



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**18<sup>th</sup> Assembly**

## **HANSARD**

**Monday, February 12, 2018**

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**The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker**

# Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

## Members of the Legislative Assembly

### Speaker

**Hon. Jackson Lafferty**  
(Monfwi)

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*Minister Responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission*  
*Minister Responsible for Seniors*  
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(Hay River North)

**Mr. Kieron Testart**

(Kam Lake)

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(Nahendeh)

**Mr. Cory Vanthuyne**

(Yellowknife North)

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**YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES****Monday, February 12, 2018****Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**Prayer**

**SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Justice.

**Ministers' statements**

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 20-18(3):  
TRANSPARENCY ON RESOURCE ROYALTIES**

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, in responding to oral question 77-18 (3), I referenced the Bauer report and stated that I thought royalties received by the government of the Northwest Territories would be approximately \$83 million a year. I have reviewed the Bauer report and the main estimates and would like to take this opportunity to correct the record. According to the main estimates, non-renewable resource revenue for 2015-2016 was \$58,346,000, and for the following year was \$63,284,000. I apologize for any misunderstanding this may have caused. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 21-18(3):  
RECOGNIZING NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
OLYMPIANS**

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, today I rise as the Minister responsible for Sport to congratulate three prominent athletes, all with ties to the Northwest Territories, who are competing for Canada at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. On behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories and all of our residents, I am proud to speak today about Brendan Green, Jesse Cockney, and Kevin Koe.

Hay River's Brendan Green will represent Canada in men's biathlon events. Brendan was a member of Team NWT at the Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife in 1998 and in Whitehorse in 2000. He has competed in the Canada Games in 2007 in both biathlon and cross-country skiing, where he won gold in the cross-country skiing event. As his career advanced, he reached the ultimate

achievement in sport, appearances at the Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010 and again in Sochi in 2014. Through his career, the Government of the Northwest Territories has been proudly supporting him through the High Performance Athlete Grant program going back to 2005. His hard work, dedication and commitment make him a strong role model for young athletes across the Northwest Territories.

Jesse Cockney started cross-country skiing in Yellowknife at age three. He carries on the proud family tradition in the sport. His father, Angus Cockney, a former TEST Skier was an accomplished artist, represented the Northwest Territories on a number of occasions and won two gold medals at the Canada Games in 1975. As Jesse continued to advance in his own career, he, too, reached the podium with three gold medals at the 2011 Canada Winter Games. He would go on to make his Olympic debut in Sochi in 2014. In addition to his rigorous training, Jesse takes the time to be actively involved in mentoring other young Indigenous athletes.

Kevin Koe. Kevin comes from the well-known Koe family of curlers, and got his start in the sport in his earlier days in Yellowknife. Kevin participated in the Arctic Winter Games in 1992 in Whitehorse and in 1994 in Slave Lake. He is a three-time Canadian champion and two-time world curling champion. I am sure the family is brimming with pride as Kevin attends his first Olympic Games as a member of Team Canada. While Kevin now makes his home in Alberta, we in the Northwest Territories still take pride in claiming him as one of our own.

Winter sports are natural to Northwest Territories athletes. Sports not only keep our residents healthy and strong, but they develop lifelong teamwork and leadership skills. We are proud of all of our athletes, and having three athletes from the Northwest Territories reaching this level of success is empowering. These are true role models for all Northwest Territories residents, from children to seniors, whether you're a weekend warrior or a high-performance athlete.

It is with great pride that, on behalf of all residents of the Northwest Territories, I acknowledge the achievements of these Northern Olympians, and wish them great success in Pyeongchang. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 22-18(3):  
WHAT WE HEARD AND NEXT STEPS –  
CREATION OF THE MINERAL RESOURCES ACT

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government committed to providing support for mineral exploration and the mining sector, and to support the territorial vision of land and resource management in accordance with the Land Use and Sustainability Framework. The proposed Mineral Resources Act will be a landmark, made-in-the-North legislation for our territory, and we are investing in its drafting with this degree of importance.

As we work to develop what will be the NWT's first-ever homegrown mining legislation, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has completed its most extensive public engagement since devolution. The extent of our public engagement and the themes that emerged from it are highlighted in the "what we heard" report released last month in association with our government's work and investment in the AME Roundup.

Our 120-day public engagement period closed on December 1<sup>st</sup> last year. In total, the department received 516 oral and written submissions from NWT residents, Indigenous governments and organizations, industry, NGOs, and stakeholders. Three hundred and twenty-eight people participated in one-on-one engagement sessions that took place in Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Behchoko, and Yellowknife.

ITI's engagement portal received over 2,700 visits. While the broad public engagement period is now closed, a second round of targeted follow-up meetings are now being held with key stakeholders, and close to 200 people, subscribed to the project's newsletter, will continue to be informed of progress on this file.

As we advance through the drafting process, we will also continue to meet and work with the Inter-Governmental Council and reach out to key stakeholders and subject matter experts to ensure our bill is the best product possible and will meet the needs of NWT residents. Mr. Speaker, our engagement has sparked a great deal of discussion around royalties. It is undoubtedly one of many whole-of-government discussions we need to have as we take ownership and responsibility for our future post-devolution.

Royalties directly impact the profitability and viability of resource development projects in the NWT. While we must get the best deal possible for NWT residents, we must also remember that we

are almost wholly reliant on these projects to protect the economic environment that we already have. Capturing the economic benefit of resource development for the people of the Northwest Territories is a serious matter, but we will not be reviewing our resource royalty regime as part of our work on this proposed act.

I can assure Members that we will have the discussion, and when we do, it will be in the context of a broad fiscal review that includes and considers our existing taxes and other revenue collection methods related to the mining sector. Mr. Speaker, what we heard during public engagement, along with a consideration of key elements, the results of our scoping exercise, cross-jurisdictional reviews, and policy research, will now guide and inform the development of the new Mineral Resources Act.

I look forward to working with Members of this Legislative Assembly as this process continues to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Members' Statements

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON HAY RIVER BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

**MR. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, each week of this sitting, I am going to use one of my Member's statements to highlight one of Hay River's many non-profit organizations. With only five weeks left, I will barely make a dent, but it is worth starting to recognize those who make differences in our community. Mr. Speaker, whenever anyone visits Hay River, especially in the summer, they always comment on how beautiful it is. Of course, much of that is thanks to the natural landscape, but a debt of gratitude is also owed to the Hay River Beautification Committee. As the name implies, the beautification committee leads and promotes several initiatives to beautify public and private spaces around Hay River. If you happen to be walking or driving around town and you see some flowers or some art and you think, "Oh, that is nice," there is a good chance the beautification committee had a hand in it one way or another. The all-volunteer committee, with the help of residents, is responsible for the schools of decorative fish found on fences throughout town; the pots of flowers surrounding mailboxes; the wooden boats that are used as planters and teem with plants and flowers in the summer; the benches that line the walking trail along the river; and much more.

Perhaps what the committee is most known for is its annual "Yards in Bloom" competition, which

encourages individuals and organizations to showcase their gardening skills. This encouragement has really paid off, and the effort that people put into their yards and gardens around Hay River, even if they're not competing, is remarkable. Last year, there were 156 official entrants into the competition. Awards are given for the best yards in each of the six areas of town in the categories of either master or amateur gardener. There is also the Blooming with No Space award, the People's Choice Award, and of course the Darm Crook Overall Winner.

In addition to aesthetic improvements to the community, the beautification committee also collaborates with other organizations to help the environment. For example, the committee teamed up with Ecology North to encourage the planting of flowers that support bees and to promote the important role bees play in our ecosystem. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage the committee to keep up the good work and thank them for making the world a more beautiful place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CANNABIS POLICY

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, later this year cannabis will become legal in Canada. A lot of Canadians think it is about time. People have been smoking cannabis for years. Its impacts are minor compared to things like alcohol, and medicinal marijuana has been legal for some time now. For others, it is dangerous ground with potential risks for young people, public safety, health impacts, impaired driving. All of these concerns are important to carefully consider.

Canada will be the first G20 nation to legalize and regulate cannabis at the national level. How should it be regulated and managed? How do we make sure it is safe? How do we best take advantage of its economic potentials?

That potential is enormous, and that is the piece I want to talk about. It is estimated that, in BC alone, the illicit cannabis industry is worth \$5 billion a year. After legalization, that kind of money will be available to be channelled into the public sphere, where it can help fund regulation, research, education, medical applications, and economic development. Because it is an entirely new system, when we design our regulatory system we must remember our mandate goals, in particular, our commitment to diversifying the economy. Some northern entrepreneurs have already made their case. They want to get into the cannabis business and are prepared to work with the government as

partners moving forward. There are plenty of provincial models we can look to for examples of private retailing.

In Vancouver, over the past year, newly designed dispensaries are providing an enhanced customer service shopping experience for sales of cannabis products. They offer professional sales, expert-level product knowledge, and effective products. Even Nunavut is considering some level of private enterprise participation. They recognize that, with public oversight, there is potential for private sector benefits and efficiencies in the marketing of cannabis.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that, from the outset, our management regime should commit to the spreading of the wealth, permitting and encouraging private sector participation in this new industry. Private sector participation will not compromise responsible public oversight. I fear if we say, "well, we will do it later," then when later comes, consumers will be buying elsewhere and the prospect will be lost. Mr. Speaker, now is the time to make sure that we don't allow a valuable opportunity for economic growth and diversification to pass us by.

Mr. Speaker, I will have questions for the Minister of Finance at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON UPDATING CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES ACT

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Speaker, the 33 communities of the Northwest Territories are governed by a suite of territorial legislation made up of the Hamlets Act, the Charter Communities Act, and the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, all of which were enacted in 2003. Together, these statutes provide the legal authority for municipal operations in all of our communities.

The Cities, Towns and Villages Act, also referred to as the CTV Act, governs the larger communities in the Northwest Territories, including the City of Yellowknife. It provides the essential legal framework establishing a municipality and authorizing it to conduct business. It prescribes the roles and duties of the mayor, council members, and municipal employees. It sets out how records must be kept, the power of a municipality to enter into contracts, and its legal authority to own property.

The act also establishes the legislative powers of municipalities, setting out their authority to pass bylaws and placing limitations on that authority. It

governs how a municipality must manage its financial affairs, including borrowing and debt management. As well, the act governs how a municipality must interact with members of the public, including provisions for public notice, voter petitions, and access to public places.

Mr. Speaker, our municipal governments do a big job. They ensure our citizens have access to vital front-line services. They keep the traffic moving, the water flowing, and they make sure our residents are safe and able to participate in programs that support vibrant community living. Municipalities need all the help they can get from this government. They deserve to operate with up-to-date legislation that helps them get the job done in today's fast-paced world.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the City, Towns and Villages Act has not had the benefit of any comprehensive review or substantive updating since it was passed 15 years ago. The act is administered by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. During the review of this department's budget, Regular Members and the Standing Committee on Government Operations have repeatedly expressed deep reservations about the ability of this department to meet its own legislative agenda.

During the review of MACA's 2016-2017 Main Estimates, the deputy minister at the time acknowledged in this House that the legislation requires a lot of amendments, including those that have been requested by the NWT Association of Communities "over the years." Mr. Speaker, Members of this Assembly are growing increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of legislative change from this government. Above all, we are put here by our constituents to do the job of passing legislation. Let's get on with the CTV Act amendments, and let's get our cities, towns, and villages the help that they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CARBON PRICING

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Regular MLAs and the public have heard almost nothing from our Cabinet colleagues on the issue of carbon pricing since the fall of 2017. On July 26<sup>th</sup> of last year, the Minister of Finance released a discussion paper and public comment closed on September 15<sup>th</sup>. A public survey was also conducted.

Although the discussion paper shows a heavy anti-tax bias, the right questions were generally asked in terms of taxes versus cap and trade,

revenue use, sectoral distribution, implementation, and reporting. Where are the results of this public engagement? Here we are, five months later, and our government has not released a "what we heard" report. There has been no policy direction, no legislative proposal, nothing in the budget, and hardly a mention in the NWT Energy Strategy or the Climate Change Strategic Framework. What are we waiting for?

The federal government released proposed legislation for carbon pricing on January 15<sup>th</sup> of this year. Letters were also sent to all provincial and territorial Premiers setting a March 30, 2018, deadline for choosing the federal backstop or developing their own system to be in place by the end of 2018.

The federal carbon pricing system has two elements:

- A charge on fossil fuels (for example, gasoline, diesel, propane, natural gas), which would be paid by fuel producers or distributors.
- An output-based pricing system for industrial facilities with high levels of emissions.

What will our government do with regard to carbon pricing? Does our government even believe in carbon pricing or climate change? There continues to be rumours of the NWT getting some kind of exemption, which this government has been pushing for all along. Has this government finally accepted our responsibility to address climate change with carbon pricing?

Since we've heard so little from our Cabinet on climate change, I will have questions later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRES TOUR

**MR. NADLI:** [English translation not provided.]

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS HEARINGS IN YELLOWKNIFE

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spent many hours a couple of weeks ago listening to the testimony of Northerners at the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls hearing that was held here in Yellowknife. I want to congratulate everyone who decided to speak in



public. It gave those of us listening an opportunity to hear from families directly affected by the loss of their family members and about the scourge of family violence.

Here are some of my takeaways. When her father murdered her mother, Lesa Semmler became an orphan for all intents and purposes after her father went to jail. The same was true for Jayda Andre's nephew. The loss of parents always creates profound sadness, but imagine living with the fact that the death was deliberate and committed by a family member.

Mr. Speaker, the testimony of these two women made clear the second element: that their families helped them to the best of their ability, but the victims didn't or couldn't access counselling. Part of the issue is how interrelated the small communities are and how divisive this kind of traumatic event. Jayda Andre said that she didn't want to counsellors in Fort McPherson because they were related to the killer. That's understandable, and other counselling options are a long way away -- here in Yellowknife.

A third takeaway for me is about the importance of helping children. Lesa Semmler was eight when her mother died, and Joni Andre's son was two. They need special attention to process what has happened to them and targeted learning about positive ways to deal with anger in order to break the cycle of violence. To the best of my knowledge, this program is offered only in Yellowknife, so it wouldn't have helped either of these children.

Mr. Speaker, my final takeaway is about the status of women in the NWT. There is no escaping the fact that abusive men are tolerated, and violence against women is tolerated. Despite the fact that the NWT has the second-highest rate of family violence in the country, no new resources have been allocated to prevention and eradication, except for the men's healing program. While many women support this program because they see benefits for themselves, it doesn't help keep them safe when they are being attacked, and it doesn't help their children who grow up in violent homes.

Mr. Speaker, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls hearing provided the first public conversation about family violence in the NWT in decades. It was an important experience for those who witnessed it, and I hope it was constructive for those who spoke. I'm disappointed that no one from Cabinet attended until the closing ceremonies. I hope that isn't an indication of their willingness to implement the commission's recommendations when they come out later this year. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I would like to talk about a major issue that we are facing in the North. Many people suffer from mental health and addiction issues in the NWT. These issues affect not only the individual, but their family, friends, co-workers, and the community. It is one of the leading causes of disability affecting more than 6.7 million Canadians. It is also very costly to the justice, health, and education systems in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have a northern addiction treatment facility in the NWT. Our members have the option to attend treatment centres down South, either in Alberta or British Columbia. This may not be feasible for all individuals; some examples may be those with one income, small children, elderly parents, or employment conflicts. The statistics show that, in 2016-2017, a total of 172 people from the NWT attended a southern treatment centre.

Mr. Speaker, in the North there are many alcohol-related crimes, but I believe that many of those could have been prevented. I would like to mention that a judge on the NWT Supreme Court wished that treating addictions was "more of a priority" in the NWT. A judge called for more resources to be dedicated to fight substance abuse in the territory during a sentence hearing February 17, 2017, relating to one of my constituents. Many of our northern residents have been criminalized for suffering with alcohol and substance-related issues. It is clear that we need far more resources in the North to address this major social problem.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, I would like to see the creation and implementation of on-the-land programs geared for our youth starting at the elementary school level. We can create a new mentality of examining and addressing addictions and mental health, and one which focuses on prevention, treatment, and understanding. Mr. Speaker, another aspect is to focus on the services offered to those incarcerated. Helping to truly rehabilitate, educate those individuals, and provide ongoing care and commitment: this could help establish successful individuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON EULOGY FOR SARAH JANE MCLEOD

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I regret to inform you that Sarah Jane McLeod

passed away on October 12, 2017. Sara Jane Isaiah was known as well as Sally. She was born on September 27, 1933, in Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories, to Eva Isaiah and Foster Browning.

Sally grew up in Aklavik as a ward of the church. She attended school there. As an adult, she returned to Fort Simpson, where she did odd jobs around the community before moving to Edmonton to work at the Charles Campsall Hospital. Later on, she returned to the North to work as a domestic worker for the family who ran the Forestry Department in Fort Liard.

There, she met her future husband, William Charles McLeod, who passed away previous to her. William had four children from his previous marriage, Frederick, Phillip, Mavis, and Ernest. Sally and Willie were married in 1953. They had nine children together; Angus, Ellen, Morris, Gladys, Ruby, Mabel, Kathie, Sharon, and Dolly.

Mr. Speaker, Sally had many talents. She was a wonderful seamstress and a fabulous cook. She made parkas and moccasins for her whole family, and they looked forward to receiving these. She sold parkas to the RCMP. She worked as a cook for local prisoners and various workers who came into town, then she decided to seek employment with the Hudson Bay Company. Later, she became the post mistress when the post office moved to the Northern Store. She held that position until she retired.

After retirement, she spent her time reading, doing crossword puzzles, and watching movies. Whenever somebody stopped by her house, there was always coffee, tea, and pilot biscuits. She was famous for having two candy dishes left for visitors. She was a caring, gentle, and soft-spoken lady whom I got to visit numerous times.

At age 70, Sara undertook the raising of her great grandchild Leona, who was just six months old. Sara was surrounded by her family in Fort Liard, as most of them still live there with their families. In her late years, Shayla, her granddaughter, would do her errands and make sure that her bills were paid and she had groceries. Various sons, daughters, and grandchildren were always visiting her and taking her on outings. Her son Angus took her berry picking just prior to her 86<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Christmas was a busy time for her. She would make sure each and every one of her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren had something special. You think you knew her. All through the years, her children bought her Elvis memorabilia, and she would display this throughout the house. Just recently before she passed away, she commented, "I don't know why my family keeps

buying me so much Elvis stuff. I don't like him." Sara Jane McLeod passed away surrounded by her family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Our condolences to the family, as well. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgments. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 80-18(3): STATUS OF AMENDMENTS TO CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES ACT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs well knows the issue of the outstanding amendments to the Cities, Towns and Villages Act, earlier in the day in my Member's statement quoted one of her officials from a business plan review for 2016-2017. I would like to ask the Minister today: what progress has been done since that review on updating the Cities, Towns and Villages Act? Thank you.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have come to learn that change in legislation does take a little bit more time than I would like to think it does, so it takes a lot of stakeholder engagement, a lot of writing, et cetera. What progress have we made? We have actually met with the six tax-based municipalities that would be affected by the CTV Act to look at things like the energy retrofits. We've also talked about the hotel tax levy with them. On the note of the hotel tax levy, we've had to meet with other stakeholders, so we have met with the Northwest Territories and the Regional Chamber of Commerce. We've met with the Hotel Association. From those stakeholder engagements, then, we move forward, and so we're in the process right now of drafting our proposal, which will be submitted in March coming up here next month, and from there we're looking at implementing our first bill to be presented in the May/June sitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** I appreciate the stakeholder engagement that's gone into this. The Association of NWT Communities has recommended these changes and other changes in the legislation for, I think, a decade now, so it's nice to see the department moving forward. I'm wondering if there's any possible way that the Minister can move up the timeline? The reason I ask, Mr. Speaker, is the City of Yellowknife is depending on some of these changes so they can afford their tourism operation. I just don't want to be put in the situation where

we're not able to give the City of Yellowknife this legislative change and they are forced to raise taxes in order to support tourism operation, which is, of course, something that this government takes very seriously. Is there any way we can move the legislative proposal up to this sitting so the standing committee can get a look at it before waiting for May/June?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** As stated at the beginning, I didn't realize that changing legislation takes as long as it does take. I often wish I could get them all off of my desk, but I realize it takes time. We are on a timeline that was submitted a year ago. We are on the timeline that was submitted just before the sitting. The proposal will be put in, in March. I can't move it any faster than the process takes, so the bill will be introduced to standing committee in May/June, and hopefully standing committee won't take as long and we will be able to get that off and rolling.

**MR. TESTART:** I'll just remind the Minister that the changes that the department has narrowed down and has been consulting on have been recommended by Regular Members every year. So I can speak for the standing committee now that, if the legislative proposal contains the exact same recommendations that we've been making, we're pretty good to go with it. So, again, will the Minister expedite this matter? My concern is: we need to meet the timelines. I represent the riding here in Yellowknife. I'm looking out for my constituents, and I want to make sure that they're not burdened by the inability of this legislative proposal to move forward in a timely fashion, and it's going to impact the City of Yellowknife's budget. They're paying for --

**MR. SPEAKER:** I think the Minister heard your question, so I'll allow the Minister for Community Affairs to respond.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to move it as quickly as possible. I haven't been here for 10 years. So I don't know what happened 10 years ago, but I do know that we've been working at it hard. I don't trust that 10 years ago the stories that were put out there are the same as today. For example, when we talked to the Tourism Association, we learned that tour packages have already been sold for this year. That impacts the bill and the timing of this. So there were considerations. We had to go out for stakeholder feedback, and so I am really appreciative of the department for actually doing that work. Again, we will move the process as soon as possible. It will be introduced in the May/June sitting, and as soon as we get the process approved, we will be moving it forward, but we can't move any faster than the process takes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I'm sure you can tell, I'm passionate about this issue. It's long overdue. In addition to these changes that are being proposed, these minor changes to the CTV, has this allowed the department to look at other outstanding changes and consult on other issues with the CTV Act? It's a big piece of legislation. Is the Minister contemplating any other changes to the CTV Act? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** The CTV Act that we're looking at changing will be for the hotel tax levy and for the energy retrofits that the Municipality of Yellowknife wanted to push forward. So I do appreciate the words of the honourable MLA that's stating that he doesn't project it would be taking long with standing committee. I'm not sure if he represents the voice of all the standing committee in the House here today, but if I could get that in writing that they have no issues, that they don't need to review it, that it can go as stated, then I will take that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 81-18(3):  
PROCESS FOR DISCONNECTING SERVICE

**MR. THOMPSON:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as most people, Members, we end up with issues that are related to people's issues with the Power Corporation and that, or Housing Corporation and, you know, arrears and that. So my questions today are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. Mr. Speaker, what policy or procedures does the corporation follow when they have overdue accounts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Power Corporation follows its terms and conditions of service with disconnecting a customer account or installing a load-limiting device due to non-payment. Those terms and conditions are approved by the Public Utilities Board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, we have a number of individuals who live in public housing, and so they have to pay their bills accordingly and that. Can the Minister please advise, if a person lives in public housing, does the Power Corporation reach out to the local housing authority and advise them of the

situation? In other words, if the power is going to be cut or restricted?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, the local housing authorities are made aware of any collection efforts which affect their clients and their assets. This notification is provided prior to any notice being sent out to the clients.

**MR. THOMPSON:** I thank the Minister for that answer. I guess I'm going to have to, kind of, go with that question here: how do they communicate that with the local housing authority? Is it through e-mail? Is it through telephone? How do they communicate that information?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** I'm not absolutely certain the manner in which they do contact the local housing authority or organization. I would expect it would be by mail, but I will look into that further.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, and I thank the Minister for that, and I apologize. It just jumped into my head there, and I appreciate the direct response from the Minister and the commitment. I'm hoping they actually reach out by phone call instead of just by mail. So my last question to the Minister is: does the corporation have a policy that they follow to disconnect the power for good, and what is the threshold for this decision-making? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** As mentioned earlier, the Power Corporation follows section 16.3 of their terms and conditions, and if I might just refer to that, that states:

"Where accounts are not paid by customer before the expiration of a notice given to the customer pursuant to this section, the corporation may forthwith disconnect the customer from service and may refuse to reconnect the customer for service until the accounts in arrears, a security deposit payable under section 5.7 and 5.8, and a reconnection fee as set out in schedule C are fully paid. As an alternative to disconnection during winter months, the corporation may, at its sole discretion, acting reasonably, install a device to limit the electricity available to the customer."

So if a customer account is not paid within seven days of the due date, the corporation may give a 48-hour notice, and if the customer fails to respond, either by making a required payment or entering into an agreed-upon payment arrangement, which is often done, the account will be disconnected. As I mentioned, the policy does allow for a device in the winter months to limit the electricity available. So that is the Power Corporation's policy in dealing with this matter.

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

QUESTION 82-18(3):  
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM  
LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I talked about the legalization of cannabis and, in particular, I had a focus with regard to the NWT taking advantage of economic development opportunities and diversifying our economy. My questions today are for the Minister of Finance with regard to the government's plan to create a regime for management of cannabis. I'd like to start by asking the Minister: what economic opportunities to the NWT does the Minister envision for the legalization of cannabis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, because it is early days, the plan is for the Liquor Commission to assume the responsibility for the importation and sale of cannabis across the Northwest Territories with liquor stores that currently operate under contract to the Liquor Commission. That being said, the Liquor Commission would also consider licensing private cannabis-only stores, once the market is stable with reliable supply chains. That might be where the Member's questions are, where the product is coming from. As part of the "way forward" document that was released in 2017, I believe, we had spoken there about the growing and distribution of marijuana, but that is the federal government. They will be looking after the licensing and the approval for those who want to grow cannabis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you to the Minister for the reply. I mean, it's good to hear that the Minister envisions that there is going to be some future where there is opportunity for potential retail sales. I do recognize that the growing of cannabis will still be under federal legislation. I guess the question then is: we know that it is going to be sold through liquor stores in the meantime, but has the government or will the government, in fact, reconsider this, given the input received from entrepreneurs wanting to get into this business? Can we right now start to give consideration to local opportunities, northern opportunities for retail of cannabis?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I take the Member's point, but the approach is to start cautiously. I mean, this is a new activity, and as I said in my previous reply, there is an opportunity, once we get through this, to have the Liquor Commission

looking at licensing retailers for the sale of cannabis.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Again, yes, I appreciate that it seems like there is going to be some opportunity, but it seems to be in the distant future, and we are trying to narrow it down then, I guess. If it is not going to be immediately right now while we are legalizing cannabis, then can the Minister maybe outline when it might be that we can give consideration to this?

The fear here, as I noted in my Member's statement, is that we are going to lose this opportunity. If we wait too long, then the opportunity will be lost, and folks will just find ways in which to acquire their cannabis. Can the Minister please outline for us when this government plans on allowing the public to take advantage of economic opportunities to retail cannabis?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I did point out that you will be able to purchase cannabis legally from liquor stores that are currently under contract with the Liquor Commission, and I did say that we will have a look at the possibility of going out to private retailers. I did not have a timeline on that, and I am not going to give a timeline, but again, because this is completely new right across the country, we want to make sure that we are in a position that we are able to do it right.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I know it is going to sound like I am repeating myself, and I am probably going to get a repetitive answer, but there are other jurisdictions around the country that are already doing this. This is not something that we have to reinvent. Our neighbour, our sister territory Nunavut, is giving consideration as we speak to the privatization aspect of cannabis retail. Will the Minister at least reach out to his colleagues in Nunavut and ask them by what means they are giving consideration to privatizing the sales of cannabis and report back to us? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I did not close the door on the possibility of going out to private retailers, which a lot of these liquor stores in the Northwest Territories are, private retailers, but I did not close that door. I did say we will give some consideration as to a specific timeline. I do not have that, but I can assure the Member that we will be giving some consideration, and to answer his question, yes, we will reach out to our counterparts in Nunavut to see what their approach has been. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 83-18(3):  
CARBON PRICING

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to start with something really simple: can the Minister of Finance tell the public whether our government actually believes in climate change and that carbon pricing is an essential tool to address this threat? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The Member is asking for the Minister's opinion. Can he reiterate the question?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Yes, I can clarify that. Can the Minister of Finance, then, tell the public: what is the position of our government with regard to climate change, impacts on our environment and our people, and whether carbon pricing is an essential tool to address this threat? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the position of the government is, because we see the effects of climate change quicker than the rest of the country, of course we know that is a serious concern, especially up in the Arctic. That is why we have taken steps through the Climate Change Strategic Framework and the carbon pricing paper that we are working on to try and help mitigate the effects of climate change on the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Apologies for not offering the question properly. I appreciate the response from the Minister. He did not really address the issue, though, of carbon pricing as an essential tool. Earlier today I tried to jog the memory of our Cabinet colleagues on the issue of carbon pricing. The public commentary for the discussion paper and survey closed on September 15<sup>th</sup> of last year. Can the Minister of Finance tell us if and when a "what we heard" report is going to be released and whether the written submissions received will also be released?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We are planning on sharing the information that was gathered. I think we have a briefing scheduled with committee during this session, so we plan on sharing our findings with committee, and then we need to share some of the information we have gathered with the federal government, and then we will be in a position to share with the public as well.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks to the Minister for that explanation. It sounds like there are a lot of things that are still coming, but we actually have a hard deadline we have to deal with. The federal government keeps moving forward with the national approach on climate change that will allow Canada to meet its international obligations. We now have a deadline of March 30<sup>th</sup>, about seven weeks away, to make a decision about our own carbon pricing system or rely on the federal backstop. Can the Minister tell us how he intends to meet this federal deadline and still include the input of committee, and perhaps the public, on his proposed course of actions?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Member is correct. We do have a very hard deadline, but we have done a lot of work on this. We do plan on sharing our findings with committee, and one of the challenges we had is that we wanted to get out there and we wanted to get opinions from across the Northwest Territories. Using the federal backstop, we wanted to make sure that the Northwest Territories was well-positioned to mitigate the effects of carbon pricing on the residents of the Northwest Territories, and I think, through the correspondence and the surveys and the discussions we have had, that we have had a lot of feedback on how people thought it would affect them. I think the sign of a good government is to make sure that we mitigate the effects that it is going to have on the residents of the Northwest Territories.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks again to the Minister for that, but we do not have a firm schedule from the Minister. He has admitted there is a lot of work that has to be done. We do not even have the results from the discussion paper consultations. He has to work with committee. He says he is going to talk to the public. Can the Minister commit to table a schedule of these sort of consultations leading up to the March 30<sup>th</sup> deadline in this House as soon as possible? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I am not quite sure exactly when our briefing is with committee. I will have to get that information, and in the consensus-style government we work in, we want to share our information with committee before we share with anyone else.

We will have that conversation, but I can assure committee and members of the public that this government will be ready by the March 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. I know the federal government wants the submissions by then. They are going to review them, and then possibly come out in September

with some comments on the material that we have submitted.

Again, I will say, at the end of the day, our main goal here is to work with what we have to make sure that there is not a negative impact on the people of the Northwest Territories. We want to let the federal government know of our unique situation up here. We have told them that a few times. Hopefully, they will recognize that and give us some assurance that they will take that into account when they review our document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 84-18(3):  
HISTORICAL CASE UNIT WITHIN THE RCMP

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. The Finance Minister announced \$300,000 to establish a historical case unit within the RCMP in the budget that he presented last week. He said that two of our RCMP and one civil servant will "work to protect the integrity of the evidence in these historical files and to make further advances in solving these cases." Can the Minister of Justice tell us what this means?

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** The Member opposite is quite correct. There are \$304,000 of funding approved for the establishment of a historical case unit within the RCMP. As the Member alluded to in her question, there are two RCMP members and a civilian involved in this. What they are doing is they are looking through historical cases that fall into several categories. They are going back to 1985, 33 years ago. They are looking at homicides; suspicious deaths; missing persons where foul play is suspected; any missing person where the body has not been located; or when unidentified human remains have been found. That is what they are going to be looking at going back to 1985.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister of Justice for that answer. How does the mandate for this unit differ from the day-to-day work of the RCMP in solving crime? What is new?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** The main difference will be that this small unit within the RCMP will be looking specifically at these historical cases that remain unresolved.

**MS. GREEN:** Can the Minister advise us: of the 63 open cases in the NWT, how many of them have been resolved in the last five years?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** I understand that there are 63 open investigations, which I took to mean that those were ones that had not yet been resolved.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi. I appreciate that clarification from the Minister of Justice. Of course, those cases are ones that need to be resolved. I wonder about the rate at which historical cases have been resolved in the last five years and, related to that, how success will be measured in this historical case unit. Mahsi.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** As I mentioned earlier, this unit will be dedicated to looking at these historical cases and presumably will be providing me with updates that I could also provide to this House. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 85-18(3):

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS FACILITY

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I talked about addictions and mental health. I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services questions around the treatment. I would like to ask the Minister if there have been any discussions about re-opening a cultural-based treatment facility in NWT. Thank you.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this time there is no plan to open a treatment facility in the Northwest Territories. I can say that K'atlodeeche have been working closely with the Department of Health and Social Services on utilizing the old Nats'ejee K'eh facility as a traditional wellness centre to focus on healing and other supportive activities for Indigenous people in the Northwest Territories. I can also say that the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation is looking at providing wellness-type centre services here in the Northwest Territories located in Yellowknife. We have made space available for them on the Stanton campus, where they are currently working on an interim measure, some tents and other things, so that they can begin some of their wellness-type programming. Although there is no treatment centre or treatment facility, there is progress being made on different wellness centre options available in the Northwest Territories. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** I would like to ask the Minister if any of that work is going towards trying to create mobile treatment possibilities or mobile treatment programs, whether it be out of Stanton or Nats'ejee K'eh or anywhere, just something that is mobile where counsellors can go into communities as opposed to the community members going into a treatment centre.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mobile treatment is one of the options that we have pursued and continue to pursue here in the Northwest Territories. It hasn't made the type of progress that I or any of my colleagues would like to see. We did run a pilot in Fort Resolution a year and a half ago. We haven't delivered as a government since that time, but we are continuing to monitor it and look at options to deliver.

I can say that we should really applaud some of our partners like Salt River First Nation and Chief Martselos, who actually stood up and met with southern partners and provided a local mobile treatment option in Fort Smith, certainly an option for many of our partners to explore. I know that there, a partner has reached out to some of the other Indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories to see if they are delivered. We want to continue to be very supportive of that work. Things are happening, not quite as much as I think any of us like to see, but we are continuing to try to make more progress in that area.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Something that appears to go well with mobile treatment is on-the-land treatment. I would like to ask the Minister if there are opportunities or if there are some initiatives where the departments working with the communities provide on-the-land treatment near the communities or just outside of some of the communities that we have where there are cultural camps and so on near the communities?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** This government makes \$1.2 million available through the Department of Health and Social Services to support on-the-land programming that is led by different Aboriginal governments across the Northwest Territories. That money flows every year. I can say that there are a number of on-the-land programs that are available. They are all different. Every one of the Indigenous governments has indicated their own way of doing things. They have some specific things they are trying to accomplish at the regional level.

We have said we would make our clinical staff available to them. Some of them have taken us up on that. Others have not. We have also been pursuing an on-the-land collaborative with organizations outside of the Government of the Northwest Territories like Tides Canada to support

more options. One of the things we have done with our Indigenous partners is we have started to work on the development of evaluation criteria for on-the-land programming. It has never been done before. We have worked closely with different governments like the Tlicho government and others to develop those. We are making progress in that area, as well.

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the Minister of Finance's budget speech, he mentioned there will be child and youth counsellors in the communities. I think that is an excellent initiative. I would like to ask the Minister of Health if those counsellors will be versed in addiction treatment. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** These youth community counsellors will be fully trained counsellors here in the Northwest Territories. They will be part of an integrated team. They will certainly have access to all of the programs and services that are available for youth. They will be able to provide supports to our youth, but also referrals, as well. It is a holistic approach to providing those services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 86-18(3):  
SUPPORT TO MUNICIPALITIES ARISING FROM  
AMENDMENT OF CITIES, TOWNS AND  
VILLAGES ACT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs for clarifying that the department is moving forward with amendments on the CTV Act. I have a follow-up question: will the Minister coordinate the introduction of the CTV Act amendments with municipal governments, including the City of Yellowknife, to allow municipalities time to establish their own authorities to effectively implement the changes? Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am a bit confused with the question, however, because none of the municipalities have actually approached me as the Minister and asked me to help coordinate their work. If the municipalities do approach me, my job is to support the municipalities. If the municipalities approach me and ask for support, we will do whatever we can to support them. Thank you. Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** Will the Minister approach the municipalities herself instead of waiting reactively for them to approach her? Will she approach the municipalities and coordinate these amendments?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** To deal with each municipality, for me to reach out to each individual community government and ask them if they need my help would be very cumbersome, and I regret that I might forget one. There are 32 communities that we actually support. However, we work closely with the NWT Association of Communities. We are actually going down there, I believe, this weekend coming up. I am assuming, if they have issues, then that is where I am. They know me; they will come and approach me if they need help. My office is open. Municipal and Community Affairs is always willing to work with them.

**MR. TESTART:** I will move off this, Mr. Speaker. In the case of the City of Yellowknife, if the City of Yellowknife is unable to establish the appropriate authorities in time to fund tourism and visitor services, will the Minister commit to providing additional funding to the City of Yellowknife so that they will not be faced with a budget shortfall while these amendments take time to get started?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I do worry a little bit about the Municipality of Yellowknife being able to access the hotel tax levy, although I must state that they have never had it before. My understanding in working with the Minister of Infrastructure is that there was funding last year provided for tourism through the Northern Frontier Visitors Association. That funding actually expires at the end of this year, but those are normal contracting procedures, that funding expires at the end of a year or two years or three years, and they rewrite it.

My understanding at this point is that that money that was provided to the Northern Frontier Visitors Association will be provided to the City of Yellowknife because they provide the visitor services. I am not sure if there is extra money that the Member is talking about, but that money, from my understanding, is set to roll out.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister reach out to the City of Yellowknife, canvass with them on any potential funding shortfalls, and commit to working with them to resolve those shortfalls, either with additional funding or with legislative change by the end of this session? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** As stated before, the City of Yellowknife has not approached me as



the Minister to intervene on their behalf. As the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, I am open to any municipality or any of our funded bodies that need our assistance.

With the City of Yellowknife, I will be seeing them on the weekend, I believe, coming up here at the NWT Association of Communities AGM. If they have any concerns for me as the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, I am more than interested to listen to their concerns and see how I can assist them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 87-18(3):  
SENIORS DAY PROGRAM

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Four months ago, I rose in this House and I asked questions about the review of the day program for elders available here in Yellowknife. I was told the review was done. Subsequently, the report was tabled, and as we stand here today there still is no day program for seniors in Yellowknife. I would appreciate an update from the Minister on when his department plans to resume this service. Thank you.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on conversations with the Member and committee, we have agreed to move forward with the development of a seniors' day program here in Yellowknife.

The RFP was supposed to be out shortly before Christmas. Unfortunately, we ran into some difficulties with some of the content. We want to make sure we get it right. It is my understanding that the department has almost finalized that work, and we are hoping that the RFP goes out very shortly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I am very familiar with the "we don't want to rush; we want to get it right" answer here, but we are talking about almost a year-and-a-half delay in providing any kind of day programming for seniors in Yellowknife. I would like to think that this is highest priority the Minister has, in order to ensure that our seniors are well looked after during the day. Can he please give us some more specifics about not only when the RFP will come out, but when the service provision is anticipated to start?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** As I indicated, the RFP is almost done. As far as the drafting, we are

hoping that that RFP will come out in the next couple of weeks. It will follow its normal process to make sure that we are getting solid applications. They will all be assessed and evaluated against the criteria that is established in the RFP.

I am hoping that we can get this contract out as quickly as possible, hopefully before the end of this fiscal year. Granted that we really only have about a month and a half before that time ends; I cannot guarantee it will happen before the end of the fiscal year, but that is my desire at this point.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that response. Can the Minister confirm that the RFP will serve people with cognitive disabilities on some days of the week and people who are frail on other days of the week? In other words, will the RFP accommodate different needs by seniors in the day programming?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I will commit to sharing a copy of the RFP with the Member once it is released.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister reveal for us whether this contract is going to be retendered every year or whether this will be a multi-year offering? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Some of that depends on the types of proposals that we get in. We would obviously like to see something that lasts beyond the upcoming fiscal year, but it really depends on the nature of the proposals that are submitted. I would like to see some consistency and some continuity on this particular approach, but we have not seen proposals that have come in at this point. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 88-18(3):  
RESOURCE ROYALTIES IN 2018-2019 MAIN  
ESTIMATES

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency on his lengthy statement earlier today. He had to reach back in time to 2015-2016 and quote some figures from the main estimates, but can he tell me what is in the current main estimates of 2018-2019 in terms of royalties from minerals, oil, and gas extraction here in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have the main estimates in front of me. I do know, however, that there is likely to be a significant decline in these revenues. Thank you.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks to the Minister for that. I can help him with his memory there. It is \$13.46 million. It is found on page B14 of the budget address, and I am sure he is going to have the main estimates in front of him shortly. Tobacco taxes are \$16 million. In the interest of transparency, can the Minister tell us who actually calculates and predicts these royalties?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** I am not exactly sure how those revenue and royalty rates are set, but I will take the question as notice.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The question has been taken as notice. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 89-18(3):  
MINERAL RESOURCES ACT

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment made a Minister's statement, and I will quote from it: "Royalties directly impact the profitability and viability of resource development projects in the NWT" and that, "further, we will not be reviewing our resource royalty regime as part of the work on the proposed act."

One of the stated public goals of the act is to create a cutting-edge mineral resources regime in the Northwest Territories. If royalties affect our competitiveness so much, why is the Minister indicating that we are not going to address that? Thank you.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated before in this House around the Mineral Resource Act, there are a number of complex issues that we are moving forward working with intergovernmental council on these issues. The question about resource revenue coming into the GNWT was asked yesterday. This is a very complex issue, as I've stated in this House, and it needs a whole-government approach, and along with intergovernmental council, we have decided to defer that to a later date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** When is that later date?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** If I had a crystal ball, I would let the Member know the exact date, but I suspect it will be in the next Assembly.

**MR. TESTART:** I'm just going to remind the Minister that the GNWT is in a revenue crisis right now, a massive shortfall that is unpredicted at this time around. It seems like now is the time to do it. Will the Minister reconsider that in light of a significant shortfall in revenues?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I take a little offence to the Member's comments. We are in support of the mining industry in the Northwest Territories. This is our biggest revenue generator. It employs probably the largest number of people outside the bureaucracy. As I stated yesterday in this House, this is a very complex issue. People focus in on the resource royalties. There's much more than that, that these mines contribute to the Northwest Territories, social economic agreements, land taxes, IBAs, gas taxes, employment. This is a whole-government approach, and it has to be something that's taken seriously, and we will look at in due course in time.

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

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, support the mining industry. I don't think my question was insulting. I think what's troubling is that the Minister won't present those significant contributions to our government's revenues and our economy in a transparent annual mining report. Will the Minister commit to putting those facts on the table in an annual report so we can stop having this debate and properly acknowledge the contributions of the mining sector to our economy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** The Member has his own take on how we're moving this forward. As I've said, the mining industry is the biggest part of our economy. We will continue to support it on this side of the House. Some Members on that side maybe don't clearly want to support it, but we do. Our approach is, we need to support the sector that contributes the largest part of our economy. We will continue to do that, and working with the intergovernmental council moving forward, along with Members of this Assembly and the public, we will move these things as a time as needed. We are working on a Mineral Resource Act at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address (day 3 of 7). Member for Frame Lake.

## Replies to Budget Address

### MR. O'REILLY'S REPLY

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I will use my reply to the budget address to set out some of my thoughts on the following, as I did last year:

- A quick summary of the 2018-2019 budget and fiscal context;
- A review of what I recommended in my reply to the 2017-2018 budget address;
- A description of the process for the 2018-2019 Budget and how it might be improved; and
- The good and the bad of the 2018-2019 Budget as proposed by Cabinet.

Let there be no mistake, Cabinet continues to cut programs and services to fund surpluses that are being used to pay for large infrastructure projects such as the \$67 million in 2018-2019 for the Tlicho all-season road. The promised spending in the last two years of our mandate is not happening. For example, there is no new funding for the arts or increased investment in renewable energy.

There is very significant financial uncertainty on the horizon, as cannabis revenues and expenses are not included in this budget. There is nothing on carbon pricing, and there will likely be a need to match some federal infrastructure funding opportunities that may mean an increase in our debt wall. One of the solutions that both sides of this House may agree on is the need to change the Territorial Formula Funding Agreement to allow us to keep more of our own source revenues to build economic sustainability.

Revenues are down by \$84 million. I think the public would be shocked to learn that we will raise more money from tobacco taxes (\$16 million) than we get from resource revenues (\$13 million). There have been no serious efforts by Cabinet to stabilize and increase our own source revenues. So much for the promise of devolution where our government would do a better job managing resources than the feds. After almost four years post-devolution, not one word of the mirror legislation or regulations has been changed. We can and should be raising significantly more from mining, as shown by two independent experts who have recently examined our revenues from this sector. As alluded to earlier today, maybe we need an independent review of economic rent from mining. A review of mining royalties has also been put off to some unspecified future date and is very unlikely to be completed within the life of this assembly, as confirmed today by the Minister of Mining. Why should the federal government give this government any more authority over lands and resources when we haven't done anything with the authority we already have?

Lastly, the quality and inconsistency of the departmental budgets or business plans vary widely. Many contained almost no actual details on activities for 2018-2019, virtually meaningless performance indicators and questionable risk profiles, making our review very difficult at best. Cabinet Ministers need to pay much closer attention to their business plans, appropriate for the rationale and justification of a business case for the investment of public funds.

- Opening up the budget process to greater public scrutiny. I am pleased to say that the opening remarks of the Minister of Finance on the fiscal context were delivered in public, and I believe all sides would agree that was a useful exchange and in the public interest. I cannot report any progress on the development of a process convention for the budget.
- I recommended that there be a formal public engagement process for the 2018-2019 budget. This was not done, and there doesn't seem to be any appetite to do it in the future. We may have to wait for the next Finance Minister.
- During the three budgets I've been involved in, I've recommended that there must be a serious effort to raise new revenues. I am sorry to report that there are again minimal efforts to raise any new revenues in this budget, other than a commitment to further study a land transfer tax and a tax on sugary drinks, as was promised last year. Perhaps most disturbing, Cabinet and the Finance Minister have not even chosen to do a factual investigation of the possibility of increased revenue generation from royalties and taxes. As I mentioned earlier, they won't even improve the debate with facts.
- Unfortunately, I have to report that the better cross-referencing of the main estimates to the business plans and staff reconciliations are still not found in the main estimates or the business plans.

This year was a bit of an anomaly with regard to the timing of the review of the departmental budgets or business plans. Rather than the usual September schedule, the review was pushed back into November and early December. I attended all of those meetings, even though I was not a Regular Member of two of the standing committees. The time for this review was much compressed, but it was accomplished with the able assistance of our staff. I know that it is often difficult to accommodate everyone's schedule, but we need to build in more time for ensuring we have responses from Ministers on outstanding issues and questions from the reviews, and Minister needs to respond in a more

timely manner. I am pleased to say that Regular MLAs worked together well and put together a coherent set of recommendations to improve the 2018-2019 budget, and indeed all future budgets.

The compressed timeframe and shifting of the business plan review later than normal has left little time for any kind of negotiations, not that much is happening. Once again, Cabinet has resorted to an exchange of correspondence rather than a real effort to resolve outstanding issues. Regular MLAs have put forward a small set of changes that consist of rolling back some of the most damaging cuts and very modest improvements and efforts to diversify the economy. The financial “asks” amount to less than 2 per cent of the overall budget. As I said last year, we are once again in a game of “chicken” to see who will blink first. This is not my idea of consensus government, and I believe it's a disservice to our residents.

Of course, most of this could have been avoided had Cabinet bothered to initiate an early consultation with Regular MLAs on the 2018-2019 budget, asking Regular MLAs what we would like to see included. There has never been any real effort to reach any agreement or consensus on what the overall fiscal context or direction should be. Cabinet remains firmly entrenched in its expenditure and debt management approach rather than a more balanced approach that would examine revenue options. Next year, Regular MLAs should work together and send our budget considerations, including specific requests for investment and new revenue options, to Cabinet in time for incorporation into the 2019-2020 budget.

I would like to talk about some of the good things in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

There are some good things. It would be unfair not to recognize the work by our colleagues on the other side. There is some forced growth spending for some programs such as income assistance and other areas, and that is a good investment. Here is a list of some of my favourite new investments in this budget:

- \$1.3 million to implement the new Agriculture Strategy, but it is also divided across several departments with no clear accountability;
- \$1.2 million to support Indigenous and community government action on climate change, to establish candidate protected areas, and to develop monitoring and management options with respect to the Bathurst caribou herd, but it is really funded by internal cuts made within ENR;
- \$2.1 million to fund junior kindergarten in all Northwest Territories communities. However,

there is no commitment to actually change the formulas for funding schools to include junior kindergarten students;

- \$1.5 million to increase mental health and wellness resources for children, youth, and their families through child and youth care counsellors, but partially funded by cutting \$475,000 from the budget for the Tlicho and Dehcho education authorities and from other authorities as this rolls out over four years. As we were briefed today, I think this is a good initiative with lots of details to be worked out;
- \$848,000 to improve the diagnosis and case management services for people with autism spectrum disorder and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder;
- \$762,000 to fund a sobering centre in Yellowknife;
- \$653,000 to increase services for children with developmental delays and disorders, those requiring speech and so on;
- \$304,000 to establish a two-person RCMP historical case unit;
- \$300,000 for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation for rent supplements;
- \$493,000 for six years to convert equity leases to fee-simple title, but those jobs are going to be located in Fort Smith rather than the communities where the work needs to be done;
- Then some special funding for the Northwest Territories/Nunavut Council of Friendship Centres, but we need a policy framework for transparent and accountable decisions around these one-time funding allocations.

Now on to the bad of the budget, in my view. I have to highlight these because they have not actually been brought out by the other side of the House. To start with, here are some items that should have been in the budget, in my view:

An increased investment in renewable or alternative energy, especially at a time when the Arctic Energy Alliance has already run out of funding for its very successful Energy Efficiency Incentive Program rebates. What are we waiting for, for federal dollars to rain from heaven? There are no costed proposals to get our communities off diesel. Cabinet needs to pitch more than just roads to resources to the federal government as infrastructure projects. We need proposals submitted to bring all of our housing out of core need and to build energy and householder energy self-sufficiency, not huge hydro projects without a buyer. There has been almost nothing shared with

Regular MLAs on a carbon tax, and I spoke about that earlier today, Mr. Speaker. There is no money identified in the budget for this work although we have to make a decision by March 30<sup>th</sup> as I mentioned earlier today.

There is no increased investment in the arts in this budget. Last year, Cabinet more than doubled the Mining Incentive Program, to \$1 million in a blink of an eye, but cannot seem to get behind increasing investment in the arts to diversify our economy. Other investment to diversify our economy should have been included for the booming tourism industry, especially here in Yellowknife where we do not have a proper visitor information centre. I would urge all in this House to go over and drop by the visitors' centre so that you can see what it looks like.

More positions will be lost through the discontinuation of programs and services and elimination of staff. This will continue to have a profound negative impact, particularly in small communities, where every job is important. I would also add that continuing to cut positions while we are in negotiations is a clear sign that Cabinet would rather cut people than find new resources and revenues. That is not the kind of message I think we should be sending to our valued public service.

There seems to be some funding to assist with junior kindergarten implementation in relation to inclusive schooling. Even though the Minister promised so-called "full funding," the school funding formulas have not been changed to include JK students and the issue of busing remains outstanding.

I believe that the Minister should have been much more transparent and more accountable in presenting the cuts that are contained in this budget, and some of them are actually categorized as "Other Financial Management Board Adjustments." Some of the cuts are also a continuation from the first two budgets, so the damage is spread out over a longer period of time. If the Minister will not disclose these cuts, sorry, I am going to have to start here, in this House, today.

ENR will see reductions of over \$3 million, more than any other department except for Infrastructure. This department achieved very little in the last year in terms of its legislation, policy development, and communications, largely because of the cuts to its capacity. A further \$371,000 cut in this capacity is contained in the new budget, and, if that was not bad enough, the department has been directed to cut a further \$1 million over the next two years to come up with a promised savings in firefighting aircraft maintenance that did not materialize. Here is a clear case where Cabinet's fiscal strategy is

making it nearly impossible for ENR to achieve what is in the mandate. ENR plans to cut \$150,000 in boreal caribou monitoring, even though this species has now been classified as threatened and a recently developed recovery strategy calls for increased monitoring.

ECE continues to show a \$200,000 reduction to the district education authorities for school administration. Earlier today, I mentioned the reduction in funding for the Tlicho and Dehcho regions for youth mental health counselling. I do think that those are important initiatives with lots of details still to be worked out.

In the Executive and Indigenous Affairs budget, there is new funding of \$387,000 for a deputy secretary of federal engagement to be located in Ottawa. Almost no rationale has been provided publicly. I had expected that this might be used to help secure infrastructure funding, but now it appears to be little more than an effort to further the messaging associated with the Premier's red alert. I cannot support the establishment of a red alert office in Ottawa.

There is still no plan to roll out government service officers in all communities, including the regional centres and Yellowknife. Regular MLAs have asked for such a plan for the last two years without success. There might even be efficiencies in Yellowknife by working with the federal Service Canada office. It is not good enough for Cabinet to say that additions will be made when there is money. If it was up to me, I would replace the red alert office with GSOs, a much better investment of such public funds

The Department of Finance continues to show new funding for \$400,000 for labour relations capacity for marine transportation services which should be removed and allocated to the revolving fund established for that enterprise. This is not the first time that Cabinet has tried to put such MTS-related expenditures into departmental appropriations rather than the revolving fund.

ITI intends to cut a further \$925,000 to the Business Development and Investment Corporation that supports economic diversification. It is not clear what ITI's plans are for this organization beyond using these external cuts to meet its fiscal reduction targets.

Justice intends to eliminate its court reporter program of \$478,000, but this is not discussed in any detail in the business plan. There has been no visible progress on the public resource centre that was supposed to replace the court library, and we remain the only jurisdiction in Canada without a court library. Lands continues to defer its investment in the Western Arctic Centre for

Geomatics at \$570,000, which should be spent now to build on the promises of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic line and help build a regional knowledge economy. MACA continues with its cuts in support for multi-sport games funding with a further \$250,000 reduction. Bringing the lottery fund in-house should not serve as an excuse to cut departmental appropriations that support sports.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I have offered some thoughts on how to improve the budget process, including early and meaningful consultation with Regular MLAs and the public, ensuring a more balanced approach that includes more revenues, and recommended a focus on diversifying our economy in line with new federal funding opportunities. Cabinet's dream of oil and gas development has faded, and we need to shift our focus to a more balanced approach, away from an externally controlled, export-driven economy. Cabinet will say that their support for economic diversification through tourism, arts, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and the like remains strong. I don't see that support translating into increased budget allocations. Cabinet's fiscal and economic strategy is to build a cash surplus to provide further subsidies for more non-renewable resource development in the form of public infrastructure. With a new government in Ottawa, the new priorities for infrastructure are a cleaner economy, a more inclusive society, a low-carbon economy, and transformative change.

Cabinet is still locked into the roads-to-resources paradigm when we should be developing plans and strategies for adequate housing and universal childcare so our residents can engage in the economy. We need to get our housing out of core need while creating local jobs; provide stronger support for the arts, tourism, agriculture, and the fishing industry; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; lower the cost of living; and develop a real post-secondary education system with a university of the NWT. These sectors also create more local jobs than non-renewable resource development per dollar of investment. This is the kind of leadership I still hope for in our budgets.

Regular MLAs have again attempted to get more strategic investments that benefit the greatest number of our residents, help diversify our economy, and create lasting benefits, or avoid future costs. It is most unfortunate that we have come to this point where there are again fundamental disagreements.

There are some exciting initiatives in this budget. I sincerely thank my Cabinet colleagues and their staff, and my committee colleagues for much hard work in getting us to this point. On balance, I will find it very difficult to support the 2018-2019 budget given the continued focus of Cabinet on cutting

programs and services to fund infrastructure without any serious effort to increase revenues. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Replies to budget address, day 3 of 7. Item 12, petitions. Item 13, reports of standing and special committees. Item 14, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 15, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 70-18(3):  
GOVERNMENT OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE REPORT 2-18(3):  
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE 2015-2016  
PUBLIC ECONOMY

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Government of Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 2-18(3): Report on the Review of the 2015-2016 Public Economy." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 71-18(3):  
MINERAL RESOURCES ACT: WHAT WE HEARD  
REPORT

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Memo Resource Act: What We Heard Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 16, notices of motion. Item 17, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 18, motions. Item 19, first reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 1-18(3); Minister's Statement 19-18(3); Tabled Document 63-18(3). By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 7-18(3), I hereby authorize the House to sit beyond the daily hour of adjournment to consider business before the House, with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

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

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee would like to consider Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019, starting with the Department of Education, Culture



and Employment, followed by the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, committee. We will consider the document after a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** I will now call Committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019. This is essentially our budget document, and for those following along at home, this document can be found at the Department of Finance's website under "Budget."

We have agreed to begin with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, which begins at page 25 of the main estimates. I will ask the Minister if he would like to provide any opening comments. Minister Moses?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and yes, I do. Mr. Chair, Members, I am pleased to present the 2018-2019 Main Estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Overall, the department's estimates proposed an increase of \$12.462 million or 4 per cent over the 2017-2018 Main Estimates. Improving education outcomes and student success requires ongoing support from early childhood to post-secondary education and training, and our 2018-2019 Main Estimates reflect this approach.

The highlights of our main estimates include:

- \$2.7 million from the federal Early Learning and Childcare Agreement that will be used to increase the accessibility and participation in quality early childhood development programs, services, and supports;
- \$2.1 million to offset the costs associated with the territorial implementation of junior kindergarten. As well, due to lower enrolments, we will direct an additional \$881,000 towards providing inclusive schooling funding for junior kindergarten students;
- \$1.6 million to expand the Distance Learning Program in four additional small communities. This is the first year of a three-year rollout aimed at bringing this much-needed programming to all 20 small communities;

- \$1.4 million to establish six new career and education advisors, who will engage with students and youth to help them make informed decisions about their education and career paths;
- \$1.7 million to address the increased demand on the income assistance program;
- \$478,000 to adjust program inequities in our income assistance and student financial assistance programs; and
- \$4.6 million in funding from Canadian Heritage to revitalize, preserve, and enhance official Indigenous languages and to provide services and communications in French.

These increases will be offset by sunseting programs such as the \$1.25 million Labour Market Development Agreement which expires March 31, 2018, and our final year of reductions totalling \$763,000.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment continues to work to meet the priorities of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. Among many of its planned activities, I would like to highlight some key initiatives that will be undertaken in 2018-2019:

- The introduction of a renewed policy on junior kindergarten to grade 12 Indigenous languages and education that will help clarify the role schools have in the revitalization of Indigenous languages and indigenizing education in schools;
- The department will work in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services to roll out a new school and community child and youth care counselling program. We will utilize existing and new resources to establish full-time youth mental health counsellors, with positions in the Deh Cho and Tlicho regions. For the smallest communities, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will continue with the travelling model of mental health support that has already been successfully piloted;
- Informed by the findings of the foundational review, Aurora College will complete a strategic plan that will help meet the needs of our labour market demands. The department is embarking on a new and exciting path towards expanded opportunities for post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories and is developing legislation for the creation of an overarching legislative framework to govern post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories. This work is a critical step toward increasing post-secondary opportunities for

NWT residents;

- We will implement the Small Community Employment Strategy, focused on increasing and maximizing training and employment opportunities for residents and improving employment outcomes in small communities;
- The department will be implementing changes to its social assistance programs that will help to reduce the costs of living, support seniors to age in place, and reduce poverty by increasing the income of low- and modest-income residents. This will include change to our Senior Home Heating Subsidy and will expand the program to include seniors who have heating expenses in rental units and remove the phase-out percentages for income thresholds;
- Completion of a new four-year Government of the Northwest Territories Culture and Heritage Action Plan that will highlight and outline culturally-appropriate programming through the Government of the Northwest Territories.

These are a few of the highlights for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. I look forward to working with Members to advance our priorities and the mandate actions related to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Chair, that concludes my opening remarks, and I welcome any questions from the Members. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Moses. Do you have witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses to the Chamber. Minister, you may take your place at the witness table. Minister, please introduce your witnesses for the record.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** To my right is Deputy Minister Sylvia Haener, and on my left, this is Deputy Minister Olin Lovely. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Moses. I will now open the floor to general comments on the main estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Any Member wishing will have 10 minutes to make opening comments, and after every Member wishing to speak has made those comments, the Minister will be given 10 minutes to respond. I know the Minister doesn't have a clock at the witness table, so I will indicate when he has one minute left, if we get to that. So, do we have any opening comments from committee? Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon to the people from ECE. The Education Culture and Employment budget contains some promising initiatives. I am happy to see the additional investment in northern distance learning. The results from this initiative have certainly improved the completion rates for the courses, which I know is the purpose of this initiative.

I'm also pleased to see that there is now going to be additional money available for inclusive schooling for junior kindergarten students. The budget is somewhat ambiguous about whether this is one-time-only funding based on a lack of enrollment or whether this is funding that will be included in the base going forward. One of the things that comes out of the junior kindergarten experience is the need to revisit some of the formulas for funding things such as inclusive schooling, Aboriginal programming, and busing, all of which are being stretched to include an additional grade. So I'm looking forward to a conversation with the Minister at some point about the revision of the formulas to provide funding in these areas.

An area in which I have some concerns involves the Child and Youth Care Counsellor's Program. On the face of it, this looks like a great initiative to provide additional mental health support to youth and children in the communities. I am a little concerned about the roll-out of this program; first of all, that the roll-out is very lengthy, and secondly, that there be an assurance from the Minister that the money that is currently allocated to counselling positions remain in place until this new initiative is fully implemented. I understand that there will be an MOU created between the superintendents and the various boards and district education authorities and the Department of Health and ECE to guide the implementation of this program, and I look forward to hearing about the progress on that.

One of the things that counsellors do now that they may not be doing in the future because of the re-direction of this program is provide advice to youth who are getting ready to apply for post-secondary education opportunities. I know that there is a plan to create career and education advisors, but it doesn't seem as if that program is in sync with the child and youth care counsellors, in that the new education advisors won't be necessarily placed in the places where the career counsellors are being placed. In my mind, that program is not synchronized, and so I'd like to confirm that has been taken into account, when we get into the more detailed consideration.

Further, it's my understanding that the shared services study is now complete and that it has been reviewed by school boards and district educational authorities, and I'm looking forward to the Minister



making this information available to us in advance of the next budget cycle, so that we can have a look at how shared services might impact the delivery of the administrative functions of the school boards.

I want to talk a little bit about childcare funding. The federal government, in its last budget, announced that there would be funding for affordable childcare, to make childcare more affordable and more available. We've talked a lot about affordability. I know the Minister is very focused on availability, but in any case it seems to me that it's time to have an update on the implementation plan for that money and how those two different issues are going to be resolved. I also want to caution the Minister that childcare is not education, and vice versa. So the fact that JK is in place now does not address childcare needs in the NWT; they address education needs. Childcare needs are something separate.

Mr. Chair, I am aware that the Aurora College Foundational Review is ongoing and due to wrap up at the end of March and is on schedule, according to the Minister's statement of last week. Recently, I also participated in a review of the Social Work Program. I appreciate the opportunity to do that, but I remain concerned that there is not money in this operating budget to resume that program in the next fiscal year. My concern is that, if the program doesn't take students in September, it will no longer exist, because it's a two-year program and it won't have any new students in it. As a result, the staff will be given layoff notices and the program will collapse out of a lack of uptake. So I would like the Minister to make a commitment that he will, in fact, make money available for the Social Work Program, pending the outcome of both the foundational review and the social work review.

Finally, I just will talk a little bit about the performing arts. I know there was discussion last week about funding for the arts, and I feel this is an area of some confusion. There is performance for its own sake, and then there are arts for economic diversification. ECE houses the former; art for its own sake. As we heard last week, that budget hasn't been increased in 10 years; it's at \$500,000, and clearly the demand for this money outstrips the provision of it very considerably. I would like the Minister to take a good, hard look at what he can do to augment the budget of the NWT Arts Council in the next fiscal year. Those are my opening comments, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm going to raise a number of the same concerns that my colleague from Yellowknife Centre has already expressed. We did have a good briefing at noon

today from the Minister of Education and his colleague the Minister of Health and Social Services on the youth mental health support investments. It will require transitioning some of the money that's now given to the district education authorities to support that work, and there is additional money that's coming in, and I think that's all a good effort, but there is still a number of outstanding issues with regard to qualifications of the 49 new staff that are to be hired over four years and whether, indeed, we can actually find them, the availability of those sorts of qualified individuals. There are also, I think, some issues around who they report to and what kind of accountability there is between the two departments and locally.

Communities will want to be able to express some views about whether those individuals would be best situated in the schools versus the health centre, and so on. I was pleased to hear the Minister say that they are prepared to look at the concept of a memorandum of understanding between the departments and the different regions to ensure that the money stays within those purposes and to help clarify relationships and so on. I think that's a good move, and I appreciate the commitment of the two Ministers to work together on that. There is to be a communications plan developed, and I think it will be important that that be shared with the standing committee, and that there be regular updates as this starts to roll out. Some more questions about this, but I think it's headed in the right direction, and I appreciate the work of the two Ministers on it.

There is to be a \$200,000 reduction in school administration funding in this budget, and I guess it's being driven by a shared services concept. I really think this is more clearly linked to Cabinet's fiscal reduction strategy than good governance, but I'll hold my breath until we see the study on shared services. I understand that is available, and I would urge the Minister to share that with Regular MLAs now, not wait. If that study is finished, share it with us now so we can have a better understanding of whether these savings are really real or imaginary, and whether there is support from the district education authorities for those.

One area that I am concerned about that is presented in the departmental business plan is this notion of having four or five different streams for secondary school graduates, and I don't really understand it very well, and I think there needs to be a lot of public discussion around that. I wanted to encourage the Minister and his department to develop a better communications strategy and approach on this. I think we want to avoid some of the confusion and division that accompanied the STIP initiative, and this is really going to require a lot of proactive work on the part of the department. We want to make sure that our students are fully

qualified to get into post-secondary education in other jurisdictions. This needs to be approached very cautiously and carefully.

On the junior kindergarten implementation, the Minister promised full funding, and it's still not there. It looks like there is going to be an increase in inclusive schooling funding, which is a good thing, and it looks like the Minister is prepared to consider some increases for Indigenous language and culture programming, but as my colleague said, what really needs to be changed is the formulas to make sure that junior kindergarten students are actually counted in those formulas for those types of school funding. The Minister himself tabled in the House last year a document that shows that, indeed, if the junior kindergarten students are actually included, it would be about \$1.8 million extra going to the district education authorities for those school formula. If it is to be fully funded, the Minister needs to come up with that money and the Minister needs to come up with that money and change those formulas on a permanent basis.

I have some concerns about the status of the social work and teacher education programs, and the fact that it doesn't appear that there's going to be an intake of students coming up in the fall of 2018. If there is no student intake for two years, what are the teachers going to be doing? Sitting around waiting? I just can't see Aurora College waiting themselves, having teachers doing nothing. That needs to be sorted out very quickly, and if there are changes that need to be made to those programs, change the programs. You don't cut them.

I am concerned about the outcome of the foundational review. I did speak to the consultants myself. I am worried that the department is going to turn the foundational review into a way to implement the Skills 4 Success work that the department has under way. That's not what the foundational review should point towards, in my humble opinion. It needs to figure out what the position is of Aurora College with regard to post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories. How is Aurora College going to fit into post-secondary education? That's what that foundational review needs to assist us with.

The minimum wage was increased, or will be increased shortly. In my humble opinion, it's not enough. Come the fall, people in Alberta will be paid more for minimum wage than our workers here in the Northwest Territories, and we have to find a way to make sure that our workers are paid fairly. There are other ways to do this, including increasing the basic income exemptions and territorial tax incentives, and so on; looking at the concept of a living wage, as well. I'm going to be encouraging the Minister to consider additional

ways to ensure that our citizens are properly recompensed for the work that they have to do.

I do want to point out that there is no increase in arts support in the ECE budget in 2018-2019. We've heard a lot about that in the last while with the review of Bill 1, and there's a petition that's going to be tabled in this House as well on this issue. If we're serious about economic diversification, we have to find more funding to support the arts. Structural changes, I said in the House last week, bring those efforts together under one roof with the Arts Council.

On early childhood and daycare, there is this agreement now with the federal government. I want to find out what's in that agreement, and whether, as my colleague said, it's really going to support affordability of childcare as well. Unfortunately, in our mandate, we've now moved away from universal childcare to something much more vague, and I'm not sure where we're really going with this.

The last thing, on a positive note, I want to say to the Minister and his staff that I've had very good reports about the staff working collaboratively with Ecole Alain St-Cyr on the expansion of the school. I know that's not really an O and M measure, but I do want to end on a positive note and say that I've heard very good things about the work that's going forward on the school expansion. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Minister and your colleagues from the department. One thing I want to make sure that we are continuing to remain focused on, especially as it relates to the bigger picture, is that our entire education system from early childhood education on through to post-secondary and, of course, onto adult education and lifelong learning is that we are developing a system that works toward aligning our education system with those things which we value as a society. I feel that that kind of has gaps in it. I think we are making genuine attempts when I see programs like Skills 4 Success and what have you, but I just feel that there are some rather large gaps. In particular, it's in the middle grades. I feel we're doing good things in early childhood. We've made a lot of improvements relating to junior kindergarten. A number of the programs I'll allude to in a moment are looking positive and successful, but somewhere in that middle ground, in around the grades of 8 and onward, we seem to be kind of almost losing a bit of grasp on our students. By the time they reach graduation, they're not fully aware or understanding of what it is that they want to do. I think that that has a lot to do with us failing to identify as a society what it is that we value so that we're unfortunately

sending students out to education, or even into the work force, not fully able to contribute to society. A lot of times, students are just going to university or college or what have you to just kind of put in time. Often, after one semester, they're failing. A lot of it simply has to do with the fact that they don't have that sense of direction on what it is that they want to do with life. Those are the gaps that I am talking about that we have to find ways in which to fill and start shaping and moulding our kids at those middle grades.

Just to touch base on a couple of things from last year, I have reached out, as many other MLAs have, to education districts, and we have been receiving some fairly positive feedback with regard to programs that were implemented. One of them was the STIP Program. Most districts seemed to have positive comments about it. I would like to see, and I would look forward to seeing, some more of the outcomes, some more of the measurables and statistical information so that we can understand the benefits of the STIP Program a little better.

Apprenticeship and trades, this is a difficult area. I respect that. I come from the trades background myself, and in many ways, it has not changed. We are really trying to make some improvements, but we do need to make some fundamental change as it relates to the undertakings of apprenticeship and trades and technology. I think our partnerships with groups like NWT Skills Canada are positives ones, and those are the things that we have got to continue to do.

When we look at employment opportunities in the Northwest Territories, and in particular I would like to point a finger at areas such as the Sahtu Region, they are certainly going to be slowing down on oil and gas, but they have an opportunity to exploit reclamation and remediation opportunities there for another generation or more.

Giant is similar, on our front door here in Yellowknife. This is generational work, and we have got to find ways in which today it might be a father who might get a job there that is just labour-based, but then, that father's son needs to have a job that might put him into a supervisor's type of position, and the generation after that might have the opportunity to become an engineer. I want to see that kind of trajectory as it relates to how our generational skills are being broadened, not just labour opportunities generation after generation after generation. We have a lot of future infrastructure projects in the pipeline that can allow us to start thinking that way and taking advantage of those opportunities.

I will just touch quickly on innovation and technology, and what we are facing today.

Obviously, this is a much faster-paced world that we are living in because of innovation and technology. If we are not taking advantage of the opportunities to take up lifelong learning, then certainly the world can pass us by. The discussions that we are starting to have more recently are around knowledge-based economy, expanding post-secondary opportunities, creating new governance for post-secondary models, and even consideration for things like centres of excellence. This is now the right time to continue that discussion. We are raising it at a critical time, and it is the time in which we want to put the right support, both with funding and resources, towards those types of discussions. They will be critical within the next 10, 15 years. If we do not keep up those discussions then, again, we are going to create gaps, and we will be left behind.

To the Minister's comments, I just want to make some highlights and points that I am in favour of. The \$2.1 million for junior kindergarten, and in particular the inclusive schooling funding, is well-appreciated. I am looking forward to that being invested. Identifying that there were some inadequacies both in the student financial assistance as well as income assistance and putting a significant degree of funding towards that is a good improvement. Specifically, to junior kindergarten through grade 12, a renewal of the policy with regard to Indigenous language and education is something that we heard, talking to district educators, that they are going to appreciate. There are others already that talked about the child and youth care counsellor program, so I will leave that at bay for now.

As it relates to the foundational review with Aurora College, all I am really asking there now is, we are into it. Let's try to, at any cost, avoid delays, and you mentioned in your comments that there will be a strategic plan that stems from that. Again, I know how these things can take time and what have you, and we have got to do it right, but I think, for the interests of our students and post-secondary students, that we have got to be timely and work expediently on that.

Maybe what I will do at this point is I will jump ahead to the arts for a moment, because you have indicated that there is going to be a completion of a new four-year GNWT Culture and Heritage Action Plan. I raised it the other day with regard to a need for a review of the Arts Strategy. I hope that that is a piece of this. The Arts Strategy certainly is long overdue for a review. In the meantime, as many have indicated, and as the public has recently raised, there is definitely need for more support and resources for the arts. I certainly will be advocating during these deliberations for support for the NWT Arts Council, additional support, and also for the department to consider a touring grant in support of

the arts. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Those are my comments.

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

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Department and Health and Social Services for working towards the new child and youth mental health workers. I think it is very important. In my riding, it has been a huge concern. Just in the past year, we have had a number of sad incidents and some tragic ones. I have got to thank the departments for working together for that, and I know, from talking with the people in my riding, they are very supportive of this direction of people working together on that.

I would also like to thank the department for continuing to expand the Distance Learning Program. It has a huge impact upon some of my smaller communities, and some of these small communities actually want to start looking at extending their schooling to kindergarten to grade 12, and so here is an opportunity with the extended learning education that we will be able to help them meet that goal. So I thank the department for that. I know, in some of the smaller communities, I have heard that a lot. They want to keep their children in the communities, and so I praise the department for doing that positive step on there.

As we have heard through some of my colleagues here, we talked about junior kindergarten and the funding. It is a concern for me that, again, it is funding as according to the formula. Again, it is not fully funded, but it is funded according to the formula, and that needs to be educated or brought out to the people so people are aware of that. The education formula is a formula. We do not fund any programs completely. It is from my understanding and looking at things, it is based on a formula. That needs to be educated, and that is how we need to be sending the message out to people. It is not fully funded, but it is funded according to the formula.

The career and education advisors, that is a huge concern for me. We are removing the counsellors, and I fully support that idea, but now you are putting these positions, three into Inuvik and three into Yellowknife. They are travelling, and yes, they are a team, but again, it's the face-to-face. It's the knowing the people and the students and understanding where it's going. When we talk about careers, we are starting at a younger age. It is just not grade 10, 11, and 12, because once they get to that point, you know, going into grade 10, they have already got a career. They already know where they are going. We need to make sure that we provide the proper system and education and support that the students need, and that is starting

in grade 5, even in kindergarten, helping them get prepared.

Somebody talked about the five systems of education, the five streams that we are looking at. That there is a concern for me, especially if we are not educating the public about what it is, but it is not just about post-secondary. It is about trades. It is about educating the parents and also the students of where they need to go. I am confused with the three streams we have right now, or the two streams depending on what school you are talking about. I understand the department is trying to work on this, but we need to educate people. People need to understand the direction we are going with this.

You have probably heard me say this numerous times. I talk about the social work program and also the TEP program. We are doing a foundational review. I appreciate the department is doing that, and I am hoping that some good results will come from it. Again, we are putting a nail in a coffin when we don't do an intake. When we don't have an intake, that means our students are starting to look at going elsewhere.

The department does a great job in preparing or supporting the students existing right now. I have no qualms about that. I say that the department is helping the people who are in the program and they are trying to get where they need to go. It is not about the help that we are challenging or questioning. It is about providing this service.

According to your Skills4Success, the top 20 jobs in demand, elementary school teachers and kindergarten teachers, 777 positions from 2015 to 2030. That is your result. That is what you are telling us. Now you are saying this department, this program is going to be removed from the college. That kind of goes against exactly what you are trying to say. One says, "here it is." The other side, "we are cutting it."

That is a huge concern for me. If there is something wrong with the program, then we need to fix the program. We can't be sending people always down south. In talking with the students, whether it is in the social work program or the TEP program, they go to school in the North because that is where their support system is. Going down South, I have talked with a number of social work students out there, and they are going, "Man, oh man, we don't have the support system we have up North." It is just not the department, but it is the family and the extended family. The department needs to understand that and needs to look at it. I seriously believe that is what we need to be looking at to improve on.

Small community employment fund, again, the department is talking about trades, the importance - not trades, but training. I agree, totally support that. However, there is a catch here. It is about putting people to work. It is about how people right now need the economy to get some food on the table so they don't have to go on income support. They want to work on it. This is what I have been trying to say.

Yes, it is great that we do a portion of it for training, but the other portion is we need to put people to work. If we put people to work, they are going to feel better about themselves. If they are feeling better about themselves, they are going to advance and get better. Then their family environment is going to be better. I understand the department and what they are trying to do. I think it is a good vision. At the same time, we need to put people to work. We need to put people on the ground doing jobs. The struggle may be that the department is really good at developing the skills we need to do it, the training that we need to do it. Maybe we take part of that money and put it to ITI, who then does job creation. Right now, people want jobs, especially in the small communities. People don't understand a \$10,000 or \$15,000 job has a huge impact on their life. We need to promote that. We need to encourage that.

This is where I am coming from. We need to look at what is good for the small communities, as well. It is just not where the vision and the mandate from the government is. We need to look at what the small communities need. Sometimes, it is not the training. Sometimes, it is about giving them a paycheque and giving them a job. In saying all that, I have to give credit to your staff. The regional staff do an amazing job. They work well with the communities and they try to achieve. Every time I have talked to my communities about things, they have talked highly of the ECE staff, the Divisional Board of Education. The department is doing a good job regionally implementing your actions.

I would also like to thank the department finally, before my time is up. It is about social assistance and reducing the cost of living for seniors. That is probably one of the biggest challenges I have right now: trying to explain to seniors, "You make too much money, so you can't get subsidy." They are going, "I can't afford to live where I am if I don't work. If I don't work, I can't provide food on the table. If I work and provide food on the table, I can't access the department's funding to get the fuel subsidy."

When you talk to some of these elders about this situation, they are getting really frustrated. They are saying we -- I say "we." I am not blaming the department. We as government don't seem to care about them. They go, "We have an appeal process,

but why? It is not going to work for us." It has a huge impact on them. It is really frustrating to hear their stories. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Those are my opening comments, with 22 seconds left.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Just under the wire. Next, we have Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Over the course of this budget review, I want to be able to speak to some of the work standing committees did during the business planning process. We touch on this often in our sittings to benefit our constituents that MLAs are hard at work for the fall of every year, reviewing the departments' annual business plans. This takes a lot of time from the Ministers' offices, the standing committees, and from the departments and departments' staff. It is a significant amount of work, and it should not be understated how important this is in the functioning of consensus government.

One of my concerns, however, is, after the conclusion of these reviews, standing committees make numerous recommendations to government. The real test of that business-planning process is whether or not Ministers accept the recommendations and move to implement them. I think that is the true spirit of effective consensus government when that exchange over the business plan actually results in progress moving forward. That goes greatly to my disposition on these final budget documents.

First off, I will just speak to some of the highlights here that the Minister indicated in his opening remarks that I support fully. The \$2.1 million dollars to offset the costs associated with junior kindergarten implementation and the additional inclusive education schooling, this is something that we have heard as Regular Members from our education partners and something that we have lobbied hard for on the floor of this House and behind closed doors. It is good to see this additional funding implemented.

My only concern around it is it is not fixed permanently. It is something that we hope will continue as there is a shortfall in enrolment. It is something that I hope continues so we have fully paid-for junior kindergarten going forward.

I think the new \$1.6 million to expand distance learning program is also a welcome investment in education. \$1.4 million to establish six new career and educational advisors, I have heard from colleagues that they have seen these officers working firsthand at schools and at job fairs and that they are very much welcome conduits for skills development for young people. The force growth spending, \$1.7 million to address income

assistance program and other income assistance program investments are good things. We don't want to fall behind with our social assistance programs.

I do want to look at a few of the concerns around the department's progress on mandate commitments. I will be quite clear from my seat, at least. Post-secondary is a real mess. It has taken a long time to get to a point where we can actually see legislation moving forward. There is a high likelihood that further delays will push this into the last year of our term or perhaps the next Assembly altogether. Meanwhile, there has been a huge push from the federal government to invest in post-secondary infrastructure and programming that we have not fully capitalized on, and we do not have a concrete plan to really invest in post-secondary opportunities.

Aurora College is, of course, the poster child for that lack of progress. We started with a strategic review, which turned into a foundational review, which, when complete, will become a new strategic plan, which was the plan all along. I think what I am expecting is that we see real change to Aurora College and real independence granted to the institution.

One of the fundamental problems with the college, from everything I have heard, is political interference with the operations of the college. I do not mean politicians are getting their friends jobs there. I mean the overall direction of the college is controlled by the department and the department's frameworks and strategies. It is being used as an instrument to develop on Skills 4 Success and other labour market strategies. That is not the role an independent post-secondary institution should play. ECE's interaction with the college should be one based on funding agreements, but the college should ultimately be the ones to dictate programming choices and operational matters, and the college needs to start listening to students. They should be at every school at a younger age talking to students. This is standard practice for every post-secondary institution, and they just do not do it. That is something I have heard about and was confirmed to me recently in the foundational review that is going on right now.

These are things that we do not need two years of work to figure out. These are very clear things. It needs an independent board. That board needs to be empowered to make clear decisions, and it needs to be severed from government. It should not be operating as a public agency. It should be operating as a public academic institution, and I am not sure if that is what is happening at all. The business planning process, which is more in depth than this, did not give me an satisfaction that that is, in fact, the direction we are moving, and we need

clarity on this issue because time is a-wasting, and people need those skills and development.

The standing committee, again, recommended that the Teacher Education Program and Social Work Diploma Program be reopened for enrolment. The department has ignored that recommendation, and I am not sure why. They cleave to the foundational review, but the issue is those programs are dead in the water if they cannot enrol new students. In effect, they are being bled dry by a lack of enrolment, and again, this is, I think, the second time the standing committee has made that recommendation and the second time it has been ignored.

The standing committee also recommended that childcare subsidies be made available to parents and families on income or means-tested bases. That is echoing other previous recommendations. That is not indicated in this business plan, either.

The standing committee recommended that arts funding be increased by \$500,000, doubling the current support to the arts council, and also that a touring grant be established for \$100,000 to help NWT-based performing artists in performance opportunities outside the Northwest Territories. I fully support these additional investments in our creative industries. Again, those recommendations were not taken up by the department.

I think this is troubling. These are significant areas where we can work together to improve the department's budget and the department's operations, and these recommendations that standing committees are making are modest. They are not exhaustive. They are not hundreds upon hundreds of minute details. They are high-level policy recommendations that are not being taken on by this department.

As the Premier mentioned in his opening statement, employment in Yellowknife does quite well. We have very high levels of employment. It is really the smaller communities outside of the capital that suffer from very high unemployment, and that is something that this department needs to address. The Small Community Employment Strategy has stumbled to get off the ground, and I hope that we will see progress on that through the commitments made in both the business plan and this budget.

Finally, on to the issue of arts funding. The creative industry in Canada employs more people than forestry, natural resources, Canadian Armed Forces, and fisheries combined. There is nothing preventing us from developing an industry, not of that magnitude in the Northwest Territories, but certainly we could lay the foundation for it, and that starts with doubling the investment in the Arts Council. That will help creative professionals find

more funding for their projects and develop their professional skills. We are talking about the whole gamut from filmmakers to architects to graphic designers. They are all involved in these creative arts projects.

Not only that, but it allows more wellness and vibrancy in our communities. It helps people take pride in themselves. It hits a whole number of areas of important public policy goals that this government has set for itself, and not increasing it because times are tough is not enough. We need to start an investment now so that investment will pay off in the future. The arts council and arts communities have been waiting 10 years for increased investment, and the fact that this department cannot see the wisdom in expanding not only arts and culture but employment in these industries is very disappointing to me.

With that, Mr. Chair, I will conclude my opening comments, but I will have more to say as our budget deliberations develop. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. Running the clock. Next, I have Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Marsi cho, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to speak on the items that appear to be most important to the communities that I represent. I have had many discussions over the years with various groups about all departments, and these are the items that were very specific to education.

The Indigenous language broadcasting, it is not an item here that I have an issue with the budget on. They have over a million dollars in Indigenous language broadcasting. It is the way in which more of the broadcasting can be spread throughout the NWT and how money could do a lot to support the communities where they need to have some language broadcasting.

I think CBC does a pretty good job of broadcasting Aboriginal languages, but there is another radio station, Native Communication Society, the CKLB. They often are not able to get their broadcasts out to the communities. In fact, looking at one of my communities, Lutselk'e, they do not have any radio at all. They do not have CBC, and they do not have any CKLB.

That is something that I think we talked about a bit when we had the Committee on the Sustainability of Rural and Remote Communities. We speak about that and how we are able to maybe train local individuals, which, again, would be a job in the small communities for somebody to take care of the technical aspects of what needs to occur in the

communities to ensure that the broadcasting is continuing.

I don't know if this department would be solely responsible for it, but I think they would certainly have their hand in it as well, and I think that is something that I would like the department to start working on to try to assist the broadcasters or the radio stations in order to broadcast to all the communities in the territories.

Like most people, I do have an issue with the fact that there is no enrolment of students for the two programs. I felt at one time that maybe the TEP program, the Teacher Education Program, was sort of like the flagship program for Aurora College. I know that Aurora College now has a very good nursing program. I think that's going well. They're producing a lot of nurses. My understanding is they're not producing as many teachers. I'm thinking that instead of withdrawing from the program, that maybe they should try to improve the program if they have issues, that students are graduating from there and are not able to go right into a classroom to teach, then maybe what they should do is to make sure that the education is there for them; their own education, the teacher's education, so that they can go into a classroom and teach.

It's the same thing with the social workers. I know that some of the social workers, once they've gone through the program, don't have all of the requirements to be a social worker in the different fields, and so on. If that's the case, then I think the college should do something about making sure that the social workers have the education in order to do the job for us in the territories. I think that the value of local social workers is really underestimated by our government. I think that, when you look at social workers when it comes to Child and Family Services and other areas where the social workers interact with the community members, you would find that the social workers, the local social workers, are highly successful. I know many, many social workers, many of whom are retired after a long career, and from my community, my home town, ladies that I knew when I was a kid, who are retired social workers who have a very good reputation. I think if need be, maybe reach back to some of those social workers to try to improve the program, as opposed to discontinuing enrolment.

Just touching on a couple of other things that I think would be a big help to the small communities, and that is things like trying to run a breakfast program. For most communities where you have money, where people have money, and where the people are wondering even if they have food in the fridges, well, in our small communities, there are families that don't have food. It seems like it's a basic need,

but they don't have food. Some of those kids will get up to go to school so they could have something to eat, and it's a pretty sad state of affairs when we have kids that don't have food, and that they're going to be not attending school because the parents are unemployed, or the parents are not employed, after trying to get the kid off to school day after day after year after year after year. It becomes something that we need to change, that we need to put the parents to work.

Some of the Members spoke of the small community employment program to be used for that. We get a hold of it. It appears as though the department's got a hold of it, and wants to turn it into a skills development thing. We put that program in place because of employment rates. The employment rates were so bad in the small communities that we needed to have people go to work, so that people could go to work. They could send their kids to school, so they don't have the situation in the future. Like 10 years from now, if people are working and the kids are going to school, we're going to have graduates. We're going to have people in, the students are graduating; that increases their ability or their possibility of getting a job. Even just grade 12 increases their possibility of getting a job by probably close to 30 per cent compared to somebody who doesn't have a high school education. I mean, that's quite a jump. If they were lucky enough or fortunate enough to end up in a post-secondary like trades, or university or college, then their possibilities of getting a job could jump by another 15, 20 per cent.

So I think this department has to be able to get people to work, hire people. There are a lot of projects on the go. I know that in my hometown right now, there are a whole bunch of people cutting trails as part of the community access road from the Department of Infrastructure and the assistance of the small community employment program combined together. It's put about eight or nine people to work. Those eight or nine people are going to be able to have not just an income but have ability, if they can't find other work, even to draw employment insurance.

I think those are the things I want to talk about. There's something that I think is old and way past due, but at one point, we used to have truancy officers. I talked about that in the House before, and I think that the department should look at something like that, or talk to DAs or something like that. It doesn't have to be specifically that, but developing a strategy to get the kids to go to school.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Further opening comments? General

comments, Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Mr. Blake.

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a few things that would be nice to see in the budget here. Many schools in my riding have issues in the fall, mostly the fall time with bears in the community, and especially when it's dark in the morning. It's a safety concern for children who have to walk to school, both in Aklavik and Fort McPherson. This fall, we had grizzly bears hanging around the community, and also in the springtime. People in the communities would like to see busing, but the truth is, funding that's given to the DAs isn't adequate to provide schooling. That is something that we really need here, and we're putting the safety of students at risk here. I think it's time we address that.

Also, from what I understand, the small community employment program is doing much better this year with a little help from the rural and remote communities participating in the process. I was hoping that whatever is not spent this year could be put in the community access fund, which is a big help to the small communities. Many of our communities have around a 36 per cent employment rate. It's actually gone up from the last numbers that I received. It's up to 40, but it would be great to see, 50, 60 per cent in the future here. I'm sure, if we work together, we could make that happen, maybe top off the fund here. Maybe even \$5 million would be great, my Cabinet colleagues here. Those are the concerns that are brought up by myself here. I know in Tsiigehtchic as well there, they're looking to hopefully provide high school grades here in the future, and will be a challenge providing some subjects. That's something they are looking forward to in the future, how to make that work. Because we're seeing the dropout rate increase because of students having to go to Inuvik, and that's something we don't want to see. We want to see our children to succeed, and we have to figure out a plan here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Blake. Further general comments on the Department of Education, Culture and Employment? Seeing none, as we've discussed, the Minister will have 10 minutes to respond, keeping in mind that as we go through the detail of this document, there will be plenty of time to respond to more detailed concerns that the Members have. Minister Moses, you have 10 minutes.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate all the comments and feedback with all Members of committee as well as the Assembly here. We've also heard from our education leaders. We do meet with them on a regular basis, and



some of the concerns that were raised here today were some of the concerns that were brought forward with our education partners as well. So we definitely are listening and trying to make those changes that will be in the best interest of our staff as well as our students.

Beginning with the inclusive schooling for junior kindergarten, I know it was brought up by everyone here and you see in my opening comments and in the funding here that we did increase funding for junior kindergarten specifically around the inclusive schooling. I can confirm that it will be in the base moving forward, that this funding is going to continue.

We also had some comments around the child and youth care counsellors. We did do a really good presentation at lunch to standing committee, and I think we got into a lot of detail at that meeting, and that meeting was public. I'm sure it's going to be on the Legislative Assembly Facebook page, if you want to get into more detail on the questions there. That's just a great program, with the collaboration of working with the Department of Health and Social Services to address some of our biggest concerns and the community's on mental health, and I know there was discussions around addictions and suicides as well. Like any other program, we're going to monitor that and make sure that it's working well. As it rolls out, we'll be able to give better updates on how these child and youth care counsellors are working in the Deh Cho and the Tlicho, as we move into the next steps of implementing it throughout the Northwest Territories.

We also had the career and education advisors. There were some concerns there. Obviously, they are two different programs; one is focusing on mental health counselling in the schools, and I agree, I think we need to get some of this information out to our students at a younger age. Not as far as kindergarten, as I heard mentioned, but I think we do need that, to get that information out to the schools, and having these career and education advisors traveling throughout the North and helping students decide what career paths they want to take and education that they need to get to either a post-secondary or to another career is going to be very important.

I know tying in with our high schools' pathways, pathways to graduation, as Members know, we did give an update to committee on this and we'll be looking at implementing the high school pathways in the 2019-2020 academic year. So that gives us about a whole year to really get out and consult and work with our partners, work with our families and our communities, and get that information to them and get their feedback and input as well.

I know MLA Green mentioned the shared services report. Currently the steering committee that is working on that is developing a response to the report, and we'll be sharing that with committee as soon as that response comes out, just to have Members updated on that.

Early childhood funding, childcare, we did sign off on an agreement with the federal government, and we will be sharing that action plan with Members once that's all finalized. I know some of that funding was for this fiscal year. One good thing that came out of that is we are able to carry over funding that we're not going to be able to spend this fiscal year. I know it's late into 2017-2018, and some of that funding is going to be available come April 1<sup>st</sup>, from this fiscal year, here.

The foundational review, I know that has been a big concern and has rendered a lot of questions in the House. We're still waiting on that report. I gave an update last week on where we are with the foundational review. I appreciate all the Members who took the time to give feedback and comment into that review, and once that review is completed, we will be making sure that we do a management response. Everything that I said on Friday's Minister's statement will continue, staying focused on that. With regard to programs, I think we're going to have to see what came out of that foundational review before we move forward, and working with the Aurora College.

I know one Member has brought up that it would be nice if Aurora College could work on their own, focus on their own path and doing things on their own, but this is public dollars that we do fund Aurora College with, so we do need to be a part of that process when we're looking at the programs and the way they run their shop, over at Aurora College. There are concerns about the level of our students when they're graduating. Back in the previous government, we started working on the education renewal process. We know that there are a lot of new programs, pilot project; we have a lot of working groups that have education leaders on there, as well as our partners. So moving forward with this renewal, we're going to see some positive things coming out and, as some Members mentioned, we want to make sure that our students have all the supports, the resources they need, so that when they graduate, that they would be able to go into further post-secondary or get into a career that they need. As I mentioned, we'll continue to keep committee updated as we go out and consult on the Pathways to Graduation project.

I'm trying to see what else is in here. As you mentioned, Mr. Chair, as we get into the detail on the budget and go page-by-page, we'll get into more detail on some of the questions.

The arts funding, the strategy. As I mentioned when I got questions in the House, I will be working with the Department of ITI to look at what options we have moving forward to develop a strategy, but also looking at things as some Members mentioned with the structural side of things, and we'll have those discussions with the Minister of ITI. As I mentioned in the House answering questions, the Arts Council will be a big part of that. They are the experts and they do represent a lot of the organizations and some of our artists in the Northwest Territories.

I know trades was also mentioned. We just released that strategy, and I think we're going to see some really good things coming out of that strategy. As Member McNeely had mentioned last week: how are we getting support? How are we supporting them to push out the people in the trades area? I think that the apprenticeship trades and occupational certification strategies are going to address a lot of those challenges and gaps. The steering committee and working group, which are mainly comprised of industry personnel, they're the ones who are implementing it, so we're going to reach out and try to get an update from them on where we move forward.

Senior home heating subsidy, ours supports the seniors. We continue to make those supports and make the changes that are benefitting seniors thought the Northwest Territories, and we just made a couple of those changes over the past fiscal year.

We also heard a little bit about the childcare benefits. We made changes when the Canada Child Benefit came into place. We made changes, as well as making changes to the NWT Child Benefit, putting more money into the families of low to modest income, and we're going to continue to support them, as well as support our childcare providers.

The arts funding, as I mentioned, we're currently looking at all the funding that, collectively, all departments fund to the artists and the organizations throughout the Northwest Territories. In my department, we fund over \$2 million, and I think it's sufficient in terms of how we support our artists throughout the Northwest Territories, as well.

In terms of support to local radio stations, the funding that we did get with the signing with the federal government, we do have allocated funding that's going to the local radio stations. So a lot of them got a bump up, and we want to continue to look at revitalizing our Indigenous languages throughout the Northwest Territories and we have an ambitious agenda to try to address that.

Small Community Employment Support Program, I tried to get into that, but we'll get into more detail. I

know the rural and remote committee is doing a lot of good work providing direction and giving good feedback on how we roll out that funding. With the increase of \$3 million, we've seen a lot of uptake right throughout the Northwest Territories, where, before, with that \$1.2 million, it was not fully allocated, but with that increase, I am sure we can be spending that full funding by the end of this fiscal year. Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we get into detail, we will get into that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister Moses. You are right. We will have plenty of time to discuss this in the detail. If there are no further opening comments, we can consider the detail in the tabled document. Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 26-18(3):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 63-18(3): MAIN  
ESTIMATES 2018-2019 - EDUCATION, CULTURE  
AND EMPLOYMENT - DEFERRAL OF FURTHER  
CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND  
EMPLOYMENT,  
CARRIED

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to defer. The motion is in order and non-debatable. The motion is currently being distributed. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

We will defer consideration of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

Committee, we have decided to next consider the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. I will turn to the Minister of the department, Premier McLeod, for any comments that he may have. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am pleased to present the 2018-2019 Main Estimates for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Overall, the department's estimates propose an increase of \$1.5 million or 7.8 per cent over the 2017-2018 Main Estimates. EIA's proposed increase is almost entirely related to strategic initiatives, which include the following:

- \$595,000 in additional resources aimed at the finalization of lands, resources, and

self-government agreements;

- \$250,000 in additional funding to the Northwest Territories/Nunavut Council of Friendship Centres to build capacity and strengthen program delivery;
- \$387,000 in additional intergovernmental relations capacity and support out of the Government of Northwest Territories Ottawa office;
- \$100,000 in funding to assist the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation implement their Strategic Direction Action Plan related to the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway No. 10;
- \$101,000 in funding to host the Western Premiers Conference later this spring;
- \$84,000 to assist in the delivery of campaign schools to further encourage women's participation in politics; and
- \$50,000 in funding to the Arctic Inspiration prize.

These estimates continue to support the priorities of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly by continuing to successfully conclude agreements with Indigenous governments for lands, resources, and self-government. There are currently 14 sets of negotiations at various stages, and these negotiations will continue to be a priority for this government as this budget ensures additional resources are dedicated to the furtherance and conclusion of these agreements.

In addition, Canada is setting significant new policy direction in many areas that directly and indirectly affect the lives and future prospects of the Northwest Territories and its people. The new Deputy Secretary of Intergovernmental Relations located in the Ottawa office will help ensure the Government of Northwest Territories' interests and perspectives are understood and considered by Canada in decisions regarding the environment, infrastructure, investments in our economy, and Indigenous rights, including any changes contemplated to the fiscal arrangements between Canada and Indigenous governments.

Finally, these main estimates continue to increase regional capacity by building partnerships with Northern friendship centres, encouraging women to participate in politics, and sponsoring innovation for the benefit of all Arctic communities, including the investment in socioeconomic opportunities related to the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway No. 10. Thank you. This concludes my opening remarks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. Do you have witnesses you wish to bring into the Chamber?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes, I do, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Premier. Will the Sergeant-at-Arms please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Premier, would you please introduce your witnesses for the record.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left, I have Mike Aumond, the secretary to Cabinet and the deputy minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. To my far right, I have Terence Courtoreille, the director of Shared Services, and to my immediate right, Shaleen Woodward, the assistant deputy minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. I will now open the floor to general comments on the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. Committee, I will remind you of the procedure. Each Member wishing to speak will have 10 minutes to do so. After every Member who wishes to speak has spoken, I will return to the Premier, who may speak for 10 minutes to make further comments or answer any committee questions if he so desires. Committee, general comments? Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I guess, in all fairness, we all have 10 minutes to speak and so does the Minister Premier. I guess I could speak for a few minutes on the main topic that I would like to cover in this area, and that is the lands and resource negotiations. I see that there are extra, additional resources that the Premier has spoken of, of \$595,000 to the aim of finalizing lands and resources and self-government agreements.

I just want to talk a bit about what I am seeing as I guess you would call it a bit of a deficiency in the process. The first one is the land use planning process. I know that Cabinet, or at least the Minister of Education, has talked about looking at funding job creation for Akaitcho in the area of land use planners as they are trying to put a group of people together.

I know that I have had some discussion with the Premier on what had occurred prior to devolution. Prior to devolution, there was money provided to other claimant groups, whether they be ones that were settled or ones that were not settled. All the same, there was money put towards the land use planning document that I will refer to it as for a couple of Aboriginal governments, but not for Akaitcho.

What, I guess, is something that I would like to see the Premier do in the area of Indigenous Affairs is to take a serious look at that. These are small communities that are represented here. If that means that we do some of the small community fund, small community employment program to provide so that they could hire some local land-use planner -- some of the young people that are already working in that area would be skilled with some direction from maybe a professional land-use planner to take a look at trying to put something together. I think it becomes an essential part of the negotiation process with Akaitcho.

I am not fully up to speed on whether or not the Metis have a land-use plan, but then it is a little bit of a discussion for me because the NWT Metis Nation spills into Hay River, your riding, Mr. Chair, and also in Fort Smith. It is not something I can take on my own and say this is what is needed, because I think it needs to be more of a joint effort and coming from them. Akaitcho clearly has come to me and clearly has asked that some money be provided for land-use plan so that they could put this big piece of the puzzle in place for potential settling of the lands and resource negotiations.

The other thing that has always puzzled me has been the self-government aspect of the negotiations. I don't see our government -- by "our government," I am referring to the Government of the Northwest Territories -- as being a big part of building capacity for potential or future self-government. I think that more effort must be put in there. I know they are at the table, and I know they are moving forward. I am not sure that once the agreement is signed, how quickly we could move to implementation.

Does that mean that, once the agreement is signed, it is at that point that we recognize the resources that need to transfer from the territorial government to the Indigenous governments of Akaitcho at that point? Then we start working on the building of the capacity? To me, looking at it from a perspective, although I am obviously not fully versed on what is going on at the negotiation tables and certainly not versed at what had gone on with the other places that were settled, the drawing down of the departments, the choices and how they draw down what the Akaitcho are drawing down and so on, that type of thing.

I am wondering if some of that work could be done simultaneously during negotiations, because it seems like it is done consecutively. It appears as though we are slowly moving towards developing capacity so that, when you sign an agreement that says lands and resources and self-government agreement, that is a step, and then the next step is to try to build the capacity. As I see it, a land-use plan for the lands and resources is something I

think that is essential. It is difficult to move without it. Also, the self-government capacity-building would be something that would be difficult to engage the Indigenous governments if we don't work on capacity now.

I am essentially saying that I think that the government has to start to look at what resources are there, what will be drawn down by the governments, determine what will be drawn down, and allow them to set up a structure that can govern themselves. Right now, if we had wrote a cheque to the Aboriginal governments for all of the areas that will be drawn down, they would spend a lot of their money just building capacity and not delivering programs. I think we should be working with them as a territorial government, working with them to build that capacity so that, when the agreement is signed, they are ready to roll into self-government quicker. If that is their desire and if that is what they are negotiating, I suppose that we should be working with them to try to build up that capacity. Those are the two areas I speak of today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Next, I have Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I would like to start off on the issue of the land rights negotiations. The Minister indicated that there is an additional \$595,000 in this year's budget for it. That is likely a good thing, but this comes after two years of cuts within the department and its capacity to negotiate. It is good that we are trying to work towards that. I guess I'll have some questions about what that funding is really going to be used for.

The other thing I want to say about this is that there is a joint committee of Cabinet and Regular MLAs to talk about some of these issues, but it has never met twice. It didn't really have the kind of authority that the Premier committed to in his campaign speech to become the Premier. It doesn't provide any sort of oversight or real advice, as I understand it, in terms of those negotiations. We haven't seen much progress. There haven't been any completed agreements, and we are more than halfway through our term. I am very concerned about the lack of progress in this area. We need to set this as a much higher priority for this government.

I want to talk about government service officers. Regular MLAs on our side, we have tried to push, in the last two budgets, for some kind of a plan to complete the GSOs in all of our communities. Not all the small communities have GSOs yet. I don't believe there are any in the regional centres. There certainly aren't any in Yellowknife. There may be some opportunities for greater efficiencies, particularly in a place like Yellowknife where the federal government has sort of a one-stop shop.

Perhaps we can be looking at partnering with them on that as well here in Yellowknife to get some efficiencies.

Without a plan, where is this going? It just seems that Cabinet throws a few dollars into this whenever it seems that it can afford it. I think we need a solid plan to know what the additional costs are to complete our network so we can improve our programs and services to our communities.

I have a place to find that, the money that the Minister wants to use to add extra capacity in the inter-governmental relations, as I termed it, the red alert office in Ottawa. That is where he can get that money. Let's talk a little bit about that office. It just sort of appears as a line item in the budget. There is not much detail in the business plan. Regular MLAs, including myself, have asked for a job description. We have asked for more details about what that position will actually do. The information we got back revolved largely around the red alert messaging that the Premier has talked about in this House, as well, about trying to overturn the offshore rights issuance moratorium.

I guess I had hoped to see much more of an emphasis on leveraging infrastructure funding for things like housing and renewable energy, rather than the large roads-to-resources projects that our government continues to submit. Maybe even an emphasis on the need to revise the territorial formula funding agreement so we can build more fiscal and economic sustainability here in the Northwest Territories, but that is not the information that we have got. I will have lots of questions for the Minister about that investment of money and whether it would be better spent on other initiatives.

There are some good things in here in terms of support for the friendship centres. I support that. The additional funding for the campaign schools to try to encourage women's participation in politics. Those are good initiatives. Ongoing funding for the Arctic Inspiration Prize; that is a good investment. Supporting the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway plan through the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation; that is good money spent as well, but there do not seem to be any rules around this funding. They all seem to be one-offs without any sort of policy framework. I think that just leaves the door open to anybody lining up at the Premier's office and asking for money, and I think we are starting to see that here.

I don't understand why the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation has to go to the Premier's office to get money when those funds could and should be available as part of Infrastructure and ITI's regular planning for a major infrastructure project. That is not to say that their proposal isn't good, but that should be part of our regular project planning, not

subject to one-offs with the Premier's office. We need to have a policy framework for decision-making around that sort of funding.

I want to talk a little bit about Nutrition North, which is one of the mandate commitments. I am not aware of really what our government is doing on Nutrition North. There was a federal task force that was set up to investigate Nutrition North and its future, and I am not aware of whether our government even participated in that and what our position is and what we are trying to do on Nutrition North. There have been ideas from this side of the House about making sure that local agricultural producers can access or use or be supported through Nutrition North, as well.

Net metering is another responsibility of the Executive. It is in the mandate as well to try to improve access to net metering and make sure that citizens who invest in renewable resources have a way to feed energy back into the grid and realize some benefits from their investment, but there is nothing that has been done by the Executive on this. There is nothing in the New Energy Strategy around net metering, and there is no direction on this. This issue has been raised in the House, not just by myself but by other MLAs, and I would like to see some real progress on this in the context of the energy strategy.

I guess one other thing here that I would like to -- Northern Residents Tax Deduction. That is in the mandate commitments that falls under the Executive, as well, although the Minister of Finance obviously has some responsibility here. We did make some progress on getting it improved. It needs to be indexed, and I don't know why we cannot work with the other Finance Ministers in the other jurisdictions that are Nunavut and Yukon and put a lot more pressure on the Minister responsible for the Canada Revenue Agency to get this indexed.

Lastly, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. There is some progress being made on implementation of this at the federal level. There is a private Member's bill that is going to come forward that is going to require a more systematic approach to federal legislations and policy, and I think that the ruling party has indicated they are prepared to support that initiative. That is something that our government needs to look at in terms of our legislation and policies to make sure that they incorporate things like free, prior, and informed consent, which is part of the declaration itself.

Just checking my notes here, I think those are the main things that I wanted to cover. Sorry, lack of progress on ombudsman legislation. I am not sure where that stands at. This is a commitment in the

mandate again, and here we are more than two years into our mandate, and it still has not come forward. I am concerned about the progress on that initiative as well. Thanks, Mr. Chair. That is all I have on this department for now.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you. That's it, eh, Mr. O'Reilly? Next on my list, I have Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tough act to follow.

A lot of these new initiatives that the department is speaking to are good things: additional resources for land rights agreements; \$250,000 to the friendship centres; \$100,000 for the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation; the Western Premiers Conference; campaign schools. I mean, these are all good things, but around what the standing committee deemed as extraordinary funding requests from the Tuktoyaktuk Community Corporation and the council of friendship centres, these are both issues that have been raised with Members of the Legislative Assembly as areas needing some additional investment. It is good to see them made, but my hesitancy with welcoming them too much is the lack of a clear policy framework around these.

During the course of the business plan review, at least as it relates to the friendship centre request, there is an existing fund called the NGO Stabilization Fund, which currently resides with the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs but previously was with this department, and that is exactly its purpose, to stabilize the operational funding of NGOs that are experiencing those kinds of shortfalls and allowing them to continue to provide services to Northerners. Friendship centres do amazing things.

The committee has been recommending that this NGO Stabilization Fund return to Executive for this exact reason, and one of the solutions to these extraordinary funding requests might be to do it this way. Unfortunately, the department has not agreed with that recommendation, and I cannot imagine why. I mean, it is good to support northern organizations and to provide this level of funding, but we need to ensure that it meets the rigour of public scrutiny, and just passing out cash, even if it's a good cause, there needs to be some policy guidelines around it, because there are a lot of good causes out there, not just these two.

As for GSOs, I think everyone here will speak to it. One of the most significant areas of this department's mandate is providing GSOs. From all of the Regular Members, it is very clear that there is a lack of front line services available to the people of the Northwest Territories. MLAs are handling a

lot of requests from constituents on how to access government services. Those requests go straight to the Ministers' offices, and this could be done a lot more expeditiously if there were front line service officers in every community, including regional centres and including the capital.

Standing committees have repeatedly made suggestions and recommendations that this program be expanded and further that a funding relationship be entered into or explored with Service Canada so we can share resources when applicable. I know the department has been piloting that approach to provide federal services through GSOs, but we have a huge Service Canada centre here in Yellowknife, and I don't see why we can't convert that. Mr. Chair, if you speak French, of course, you can receive that here in the capital. You can go and get one-stop-shop for government services, but only in French, and I think that is a disservice to our other official language communities. This is a crucial service. People should have a one-stop-shop to go when they need assistance from government.

As to this deputy secretary position in Ottawa, I think staff to ensure we can achieve our strategies, goals, and public policy objectives is appropriate. I just wonder if, at a time with extremely diminished revenues and mounting expenditures and a need for enhanced public services, if it is really the time to roll out this position in Ottawa. We do have a seat at the table through our federal-territorial-provincial relations. Every department participates in those round-table discussions. Unfortunately, when the standing committee conducted its review and has been communicating with the department since, we have not had much clarity on what this position will do and exactly the parameters around it. I think we really need to consider carefully if we are going to establish a \$387,000 position in Ottawa when there, again, are a number of important positions that we need here in the Northwest Territories.

My colleague the honourable Member from Frame Lake spoke of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This is an international declaration that this Assembly has supported in the past. Canada, as a government and a parliament, is moving towards full support and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Committee was concerned at the time of the business plans that, if we move in a similar direction, which I think we all agree is important, we do not know the full consequences of doing that.

To ask the department to develop a policy lens for Indigenous rights that it could apply to all public policy undertakings and ensure that all departments are being consistent in their approach to Indigenous

rights in Canada and through the lens of the UN declaration, unfortunately, we do not have a firm commitment other than they will keep an eye on it. There are a lot of things going on, and I know we have limited resources, but this one seems like an obvious one. I think events today, the public rally that was held outside, just again underscore how important it is that we make reconciliation a priority for this government and we ensure that our public policies and those who implement those policies fully recognize what reconciliation means from a public government. We have a long way to go. Every government in Canada does. We have made significant progress, but we need to go further. These kinds of steps, like enshrining the UN declaration in our public policy documents in every sense of our government, would make a big difference. It is unfortunate that we do not have a stronger commitment to move on this. I think we need to consider that moving forward as not just an area that we need to keep an eye on, but an area that we need to be the leaders on.

There are a number of other issues around the red alert, around the future sustainability of our fiscal framework, in the light of increasing costs, pressures, and a mounting infrastructure deficit, and now federal initiatives towards putting a price on carbon and the ongoing effects of climate change. I do think we need to take a stronger and more proactive approach in addressing these significant concerns with Ottawa, who control our constitution, more or less, Mr. Chair, and I think those need to be the core of this department's work as it moves forward.

Also, we need to put that renewed focus on self-government and how self-government is going to work. My colleague the honourable Member from Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh spoke to this as well, that we need to have more than just agreements on the table, but real plans to implement those agreements within a realistic timeline and that we have the resources from all levels of government in order to finalize them and, finally, that we articulate a very clear picture of how the Northwest Territories is going to operate after self-government is implemented across the board. If the territory is going to have all these different orders of government, constitutionally protected orders of government, this department needs to have a clear road map for what that looks like and how it is going to work. Quite frankly, I cannot understand at this point how we will be able to maintain an equity of service with different orders of government and different capacities in those orders of government.

Again, we owe it to the purpose and principles of reconciliation to clearly articulate that in a realistic and honest fashion so that everyone is on the same page moving forward, everyone can participate in their land rights, in their constitutional rights, and in

their self-government rights. Unfortunately, we still do not see a lot of that vision in these documents. We still see a lack of funding towards services to people, which is the most important role for this government to play. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. Further to the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, general comments. Mr. Thompson.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to try to be brief on mine here. I have a number of comments that I would like to make.

I guess my first one: I would like to applaud the Executive for putting the \$250,000 to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Council of Friendship Centres. I think that is a good investment. What my big thing is, is I would like to see it annually. I think that this organization does some really good work, and we should be doing it annually. It should not be just a one-time offshoot, so I am hoping that the department can look at that. I think that is a good investment for the people of the Northwest Territories.

The \$84,000 to the campaign schools, I think that is another good start, but, again, we should be making this contribution annually for this particular endeavour. I think we need to get more women participating in politics. I come from a family of seven children, and there are only two boys. There are five girls out there. The same with my family, I have got five daughters and two sons. I know who rules the roost in our house, but, again, it is getting women involved in politics.

The \$50,000 for the Arctic Inspiration Prize is probably our best investment ever in this government. We have now seen, I think, three times we have won this award. The investment is huge. I think the government is getting our bang for our dollars, and I think we need to continue to do that. I think it is a good step.

The almost \$600,000 for the additional finalization of resource and self-government, I think that is a good step. I would love to see it, to have these done. I have two, potentially more, issues in my riding, and I would love to see the DFN and the Acho Dene processes completed by the end of our term. In talking with Acho Dene, it is getting closer, and I have heard another talk about a year now. I mean, we did have a change in leadership there, but it means a positive step. With DFN, there are some challenges that they are seeing there, and we need to move forward on that.

I guess my big thing for me with this department is the GSOs. I honestly believe that is really an amazing program that you guys developed. It has a

huge impact on the smaller communities, but, in conversations with Regular MLAs, they talk about the impact it would have on some of the larger centres, as well. We need to look at that. It is about trying to serve the people in the Northwest Territories, and I know the government does a good job at it, but here is an opportunity to make it a priority to get each community to have a GSO in it. I know, in Yellowknife, it is a bigger centre, but we need to give some people some services. I know we have departments here, but sometimes people don't know where to go, and we need to address that.

The position in Ottawa, I am still on the fence with that position, because I don't know what the job description is. I don't know what we are doing with that position. We had correspondence on it, and it has had some positive direction on it, but we need to know what we are actually doing with that position, what it entails, what the job description is, and how it is going to benefit the residents of the Northwest Territories. At the end of the day, that is where, to me, it comes down to, is why we are here is for the residents of the Northwest Territories. I believe all 19 of us are here for that reason, but, again, it is understanding how we are moving forward on certain things. Once we have a better understanding of that, then we can present that information to the residents. Again, we are ordinary MLAs. Once this goes down, we are part of this process, we are part of this government, and we need to be able to explain to our residents and our constituents what we are trying to do.

There are a number of other issues. Those are my concerns. Those are the ones that jump out at me. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Further general comments on this department? Seeing none, I will allow the Premier to respond if he wishes. He has 10 minutes. Premier McLeod, if you do wish to respond, I will indicate by holding up my sign when you have one minute left. Premier.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will try to live within the limits of the 10 minutes. I guess, first and foremost on land and resources, with regards to questions with land-use planning, those responsibilities remain with the federal government. They were not devolved. We certainly agree with the Member that land-use planning funding should be provided for. We are certainly fully supporting that. We see land-use planning as the way of the future.

The South Slave is becoming very complicated because there is a number of land-claims negotiations. You have the Akaitcho. You have the NWT Metis Nation. You have the Denesuline from

Manitoba. You have the Denesuline from Saskatchewan. I guess I should mention the North Slave Metis Alliance, as well, then, of course, the Dene Tha. There is significant overlap in that region, so it will be quite a difficult task, I guess I foresee, to come up with a land-use plan for an area that encompasses all those different Aboriginal governments.

Self-government, we have two self-government agreements negotiated in the Northwest Territories. The Tlicho negotiated self-government at the same time they negotiated their land and resources agreement. Deline has a community self-government agreement. I guess, about 30 years ago, the government tried to organize themselves so that capacity would be built as Aboriginal governments would take over programs and services. We also clarified successor rights. We also have the NEB so, when programs are taken over, employees can access resources.

We see the need for capacity building. We do have a current arrangement with the Gwich'in government. That is a tri-party agreement between the federal government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the Gwich'in, where we have people that can enter into this program. I think we have been at it for two years. I think it is working very well.

As far as implementation, it is up to the Aboriginal government to decide how quickly or how late they want to draw down programs and services. With the additional resources, we see us making a big push. The ministerial special representative reports they have recommended that the governments take a greater responsibility for facilitating agreements. We will endeavour to do so.

We have been very hesitant to put GSOs into Yellowknife or regional centres because people can walk down the street and get the services that they need. The GSOs in the small communities were put into place mainly because of the Aboriginal language requirements and to help seniors. If the committee is all united that Yellowknife should have a GSO, then I guess we would have to look at that. We have a pilot project with the federal government, so we know that works well.

Ottawa office, I think it is important to understand that the federal government is making a lot of significant changes, not only the fact that, as a Member pointed out, we are a creature of the Government of Canada. We are born as part of the NWT Act. The federal government can change the act whenever they want to and could change the whole structure of our government if they saw fit to do so. I don't think they will do that, but they are looking at how programs and services are delivered.



One of the big items is the federal vision for the North. They are starting to work on that. The federal government will lay out their vision for Arctic provinces and territories up until 2030. That is something that will be a very important piece of work for our government and will involve some significant involvement, primarily in Ottawa. If we are not there, the federal government will see fit to move on without us.

Also, with regards to still-unfinished business with devolution, I think the biggest area of change is 10 principles that were announced by the working group of federal Ministers, which we will look at. I guess the one principle that will have the most effect on us is the principle that talks about revisiting the fiscal arrangements for programs and services delivered to Aboriginal people or Indigenous Aboriginal people.

That is something that affects us significantly because one of the areas that the federal government is moving is distinction-based approach with three national Indigenous governments. They are talking about taking money that is being used for programs and services and giving it directly to Aboriginal governments. Our Aboriginal governments have been talking to the federal government for at least two years without our involvement, without our knowledge. It is only recently that we have all agreed to work together. We think it is all in our best interests if the Aboriginal governments get as much of the resources that they are entitled to, not only in Aboriginal housing, health, education, where those dollars could be transferred to Aboriginal governments.

It is important for us to be there. The federal minister, Minister Philpott, has invited us to the table now. We will be part of that process. Her responsibilities are primarily to Aboriginal people on reserves. We have to make our case so we don't get left out. Historically, the federal government puts a lot of money into reserves and they forget about us. We have to make sure we are there knocking on doors so that we are not left out of the picture.

Nutrition North, we talked about that before. It is a federal program. They are going to continue to do what they do. We have asked them to give us resources for Nutrition North in the Northwest Territories and we would run it. They have not seen fit to do that.

On the contributions, people approach us. We try to deal with them. The view is that there should be no one-offs. I guess that is something we can look at.

On net metering, all we do is provide administrative services to the Public Utilities Board. Personally, I

think it would be better if the Public Utilities Board was housed in the department that is responsible for energy and public works.

Northern Resident Index, we looked at it before, before this federal government came into power, before they put an increase into the northern residents' deduction. We have to go talk to all of the provinces and territories that are eligible to claim this deduction, so we probably have to talk to the three territories. I think there are at least six other provinces that we would have to try to get that change.

UNDRIP, the federal government has said that it has to apply to the Constitution of Canada. We are waiting for where they are going from there. I guess the only other area is that there are a number of things with the Ombudsman, I think, that are pretty close to being done as I expect that it will come forward in the very near future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Premier McLeod. We have finished general comments. We can now move into the detail contained in the tabled document. Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 27-18(3):  
TABLED DOCUMENT 63-18(3): MAIN  
ESTIMATES 2018-2019 - EXECUTIVE AND  
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS - DEFERRAL OF  
FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE  
ESTIMATES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF  
EXECUTIVE AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS,  
CARRIED

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee defer further consideration of the estimates for the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to defer. The motion is being distributed. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour. All those opposed.

---Carried

The motion is carried. We will defer consideration of the detail, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. My apologies. Correction. That was a motion to defer the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs, and it passed, so we will defer consideration of the Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. I want to thank the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, you may escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

What is the wish of committee now? Mr. Beaulieu.

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that the chair of the Committee of the Whole leave the chair to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

---Carried

The motion is carried. I will rise and report progress.

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

### Report of Committee of the Whole

**MR. SIMPSON:** Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019. I would like to report progress with two motions being adopted, and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Do we have a seconder? Member for Yellowknife North. The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed.

---Carried

The motion is carried. Masi. Item 23, third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, item 24, the orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer):** The orders of the day for Tuesday, February 13, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Reports to Standing of Special Committees
5. Returns to Oral Questions
6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
7. Acknowledgements
8. Oral Questions
9. Written Questions
10. Returns to Written Questions
11. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address

12. Replies to Budget Address (Day 4 of 7)
13. Petitions
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
19. First Reading of Bills
20. Second Reading of Bills
21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Minister's Statement 1-18(3), North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns
  - Minister's Statement 19-18(3), Aurora College Foundational Review Process
  - Tabled Document 63-18(3), Main Estimates 2018-2019
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 13, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:43 p.m.