government's response.

About the Public Accounts Generally

The public accounts are the financial statements of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), which are prepared according to public sector accounting standards adopted across Canada.

The public accounts of the GNWT are also prepared in accordance with requirements contained in the federal Northwest Territories Act [S.C. 2014, c. 2, s. 2] and the GNWT's Financial Administration Act (FAA) [S.N.W.T. 2015, c.13]. The FAA requires that the public accounts be prepared in two phases: first, the unaudited interim (non-consolidated) public accounts and later, the final (consolidated) public accounts, which are audited.

The public accounts disclose the GNWT's financial position and results of operations as at March 31st of a given fiscal year. The GNWT's financial position is revealed through information on assets, liabilities, net debt and accumulated surplus. This information assists the reader in evaluating the GNWT's ability to finance its activities, to meet its liabilities and contractual obligations, and to provide future services.

The results of operations show the revenues and expenses of the GNWT for the fiscal year. This allows the GNWT to account for the resources it received and to demonstrate how those resources were budgeted for and expended. The consolidated public accounts are produced in four sections:

Section I contains the consolidated financial statements and combined results of operations for all GNWT departments, revolving funds, public agencies, territorial corporations and other related entities that are considered part of the government reporting entity. This section provides a high-level, aggregated (combined) look at the financial position of the government and its various departments and agencies, so that the reader is able to gauge the overall financial health of the government, as opposed to the stand-alone position of any single department or agency. It discloses the full nature

and extent of the financial affairs and resources for which the GNWT is responsible.

In Section I, the notes to the consolidated financial statements are an integral part of the public accounts and should be read in conjunction with the financial statements. This section also contains an unaudited Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis by the Minister of Finance, which provides further insight from the GNWT's perspective into the information reported in the public accounts.

Section II presents the non-consolidated, unaudited financial statements for GNWT departments, the Legislative Assembly, and Statutory Offices. Section II is comprised of the financial position and results of operations for GNWT departments only, including the revolving funds and special purpose funds they administer. Providing this information separately allows the reader to assess the collective financial position of the GNWT's departments, as separate and distinct from that of its larger operations, which include public boards, agencies and territorial corporations. This section also includes important notes to the financial statements.

Section III contains the supplementary financial statements of other entities and revolving and special purpose funds.

Section IV contains the supplementary financial statements of education boards and health and social services authorities.

It should be noted that the public accounts are based on historical information. They are, therefore, backwards looking and pertain to actual spending for the given fiscal year in question.

Role of the Auditor

With respect to the examination of the public accounts, the federal Northwest Territories Act conveys to the Auditor General all powers contained in the Auditor General Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. A-17). The Auditor General of Canada audits the GNWT's consolidated financial statements on an annual basis. The Auditor General also annually audits the public accounts of some of the GNWT's larger public agencies, such as the Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation, the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Aurora College and the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation.

Smaller public agencies, such as regional health authorities and education boards, are audited by independent certified public accountants, upon whose work the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) relies in carrying out its audit of the GNWT's consolidated financial statements. The OAG

reviews the audits of these smaller entities on a rotational basis (i.e. once every three years).

Regardless of who prepares it, the purpose of an audit remains the same. As specified in legislation, the purpose of an audit is twofold:

To allow the auditor to express an expert opinion as to whether the financial statements present the financial position of the government body fairly, in all material respects. This includes the financial position of the government body, the results of its operations, changes in its net debt and its cash flows for the fiscal year being examined.

To examine financial transactions to ensure they have been carried out in accordance with the powers provided to the government body under law. It is important to note that the audit of the public accounts is a financial audit, as opposed to a performance audit. Although a financial audit and a performance audit share procedural similarities, they are not the same.

A performance audit focuses on efficiency measurements by identifying operational problems related to management, and resourcing and identifying their causes. In this sense, a performance audit is focused primarily on people and on the quality of performance of a government department, board or agency as defined in its legislative and policy mandate.

A financial audit, on the other hand, focuses on the accuracy and correctness of financial accounts. It does not explore the quality of management decisions. In a financial audit, the attention is directed towards finances and on determining if a government's figures have been recorded as required by national standards.

In conducting a financial audit, the auditor undertakes a risk-based audit approach that focuses on significant risks of material misstatement and non-compliance with significant authorities. Materiality is an important concept in auditing, related to the importance or significance of an amount, transaction or discrepancy. Based on professional judgment, the auditor determines what errors are considered material in the public accounts.

For each department, board or agency whose books are audited, the independent auditor prepares an audit report that addresses each of the audit objectives. These reports are included in the public accounts along with the financial statements for each entity.

Review of the GNWT Public Accounts for 2015-2016

Introduction

This is the second review of the public accounts by the Standing Committee on Government Operations of the 18th Legislative Assembly. The review took place in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, from April 3-4, 2017.

Acknowledgements

Members of the standing committee would like to take the opportunity to thank the officials from the Office of the Auditor General who participated in this year's review. The standing committee would also like to thank the officials from the office of the comptroller general in the GNWT's Department of Finance for their appearance before the standing committee on April 4, 2017.

The Significance of a Clean Audit Opinion

In an unqualified or "clean" report, the auditor concludes that the government's financial statements present its financial affairs fairly in all material respects. This indicates that the government observed compliance with Canadian public sector accounting standards and statutory requirements. This also demonstrates that any changes in the accounting policies, and the impact of these changes, have been adequately determined and revealed.

It is important to note that a clean opinion does not tell the reader that the government is in good economic health. It merely states that its financial report is complete and transparent and has not misstated any important facts. Nonetheless, achieving a clean audit opinion is an important objective and is to be commended.

The committee notes that the consolidated 2015-2016 Public Accounts received a clean audit opinion from the Auditor General and commends the Government of the Northwest Territories for this achievement.

Timeliness of the Public Accounts

Government Reporting Entity

Deadlines for the completion of the public accounts are set in the territorial Financial Administration Act (FAA). A new and modernized version of the FAA [S.N.W.T. 2015, c.13] came into force on April 1, 2016. The 2015-16 public accounts are the first to be prepared under this new legislation.

Under the new FAA, Section 36 requires that the interim public accounts be completed by September 30th after the end of the fiscal year and tabled in the Legislative Assembly at the first opportunity. The interim financial statements of the GNWT for the year ended March 31, 2016 were completed in accordance with the deadlines set in the legislation. They were provided to the standing committee on

September 1, 2016, and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 3, 2016.

With respect to the consolidated public accounts, Section 35 of the FAA requires that, "the public accounts for a Government fiscal year must be laid before the Legislative Assembly (a) on or before December 31st following the end of that fiscal year; or (b) if the Legislative Assembly is not then in session, on or before the fifth day of the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly." The consolidated Public Accounts for 2015-16 were completed in accordance with the deadlines set in legislation, having been signed on November 14, 2016, provided to the standing committee on January 27, 2017, and tabled in the House on February 6, 2017.

The committee takes note of the fact that this is the third year in a row that the Department of Finance has completed both the interim and consolidated public accounts in time to meet the deadlines set in legislation. The committee acknowledges the significance of this achievement, given the delays that were experienced in past Assemblies and commends the government. Given this much-improved track record, the committee has opted this year to dispense with recommendations related to the timely completion of the interim financial statements and consolidated public accounts, but intends to remain vigilant in monitoring the GNWT's compliance with the deadlines noted in the FAA.

Public Agencies

With respect to meeting statutory deadlines, the standing committee is interested in monitoring not only the compliance of the government reporting entity as a whole, but also that of the individual agencies which make up the reporting entity. The Department of Finance has been responsive, in previous years, to this request for information, providing it to the standing committee upon request. However, the standing committee has expressed a preference that this information be included in the public accounts, so that it becomes part of the public record when the public accounts are tabled.

The committee is pleased to see that the Department of Finance has included in the Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis in Section 1 of the 2015-2016 Public Accounts, a list of all departments, boards and agencies in the government reporting entity, their deadlines for the completion of financial statements, and whether or not those deadlines were met. With its inclusion, this information is now available to public scrutiny. The standing committee thanks the Minister of Finance for making this information readily available to the public.

Recommendation 1

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the table titled "Completion of Entities Consolidated within the Public Accounts" be included annually in the unaudited financial statement discussion and analysis section of the public accounts. Again this year, the committee reviewed the compliance of individual public agencies in the government reporting entity with their respective deadlines.

For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the committee notes that the following agencies requested and received extensions of the due dates for completion of their audited financial statements, as provided for in Section 32 of the FAA and in accordance with any requirements contained in the respective acts establishing the public agency: the Beaufort Divisional Education Council; the Ndilo Divisional Education Council; Aurora College; the Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation; the Northwest Territories Business Development and Investment Corporation; and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

The committee commends each of these agencies for seeking the appropriate extension and meeting their extended deadlines, giving particular acknowledgement to both the Northwest Territories Hydro Corporation and Aurora College for their improvement over the previous year, when they failed to seek the necessary extension to their respective deadlines.

For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the following agencies failed to meet the statutory deadlines for completion of their audited financial statements: the Detah District Education Authority; the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission; the Northwest Territories Sport and Recreation Council; and the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories.

As always, the committee recognizes the capacity challenges facing smaller agencies. Nonetheless, the committee urges any agency requiring additional time to seek out the extension provided for in law, to ensure compliance with the FAA. The standing committee makes the following recommendation with respect to timeliness of the public accounts:

Recommendation 2

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Office of the Comptroller General in the Department of Finance work with all GNWT public agencies to assist them to complete their audited financial statements to meet statutory reporting deadlines, and to seek the necessary extensions where those deadlines cannot be met.

Notable Audit Subject Areas

The following subjects have been identified by the standing committee as areas of particular interest to the committee, which also may be of interest to the public:

Environmental Liabilities

The accounting treatment of environmental liabilities by public sector bodies is set out in the Public Sector Accounting Board's standard PS 3260 – Liability for Contaminated Sites. Under this standard, the GNWT is responsible for recording estimates in its financial statements for the further evaluation or remediation of all known contaminated sites for which it is legally responsible.

Environmental liabilities arise when contamination exceeds established environmental standards. Estimated remediation costs are recorded in the year in which they become known.

For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the GNWT's environmental liabilities are disclosed in note 11 to the consolidated financial statements:

The GNWT has identified 223 sites potentially requiring environmental remediation as at March 31, 2016. [2015 – 216]. Total remediation costs for these sites are estimated at \$66.2 million (\$59.4 total remediation costs + \$6.9 million for NT Hydro asset retirement obligations). This down from the previous year's total of \$68.9 million.

Giant Mine has been formally designated as contaminated under the NWT's Environmental Protection Act. The balance of the GNWT's share of the above-ground remediation is \$2.851 million [2015 - \$2.994 million].

There are six other abandoned non-operating mine sites that the Government will be remediating in conjunction with the Government of Canada. Cost estimates for the remediation of these sites are in the same order of magnitude as the GNWT's share of the remediation costs for Giant Mine.

There are 28 sewage lagoons and 40 landfill sites outside of incorporated communities. These are being remediated or monitored as appropriate.

Included in the 223 sites are 74 sites for which no liability has been recognized. Monitoring of these sites is on-going under the GNWT's environmental protection program. There were two sites closed during the fiscal year [2015 – 0] that were either remediated or determined to no longer meet the criteria required to record a liability for accounting purposes.

During last year's review, the committee requested that information on the status of sites with known or potential contamination be included annually in the public accounts. The committee acknowledges the response received from the Department of Finance indicating that the inclusion of information in the public accounts must follow public sector accounting standards. The committee is satisfied with this response, noting that the department is now posting a list of contaminated sites on its web site.

Fiscal Responsibility Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories first established its Fiscal Responsibility Policy in 2005. It was formalized in February 2016, when it received approval by the commissioner-in-executive-council. The purpose of the policy is to promote on-going fiscal sustainability by guiding prudent borrowing and ensuring that government debt remains affordable.

The government reports annually on its performance in meeting the requirements of the Fiscal Responsibility Policy. The performance measures identified in the policy are: debt to revenue ratio; debt per capita ratio; debt servicing costs as a per cent of revenue; debt servicing payments as a per cent of revenue; debt servicing payments as a per cent of three-year moving GDP average; net debt per capita ratio; and credit rating. The policy requires that these performance measures be reported on a consolidated basis for the entire government reporting entity (ie. departments + public boards, agencies and territorial corporations). The Fiscal Responsibility Policy establishes specific numerical limits, expressed as percentages, restricting infrastructure financing and debt servicing as follows:

(3) Infrastructure Financing

The government will restrict infrastructure investments, excluding public-private partnership projects as follows:

A minimum of 50 per cent from the operating surpluses generated within the non-consolidated Public Accounts (emphasis added);

A maximum of 50 per cent from government debt.

(5) Affordable Debt (includes debt associated with Public-Private Partnership Projects)

Non-consolidated debt servicing payments shall not exceed 5 per cent of total non-consolidated annual revenues; and

Where non-consolidated debt servicing payments exceed 5 per cent of total non-consolidated annual revenues, operating surpluses shall be generated in

the following two years sufficient to permit principal repayments that will decrease debt servicing payments to 5 per cent by the third subsequent year.

In previous reviews, the standing committee has expressed the view that, in addition to the performance measures reported on a consolidated basis, the GNWT should also be reporting specifically on its performance in meeting the policy provisions related to infrastructure financing and affordable debt using the relevant data from the non-consolidated public accounts. This will allow members of the public to determine whether or not the GNWT is in compliance with the threshold limits related to infrastructure financing and affordable debt, as set out in the policy.

The committee is very pleased that the government has responded positively to this recommendation and that, as a result, the 2015-2016 Public Accounts are the first to include a table, on page 35 of Section I, reporting on the GNWT's compliance with the provisions on infrastructure financing and affordable debt contained in the Fiscal Responsibility Policy.

The committee commends the government for the inclusion of this information in the public accounts, and makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 3

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories continue to include information in the Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis section of the public accounts, indicating how the GNWT has met the provisions related to debt servicing and infrastructure financing in the Fiscal Responsibility Policy.

Accountability and Transparency

A commitment to improving accountability and transparency is one of the key priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly, and a fundamental component of the Government of the Northwest Territories' Mandate. Public information must be clear, concise, and easily understood by the average reader.

The public accounts are the definitive source of information for the public on the GNWT's fiscal performance. However, they are prepared for a very specific purpose, according to federal and territorial legislation and following standards set by the Public Sector Accounting Board. As a result, these documents are not easily understood by non-expert readers.

In previous reviews, the standing committee has urged the Department of Finance to find ways to

make the information contained in the public accounts as clear as possible for interested readers lacking expertise in finance or accounting.

During the review of the 2015-2016 Public Accounts, the committee was provided with a document titled *The Public Accounts: An Overview*, which was prepared by Finance and provides non-expert readers with an introduction to the public accounts and the information contained within them.

The standing committee thanks the Department of Finance for its positive response to the committee's recommendation and commends the department for its work in this area. The committee notes that this document is now available to the public on the department's web site.

The committee believes that, while this work is a good start, there is more work that remains to be done. The committee would like to see a summary document made available to the public to accompany the public accounts each year, which describes the financial highlights and key audit issues for the year and which is made available online at the same time the public accounts are released. The committee notes that the information contained in such a summary would not be dissimilar to that which the department already prepares for its opening presentation to the standing committee at the time of the annual public review. Accordingly, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 4

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Minister of Finance work with the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency to develop plain language materials that summarize the public accounts for a given year, in a manner that is understandable for an interested, non-professional reader, focusing on the key financial highlights and significant audit issues arising for that year.

Protection of Privacy and Disclosure of Information

The non-consolidated schedule of bad debt write-offs, forgiveness and student loan remissions contained in the public accounts identifies, by name, all individuals who have received a remission of their student loans and the amount of that remission.

The standing committee recognizes that government must strike a balance between protecting the privacy of an individual's personal information and disclosing information that is in the public interest. However, Committee believes that the degree of disclosure related to this information

may constitute a breach of privacy of those individuals named in the schedule.

In its review of the 2014-2015 Public Accounts, the standing committee recommended that the department consider amending this schedule by removing the names of individuals who have received remissions, and report only upon the dollar amount of the remissions. The GNWT responded that "This information will continue to be disclosed in the Public Accounts in accordance with the Financial Administration Act and to ensure transparency of these amounts to the public." Incidentally, it is worth noting that this is the only recommendation from that review to which the government did not respond favourably.

Section 65(1)(b) of the Financial Administration Act provides that the public accounts must contain information about the forgiveness of any debt or obligation owed to the GNWT. The committee understands the government to be of the view that this requirement necessarily obligates the government to disclose the names of students who receive any remission of their student loans. The committee remains unconvinced that this is the case.

In discussing this matter during the public hearing, the committee received a commitment from the Comptroller General that he would consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner to hear the IPC's views on the matter. Accordingly, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 5

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Department of Finance, after consultation with the Information and Privacy Commissioner for the Northwest Territories, reconsider amending the non-consolidated schedule of bad debt write-offs, forgiveness and student loan remissions to protect the privacy of individuals by removing the names of those who have received student loan remissions and reporting only the amount of the remissions.

The Comptroller General also indicated that he would consult with Education, Culture and Employment to learn what information is provided to student loan applicants about disclosure and whether or not consent is obtained when the loan is given. The committee expects that the response to this inquiry will be included in the government's response to this report.

Public Private Partnerships

For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Office of the Auditor General identified the GNWT's accounting treatment of public-private partnerships (P3s) as a significant audit area. As the GNWT moves forward

with projects of this nature, they are working with the OAG to ensure that P3s are accurately reflected in the public accounts. It is also an area of notable interest to the standing committee.

The GNWT is currently involved in two P3 projects, the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project and the Stanton Renewal Project. This is the first year that costs related to these projects are included in the public accounts:

Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project

On October 30, 2014, the GNWT entered into a 20-year agreement with Northern Lights General Partnership to design, build, operate and maintain 1,154 kilometres of high-speed fibre optic telecommunications cable from McGill Lake to Inuvik: term of agreement: 20 years (2017 – 2037); total construction cost: \$90,900,000 plus interest; financing: 100% NLGP; total payments to NLGP to operate and maintain system: \$64,000,000; additional costs: \$5,120,000 to First Nations for land access.

Stanton Renewal Project

On September 22, 2015, the GNWT entered into a 30-year agreement with Boreal Health Partnership to design, build, operate and maintain the new territorial hospital: Term of agreement: 30 years (2018 – 2048); total construction cost: \$291,000,000; financing: \$152,000,000 GNWT, \$139,000,000 BHP; total payments to BHP to operate and maintain facility: \$216,000,000.

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Government Operations has a mandate to review the public accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories so that GNWT financial management practices and decisions receive public scrutiny.

Committee members were grateful for the assistance provided by the Office of the Auditor General in support of this work. Committee members also appreciate the appearances before the Standing Committee by staff from the Office of the Comptroller General in the Department of Finance. The standing committee looks forward to the government's response to this report.

Recommendation 6

The Standing Committee on Government Operations recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Reports of standing and special committees. Member for Kam Lake.

MOTION TO RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORT 2-18(3) AND MOVE INTO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE,
CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River North, that Committee Report 2-18(3), Standing Committee Report on Government Operations on the Review of the 2014-2015 Public Accounts, be received by the Assembly and moved to Committee of the Whole for further consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

Motion carried. Masi. Reports of standing and special committees. Item 6, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 7, Acknowledgements. Colleagues, at this time, I would like to request for a short recess.

---SHORT RECESS

MR. SPEAKER: Members, we left off from acknowledgements. So the next item is item 8, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 1-18(3):
CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING FOR
EDUCATORS

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I spoke about the KAIROS Blanket exercise and the importance of governance like ours at the Legislative Assembly and how important it is to understand the effects of residential schools, and my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister describe the cultural awareness training that the new NWT teachers participated in, in 2017? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About three years ago, the department started developing this conference called New to the North, and any teachers who are just beginning their career in teaching or come up from the south or outside the Northwest Territories, they go through a series of cultural awareness training and make sure

that all our teachers that come from the south understand the legacy as well as the history of residential schools and the impact that it had on our communities or residents so our teachers that are going into these small communities are aware and well prepared for the situations that they will get in in terms of teaching in our schools. Also with that said, it is not only for our teachers but within our Department of Education, Culture and Employment, it is mandatory for all our staff to take cultural awareness training, and that includes one of the blanket exercises that is very well known throughout the Northwest Territories.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: That is good to see, that the Minister is quite involved, especially in the education system. Mr. Speaker, my second question for the Minister is: what role does a Minister see in teacher training and classroom curriculum for something like the KAIROS blanket exercise?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: In our Northern Studies 10 course, which is mandatory for all of our students across the Northwest Territories, one part of the Northern Studies 10 program is having the students participate in the blanket exercise. Just like our teachers, we want to make sure our next generation of youth understand the history and legacy of residential schools in the Northwest Territories, and as I mentioned earlier, the impact that it had on our residents or families in our communities, and to make sure that our students are well aware of that as well.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response. Mr. Speaker, we travel around Canada and we work with other Indigenous governments in other provinces and territories, and sometimes the lack of knowledge for Northerners in residential schools, whether it be in provinces in southern Canada or in the North, are sometimes not recognized with Indigenous groups that have gone through this, and especially families. Mr. Speaker, my final question is: would the Minister consider engaging facilitators to lead this exercise for senior staff in his department and also the Government of the Northwest Territories to better educate bureaucrats, MLAs, when dealing with Indigenous people and Indigenous governments?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, we do engage with other departments in terms of cultural awareness training, as well as the blanket exercise. Myself, I participated in the blanket exercise when I first got elected and was given the portfolio of Education, Culture and Employment. When I did it, we had other jurisdictions: Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Yukon. Nunavut participated in this as well, and we do encourage other departments and other leadership in the Northwest Territories who want to participate in this type of cultural awareness

training. We would be more than happy to facilitate it as well, as we do have the train the trainers programs as well, and actually even with the City of Yellowknife, working with them to get some cultural awareness training for their staff and employees as well.

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

QUESTION 2-18(3):
FUNDING FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE SHELTERS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. As I said in my statement, it is time to provide secure funding tied to standards of service for the five family violence shelters that now exist in the NWT. Work has been under way for years on these standards, so my question is: when will the draft standards be finalized, and what is the delay? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will have talk to the department to get the specifics on that detail. I am not exactly sure when those will be ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you for one of the shortest ever answers from the Minister. My second question is: what progress has the Minister made on developing a funding formula for family violence shelters, and when is this work scheduled to be complete?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The Department of Health staff met with different individuals from the family shelters around the Northwest Territories on September 16th to start developing a work plan on how to work together to develop a funding formula. I do not know the exact timelines of that. They are working amongst themselves, something that will work on both sides. I will get some additional information to share with the Member.

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for that answer. As the Minister is aware, there are no family violence shelters in the Deh Cho and Sahtu regions. What plans does the Minister have to address this gap in service for women who are fleeing violence in those areas?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We do invest about \$3.8 million annually towards family violence prevention and inter-prevention services in the Northwest Territories; \$2.9 million of that goes to the different territorial family violence shelters. Where there aren't family violence shelters in

communities or regions, we do have some dollars allocated that we can use to bring those families or those individuals to the regional centres where the family violence shelters do exist. On top of that, we are also contributing about \$477,000 to a number of different campaigns to bring awareness and combat family violence in the Northwest Territories. Things like What Will It Take? We have non-shelter regional protocols and response teams. We have programming for children who witnessed violence. We do have the shelter network that's getting some additional funding as well as Family Violence Awareness Week. There are a number of things we are doing trying to support those individuals who are suffering from domestic violence.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the run-down on the family violence, but it doesn't tell me when there will be shelters in the Deh Cho and the Sahtu. The other five shelters are often full and having these additional resources closer to home is important to the residents of that region, especially to women in that region. Will the Minister be looking at new investments such as in these shelters in the next budget? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, during the capital budgeting process, the Minister of Finance did indicate that we would be working together to see if there are any opportunities to provide some funding in this area, especially if the federal government was going to come to the table in support of family violence shelters. We are going to work together to see what opportunities exist and, as we have more information, we are happy to share that with Members.

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

QUESTION 3-18(3):
CLOSURE AND RECLAMATION OF MINES

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Lands, who has some responsibility for mining financial security. There are some positions shown on the organizational charts for the Securities and Project Assessment Division of the Department of Lands. Can the Minister give us a brief overview of the work under way within this division to develop a new closure and reclamation regime for mining in the Northwest Territories, including financial securities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Securities and Project Assessment Division is

providing input to the Department of Lands as we go forward with our updates to the Territorial Lands Act and the Commissioner's Land Act. The department will begin reviewing regulations relating to securities and other matters within the next few months. Apart from that, I can advise that the government and resource management boards who share responsibility for many aspects in this area, particularly financial securities, are working together to develop a guideline for closure and reclamation cost estimates for mines. I understand that document is expected to be released as a joint GNWT Lands and Water Board document in early 2018. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that response. I think it doesn't really quite jibe with what he said on October 5th when he said, "We know the present system is working quite well." Earlier in my statement, I described the financial security mess involving a promissory note created against the closure and reclamation costs of the Mactung and Cantung properties. Can the Minister update us on the costs at work to property reclaim of Mactung and Cantung?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Canada accepted responsibility for the Cantung site in November of 2015. Care and maintenance at the site continues to be monitored by the court-appointed receiver, for the North American Tungsten. The Government of Canada is bearing the costs of that work. The GNWT no longer exercises delegated authorities at the site under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. This means that it is Canada, not the GNWT, who is responsible for the decisions and water licences and inspections of any water licences or land use permits.

The final step to be completed in this exercise is the relinquishment of the site to Canada, and most parties are working closely to complete the legal steps necessary to transfer the land back to Canada, as it is their responsibility. With respect to the Mactung ITI is the department lead on that project and they are working closely to ENR to remove and dispose of debris from the site.

MR. O'REILLY: I appreciate the answer from the Minister. It is clear he did his homework and I gave him a heads up, so I appreciate the detailed response. As part of our mandate, we agreed to "develop an integrated comprehensive approach to the management of contaminated sites including prioritizing, sharing of responsibility in collaboration with other governments, monitoring, and a sound financial security system to prevent public liabilities."

This item was not changed during the recent revisions. What lessons have we learned from the Mactung and Cantung messes and how will this

government apply them to achieve the mandate commitment and prevent further public liabilities?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I do appreciate the heads up the Member opposite gave me on this fairly complex issue. He referenced my statement of October 5th. Obviously, we can still improve and do need to improve. I do acknowledge that.

We have learned lessons through the exercise of our post-devolution responsibilities. There have been problems with the type of security that we have accepted in the past. I believe there was an unsecured promissory note that is not worth the paper it's written on, so we have learned that we should take more real security. Clearly, you must have real security. An unsecured promissory note is worth very little. We are taking a whole-government approach, if I can put it that way, to resolve this matter and provide the type of security we do need for these projects.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Again, thanks to the Minister. I'm glad to hear him say that promissory notes are not good. What he should be looking at is something called an irrevocable letter of credit from a charter bank. That's what you want. I'm helping him out with his homework here, but public consultations are under way on a new Mineral Resources Act. The words "financial security" are nowhere to be found in the discussion paper and the word "abandonment" appears once in the table.

The discussion on rehabilitation closure takes up three paragraphs and four questions with no analysis or options presented. Was the Lands Department involved in putting the Mineral Resources Act discussion paper together? If so, how did it attempt to ensure that the mandate commitment on prevention of future public liabilities is achieved through the Mineral Resources Act? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly an irrevocable letter of credit is far better than a promissory note. The promissory note was actually inherited though from the federal government. That was not something of our doing.

ITI, of course, is leading the development on the proposed Mineral Resources Act. We are in the middle of a public engagement until December of 2017. We will be working with ITI on any topics that might arise as a result of this public engagement. As well, Lands will work with ITI on the process as the current mining regulations are held within the Northwest Territories Lands Act. We are working

with other departments in this important area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 4-18(3):
MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT OPTIONS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today in my Member's statement I talked about mental illness and suicides in my region. My questions are to follow up to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Has there been any outreach to education institutions specializing in Health and Social Services programs for recommendations or potential training for healthcare professionals and residents of the GNWT aside from what we do presently? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows, we do have a relationship with Aurora College and they do provide important training, things like resident care aid training and nursing, but I think the Member is asking about some of the other things that we are exploring. I did have an opportunity to meet with the Dean of Effective Medicine at the University of Alberta to talk about potential opportunities for us to work together in bringing physicians up for residency placements, but also the possibility of having some dental hygienists come up for some practicum placements. We are looking to having those types of relationships with institutions to see what opportunities exist and to see how we can benefit our residents here in the Northwest Territories.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. I guess my concern is regarding the mental health and mental wellness of our individuals, and I have to applaud the department and the staff who are there helping us. However, is the department looking at mental health resources like telepsychology and looking into for remote, small communities? Right now we do not have staff in there, so are we able to be looking at some of these options?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the use of telepsychiatry is already in place in the Northwest Territories. The telehealth support unit may be able to provide those types of services directly to individuals or indirectly to communities based on supports and resources that are required to support individual people. However, I do want to caution that often that would be for follow-up appointments and those types of things. Initial appointments, I believe, and I think many people

believe that some of that needs to be done person-to-person, psychiatrist or counsellor with an individual, so that they can start to develop a rapport and a relationship, so there still is a requirement to try to facilitate some face-to-face, but, as follow-up appointments, we do have the ability to use our telehealth and other tools that are available.

MR. THOMPSON: I again thank the Minister for his answer. I guess my concern is small communities that do not have staffing there, and that is something that we need to look into. Mr. Speaker, having a database upon which ministry program outcomes could be monitored would give us a better idea of what kind of programs are working for our residents. Does the Department of Health and Social Services currently have one in place? If it does not, does the department intend to look into implementing one?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The department is continuously enhancing and looking for ways to enhance efforts to ensure that we have administrative databases that allow us to monitor program outcomes. We do have the electronic medical records as well as the new Child and Family Services information system that went live last week. With electronic medical records, we have not got it into every community yet, but we are rolling it out, and we are intending to have that done shortly. Those tools will help us collect data that will help this Assembly as well as the department make evidence-based decisions about what is actually happening out there. We also have 32 indicators that we track on a regular basis and compile data on so that we can monitor the effects and the results of the services that are being provided, so there are a lot of things that we are using to collect data at this point.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker, and I again thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, what measures are being taken to ensure that programs delivered by Health and Social Services in all communities are done correctly and adhere to all policies and procedures?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the department publicly reports on outcomes through our public performance measurement report which comes out annually. Public reporting of performance indicators and results basically allows for an open and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of the health and social services system as well as our programs. Both in 2015 as well as in 2016, the public performance measurement report included over two dozen indicators covering a wide range of topics related to

health and wellness. These are the types of things that we are going to continue to report on so that we can show progress or lack thereof in the different areas of the system here, in the Northwest Territories, to help us make evidence-based decisions. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 5-18(3):
SMALL BUSINESS TAX RATES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I talked about how important it is to support small businesses. The federal government has cut the small business tax rate by 1.5 per cent, and I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he is prepared to bring forward a tax plan to reduce taxes on small business as we have committed to in the mandate of the 18th Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the federal proposal I believe is costing the federal treasury about \$3 billion. A similar proposal would cost us about \$750,000, so it is not something that we are contemplating at this moment.

MR. TESTART: It is true that any cut to the tax rate is going to decrease revenues, but increased productivity and prosperity in our business community, that is, 98 per cent of the economy, will help create jobs and give businesses more resources to invest back into the economy. The Government of Yukon has cut their small business tax rates, so the Northwest Territories seems to be standing still. Is the Minister willing to revisit this issue at any time in this term?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the contribution of small businesses across the Northwest Territories. That is why we believe we have many other programs that are in place to help the businesses grow. I think we have demonstrated that just recently with working with one of the local manufacturing companies to come up with a benefit that would be beneficial to them, and not only to them, to the consumers, so we believe we have programs in place. I take the Member's point about it being a part of the mandate, but the mandate is for four years, so we still have two years left.

MR. TESTART: So we have got two years left to implement this tax cut. Is it going to get done? I did not hear a clear answer. If not, can the Minister at least stand up and say it is a broken promise?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we have two years left in this mandate. It was not a promise that I made, so it is not going to be a broken promise. I understand that it was part of the mandate, but again, the mandate was for four years, not two.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to question the Minister's math, but we have had two years to cut the tax. We have not done it. We have got two years left to cut the tax. That is what we are talking about here. Mr. Speaker, the reason why a tax proposal like this is good is because it affects everyone equally. It is not a program that is going to be oversubscribed or underfunded. This is something that every business can benefit from, so, if we are not going to cut taxes, then are we going to roll out some tax credits? Especially as the new carbon tax comes out, are we going to roll out some tax credits for businesses that can take advantage of some of that carbon tax revenue and put that revenue back in their businesses? Are we going to roll out tax credits for these businesses that work so hard to support our communities?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I recognize the fact that these small businesses, they work hard, and they provide a service to consumers, and they keep people employed. As I said before, we believe that we have a system in place that helps to try to grow their business. If there are other ways we can look at it, the carbon tax the Member speaks about and the carbon credit, I mean, that is something that, as I said, I think in this House that we are still looking at. We are trying to mitigate the impacts as much as we can on businesses and people in the Northwest Territories, so it is something we continue to look at. At the end of the day, our goal is to try to grow the economy. As I said before, \$750,000, you know, there are ways that we could put that into businesses across the territory to help grow their business as part of our full suite of programs we offer, then it is something that we will consider. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 6-18(3):
SAHTU REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today is to the Minister of Health and Social Services in the spirit of oversight on the Sahtu Regional Health Centre building to say that we are open for business. I first ask: when is the

Department of Health and Social Services taking ownership of the building? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are expecting that substantial completion of the facility will be either late November or early December, at which point the government will take possession of the building. It does require that the Department of Infrastructure go in there and do some testing on some of the functional components of the building to make sure that it is all running properly. Once that has been verified, then the Department of Health and Social Services would take over the responsibility of the building. We would then go in there and start doing our assessments on some of the medical equipment and medical tools that are in that building before we start moving in. We are hoping to be fully operational in that building late spring, early summer at the very latest.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for that reply on scheduling. In preparation for the open for business concept on the issue of staffing and accommodations, what preparation plans are in those two areas?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The job descriptions for the new facility have been written. We have experienced some delays getting them through job evaluation, but most of that is completed at this point. We are doing some anticipatory hiring. Advertisements have been posted for resident care aides, which was one of the new positions that is coming to the region. We are starting to roll out some of our staffing actions now in anticipation of opening that facility.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks to the Minister for that deadline, open for business here and filling these positions that are incoming, as well as looking at the accommodations so that the people out there know what opportunities are available to apply for.

My third question is: when can the long-term clients be expected to be relocated to the new building, specifically clients who are residents of the Sahtu who are living elsewhere?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: After the building opens.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Minister for that shorter reply. My last question is: will the Minister keep monthly scheduling postings to our office here or the Members on this side of the transition?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: I will certainly commit to keeping the Member up to date on where we are with progress on moving into that building. With respect to the last question, all placements in the Northwest Territories are determined through the Territorial Admission Committee. Residents of the Sahtu who are now living in other communities, whether it's in the Beaufort Delta or Yellowknife or Hay River or Fort Simpson, if they are interested in returning back to Norman Wells when the new facility opens, they should be getting in touch with the staff of the facilities they are in and looking to apply through Territorial Admission to express a desire to move back to the region. We are hoping that we will have people moved back to the region, as well as people who live in the region utilizing those facilities. Please have your residents review or follow up with the TAC, Territorial Admission Committee.

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

QUESTION 7-18(3):
TEMPORARY GENERAL IDENTIFICATION
CARDS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Infrastructure about general identification cards, known as GICs. This issue was brought to my attention by a medical professional who has witnessed many situations in which family members, mostly elders, could not travel with a loved one who had been medevaced because of a lack of appropriate identification. Sometimes that means that people are alone in their last moments or that their loved ones don't get to say good-bye.

I believe that, here in Yellowknife, the RCMP can provide someone with a statutory declaration confirming identity, but that service is unavailable in most communities, and a statutory declaration cannot be used to fly out of the territory anyways.

The GNWT can issue a general ID card to residents without driver's licences and GICs are acceptable for air travel, but that process takes many weeks, as the government does not issue temporary GICs. I could get a temporary driver's licence printed on the spot in Hay River, but not a temporary GIC. A simple solution to this issue, it seems to me, anyways, would be to start printing temporary GICs on the same secure stock that we print temporary driver's licences on. I would like to ask the Minister: can we start doing this and fix this problem right now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no, because the stock that we do have

for using them within our system right now is identified as driver's licence stock, and it cannot be used for that. It would also require significant software changes to be able to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SIMPSON: The technology to print hard plastic licences must be cheap enough now that we can have these done in the regional centres. I am sure I could buy one off Amazon and start printing licences in my house if I wanted to. I wouldn't.

If we cannot print the temporary GICs because the paper is driver's licence paper only, are we going to start printing hard plastic permanent driver's licences and GICs in regional centres so that we do not have to wait for weeks while the application is sent to Inuvik, and then the card is shipped back?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: To answer the question, first of all, in the 2018-2019 capital plan we have some money that is in there for a two-year project to replace the secure image management system within the Department of Infrastructure. One of these enhancements that we are going to do is to do a temporary GIC card for residents of the Northwest Territories, update the software, have facial recognition capabilities for security issues, and these sorts of things.

The answer is questionable regarding doing it regionally. Once we have this system in place, and we try to work through it in the next two years with this management system, we need to do a cost analysis on doing this, the security measures that need to be taken place -- we cannot be just issuing cards willy-nilly -- as well as inventory control, all these sorts of things. Once this program comes into place after we get the capital through, we will be able to work to fix this problem.

MR. SIMPSON: There is a lot of information there. I think I heard that something is rolling out over the next three years where the department will be able to begin printing at least the temporary GICs, and from there, they will see. I just want to confirm: when can we expect temporary GICs to be issued in regional centres?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I have said, there is money in the capital budget to move forward with this project of the secure image management system, and hopefully, within the next two years, once we have all this stuff worked out; by 2020 at the very latest, we will be able to do that.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been an ongoing issue. I know the Minister is aware of it because I have brought it up to him. I believe that the Department of Health and Elections

Canada have also expressed concerns about the lack of accessible ID in the territory. Is there any collaboration with any other departments or levels of government to get this off the ground? Thank you.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Department of Education has worked with us, as this was an issue around some of their programming. The Department of Health as well, Elections Canada, there are a number of departments that could possibly use the temporary ID for residents in the Northwest Territories to assist with their programs and stuff moving forward. We've been in collaboration with a number of different departments in moving this forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 8-18(3):
SMALL BUSINESSES FUNDING

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on the responses from the Minister of Finance to the honourable Member from Kam Lake's questions on small businesses. The Minister indicated that a 1 per cent cut would cost the government about \$750,000 in revenue. I would like to ask the Minister if he would consider another method of putting the \$750,000 directly into small businesses in the NWT. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will not commit to actually putting that \$750,000 into other programs. I did say that, through the programs we offer within the government to support small business, that \$750,000 that we would save by not implementing the tax would definitely help to fund some of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: I would like to ask the Minister, along the same line of questioning, if the Minister would do a socio-economic model on what the reduction in, say, social spending would be if the \$750,000 was put into small businesses in the communities where there is low employment. The models I have looked at indicate that there could be about 2.5 times the amount of a reduction in social spending on the expenditures. Would the Minister look at doing some sort of socio-economic model on the money that we are referring to pertaining to a 1 per cent reduction in taxes for small business?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The \$750,000, I mean, that's what this government would save. That money just stays within the government. It goes to

a lot of the full fleet of programs we offer across government-wide. As far as the socio-economic government, I'm not sure what the Member expects to come out of that. I would have to look at that and see how much work that would actually be. I can say that, with the small communities, it was the small community employment fund that was recently approved, \$4.2 million. We think that would go a long way into helping with the employment in the small communities. I'd have to confirm but I'm not sure how many businesses would be affected by this reduction if it were to go ahead. Again, I mean we are still open. We still have two years left in our mandate. We will still continue to do the work and if we feel that there is something that we need to implement, then we will look at it.

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

QUESTION 9-18(3):
ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to my Member's statement, I have two questions for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier: what does the Premier understand his role to be when working with the federal government and with the American officials in the matter of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge where the effects will intimately impact the landscape wildlife and people of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Porcupine caribou herd is probably one of the healthiest herds that we have in the North. That is largely due to very strong management by the national and international Porcupine Management Board and as well as the people of the Mackenzie Delta who view it very important to protect these animals and to use them wisely.

In the Northwest Territories, as well, we place a very large importance on caribou calving grounds. We have caribou protection measures for the various areas. Certainly, we will take whatever action we felt would be necessary to protect the animals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Debate over the refuge has gone back and forth in the American congress for many years. However, the first series of attempts to erode the refuge in 13 years is currently under way. What actions has the Premier and his government taken now to represent the GNWT voices and defend the refuge to our American counterparts?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I believe the Board of the Porcupine Management has been doing a very

excellent job, as I said. I have not been approached to take any specific action, but we are quite prepared to do that. Twenty years ago, when Jean Chretien was the Prime Minister, we did write a letter to the Prime Minister encouraging him to take action with the United States government the last time this came up.

MR. BLAKE: I would like to ask the Premier: will the Premier travel to Ottawa with a delegation to lobby the Prime Minister to do all that they can to ensure the protection of the 1002 lands for the Porcupine caribou herd?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources will be meeting with the federal environment Minister next week in Vancouver. He will be raising that matter with her. Certainly, we are prepared to go to Ottawa to meet with the Prime Minister to discuss this very important matter.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the years, this concern has received a lot of support from the congress in the United States, but recently with the election of Trump it has really opened up the hard facts that, you know, they are planning to open up the 1002 lands. We do have the Porcupine Caribou Management Board and other Gwich'in nations in the Yukon that travel to Washington to lobby. If possible, would the Premier be willing to also travel down to represent the communities of the Northwest Territories to lobby congress in Washington? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Over the years, we have had occasion to travel to Washington for numerous reasons. I think we will be prepared to do that again. We will see how many Cabinet Ministers we would have to take, but I think it is a big enough issue, international issue, that I think it is an important matter that we will be prepared to discuss with the leadership in the area, as well. I think it would be helpful to have a coordinated effort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 10-18(3):
EMERGENCY PROTECTION ORDERS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a second set of questions on my statement I made today about intimate partner violence. This set of questions is for the Minister of Justice. As I mentioned, I am referencing the same report about how to improve service to women who experience

intimate partner violence. One recourse that women have is to apply for an emergency protection order. Research has shown that there is no correlation between the number of EPOs issued and either the prevalence of intimate partner violence or the community population. Does the Minister have any ideas about why this discrepancy exists? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: No, I don't, Mr. Speaker. I haven't read the report that was referred to earlier, that I understand was prepared by the Aurora Institute. I certainly would like to take a look at that and perhaps address the concern raised by the Member opposite. What we have seen is EPOs as an important tool in reducing and preventing family violence, but we certainly are looking at ways in which we could improve the program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: That's good news, that the Minister is open to looking again at this program. I will be tabling this report at the appropriate time. He will have a copy ready to hand. The researchers indicate that men may be using the EPO process to get back at women who want to keep them away by filing for their own EPOs. What kind of oversight is in place to ensure that this retaliatory type of action doesn't happen?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand that about 75 application for EPOs are heard each year. It has been noted that the number of male applicants has increased in recent years. Of course, the department does provide training in this area, annual training for RCMP, public information, and outreach. The materials are distributed to communities each year. I would be very disappointed to know that this very good program would be used for the purpose of getting back at the victim.

MS. GREEN: As disappointing as that may be, it is something that I believe is worth investigating. To that end, since the EPOs were introduced in 2005, what kind of review or evaluation has been done of them and made public?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I'm not certain of any recent evaluation. It sounds as though the Aurora Institute has done some research, and I very much would like to review that research.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the report does is plot uses of EPO with incidents of intimate partner violence on a map. The research is not what I would call a thorough review. Obviously, in my view, there needs to be a thorough review.

Can the Minister commit to doing a review of the emergency protection orders in order to improve their use and efficiency? Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, of course, we are always trying to improve our response in this area. I certainly would be prepared to look at this legislation and the use of EPOs. I am quite surprised by the information that has been provided by the Member opposite. I said earlier I am very disappointed to hear that there seems to be an inappropriate use of EPO. Certainly, I will look into this matter. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 11-18(3):
DENTAL THERAPISTS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today in my first set of questions the Minister of Health and Social Services talked about dental therapists and hygienists. I guess that leads me to this second set of questions I have today. In the height of dealing with dental therapy in that we used to have positions in there, can the Minister tell us how many dental therapy positions were in NWT at the height of it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past, our oral health services delivery model consisted of 12 dental therapists in nine communities across the Northwest Territories. There were three positions established in Behchoko, two in Inuvik, one in Deline, Fort Good Hope, Simpson, Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, Fort McPherson, and Fort Smith. These individuals got their training from a dental therapy training program at the University of Saskatoon. It once upon a time was delivered in Fort Smith, and it was a federally funded program. It was moved to Saskatoon. It was discontinued in 2011.

We no longer have a supply or a training mechanism to train dental therapists at the point in time, Mr. Speaker, we only have four dental therapists left. One of the things we are doing with the oral health strategy is looking at a new way of providing oral health to our youth and to our residents across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: It looks like the Minister had all my questions here and was able to answer them all. The answer to the question on how many communities are out there: basically, we have five communities that don't have dental therapists in place. Is the government seriously looking at trying

to fill these vacant positions, and if they are, how are they looking at doing this?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Since the program was discontinued at the University of Saskatoon, like I said, we no longer have a supply of the individuals with the appropriate training to fill the role of the dental therapists. In investigating the role of the dental therapists and looking at providing better quality oral health for residents of the Northwest Territories, what became clear is that dental therapists were a school-based position. There was a gap that we were missing, and that was the youth or the children from zero to five were not getting support from the dental therapist positions, which were primarily school-based positions.

What we are looking at doing through the oral health strategy is actually changing it. We are striving to improve the use of our existing resources and changing to more of an oral health -- integrating oral health as part of our overall primary care services and suite of services that are available at the community level. This means working with our community health reps, with our local community health nurses, and providing them with additional tools so that they can provide more oral health services to our residents, and not having it as a separate service but being part of our primary care. That is the work being done right now.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for that answer. It looks like we are trying to do some good stuff and I applaud the department for that. Is the government looking at maybe working with Aurora College, looking at developing something in this area for the strategy?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In developing the oral health strategy, we have actually contracted a local dentist here in the Northwest Territories to provide some oversight and direction on that. We also have some staff members involved. We are looking at changing the way that we provide oral health services. Some of the things we are hoping to accomplish is to create an integrated oral health program for children within the NWT at all ages, not just the ones in the school system.

We are looking at delivering more prevention/promotion activities with an emphasis on oral health as a part of the overall health, not as a separate program. We are looking at working with our existing staff and providing them with the resources and tools they need and incorporating with other programs like the healthy family program so the information is getting out there and is seen as overall health and the incredible value that maintaining good oral health has on your overall health. It is a change in direction. It is working with our staff to provide more resources. We are not at

this point in time looking to train people to occupy the dental therapist positions. We think we are evolving into a better system that is going to provide better results for all residents, especially youth zero to five and in the school system, as well.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that answer. I guess my concern, though, is: we are still not dealing with it. We have small communities that have this issue. I have been listening to people. They basically would like to see some dental therapists in the smaller communities, like Fort Providence, Fort Liard, some of these smaller communities, to give these residents from zero to 20 years old the opportunity to get this treatment. Will the Minister look at the smaller communities, at training the staff and getting people in these places? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is actually part of the oral health strategy that we are working on, training our local people to do some of that work, especially some of our existing staff, whether it is community health reps or community health nurses. I indicated previously I did have an opportunity to meet with the dean of the medical program at the U of A, and we did have some conversation about whether or not there is an opportunity for some of their dental hygienist students to possibly come to the Northwest Territories, in particular to small, rural, remote communities to do some practicum placements and do some of the dental hygienist work in the communities. That is education, but also some treatments, fluoridation, and those types of things. We are pursuing that as an opportunity. That is above and beyond the work we are doing with training our local staff to do some of this work as well. We are trying to get it from a number of different angles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Item 9, written questions. Item 10, petitions. Item 11, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 1-18(3):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 3,
2017-2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 2-18(3):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (OPERATIONS
EXPENDITURES), NO. 3, 2017-2018

TABLED DOCUMENT 3-18(3):
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
(INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), NO. 1,
2018-2019

TABLED DOCUMENT 4-18(3):
INTERIM PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH
31, 2017

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents entitled "Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2017-2018," "Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2017-2018," "Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2018-2019," and "Interim Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories for the Year Ended March 31, 2017." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Justice.

TABLED DOCUMENT 5-18(3):
CANNABIS LEGALIZATION IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES: REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

TABLED DOCUMENT 6-18(3):
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY:
OPEN GOVERNMENT POLICY: WHAT WE
HEARD

TABLED DOCUMENT 7-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
872-18(2): NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL
COMPLEX (NSCC) FENCING

TABLED DOCUMENT 8-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
875-18(2): LANDS INTEGRATED RISK BASED
STRATEGIC PLAN

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents entitled "Cannabis Legalization in the Northwest Territories: Report on What We Heard, October 13, 2017," "Public Engagement and Transparency: Open Government Policy: What We Heard, June 2017," "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 872-18(2): North Slave Correctional Complex Fencing," and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 875-18(2): Lands Integrated Risk Based Strategic Plan." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 9-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
847-18(2): MEDICAL TRAVEL

TABLED DOCUMENT 10-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
880-18(2): CENTRALIZATION OF LONG-TERM
CARE FACILITIES

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 847-18(2): Medical Travel" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 880-18(2): Centralization of Long-Term Care Facilities." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 11-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
837-18(2): DELETION OF MOOSE KERR
SCHOOL RETROFIT

TABLED DOCUMENT 12-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
899-18(2): SMALL COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT
SUPPORT PROGRAM

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 837-18(2): Deletion of Moose Kerr School Retrofit" and "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 899-18(2): Small Community Employment Support Program." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Minister of Infrastructure.

TABLED DOCUMENT 13-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
822-18(2): PEEL RIVER FERRY SERVICES

TABLED DOCUMENT 14-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
855-18(2): STATUS OF REPAIRS TO HIGHWAY
NO. 6

TABLED DOCUMENT 15-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
859-18(2): SUPPORT FOR TRADITIONAL
HARVESTERS

TABLED DOCUMENT 16-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
909-18(2): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY STRATEGY

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following four documents entitled: Follow-

up Letter for Oral Question 822-18(2): Peel River Ferry Services; Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 855-18(2): Status of Repairs for Highway No. 6; Follow-up letter for Oral Question 859-18(2) Support for Traditional Harvesters; and Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 909-18(2): NWT Geological Survey Strategy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

TABLED DOCUMENT 17-18(3):
HEARING ABOUT THE REALITIES OF INTIMATE
PARTNER VIOLENCE IN THE NORTHWEST
TERRITORIES FROM FRONTLINE SERVICE
PROVIDERS: FINAL REPORT - RURAL AND
NORTHERN COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

MS. GREEN: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Further to my statement today, I am going to table a report called "Hearing About the Realities of Intimate Partner Violence in the Northwest Territories from Frontline Service Providers: Final Report." Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Tabling of documents.

TABLED DOCUMENT 18-18(3):
STATUTORY DECLARATION OF THE MEMBER
FOR MONFWI

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 14 of the Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, I hereby table the Statutory Declaration of principal residence of the Member for Monfwi, dated September 25, 2017.

Item 12, notices of motions. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Notices of Motions

MOTION 1-18(3):
REVOCATION OF APPOINTMENT OF THE
HONOURABLE LOUIS SEBERT TO THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on October 19, 2017, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I will move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that this Assembly formally revokes the pleasure of the Assembly from the appointment of the Honourable Louis Sebert as a Member of the Executive Council;

And further, that this Assembly recommends that a Member be chosen to be a Member of the Executive Council.

And, Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time tomorrow, I will be seeking unanimous consent to deal with this motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MOTION 2-18(3):
APPOINTMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST
COMMISSIONER

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 19, 2017, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that pursuant to section 91 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, the Legislative Assembly recommends to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories the reappointment of Mr. David Phillip Jones as Conflict of Interest Commissioner, effective December 1, 2017.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife North.

MOTION 3-18(3):
APPOINTMENT OF THE EQUAL PAY
COMMISSIONER

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Thursday, October 19, 2017, I will move the following motion: Now therefore I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Ms. Elizabeth Joy Noonan be appointed as the Equal Pay Commissioner in accordance with the Public Service Act by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories as recommended by the Legislative Assembly. And further that the Speaker be authorized to communicate the effective date of the appointment to the Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of motion. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MOTION 4-18(3):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
FEBRUARY 7, 2018

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Thursday, October 19, 2017, I will move the following motion: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on October 20, 2017, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 7, 2018; and further, that at any time prior to February 7, 2018, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the

Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion. Item 13, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 1:
WESTERN CANADA LOTTERY ACT

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Thursday, October 19, 2017, I will move that Bill 1, Western Canada Lottery Act be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 14, motions. Item 15, first reading of bills. Item 16, second 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, October 18, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion

16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns
 - Tabled Document 1-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 3, 2017-2018
 - Tabled Document 2-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Operations Expenditures), No. 3, 2017-2018
 - Tabled Document 3-18(3), Supplementary Estimates (Infrastructure Expenditures), No. 1, 2018-2019
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, October 18, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:23 p.m.