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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Thursday, February 14, 2019

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. The Honourable Premier.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 144-18(3):
MINISTER ABSENT FROM THE HOUSE

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise Members that the honourable Alfred Moses will be absent from the House today to attend the federal-provincial-territorial Ministers' conference in Red Deer, Alberta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
SAFETY ISSUES ON THE DEMPSTER HIGHWAY

MR. BLAKE: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about highway safety on the Dempster Highway. As you arrive in Fort McPherson heading south, there is a lake situated right beside the highway. The embankment is rather steep. It is the old water-intake lake. Last summer, we had a group of tourists, a camper, who veered off the road, went down the steep embankment, and almost into the lake. These people are very lucky that nothing terrible happened to them.

Mr. Speaker, we can't continue to say "lucky." We need the Department of Infrastructure to build a guardrail along that little bit of highway so that vehicles can be made aware that this is a dangerous area, in hopes that they will slow down when approaching.

In the summer of 2018 tourist season, we have seen a record numbers of travellers on the

Dempster Highway. This is due to the completion of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway and high demand for local tourists and business in the region. The numbers are expected to be even greater this summer. With this in mind, we need the department to seriously look into this matter and make sure our highways are safe for all travellers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions later today. Masi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CANADA WINTER GAMES 2019

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, scores of youth athletes and their support teams are on their way to Red Deer, Alberta to compete in the Canada Winter Games. I hope the Members of this House will join me in wishing the team and coaching staff the very best as they head down to Red Deer to compete and represent the NWT.

Sport is an important means to bring people together, not only within a single community but as a chance for our youth to explore the world they will inherit. It gives them a chance to meet other like-minded young people who have dedicated their time, sweat, blood, and tears to getting to where they are now. Events like these are great for building team spirit and reinvigorating the mind, body, and soul. Sport has been used to bring together communities and can act as a healthy and constructive outlet to counter the ever-increasing sedentary lifestyle many lead in our time. I want to thank Cheyenne Lafferty, Jessica Smith, and Michael Johnston for all their hard work in helping the athletes make attending this competition a reality.

I also wish all the luck to the world to our Kam Lake athletes who will be competing for Team NWT: speed skaters Lance Dizon and Sylvain Rourke; squash player Stephen Messier; Jade Ko in gymnastics; Bailey Johnston in archery; figure skater Victoria Hamm; and, in hockey, Andrew Carr, Taylow Catcher, Alex Cordero, Deanne Whenham, Regan Bulger, Tysen Almond, and Devin Vogel.

Safe travels and best of luck in your competitions. Know that you have our support and that every Member of this House and all of the people of the Northwest Territories will be cheering for you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ABORIGINAL SPORTS CIRCLE COMMUNITY
BUILDING AWARD RECIPIENT JACQUELINE
WHELLY

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I spoke about the Aboriginal Sports Circle in the Northwest Territories awards program and how they recognize and give credit to exceptional community members in the NWT sports system. They recognize individuals who have continuously shown dedication, hard work, made significant contributions, and made a positive difference in their respective communities across the NWT. Mr. Speaker, the Nahendeh region had two winners. Yesterday, I spoke of Jonathan Tsetso. Today, I will speak about the other award winner from the Nahendeh region.

During the 2018 award ceremony, the organization recognized Jacqueline Whelly for the community-building award. This award is presented to an individual who has contributed a great amount of time and energy to the community to assist the coaches, athletes, and others in any sport and recreation events.

Jacqueline Whelly is known across the NWT for her hard work and dedication as both a teacher and a community champion. A winner of the Scott McAdam Youth award from the NWTRPA in 2013, Jacqueline continued to be a major presence in her home community of Fort Simpson as a teacher, coach, and mentor. Over the years, Jacqueline has chaperoned dozens of sports teams across the NWT and beyond to tournaments and training. She frequently volunteers her time to keep the gym open, run training and practices, and is always there for the youth who look up to her as a coach and role model.

Jacqueline has been a pivotal in the in the Sober Steve and Sober Sally program in Fort Simpson, which offers youth the chance to participate in positive and fun sober activities on the weekend, in a safe place. She also volunteers for the Lights On initiative, which also gives youth a safe place in the evening and weekends. One of Jacqueline's greatest strengths is how she believes in the youth of her community and seeks to empower them to become the next generation of leaders. She is always willing to listen, help establish a program, or be available to help in whatever capacity she's able.

Jacqueline is not only a super coach, but she's also a super teacher, and a super mom. She continues to be a central community member, and for this, she is recognized for the 2018 Community Builder's Award.

Ms. Whelly would like to thank Aboriginal Sports Circle for the award, and Minister Cochrane for representing the ward since her dad was not able to attend the ceremony. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
CHINESE – NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
RELATIONS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we work to expand and diversify the Northwest Territories' economy, we often point to tourism as the promising new sector. We used to talk about the Japanese quite a bit, but we recently know that visitors come from a few different Asian countries, including China.

That's as a result of a lot of planning, work, and expense that this government, working with the private sector, invested in developing that relationship. People and resources from various departments have been applied to the China file over the last 10 or 12 years. As recently as last summer, the Minister of ITI led a delegation to China with the goal of making the NWT top-of-mind for tourists from the world's largest market.

The result is that we have new NWT residents from China, and the benefits of tourism are beginning to spread beyond the capital city. There's a lot to be gained in this valuable relationship.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this valuable relationship may be put at risk by issues between the federal government and China. In spite of our often-stated intention to improve the relationship and increase trade between Canada and China, we recently put that to the test by arresting a high-profile Chinese executive. They in turn have arrested two Canadians.

I recognize that Canada has responsibilities within international law, Mr. Speaker, but one might think that the feds would try to build bridges instead of burning them. Regardless, the relationship that less than a year ago held so much potential and promise now appears to be vulnerable and weak.

Because of these changes, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering what our government has done to convey our concerns to Ottawa. We need to be making sure the federal government is very aware of what this might cost our territory. Let's be

energetic in making sure Ottawa understands the potential risks to our growing tourism sector, and our access to this huge market of travellers. What has this government done to repair the damage that this conflict may have caused?

At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Premier. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FIBRE OPTIC LINE AND SATELLITE LICENSING

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, recently, it was announced that two satellite operators received an interim licence to operate receivers at the Inuvik satellite station facility.

Mr. Speaker, this is good news and will hopefully pave the way for continued expansion of the satellite station and additional global customers for the Mackenzie Valley fibre link.

Mr. Speaker, the government's investment in the fibre line was significant. This communication backbone should help the economic diversification of our territory and improve service delivery in the communities along the Mackenzie Valley.

Mr. Speaker, the three years that it took to get the approval for these satellite operators is troubling. I understand this is a federal government responsibility and that there are concerns with national security, so there needs to be a complete review before licences can be granted.

Mr. Speaker, that said, three years is too long, and I would hope that the GNWT is providing input to the federal government on ways the approval process can be improved.

Mr. Speaker, previous to this position, I assisted in the installation of the fibre optic cable, a wire as big as your finger. This provided me with the experience to visually see the flashlight from one community to the next. It was an awesome experience.

As I said, the approval is a good-news story, but I will have questions for the Minister of Finance later on, on this Mackenzie Valley fibre line. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
REDWATER SUPREME COURT OF CANADA
DECISION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. A much-anticipated decision on environmental liability and bankruptcy was delivered by the Supreme Court of Canada two weeks ago today. The Redwater decision has huge implications for the environment and resource development, even here in the Northwest Territories.

No longer will financial institutions and trustees be able to ignore regulatory requirements during the sale of assets. To quote from the decision: "Bankruptcy is not a licence to ignore rules, and insolvency professionals are bound by and must comply with valid provincial laws during bankruptcy." "It is clear that the Regulator acted in the public interest and for the public good in issuing Abandonment Orders, and that it is therefore not a creditor of Redwater. The public is the beneficiary of those environmental obligations. The province does not stand to gain financially from them."

Where does this leave us here in the Northwest Territories? I believe this will make financial institutions much more careful in examining risk before backing projects. Banks, insurers, and investors will no longer be first in line when a project goes under. Investors will be more cautious in providing funds for projects that are not well-developed, that involve new or risky technologies or methods, or are owned by operators with a poor environmental track record, or have heavy monitoring and reporting requirements. Conversely, projects that demonstrate best environmental practices, use proven technologies in northern environments, and are operated by savvy owners should get easier access to financing.

There's a warning here about lowering our environmental standards. Under our watch, Cantung went into receivership without adequate security. Prairie Creek has not posted financial security to the full value of site liabilities, and there has been almost no progress on the mandate commitment around contaminated sites management. The commitment was to "Develop an integrated, comprehensive approach to the management of contaminated sites, including prioritizing, sharing of responsibility in collaboration with other governments, monitoring, and a sound financial security system to prevent public liabilities." Cabinet has not lived up to the promises of responsible resource development. No policy, regulatory, or legislative changes have been put in place to better prevent liabilities from happening in the first place.

I'll ask the Minister later today what the Redwater decision means for the Northwest Territories and why there's been no progress on the prevention of public environmental liabilities in the Northwest Territories. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YELLOWKNIFE WOMEN'S SOCIETY NAMED UP
HERE MAGAZINE NORTHERNERS OF THE
YEAR

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Yellowknife Women's Society on being named Up Here magazine's Northerners of the Year.

As the magazine's testimonial story outlines, today the Yellowknife Women's Society is a major force in the safety and wellbeing of women. It has moved from strength to strength in the last few years.

YWS leases apartments throughout Yellowknife and sublets them to people transitioning from homelessness in the Housing First program. YWS continues to operate a women's shelter from its long-term location on Franklin Avenue, along with eight semi-independent units downstairs where the daycare used to be. Now, the daycare is in a standalone building that doubles as a family centre. The society has staff who operate the highly successful safe ride program that assists people in distress on our streets. They also lead the Common Ground project to facilitate employment for downtown homeless people. The Yellowknife Women's Society is a major force for good in our community.

Mr. Speaker, as usual in the world of activism, YWS started with a few committed people with a passion for change and for social justice. According to the Up Here magazine profile of them, the society's roots are in a gathering at International Women's Day in 1988. Incorporated in 1990 under the leadership of Arlene Hache, the society set up first as a drop-in and mutual support centre downtown. As the society moved on to a house on 49th Street and then to its long-term location on Franklin Avenue, the society expanded to include a women's shelter, providing emergency housing for up to 30 people at a time. Our own Minister of Education, Culture and Employment was the executive director before she was elected and helped the society regain financial stability.

Under the leadership of the current executive director, Bree Denning, YWS has further expanded and grown. The Up Here article describes her desire to see the emergency shelter operate as a short-term solution in a city where anyone capable of living independently has that opportunity. I am confident that these developments are just the latest chapter in the continuing story of service to Yellowknife women and to the community as a whole.

Please join me in congratulating the Yellowknife Women's Society for its recognition as Up Here's Northerners of the Year and, above all, for its many years of outstanding service. Mahsi.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER IN
THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. Today I am going to talk about an issue that is not talked about a lot. That is the overrepresentation of persons with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder within the justice system.

Mr. Speaker, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is a condition that is created when the fetus is exposed to alcohol during pregnancy. The result is permanent brain damage, which causes a range of cognitive and emotional impediments, including difficulties in reasoning, judgment, and learning. However, physical effects are not always apparent, making FASD nearly invisible to the untrained eye.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, one of the consequences of people with FASD is an increased risk for adverse outcomes involving the criminal justice system. Research indicates that 60 percent of our youth and adults who have FASD have reported contact with the justice system, and 35 percent have reported they have been incarcerated for a crime at some point in their life.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that one quarter of all inmates in Canada have FASD, despite accounting for only 4 percent of the general population. What is unknown, however, is the number of NWT inmates that have FASD, because the government does not track that. This brings me to the heart of the issue, which is that more work needs to be done in helping persons with FASD navigate the justice system.

In terms of solutions, Mr. Speaker, there are two pillars on the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action that address this very issue and present the best solutions. Firstly, all levels of government must recognize this as a high priority and need to address prevention of FASD by developing preventive programs in a culturally appropriate manner.

Secondly, the government must undertake criminal justice system reforms to better address the needs of offenders with FASD, which includes providing greater community resources and powers for courts to ensure FASD is properly diagnosed. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that there are many individuals with FASD who do not encounter the criminal justice system. The pervasiveness of this issue, however, indicates a need for more work to be done. The GNWT must take an interdepartmental approach to determine the prevalence of FASD. Thank you.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE EDUCATION

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Quyanainni, Mr. Speaker. The United Nations has designated 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages, and the NWT has announced February as Indigenous Languages Month here in the NWT.

Mr. Speaker, what does this special focus bring? It brings the opportunity to highlight the urgent need to protect and nourish Indigenous languages and to emphasize this government's responsibility to dedicate itself to undoing the years of damage done to Indigenous languages by settler-colonial laws, policies, and practices.

A couple of generations have passed since children were punished for speaking their language. Even today, children still face covert pressures to conform to English monolingualism. For example, it is difficult for language learners to regularly converse with fluent speakers; to find books, films, and other media in their language; or to pursue meaningful language education as children, when their brain is most perceptive.

Mr. Speaker, language immersion is what is needed. The trouble is that is hard to do. Nevertheless, it is what we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People says: "States shall, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, take effective measures in order for individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access when possible to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language."

Mr. Speaker, this is an option, hard-won, open to Francophone children in the Northwest Territories. It is also something Indigenous peoples have tackled around the world, from the original "languages nests" of the Maori in New Zealand, to the K-12 Hawaiian language education program in Hawaii, to dedicated curricula in Indigenous communities in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British

Columbia. Here in the Northwest Territories, extended immersion programs, perhaps up to at least grade five or six, would be an incredible thing for our traditional languages.

Mr. Speaker, the GNWT has been working on language revitalization for many years, and yet the stakes have never been higher. The most recent action plan tells us: "Revitalizing languages is an enormous task. It is said that language is the key to and the heart of culture, and as cultures change, so do their languages. Similarly, as languages change or are lost, so, too, are entire cultures."

Mr. Speaker, this action plan commits to expanding and improving Indigenous language programs in Northwest Territories schools and to renewing the Aboriginal Language and Culture-based Education Directive. Mr. Speaker, later, I will have questions for the appropriate Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Yellowknife North resident Nancy Zimmerman. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize Yellowknife North resident and president of Local 11, Mr. Frank Walsh. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have three Pages who are from Mildred Hall School who are working with us during this sitting and who are residents of the Frame Lake riding, Josephine Seagrave, Austin O'Neill, and Amabel Zoe. I want to thank them very much for all the work that they do on our behalf. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize a couple of Pages from Hay River South, Jon Tatti and Shaelyn Mabbitt. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. If we missed anyone in the gallery, thanks for being here with us. It's always great to have an audience as part of our proceedings. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 565-18(3):

CHINA-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES RELATIONS

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today in my Member's statement I talked about the relationship between Canada and China, and what is at risk if the relationship doesn't stay as a positive one. I'd like to take this opportunity and ask the Premier a few questions: can the Premier advise if he has expressed concerns to the federal government about the impact on the NWT economy of the dampening of Canada's relationship with China? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our relationship with China goes back a long way and, if anything, the recent tightening of the Chinese government on subnational investments and business has had a limited effect on our territory. Most of the investments were in mining. We did have some business investment and, with the crackdown on a number of areas, some of the Chinese businesspeople who were here, we haven't seen in a while, but as far as I can tell, the most visible Chinese visitors are the Chinese tourists. I have not seen a decrease in their visitation. It could be a concern. The Chinese could see fit to revoke the designation of Canada as an approved destination status, but we haven't seen any evidence of that yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his confidence that things appear, at this point in time, to be fairly secure and that we are not seeing any direct impact so far. I would like to ask the Premier: what, if anything, has the Government of Canada indicated to our government that our relationship and investments with China will not be disadvantaged?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Other than what we see in the media, there has been no reaching out by the Government of Canada to us. I believe that, the incident at Huawei, Canada was following the rule of law. The fact that a number of individuals were apprehended in China gives us pause to think. We were planning a trade mission to China for this year, but we have since put it on the back burner. We are waiting to see what happens.

I have met the Chinese ambassador to Canada, but it was before some of the latest incidents happening.

MR. VANTHUYNE: As the Premier has indicated, we continue to build upon the relationships with China. It was looking as though we were going to travel there once again, but already this relationship

between Canada and China has been having an effect. We have put a pause on that now. Let me ask: has the government reached out to reassure our friends and business partners, both here at home and in China, that, regardless of international matters, we remain open for and interested in their business?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, we certainly are prepared to do that. We are still in contact with the Chinese, People's Republic, friends of the people who usually host us when we go to China. There is still a possibility that we could go there before the end of the term of this government. With regards to tourism, we continue to market the Northwest Territories to Chinese tourists, and I think that we are prepared to look at further investment.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the response from the Premier. Just lastly, can the Premier indicate if there have been any communications locally, here, with our Chinese business owners, and have we encouraged the tourism operators here or assured them that we are still open for business, that any concerns that they might have are certainly being paid attention to and that we are going to continue to build positive relationships with China?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have done a lot of work with the Chinese over the past. We have developed a China Strategy for the Northwest Territories. We have also been looking at investing in sister cities or provinces. We just recently had a Chinese counsellor visiting us, meeting with the Minister of Economic Development, and he assured us that it was business as usual. Destinations Canada, who have offices in China and Beijing, have also reassured us that it is still business as usual, at least in the tourism business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 566-18(3):

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE EDUCATION

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, on languages. Mr. Speaker, the action plan on languages commits to supporting NWT schools and early childhood programs to offer Indigenous language instruction and programs. Mr. Speaker, my question is: what is this going to look like in practical terms, and to what extent does it include language-immersion curricula? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am actually glad to speak about our languages because, as the MLA stated, our languages are in danger and they need to be preserved. I also want to recognize that, within the Northwest Territories, we still have a fair amount of speakers, and we need to preserve that. We need to promote that and revitalize.

We did do the action plan in May of 2018, but, in honesty, we have been working on this before last year. We have been working on this for many years. Our curriculum is being piloted right now in 40 of our schools across the territories. We have 40 out of 49. When I have gone into the schools, I have heard nothing but good news. They are bringing in elders. They have got language teachers in there. We are developing resources for them. Once this pilot is finished, then we will be compiling all of the results. We will be making a firm curriculum, and that curriculum will be implemented throughout the Northwest Territories.

I should also mention, though, that in our schools is one thing, but we also provide monies to Aboriginal governments to do their own language revitalization. It's important. We need to put our efforts into it.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It is good to see that elders are being recognized. Earlier I was at the Dene Nation Assembly and they recognized all of the interpreters and language-holders, so kudos to that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the plan also commits to supporting professional development for language instructors and offering language-instructor training. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us more about these, and any other actions that the department is willing to do to build capacity in current language speakers and to ensure our traditional languages are kept alive into future generations?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes, it is important that we reach out and train as many people in developing language revitalization teaching. It is actually an embarrassment, being a Metis woman and not being able to speak a word of my language, except perhaps "mahsi," which is common. I am not the only one that is Indigenous and can't speak their language, so we need to put a lot of effort.

Last year alone, approximately 75 of the Indigenous language teachers and support staff came together for the very first training in our new languages curriculum. That included training on learning how to use the new curriculum and how to use the resources and the assessment tools. It is important

that we evaluate this as well. We also trained our regional Indigenous language education coordinators to support the teachers, as well as offering video conferencing training and in-class training throughout the year. As well, we have trained the principals, and we are starting to work closely with our program support teachers so that they have the skills to support the development of Indigenous languages.

Finally, as well, we are partnering with the University of Alberta and the University of Victoria to offer training and capacity-building opportunities to current language speakers. We need as many as possible. This is a serious effort, and we need to pay a lot of attention to it.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: It is good to hear that the department is allowing Indigenous governments to work at their pace. Mr. Speaker, I know that the department is currently hard at work with stakeholders, working on improving curricula for the Northwest Territories education system. Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to seriously consider incorporating a heightened focus on language immersion in this work. Mr. Speaker, can I get the Minister's opinion on this proposal?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I think it is no secret that I think, like I have said many times, that this is really important, and it is critical. Language is culture, and culture, in my opinion, is health. It's about wellness and making people feel good about themselves, and that is critical in making good choices. That's from my social work background. For the full immersion programs, ideally, all activities and learning would be done in their Indigenous language. That is the ideal. Currently, now, we have two communities that are doing immersion programs, one in Fort Providence and one in Behchoko. Those communities will provide some leadership and hopefully some support as other immersion programs begin.

Unfortunately, the reality is that not all schools in our communities have the capacity to offer a full immersion program, but that is not okay. We need to work towards fixing that. We need to work with the Indigenous language speakers to help them so that they can become teachers in our communities. We need to support Northern language speakers to become teachers so that they can pass on the knowledge.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the response, and I see the reality of the issue of the capacity across the territory, seeing the residential school impacts have

had a great impact, negative impacts, on all Indigenous peoples.

Mr. Speaker, my final question to the Minister is: in the long run, as we build our five-year or 10-year or 25-year plan, I think I would like to see more of a commitment since language is not in this Assembly but into the next Assembly, working towards bringing Indigenous language into grade five, grade six, and grade seven. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I totally agree. I would like to see it expanded. I am hoping within the next Legislative Assembly that we will get more programs, more schools that are doing the full immersion. However, I recognize also the reality is that this will take years. We need to train people to be able to provide that service. At least, I am hoping that within the next Assembly there will be couple of more schools jump on board with the full immersion, and my goal is that every single, at least every couple, of years more will help in, until we are doing it across the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Colleagues, I would like to draw your attention to visitors in the gallery. We have with us Michael McLeod, former Member, former Minister of the Legislative Assembly, and also a current Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories. He just came back from working hard with Dene Nation just now. Welcome.

Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 567-18(3):
ICE BRIDGES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have some of the most unique ways to travel across the Northwest Territories. Depending on where you live, you can travel by air, water, trails, roads, or combined of winter roads and ice bridges. People from across the world are amazed at how we transport ourselves across this great country.

Mr. Speaker, I have been asked questions from our constituents about our transportation infrastructure and the challenges they have been facing with the roadside assistance program. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure: can the Minister confirm if the ice bridges across the Mackenzie, Liard, Peel, and Great Bear Lake are part of the government's infrastructure? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the department construction maintains ice bridges at the Mackenzie, Liard, and the Peel River system. We also do the ferries on

those three systems, and we also look after the lake crossing at Deline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They are part of the public road system.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm if the department has a system in place to guarantee that the ice bridges are safe to travel?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, the Department of Infrastructure follows the guidelines for safe ice construction that was developed with expertise from within and outside of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Other jurisdictions actually use our guidelines, and so does private industry.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, we heard from my constituents that sometimes these companies down south are having concerns about what happens should a vehicle fall through. Can the Minister advise us: does the GNWT have insurance should a vehicle, whether it is going across or is on a flatbed, fall through ice? Do we have insurance to cover that?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: All public roads are insured for liability risk under the government's commercial general liability insurance. When we hire contractors that also do some of this work, they have to have the exact same coverage. The short answer, Mr. Speaker, is yes.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for his answers. I have one more question. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that four or five years ago, and I'm not exactly sure of the time frame, the Minister of Transportation and the Premier had to write a letter to these companies explaining the Mackenzie Valley Highway was a winter road and maintained by the GNWT. Will the Minister be willing to send a similar letter to these manufacturers who provide roadside assistance to clarify the use of ice bridges?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, it was about five years ago that the department had this same exact situation come up, and they actually wrote letters to all the manufacturers, stating that this was part of the public road system, supplied them with that and maps of the Northwest Territories and asked them to reach out to all of their call centres and share this with local service providers that they actually contract this to. To the Member's point, I will actually ask the department to do this. We will step in and write the same letters and reassure the manufacturers that this is part of the public system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 568-18(3):
LICENSING PROCESS FOR INUVIK SATELLITE
STATION

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up to my statement earlier, my first question to the Minister of Finance is that the recent approval for the licensing for the operators for the Inuvik Satellite Station was good news. This has taken some time. Can the Minister explain why the approval has taken so long? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the licensing for the satellite operators requires licensing through the federal government. GNWT is not directly involved, and there is a rigorous application and review process. We believe that needs to be looked at in the future. Part of it may be because their legislation is outdated and needs to be updated a bit. We continue to work with them on that.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks for the reply here. My next question to the Minister is: what is the GNWT doing to work with the federal government to ensure this process is improved?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, in the Member's statement before, he talked about the fact that this has taken almost three years to get this done. We are concerned with that. We do continue to raise it at the federal government's tables that we go to. I recently raised it in December at the Finance Minister's table and our MP, who is working extremely hard in Ottawa, raising it with his counterparts, as well. Our Minister of ITI has sent a letter. Our Premier, I believe, has brought it up to the table that he is involved in. I think Ottawa realizes now that this is something that they need to have a look at. I have made the comment that we do not want to see a lot of our investment not being utilized and have the satellite companies going to Alaska, for example, if their process is not as rigorous as ours. This is something that is new, and I do believe that we are going to take steps along with Ottawa to rectify this and have the process go a little smoother.

MR. MCNEELY: Thanks for that reply there. I am glad to hear there are efficiencies from the process, that we are learning and benefiting. My question is: what is our government doing to take full advantage of the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, it was a significant investment into the fibre optic link down the Mackenzie Valley. One of the things that they built into the link right away was the number of strands that they had in the fibre line that was going

down. We are well-positioned in the future if there was a demand for more services out of that. We try to make the international community aware of our investment and they have been fairly receptive. We have an annual Inuvik Satellite Station Facility AGM, where we have a number of people that come in every June, and they check out our facilities and the area and the connection, just to see if there is an opportunity for them to make an investment into satellites there. Now that work is happening to speed up the regulatory process or the application process, they may be more receptive to adding more dishes to the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question to the Minister is: with the experiences to date on reviews of engagement or monitoring, is the Minister of Finance of the opinion that this is a good investment, with the experiences to date and the cash flow to date and the signed customers on the system?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We think it is an excellent investment, and it is one that was needed. It is one that we may be able to build on. I think there are communities down the valley that are taking advantage of the new technology, which is welcome and would help with a number of things down the valley, but we think it is a good investment.

Again, with the application process possibly streamlined, that may send a message out to a lot of those out there who were considering investing into the Satellite Station Facility in Inuvik. They might come on board a little sooner now. We think it is a good investment, and we think it is the way of the future. With the number of strands that were built in the fibre line, I think we are well-positioned if there is an increase in the demand for our service. It was a good investment, and I think we are well-positioned. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 569-18(3):
SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. The Standing Committee on Social Development met with the commander of the RCMP's "G" Division at the end of October to be briefed on current policing issues. In my response to my questions about enabling third-party reporting of sexual assaults, the commander said that a joint RCMP-Department of Justice working group was looking at options. I

would like to ask the Minister what the status of this work is. Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Department officials and the RCMP are exploring alternative options for victims to report sexual assault, such as third-party reporting, as well as the potential for external review committees. This will require a collaborative effort between GNWT, NGOs, and the RCMP. This is an important matter, and I realize that considerable progress has been made in this area in other jurisdictions. Thank you.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister. I'm going to be really happy when you report that we are making considerable progress in this jurisdiction on this issue. I would like a little more detail around how often the working group is meeting and how it is engaging service providers who have front-line experience with people who have experienced sexual assault.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I do know, obviously, that there are many partners in this important work. I am not certain as to when the last meetings took place or what level of engagement has been made, but I will look into that and get back to the Member opposite.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister's commitment to obtain more information. Is there any kind of, I don't want to say "deadline," but is there any thought that there will be recommendations and an implementation plan focused on the most promising options within the remaining life of this Assembly?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I can certainly look into that and get back to the Member opposite. I know this is important work, and as I mentioned earlier, other jurisdictions have moved ahead, particularly in the area of third-party reporting. I think the Yukon and British Columbia, if I have that right, have moved ahead on this. I do realize it is an important issue, but I can't really give a timeline at this point. I will check with the parties involved and get back to the Member opposite.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that this issue will come to completion in the life of this Assembly and that we don't have to start over with it again. I am also hopeful that this initiative will produce a definite ask of any additional resources that would be required to facilitate third-party reporting and third-party review. Can the Minister commit to providing this information when

this information will be available when he is rounding up the other information?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am not certain about the question, whether the question had to do with financial resources that were going to be provided. I will again talk to the parties, involve the RCMP and, of course, the Department of Justice, and get as much information as I can as to timelines, certainly. As to financial commitments, I will have to look into that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 570-18(3):
SUPREME COURT OF CANADA REDWATER
DECISION

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today I discussed the Supreme Court of Canada Redwater decision. Can the Minister of Lands, who is responsible for managing financial security that should hopefully prevent further public liabilities, tell us whether his department has looked at the Redwater decision and what it may mean for the Northwest Territories? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Lands.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I have looked at some of the commentary on this very important case. As Members may know, this worked its way through the court system up to the Supreme Court of Canada and had to do with the obligations when a company goes bankrupt. In essence, they said, and I am quoting from a commentary, "After going bankrupt, an oil and gas company has to fulfill provincial environmental obligations before paying anyone it owes money to, the Supreme Court has ruled." This is an important case because it will affect all companies and also affect those that lend to companies.

The Department of Lands has a coordinating role across the GNWT and the boards to ensure that the GNWT holds full securities across various authorities for environmental liabilities. The department has looked at the Supreme Court of Canada decision and is working with the Department of Justice to develop a full analysis. This is an important case that likely will have ramifications all across Canada. We are looking at the case. The decision date on it was only January 31st, so further analysis is needed. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. I hope that he can share some of that analysis with Members on this side of the House at the appropriate time. One of the key factors in the Redwater case was whether a trustee is liable for

environmental requirements, as the Minister just said. The Alberta government has included "a trustee" in the definition of "operator" in its relevant legislation. Can the Minister of Lands, who is responsible for managing financial security, tell us whether the definitions in our legislation cover trustees and whether any changes should be made?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Frankly, I don't know whether our definitions would include trustee or whether there has been any case law that might assist. However, it is an important issue, and I will get back to the Member opposite on this important issue. I understand what he is asking, I think.

Yes, certainly that might make a major change in the law if they were included in the definition of operator. I think that is the question. I don't know whether the Member opposite is suggesting that the trustee would be personally liable for environmental obligations. All I can say is that I, myself, will read the case and perhaps see what effect it would have on our legislation, or should have on our legislation, and specifically on the area of obligations and definitions of responsibility surrounding the trustees.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to thank the Minister again for that commitment to get back to me on this very important matter, and I look forward to his department doing some work on it. Cabinet committed to prevent public liabilities as part of our mandate. When I checked the very reliable and trustworthy Mandate Tracker website, the only activities that seem to have been undertaken are some sort of tracking system that is still in progress and an elusive contaminated sites policy and procedures manual. Can the Minister tell us what he is doing, along with his Cabinet colleagues, to fulfil this commitment to prevent public environmental liabilities?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We will be introducing a bill shortly which will include updated provisions related to security. This is a shared mandate commitment to develop an integrated comprehensive approach to the management of contaminated sites and develop a sound financial security system to prevent public liabilities. Lands has been supporting EIA and ENR's work on contaminated sites, and it is contemplating a securities tracking system for the GNWT, so we are making progress, I would suggest, in this area, and we will be introducing a bill shortly.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to thank the Minister for that. He was able to read the mandate item very well, and I look

forward to hearing about the progress that is being made on that. The Redwater decision has helped to clarify responsibilities and liabilities during operation and even afterwards. Devolution was supposed to bring responsible resource development, but our government has, in my view, yet to deliver on that promise. What specific policy, regulatory, and legislative changes is the Minister contemplating as a result of the Redwater decision? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: When I first thought about the decision, I perhaps wasn't as aware as the Member opposite of the ramifications that it may have. I thought of it mostly in relation to the oil and gas industry, but it may have ramifications beyond that, possibly, although it is an oil and gas case. I'm not certain of the ambit or the effect of the case, and I'll have to look into that. That's why we're analyzing the case at this time. If it does point to the necessity of legislative change, we would certainly have to seriously consider that, as it is a Supreme Court of Canada case. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 571-18(3):
IMPACT OF FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM
DISORDER ON THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marsi cho, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Justice. In my Member's statement, I talked about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. I'd like to ask the Minister if the Department of Justice knows the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in the Corrections system. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, we know it is an issue in Corrections. However, not all of those with this condition are diagnosed, and I don't think we would have an exact count as to the number of people who are suffering from FASD. The Member opposite is quite correct that often they do come into contact with the justice system, but securing a diagnosis is a complex and costly process. An FASD diagnosis is not required for an individual with complex needs to access service, so as I say, diagnosis is difficult, but we do realize this is a problem in Corrections and in society generally, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: I realize the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is difficult. It's like that right across the country. I'd like to ask the Minister if he would commit to working with the Department of Health and Social Services or hire an expert in identification of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly, I would be very happy to work with the Minister of Health and Social Services with respect to this issue, and I understand from some information provided to me by him that his department fully realizes this is an important issue. I note that, in 2018-2019, to enhance services for autism and FASD, they invested \$848,000, or we as a government did, so both in Corrections and in Health and Social Services we do realize this is an important issue.

MR. BEAULIEU: I'd like to ask the Minister if he can commit to creating or developing programs that are targeted to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder that can be delivered in Corrections facilities on I suppose at this point it would be a voluntary basis, but if the Minister would commit to developing such a program. I think the money that was there that may not be there anymore would be something that could be used to develop these programs.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I don't think I can commit to the creation or development of such a program at this time. There may be certain costs involved that we would have to look into. However, I do recognize that this is an important issue and will consider the question posed by the Member opposite.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that there was an individual who was in place to develop programs targeted at that. Maybe there was some issue. I'd like to ask the Minister if the Minister is prepared to have the department look at the programs generally that are being delivered to see if the people who are afflicted with this disorder will be benefitting from the programs that are delivered in the Corrections system. Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly in the department we're always looking at our programs that are delivered to those in custody with a view of improving their lives and hoping to rehabilitate them so they can re-join society. Looking at the programs is an ongoing process, and obviously we will continue to do that. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 572-18(3):
SAFETY ISSUES ON THE DEMPSTER HIGHWAY

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement, I explained the safety concerns at Kilometre 87 just as you arrive in Fort McPherson. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned in my statement that, last year, we had a close call. If it

wasn't for the quick reaction of my constituents, things could have been much worse. I'd like to ask the Minister: will the Minister ensure his department installs a guardrail along the lake at Kilometre 87? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member is asking me about, I think, a section of highway where, when he just did a constituency tour, if I remember correctly, he and the Minister of Finance were pulled over. That is a 70-kilometre-an-hour zone there, Mr. Speaker.

There was a guardrail on this section of highway back in 2002, the department has informed me, and it fell over due to a soft shoulder. Since that time, the highway has actually been widened in that section, so at the present time there have been a couple of incidents, I think, in that area. There are a number of cabins right around there; that's the turnoff to go to the lagoon, as well, if I remember correctly. The last accident that occurred there, the Member is talking about and referred to, is someone who was parked on the side of the highway. At this time, we are not planning on putting a guardrail there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: Through the Building Canada Plan Fund, we have completed 143 kilometres of widening as the Minister mentioned of the Dempster highway, which we all appreciate. Now we need to complete this work by clearing the right-of-way with brush cutting and installing guardrails to make it safe for the people who use this highway. Will the Minister ensure that this is done?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I'd like to inform this House that we're actually going to spend another \$22.5 million on Highway 8 for reconstruction and rehabilitation between 2019 and 2024, which is a significant investment in that Member's riding. What I can say about this guardrail in this section of highway is that I can have our staff go out there and have a look at this and meet with the community members and have a look at it, if we can do a safety audit on what's happening there and get back to the Member.

MR. BLAKE: I'm feeling the love from the Minister here today. That's good news. That's a start, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister also ensure they identify all other areas that require guardrails from the NWT border to Campbell Lake, which is all throughout my riding?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Guardrails, we've had this conversation with the Member who looks after the Ingraham Trail, as well, around guardrails. Guardrails are identified if there's a safety hazard to traffic, but they are set up as according to industry

standards as to the Transportation Association of Canada Guide, and I'm sure that our superintendent is all over that on that whole section of highway. I can actually ask the department to give me a list of where we think we need to be doing this or where we're planning on doing guardrails and let the Member know what we're going to be installing.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is just safety for our highways here. The Dempster, as I mentioned, we've only seen an increase in traffic because of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, and I'm sure it will be like that for many years to come. Safety is the number one issue. Many of our tourists have only driven on pavement, Mr. Speaker. Our highway is all gravel, but much better than the Yukon, I may add, that section of highway, the Dempster. Just for future safety concerns, will the Minister let his guard down and just say, "Yes"?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I know it's Valentine's Day, but let's take it a little bit easier here. I just want to reassure this House that we are investing \$22.5 million on the Dempster over the next five years, \$22.5 million. Safety is the number one priority of our department, and we will work with all Members in this House to ensure the highways in the Northwest Territories are as safe for the travelling public as possible, and if there are any concerns, please come to me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, replies to budget address. Member for Yellowknife North.

Replies to Budget Address

MR. VANTHUYNE'S REPLY

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in reply to the Minister of Finance's budget address from last week. This is important because it's the last budget of the 18th Assembly. It is, in essence, our last kick at the can, our last shot at making our mandate commitments we all agreed to three and a half years ago.

I am pleased to see that the majority of our new expenditures are the result of investments in people, in areas like education, healthcare, social services, environment, and housing. I've said since the outset, and I probably won't stop, that we need to invest in the mandate. I am pleased to see new

investments in health and community wellness. Healthy children and families today will help produce a healthier and more prosperous territory tomorrow, and it's crucial that we build that for our children. Investments to combat mental health and addictions, deal with poverty, support our elders and disabled, and enhance income assistance and low cost housing are all supports for a more secure and prosperous future.

Similarly, investments in natural resource development is investment in future prosperity. I am pleased to see more than \$1 million going to research mineral potential in the Slave Geological Province. \$375,000 invested in the knowledge economy and related activity is an important way to build on unique strengths and proficiencies that exist amongst our people.

Enhancements to student financial assistance will foster a stronger, more capable Northern workforce. Developing our labour market capacity to ensure that Northerners are in place as jobs and careers open up provides a base upon which families and communities can build.

We've all seen that tourism is the fastest growing area in the economy. Investing over \$1 million in support of this burgeoning industry is an important boost to maintaining momentum there.

Our infrastructure needs are many and broad so the budget's commitment to diversifying the growth and protection of infrastructure will pay off for us and for future generations. This is especially timely because it takes advantage of additional badly needed federal dollars.

Moving towards a greener, low-emission economy is something I think we can agree is necessary, if not urgent, so I'm happy to see the investment of \$21 million to support that transition. This work is in support of our commitment under Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, as well as implementing our own 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework.

I've spoken many times about the need for our government to continue working to close the funding shortfall to our municipalities, so I am pleased to see increased support of \$1.9 million towards community governments, but much more is needed.

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the things I liked in the Minister's budget, but, as you may have expected, that's not the whole story. There are some areas where I think the government needs to fundamentally change its approach.

Since the beginning, the government's overall fiscal approach has been to spend less. Only by strenuous intervention from this side, tenacious

line-by-line review, and positive compromise have we reduced the pain that could have been caused by budget reductions. I have said since the beginning of the Assembly and since the beginning of this speech, in fact, that we must invest in the mandate. I will continue to argue this. In slow times or periods of transition, the government's approach should not be to slow down and minimize activity. It should be to invest, to stimulate, to make things happen, and to invest in our people. That should be our approach, and I will continue to advocate for this.

At the same time that the government's fiscal approach would have been to reduce the workforce and cut programs, it has been the government that has significantly contributed to the cost of living. Increased lease fees, airport user charges, increased power rates, carbon taxes, and maybe even forthcoming land transfer tax and sugar tax that might yet to become, these are all costs that get passed onto all Northerners, even those surviving on the lowest income.

Our mandate commitment states that the 18th Legislative Assembly will reduce the cost of living. I don't think we can claim success on that front. That commitment gets an "F" for failure.

Mr. Speaker, we started this week with a new sense of relief because a labour dispute had been avoided at the last minute. I think we need a new approach that says very clearly that we appreciate our public servants and that we care about our workforce, the people who deliver the essential services that the people of the NWT count on every day. To that end, we need to take a strong, hard look at the Public Service Act and its effectiveness. We should never come so close to a labour stoppage again.

Another area that requires improvement is procurement. It's no secret that there are issues with this government's procurement policies and practices. The challenges for suppliers, builders, contractors, et cetera, are all well known. We need a serious commitment from this government to review and improve our procurement policies and processes.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, is the issue of land rights discussions. Mr. Speaker, I've said this many times before in this House. The most pressing thing on our list is the fair resolution of land rights. We cannot advance other priorities until land rights are resolved. Certainty is needed to achieve our mandate of economic growth. It is necessary to achieve our commitment in education, health, and social justice. It is crucial to support small business, develop renewable energy, and minimize our carbon footprint. All of these crucial priorities depend on the successful and fair resolution of land

rights. We all want to see these done in the life of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that I was able to highlight a number of positive points that were brought forward in the Minister's budget address. Clearly, we are making progress in many areas, but in other areas, Mr. Speaker, we still have a long way to go. The end of this Assembly may be coming closer, but I intend to fight for a strategic investment in our mandate in support of all residents of the Northwest Territories in the coming weeks and right up to the end of the 18th Assembly.

Those are my comments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Replies to budget address. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

MR. BEAULIEU'S REPLY

MR. BEAULIEU: Mr. Speaker, I reviewed the budget and heard the Minister of Finance speak on all of the initiatives. I agree that there are many good initiatives in the field of wellness and many initiatives overall in the budget. I felt that, from the first budget that this government presented to us in the House here, we were quite a few million dollars apart in what we thought a good budget was and what they thought a good budget was. This last budget, I think we were so close that I think that this time, when we get back into the budget deliberations, it will be easy for us to achieve the budget that the whole House would like to see. I thought that the items that this government put forward in the budget was positive.

I have some concerns with some areas that I just wish to highlight on a bit as I go on to talk about my address. I felt that there should be more money spent in the smaller communities. The government already has programs in place for addressing some issues. I have always said in the House and I think the Minister of Finance has always agreed with me that the best social program that the GNWT could have was employment. There are several areas, but I just want to highlight some of the areas that I felt were what I would refer to as low-hanging fruit, where it was easy for the government to spend money in the small communities in these areas. I felt that the access roads program, which is an O and M program, was somewhere where the government could have easily expanded that program by 50 percent without too much difficulty, and the results were quite significant and the positive results were quite significant for these small communities.

I felt that there would be more money put into educating and delivering homecare services across the territory. I know that, this budget, at the time the budget was done, there was some money moved

out of homecare and put into another area of great importance, the Child and Family Services, which I support, but I have always advocated for more education for individuals who would be working in the field of homecare. I felt that was lacking in the budget, that there would be more education, more homecare workers. I know that there are some difficulties in actually getting people who were willing to work in that field. I have talked to the Minister of Health and Social Services many times about this and his desire to see a new workforce in homecare services, so what I am saying is that maybe a different approach, an educational type of approach to that, would have been where we would have spent some money in there.

I felt that the conservation economy could have used more funding. I felt that the conservation economy had tremendous returns, that there are a couple of programs across the territory, a couple of guardianship programs across the territory, that were benefiting the community and that they were seeing a reduced amount of spending in social programs, that this money was good value, good value for the GNWT, was money that was spent and then the returns over a longer period of time. Mind you, Mr. Speaker, you can't get the returns the same year that you are putting the money in, but you were getting returns. The returns were quite tremendous. The returns were maybe two and a half percent, two and a half to one. In other words, for every dollar spent, you would save \$2.50 in the social end of it, so I thought that more money could have gone into conservation.

That kind of leads me to another thing that I thought would be important. That was how we handled the whole issue of Fort Smith and Inuvik in as far as the whole discussion about the university here in Yellowknife. I thought that this government could have put money into Fort Smith and that they could have gained friends in Fort Smith and friends in Inuvik. I felt that it was the delivery of that. I felt the idea of the university, written by the consultant, kind of pitted Yellowknife against Fort Smith. It kind of pitted Yellowknife against Inuvik. That shouldn't have happened. I think this government should have indicated clearly how the money was going to be laid out. You know, I felt that it was an ideal, perfect opportunity to develop Aurora College in Fort Smith into a conservation school or a trades centre, and a trades centre. You know, there is some opposition to it being a trades centre because there wasn't a continuous flow of students because they would come for three months, four months at the time and whatnot.

There are also so many trades that were not being addressed in the Northwest Territories that can be. I think becoming a cook, some sort of technicians and things like that, that are tradespeople, that would benefit from having a trades centre in Fort

Smith, and a conservation school is ideally located. It was ideally located to be a conservation school because the park is right there. They could train park officers, renewable resource officers, guardian programs, rangers, the Canadian Rangers. Canadian Rangers could be a part-time job. That is a job for small communities. Again, those types of returns will be seen in those types of jobs.

I felt that the government could have put more money into small community employment. I felt that that was something that was a no-brainer. You put money in, and you are seeing immediate returns. You are putting money in, and you are getting it back almost immediately because you are taking people off income support. Right now, the government is willing to pay income support. They got money into income support, but putting enough money into the employment side of it to reduce income support, use that money, bridge people to EI if that is what it takes, you know. All of a sudden now, the government is drawing on the federal government purse and legitimately so, so I mean those types of strategic spending that I have always spoken about in the House.

I thought that more consultation money should have been put in by this government in the area of lands, whether you are going to be leasing lands, taxing lands, charging leases to individuals in the communities and outside the communities, leasing cabins, charging taxes on cabins, and all of those things. I thought that money should have been put in there so that the government could sit down with the communities, sit down with the people who really had issues with this. People really have issues with having their cabins taxed. You know, people have been living in these cabins for a long, long time in these communities where you have people gathering, harvesting.

This is a program, and ENR has a tremendous program, I think, with ITI. They have a program for the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program. These things, where supports should be given to the harvesters, not charge them taxes. They complain about it. They want to go out there, just to be on the land. People, you know, they're saying, "Well, if you're not using it for harvesting, then you have to be taxed for it. If it's recreation, you have to be taxed for it." But just being on the land is very healthy. Being out there. You don't have to be trapping martin. You just have to be out there, and these are the benefits. It benefits the youth. A lot of people, young families, going out on the land and not have to be burdened with the fact that you have to pay for the taxes on that property.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a lot of discussion in the House over the years about strategic spending. All of these things with money going into the small communities, for me, it doesn't make sense that we

don't do it. Not to do it means that we are rolling further and further into debt. By continuing to support programs that have no returns, we are going further into debt, when you could use that same money to invest in the people and get tremendous returns.

I don't want to end on a negative note. I would like to say that I thought this budget was very, very close to what the people on this side of the House had, and it has gone a long ways. I told the Minister of Finance that this has gone a long ways, the budget. When we sat down four years ago, we were \$150 million apart. That is a lot of money.

We have worked together. We have worked hard. Everybody on this side of the House and everybody on that side of the House worked hard to get it down to a budget that we thought would benefit the majority of the Northwest Territories, and we are getting close. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Replies to budget address. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON'S REPLY

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the commencement of the 18th Legislative Assembly just over three years ago, our economy was facing hard times, and we set ourselves on a path with the intent to strengthen it, so that future generations could benefit from the potential of this land.

Within the first months of the Assembly, however, we were struck a blow when Snap Lake Diamond Mine shut down. With that closure, an economic contribution to our economy as big as the entire tourism industry disappeared practically overnight.

The remaining diamond mines are all scheduled to end production one by one over the next eight years, and there are no new diamond mines being contemplated. Even if there were, given how long it takes to bring a new mine online, any new mines wouldn't be operational until long after the current ones shut down. While some smaller metal mines may begin production within the next decade, none will come close to replacing the economic contributions that we will lose.

The glory days of diamond mining are coming to an end. It is reminiscent of the fall of the NWT's oil and gas industry in the 1980s, which has drastically altered our economic landscape. With the more recent global decline in the oil and gas industry, we can rest assured that we won't see a revival in that sector any time soon either.

What all of this means is that, in the coming decade, we will be without any industry capable of

supporting the needs of the NWT. We are headed for a recession. There will be job losses in the thousands, an exodus of skilled workers, and tens, if not hundreds, millions of dollars in lost government revenue. This isn't conjecture; these are the facts. Times are hard for many people, and they are going to get worse.

As the Minister of Finance stated in his budget address, "There are cracks in the foundation." That is a powerful statement, Mr. Speaker, and unfortunately I have to agree with it. The social services that we provide today are already underfunded, and many are underperforming. An aging population and worsening economy will mean that costs will continue to rise. Our ability to provide services like healthcare, housing, and education is built upon our faltering economic foundation, so it must be addressed.

The proposed 2019-2020 budget contains \$1.8 billion in spending proposals across eleven departments and the Legislative Assembly. Given the scope of this budget, it undoubtedly contains many proposals that I support and some that I disagree with. However, the overarching criteria that I have to use to assess this budget is whether or not it does enough to put us in a position to weather the upcoming economic storm and to take advantage of opportunities for growth.

As the Minister stated in his budget address, we need economic diversification to strengthen the sustainability of our economy. Mr. Speaker, I agree. My constituents agree. Everyone I have talked to across the territory agrees. Diversifying the economy is how we can patch those cracks in the foundation. However, Mr. Speaker, the budget that this government has put forward, and the associated policies it continues to follow, do not go nearly far enough to diversify our economy.

I support many of the government's efforts to expand our transportation and power infrastructure and to encourage investment in the NWT by industry. I have made statements in this House about the need for the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the road to Whati, and the Slave Geological Province. I began pushing the government to expand Taltson Hydro System at the beginning of this Assembly. Unfortunately this government seems to be exclusively focused on advancing these types of projects at the expense of diversification, and I can't understand why. I think the government is perfectly capable of doing two things at once, and I don't think it is too much to ask that we ask them to walk and chew bubble gum at the same time.

This government pays lip service to economic diversification, but this budget and the associated business plans show no indication that they are

deviating from their singular focus. The needed investments in education and training, small businesses, and communities that are critical to diversification are absent.

During every sitting, Regular Members raise the importance of investing in these areas on the floor of this House. When Regular Members meet with the Ministers to review the budget behind closed doors, we raise the importance of investing in these areas. We continuously push for investments because we know that just talking about economic diversification doesn't make it happen. We do it because it is one of the priorities of this Assembly. We do it because our constituents have made clear that they are tired of being at the mercy of the boom-and-bust commodity cycles. However, Mr. Speaker, this Cabinet has repeatedly ignored those recommendations and continues to do so. The voices of our constituents are falling on deaf ears.

Mr. Speaker, this is our last budget. It is our last kick at the can. It is a culmination of the work that we have been doing for the past three years. That is why it pains me to say that we are a far cry from where I hoped that we would be at this point. Industry is disappearing. Small businesses are struggling. We have over a billion dollars in debt, and we are right up against our borrowing limit. We have set the next Assembly up with a monumental task.

As we debate the budget over the coming weeks, I look forward to going into more detail about my concerns, and I will give the Cabinet a chance to change my mind and convince me that this budget can save the Northwest Territories from its economic future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Replies to budget address. 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 Environment and Natural Resources.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 341-18(3):
WASTE REDUCTION AND RECOVERY
PROGRAM 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Waste Reduction and Recovery Program 2017-2018 Annual Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 342-18(3):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ORAL QUESTION 522-
18(3):
DIAMOND POLICY FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter to Oral Question 522-18(3): Diamond Policy Framework Analysis." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 343-18(3):
EXCERPT FROM GEREIN, HAL J. 2018,
NEGOTIATING THE NWT DEVOLUTION OF
LANDS AND RESOURCES:
AN INSIDER'S STORY, PRIVATELY PUBLISHED

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I wish to table some excerpts from "Negotiating the Northwest Territories Devolution of Lands and Resources: An Insider's Story," by Hal J. Gerein, 2018, Tellwell Talent Publishers. Mahsi, 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. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Motions

MOTION 32-18(3):
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO
FEBRUARY 20, 2019,
CARRIED

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding rule 4, when this House adjourns on February 14, 2019, it shall be adjourned until Wednesday, February 20, 2019, and further, that, at any time prior to February 20, 2019, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council of Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice, and thereupon, the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Mahsi.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Masi. Just reflecting on one area that we skipped on is notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 36:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE PETROLEUM
RESOURCES ACT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to give notice that, on Thursday, February 21, 2019, I will move that Bill 36, An Act to Amend the Petroleum Resources Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

BILL 37:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE OIL AND GAS
OPERATIONS ACT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, on Thursday, February 21, 2019, I will move that Bill 37, An Act to Amend the Oil and Gas Operations Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. First reading of bills. Item 20, second reading of bills. Minister of Infrastructure.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 35:
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL
DESIGNATION ACT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 35, Supply Chain Management Professional Designation Act, be read for the second time. This bill prohibits a person from using certain designations and abbreviations until the person is a designated professional in the field of supply chain management. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

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

---Carried

Bill 35 has had its second reading. It is now referred to standing committee. Second reading of bills. Item 21, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement; Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020, 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 now call Committee of the Whole to order. What is the wish of committee? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I ask that the chair rise and report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. There is a motion to report progress. The motion is in order. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---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 Minister's Statement 131-18(3), Sessional Statement; and Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020, and would like to report progress. 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? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Masi. Item 23, third reading of bills. Item 24, Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith): [Translation] Orders of the day for Wednesday, February 20, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements

4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgments
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Replies to Budget Address (Day 4 of 7)
12. Petitions
13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
15. Tabling of Documents
16. Notices of Motion
17. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
18. Motions
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 131-18(3), Sessional Statement
 - Tabled Document 322-18(3), Main Estimates, 2019-2020
22. Report of Committee of the Whole
23. Third Reading of Bills
24. Orders of the Day

[Translation ends.]

MR. SPEAKER: [Translation] Masi cho, Madam Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, February 20, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.
[Translation ends.]

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

