



# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Session**

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

## **HANSARD**

**Thursday, June 6, 2019**

Pages 5839 – 5876

**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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**Hon. Glen Abernethy**

(Great Slave)

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*Minister Responsible for Seniors*

*Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities*

*Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board*

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(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

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(Sahtu)

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(Hay River North)

**Mr. Kieron Testart**

(Kam Lake)

**Mr. Shane Thompson**

(Nahendeh)

**Mr. Cory Vanthuyne**

(Yellowknife North)

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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, June 6, 2019

**Members Present**

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

The House met at 1:31 p.m.

**Prayer**

**MR. MCNEELY:** O God, may your spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all our people for peace and justice in our land and for the constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. R.J. Simpson):** Members, I would ask that you remain standing and join me in observing a moment of silence in recognition of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. Thank you. Please be seated. Ministers' statements. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

**Ministers' Statements**

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 207-18(3):  
SUPPORTING THE NORTHERN AVIATION  
INDUSTRY

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is following through on its mandate commitment to strengthen connections with public and private sector partners in transportation infrastructure.

Given our vast geography and harsh climate, Northwest Territories communities and businesses rely on the aviation industry for the safe and reliable delivery of people, goods, and services. That is why the Government of the Northwest Territories has made supporting the northern aviation industry a priority. Our work includes focusing efforts on maintaining and improving aviation infrastructure; exploring ways to increase economic benefits in this industry; and working with our partners to take action to fill the aviation skills shortage.

Mr. Speaker, we have 27 public airports in the Northwest Territories, all of which are critical to the economic and social well-being of our residents. They provide essential services, including community resupply, air ambulance, search and rescue, forest fire response, and much more. Ongoing improvements to our airports allow for safe and efficient movement of these and other essential goods and services.

When it comes to investing in aviation infrastructure, some of the improvements our airports have received, or will be receiving soon, include:

- airfield sweepers for the Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, and Fort Simpson airports;
- runway rehabilitation at the Hay River, Inuvik, and Yellowknife airports;
- dust suppressant applications on gravel runways;
- replacement of the Inuvik air terminal building; and
- continued investment in improvements to maintain safe, secure, and prosperous airports.

The Government of the Northwest Territories also works closely with our federal counterparts and has received additional support to invest in our airport infrastructure, including:

- airfield lighting in Fort Smith, Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, and Norman Wells;
- surface overlays in Tulita, Inuvik, Yellowknife, and Norman Wells;
- drainage improvements in Yellowknife and Sachs Harbour; and
- emergency response and mobile heavy equipment at the Yellowknife, Hay River, and Norman Wells airports.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is also seeking federal funding to continue improving our airports, including funding from the Airport Capital Assistance Program for snow blowers for Fort Smith and Inuvik, new airfield lighting in Fort Simpson, and an overlay of the Hay River runway. We have also submitted applications to the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund for projects to make our airport infrastructure more resilient to climate change.

Mr. Speaker, our government is always looking for ways to increase the economic benefits the aviation industry brings to our communities. We continue to

reach out to our potential partners and customers to ensure the longevity of the aviation industry in the North and to maintain its growth and success.

I have previously spoken in this House about the Yellowknife Airport Cold Weather Testing Group, who are working to capture economic opportunities and benefits for the local economy through cold weather testing partnerships. This past winter, the group partnered with Bell Helicopters to host 30 engineers and pilots for approximately 90 days in Yellowknife, infusing an estimated \$2.3 million into the local economy.

In recent months, the Cold Weather Testing Group has also had discussions with Mitsubishi to test their medium-sized jets, and Korean Aerospace Industries has inquired about testing their helicopters here. Further planning efforts are under way to develop a preliminary competitor analysis, a marketing framework, and the decision to link the Cold Weather Testing Marketing Strategy to Destination Canada's Business Events Canada Marketing Program for the Aerospace Industry.

We know that our success depends on strong partnerships. The Government of the Northwest Territories is pleased to continue our collaboration with partners such as the Northern Air Transport Association. NATA is an organization that has worked for many years to ensure Northern Canada is well-represented in the decisions made about the industry. I would like to thank the NATA leadership for the opportunity to speak at their recent AGM and look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the safe, secure, accessible, and reliable movement of people and goods throughout the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues discussed at the recent NATA AGM that is of great importance to supporting the aviation industry in the North was addressing the skills shortage the aviation industry is currently facing.

In the Northwest Territories and all across Canada, there is a shortage of pilots and aircraft maintenance workers, and we expect this shortage to continue to increase. Addressing this gap in the Northwest Territories will require support from government, opportunities for local training, and industry champions.

Mr. Speaker, this past month, Transport Canada certified the Terry Harrold School of Aviation as an approved flying school. The school is located in Fort Smith and was created by Northwestern Air Lease, Ltd. to help northern residents achieve their pilot licence.

We know from experience that many Northerners want the option to train at home, and this will give

them that option. We also know that flying in the North is unlike anywhere else. This flying school will give students a true sense of what it's like to fly in our northern skies. I want to congratulate Northwestern on their new school and wish them all the success.

The government also has a role to play, and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleague, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, on implementing the Skills 4 Success initiative to improve employment success for NWT residents, close skill gaps for in-demand jobs, and more effectively respond to employer and industry needs.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories will continue with the efforts I have described today and continue to work with our public and private aviation industry partners to strengthen and support the aviation industry in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 208-18(3):  
HEALTH AND WELLNESS ENHANCEMENTS IN  
SCHOOLS

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, a high-quality education system is one that ensures that student wellness and the development of a positive sense of identity are promoted and embedded in school experiences, programming, and environment.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment values diversity in our school communities. We recognize the unique challenges experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and two-spirited, or LGBTQ2S+ people, including being possible targets for discrimination and bullying.

In support of these students, staff, and families, the Department, as part of its Safe and Caring Schools model, has developed Guidelines for Ensuring LGBTQ2S+ Safety and Inclusion in Northwest Territories schools.

Mr. Speaker, according to studies from Canada, the United States, and New Zealand, LGBTQ2S+ youth are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. Those who have been rejected by their families are more than eight times more likely. The rates of LGBTQ2S+ youth reporting harassment, in general, ranges between 57 and 92 percent.

These rates are unacceptable. We have a duty to do everything we can to provide a safe environment

and defend the well-being of these students, so that experiences during their formative years help them develop a positive sense of identity.

The new guidelines provide educators in the Northwest Territories with 13 promising practices that can be incorporated into school environments of every size. These practices are evidence-based, tangible calls to action developed in collaboration with members of the Rainbow Coalition of Yellowknife and the youth sexual health programs, Fostering Open eXpression among Youth, and Strength, Masculinities, and Sexual Health, better known as FOXY and SMASH. The work was also guided by feedback from youth who attended the inaugural NWT Youth Rainbow Conference held in March 2017 and feedback from board and education council superintendents. All agree these are necessary guidelines that will be welcome when they are introduced in schools in September 2019.

In addition to these guidelines, planning is under way for the second Northwest Territories Youth Rainbow Conference in the upcoming school year. We will also be supporting NWT participation in Canada's second annual survey to measure discrimination toward LGBTQ2S+ students. These statistics will inform future development in this area.

Mr. Speaker, the LGBTQ2S+ Guidelines are a part of the Education Renewal initiative and the Safe Schools Regulations that require every school to have a Safe School Plan. Safe school planning is more than having procedures for emergency evacuations and lockdowns; it includes protecting our school communities with policies in place on bullying and discrimination.

We have also developed a new health and wellness curriculum that is being integrated into grades four to nine. We are changing our focus from simply delivering health information to providing students with the tools, knowledge, and ability to gather and evaluate health information themselves. In that way, we are contributing to their well-being, and we are equipping them to contribute to the well-being of their community throughout their lives.

The new curriculum is flexible and gives teachers the opportunity to engage with crucial topics immediately, as they arise, while engaging local expertise and knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, the new LGBTQ2S+ Guidelines and the new health and wellness curriculum are some of the building blocks of the high-quality education system we all want. They will help ensure our schools are safe places for all students, places where all students can develop a positive sense of identity and skills to improve their physical and mental wellness, today and in the future. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 209-18(3):  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES DISABILITY ACTION PLAN  
UPDATES

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, last week was Disability Awareness Week in the Northwest Territories, as well as National AccessAbility Week across the country. It is a time to promote inclusion and accessibility in our communities, and to reflect on what we can all do to make sure that everyone is able to contribute to and be a part of community life. With that, I'd like to provide an update on the Government of the Northwest Territories Disability Action Plan 2018/2019 - 2021/2022, which was tabled in October 2018 and is the final deliverable of the Disability Program Review and Renewal Project.

Work is under way across multiple GNWT departments on the five key objectives in our action plan to increase income security and reduce poverty; build awareness and knowledge through education and training; improve transition planning and options; encourage universal design and living options; and improve access and quality of caregiver supports.

The action plan represents a shared vision and partnership between the Departments of Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Justice; Finance; Municipal and Community Affairs; Infrastructure; and the NWT Housing Corporation. It is helping our government pursue new avenues and resources available to promote more equity, accessibility, inclusion, and participation in all aspects of economic and social life for persons with disabilities in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, we are accountable to persons with disabilities and all residents on the progress on this action plan. While the first update on our actions is anticipated later this summer, I can speak to some initiatives currently under way:

Our government has made investments in increasing rehabilitation supports for children, and is establishing a territorial FASD Adult Diagnosis and Support Program in partnership with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority.

The Department of Infrastructure has developed an Accessibility Toolkit to assist in implementing accessible design in government office space. This has been tested on a recent renovation project in

Yellowknife, and will be used in designing the new airport in Inuvik.

The NWT Housing Corporation has begun its Housing Support Worker pilot in the community of Behchoko. This strengths-based and trauma-informed initiative includes supporting adults with disabilities to maintain stable housing.

The Department of Health and Social Services is reviewing supplementary health benefits programs, as the current program structures do not cover all disabilities. We are also planning for a review of supported living services.

As you can see, this action plan is broad-reaching, reflecting our shared commitment across government to fully address disabilities. I appreciate how each department is taking on implementation and evaluation of their respective action areas and collaborating with disability partners in this important work.

Mr. Speaker, Disability Identity in the North was chosen as the theme of this year's Disability Awareness Week, and it is fitting to recognize and thank our disability NGO partners, including the NWT Disabilities Council, Yellowknife Association for Community Living, NWT Seniors' Society, Hay River Committee for Persons with Disabilities, and the NWT Foster Family Coalition, for their ongoing input and participation. We continue to work with our partners as we implement the action plan to make meaningful and measurable change that will reduce barriers for persons with disabilities.

While we work hard on making change, we can also celebrate what is already happening to encourage more inclusive communities across the Northwest Territories. On May 31st, I hosted the annual Disability Awareness Minister's Tea and was pleased to announce the winner of the 2019 Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities Award, Mr. Dean McLeod of Aklavik. Dean has been a committed resident of Aklavik for 47 years and a strong advocate for persons with disabilities in order to ensure inclusive participation in his community. Mr. Speaker, his dedication and his passion as the community recreation coordinator and as an active community volunteer have made a significant difference in the lives of Northerners.

We also recognized Tina McNeil of Fort Smith as this year's NWT Disability Council Community Champion, and the Hamlet of Aklavik as this year's Human Rights Commission Corporate Champion.

All of us have roles to play in promoting inclusion and accessibility in our communities. I look forward to seeing the progress we achieve over the life of our action plan, together with our partners, to

improve the lives of NWT residents living with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 210-18(3):  
THE DE BEERS/YELLOWKNIFE WOMEN'S  
SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to speak about a new partnership between the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the De Beers Group, a partnership that will help house some of our most vulnerable citizens.

De Beers Group has invested heavily in the Northwest Territories over the years through the development of its two mines. These investments have provided numerous gains for the residents of the Northwest Territories in terms of jobs and procurement. In addition to the economic benefits, De Beers Group has indicated that they want to support lasting social improvements to communities.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and the De Beers Group have discussed potential legacy housing projects, consistent with the De Beers Group's commitment to supporting Northwest Territories communities involved in diamond mining. The De Beers Group is especially interested in projects that address the long-term needs of vulnerable people in their operating region.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the De Beers Group, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, and the Yellowknife Women's Society have agreed to improve shelter housing for women who are homeless.

The Yellowknife Women's Society shelter on Franklin Avenue will be reconfigured to provide 16 single-room suites for homeless women. The De Beers Group is making a generous contribution of \$250,000 to the project. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation will provide the project management expertise and a \$350,000 contribution under the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's Community Housing Support Initiative. The Yellowknife Women's Society will administer a smaller emergency shelter section of the building. They will continue to provide supportive services to residents in the new suites.

These new spaces will provide better privacy, safety, and security for women. The shared living arrangement offers the safety of living with others, as opposed to being isolated in a rental unit on the



private market. Residents will have a safe, stable home where they can start to address some of the other challenges in their lives, without having to worry about housing.

This initiative supports the mandate commitment of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly on increasing the availability of safe, affordable housing and creating solutions for addressing homelessness. It is also consistent with long-term planning to address homelessness in Yellowknife. This project is one step towards what our communities, this government, and all of our partners want; healthy, sustainable communities with safe, adequate, and affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's partnership with the De Beers Group and the Yellowknife Women's Society is an exciting opportunity. It is a great example of how a corporate citizen can work with governments and other partners to create tangible outcomes and make our communities better places for all of our residents. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 34(6) so that all Ministers' statements filed with the clerk can be delivered today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 211-18(3):  
ADDRESSING THE CARIBOU CRISIS

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, this Assembly made a mandate commitment to improve food security in the Northwest Territories through the effective co-management of wildlife, including caribou. Our government is therefore taking significant steps with our co-management partners to support the recovery of our struggling barren-ground herds, including investing an additional \$6.8 million over five years for conservation and recovery efforts.

The Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds have traditionally been an important food source for a number of our communities, and are central to the culture, identity, and way of life of many Indigenous Northerners. Despite extensive actions by the Government of the Northwest Territories and our co-management partners to support caribou conservation and promote herd recovery, both herds continue to decline, and in just the last three years they have been reduced by half.

Mr. Speaker, since receiving the latest population results last fall, our government has moved quickly to put a number of initiatives into place in an effort to slow the decline.

Environment and Natural Resources has worked closely with the Tlicho Government to submit two joint management proposals to the Wek'eezhii Renewable Resources Board, one for each herd. These management actions are being reviewed by the board, and we expect to receive their decisions in the coming weeks. We continue to work with the community of Deline to support their community-based caribou plan for the Bluenose-East herd, and are supporting other communities interested in forming their own conservation plans for barren-ground caribou.

Some of the conservation and recovery efforts led by the department include doing population surveys every two years instead of three, so we can detect changes sooner and, if necessary, adjust our management approach. We are increasing the number of satellite collars we use to give us better information about how caribou use their range. We are also keeping a close eye on the health of the herds through regular composition surveys and by providing financial support for on-the-land caribou monitoring programs, such as the Tlicho Government's Boots on the Ground program and the Ni Hat'ni Dene Rangers run by the Lutselke Dene First Nation. In addition, the Government of the Northwest Territories continues to support community-based harvest monitoring programs in a number of communities across the Northwest Territories.

This winter we also introduced a new incentive program targeting wolves on the winter range of the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds. A total of 57 wolves have been harvested under this program to date, Mr. Speaker. That is an increase over the average of 40 wolves per year harvested in the North Slave Region since 2010. It is also important to note that all of the wolves caught under this program were in the area where barren-ground caribou wintered this year, rather than around communities and landfills, which was the case in the previous eight winters.

Mr. Speaker, the pressures facing caribou also include habitat loss in critical areas on their winter range, mostly due to wildfire. The department plans to establish a new fire crew in Wekweeti to allow us to detect and respond to fires more quickly in the heart of the Bathurst caribou herd's traditional range. We are working closely with elders and land-users in the North Slave region to help us identify key caribou habitat and corridors that we will aim to protect as values-at-risk during the upcoming fire season.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we are very close to approving a range plan for the Bathurst herd. This plan was developed together with 21 organizations and agencies, including Indigenous governments, industry, and wildlife management boards from across the Bathurst range, in response to community concerns about the impact of development on caribou. Through this range plan, we are working together to support the Bathurst herd in a way that recognizes the importance of conservation and economic opportunities for Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, protecting caribou is a shared responsibility that requires the commitment and action of multiple partners, across multiple jurisdictions. Our co-management system here in the Northwest Territories is strong, but caribou are not confined to our borders. We need to work with our neighbours in Nunavut, as well. That is why I travelled to Kugluktuk in April and met with the Honourable Joe Savikataaq, who is both the territory's Environment Minister and Premier.

Our governments discussed the Bathurst and Bluenose-East herds, which calve every year north of our border in Nunavut, as well as the Beverly herd, which was also surveyed in 2018. Premier Savikataaq agrees the current declines in these populations are alarming, and that immediate and strong action to support herd recovery is needed.

As a result, our governments have agreed to host a meeting of key co-management partners from both jurisdictions to discuss how we can work together to support the recovery of these herds. We will work together on wolf harvest incentive programs in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and continue to support each other's research and monitoring activities, including on-the-land and community-based programs to improve our understanding and management of caribou.

Mr. Speaker, the last few months have seen a lot of positive work to support our caribou, but this is just the beginning. It will take a commitment from each and every one of us to do our part to give caribou the support they need to survive and thrive. In the next few months, engagement will begin on the development of a recovery strategy for barren-ground caribou. This strategy will bring together the efforts of all management authorities across the Northwest Territories to protect barren-ground caribou under territorial Species at Risk legislation, and will guide our actions going forward.

I would like to thank all of our co-management partners for their dedication and hard work, and for helping to make what have been some very difficult decisions in order to support our caribou herds. The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to continuing this work with our partners

to ensure that, together, we make effective decisions about managing wildlife so our communities can continue to enjoy harvesting opportunities now and into the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Kam Lake, that Minister's Statement 210-18(3) addressing the caribou crisis be moved into Committee of the Whole for discussion later today. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried.

The Minister's statement will be moved into Committee of the Whole. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

## Members' Statements

### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON ELDERS FORCED INTO LONG-TERM CARE

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement today is from one of my constituents in the Mackenzie Delta. One of the elders was asked to move out of public housing and into the elders home. I agree that we lobby to keep our elders in the community. We have the Joe Greenland Centre in Aklavik. We have the newly constructed elders home in Fort McPherson, as well as an elders homes in Tsiigehtchic. However, if our elders are comfortable where they are now, why should they be asked to move into the homes?

Mr. Speaker, this elder can do daily living activities on her own. She has family members who check on her to make sure she is okay and to make sure that she gets out on daily outings. She wants to reside where she is now without having to relocate to the Joe Greenland Centre in the community. Let's keep our elders in their units where they are happy without forcing them to move out.

The majority of the elders in the NWT are independent. They keep themselves busy with daily chores. If we want our elders to be self-sufficient, we should be encouraging and supporting them to live independently.

Mr. Speaker, I know for a fact that our elders live longer lives because they do things on their own. They enjoy getting out and about, eating healthy,

traditional foods provided by family members, and being able to cook for themselves. We should be respecting our elders' decisions to live independently and not forcing them against their will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister later today.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Kam Lake.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON D-DAY COMMEMORATION

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I rise to commemorate the sacrifices made by Allied soldiers on the shores of Normandy, France, 75 years ago today. Canadian soldiers, along with their Commonwealth and American allies, took part in the largest seaborne invasion in human history. This landing opened a western front on mainland Europe, and over roughly the next year, along with Soviet forces in the east, the Third Reich was besieged from all sides and ultimately surrendered in May 1945.

The task our forces had before them in the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, a task which had never been successfully done before, embarking from landing craft and by parachute while under fire in hopes to create a safe landing and port for resupply as part of a bigger effort to push back entrenched enemy forces.

Mr. Speaker, 75 years ago this morning, our Armed Forces set out to do the impossible, and they were victorious. It is only fitting that we pay homage to the 45,000 Canadians who lost their lives during the Second World War, of whom 5,500 were killed during the Battle of Normandy and 359 lost their lives on D-Day.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all Members of this House and all members of the public will take a moment today to reflect upon this momentous anniversary, to reflect upon the sacrifices made by those who left their homes behind, too many never returning to their families. Many who served on that day are no longer with us today. In my opinion, it is our duty to not let them or their actions be forgotten. We must do our part to honour their service and pass on to the next generations their stories. We will remember them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON RECOGNITION OF WILLIAM ALGER

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the pleasure of meeting William Alger, a young, 20-year-old man who was born and raised in Fort

Simpson. He shared with me his journey as he discovered his goals and objectives, embracing his passion of his vision of developing a positive impact on the community of Fort Simpson and the North as a whole.

William graduated from Thomas Simpson School in June of 2016. Upon graduation, William was employed in the community in various positions. It was not until June of 2018 that he had the realization he would like to focus on a career in agriculture and what academic programs could afford him the ability to realize his dreams.

William, this past year, attended Vancouver Island University. He was enrolled in upgrading with the vision to register and complete the four-year tourism management program. Upon completion of this program, William plans to move back to Fort Simpson to pursue agriculture and business through online courses. William appraises to start a homestead in Fort Simpson to grow fresh and affordable produce. William's futuristic goals are to begin raising cattle and other livestock. William researched and explored possible funding opportunities through federal funded government programs and to begin such a venture.

William expressed how his initial movement for these initiative ideas were created by witnessing the hardship faced in the community with the cost of living, transportation costs, all part of the high cost of living. William began working on a farm, where he realized creating these same services and opportunities up North are doable. While William was working on the farm, he met his academic responsibilities with an attempt to continue educating himself while gaining knowledge regarding the farming industry.

William's motivation to establish on the premises that nutritional food is an actual necessity, regardless of the location. William recognizes unnecessary struggles Northerners face in attending nutritional food. William feels it is extremely unfair to charge northern people extremely high amounts for food, which is a basic human need. William's vision is positive, comes back to the community, and makes a positive impact, witnessed its flourishing growth through agriculture, which is an untapped resource.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend William Alger for his visionary approach to our community and look forward to witness this positive and innovative changes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING AND  
MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, the report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was released. It arrives at some sobering conclusions that, as Canadian leaders, we must take seriously. The term "Canadian genocide" has raised some controversy, Mr. Speaker, but I think it just shows how deeply serious this discussion is.

Many hundreds of Indigenous women have been assaulted, murdered, or simply disappear, Mr. Speaker. That is not just a crime. It isn't just unusual. This isn't a somewhere-else problem, Mr. Speaker. Our very own mothers, daughters, sisters, and neighbours are among the victims of this genocide. Women from our communities have similar experiences to those elsewhere in Canada. The support services they need are equally lacking. It is a problem right here at home, and we are not offering meaningful solutions.

What can we do, Mr. Speaker? The word "genocide" may make us uncomfortable, but that word's gravity must force us to confront reality. We need to achieve a new understanding of the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and families, and take concrete steps to improve those experiences. Women in all our communities need support.

Our programs should offer women access to health and wellness services wherever they live. Our government should prioritize women's equity and equality and encourage women to step forward into leadership roles. We must move forward on the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Let's make self-government and self-determination a basic right for Indigenous peoples. Our land rights agreements should promote justice and opportunity by creating certainty on land ownership.

Our systems of policing and corrections need vigilance, and principles of restorative justice should be incorporated into our legal system. In schools and workplaces, we should emphasize knowledge and fluency in northern studies, Indigenous history, and the legacy of residential schools. Indigenous wellness and traditional healing should be fully incorporated in our health delivery systems, which should focus on preventative as well as treatment aspects of health.

Mr. Speaker, the report states that "insufficient political will is a roadblock" to progress. I challenge my friends and colleagues across the NWT: let us find the political will to start making a difference. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Frame Lake.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
NWT OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD  
YOUTH NOMINEE VIVIANNE PAUZE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. [Translation] Today, my Member's statement will concern residents of the riding of Frame Lake who were named in the category through volunteer pride for young people. For three years, Vivianne Pauze has been carrying out volunteer work in her school theatre. Last year, she dedicated 77 hours as her role as script register. Over the past three years, she also officiated 20 times on events at the Northern Arts and Culture.

In the summer 2017, she did volunteer work as a soccer coach for a young team who were eight years old. In the school where she attends, she works on recycling programs and composting programs within the francophone community.

Ms. Pauze has been a volunteer at the (inaudible) daycare and during the annual meeting of the franco-tenoise federation in 2019.

In 2017-2018, Vivianne gave her time to the Foundation of Stanton Territorial Hospital by taking part and organize that's held, the so-called Mud Run. She also takes part actively by collecting food for the Salvation Army. She has gathered, raised funds during the Coldest Night to sensitive the people of the Northwest Territories about homelessness. She has collected 700 pieces of clothing for the Stanton Territorial Hospital for the YMCA. She has positive exercise bringing change for Yellowknife. Mr. Speaker, I would like unanimous consent to conclude my statement. [Translation ends.]

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. O'REILLY:** [Translation] Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Colleagues. She wrote herself to the culture, recycling and composting. Francophone, sports and, of course, intended for the people who are need. Vivian trying to be, have a better world, a more humane role that can exist in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [Translation ends.]

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS PLAN

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to offer my thanks to the Minister of Health and Social Services and his staff for completing the long-

awaited mental health and addictions action plan. The plan's strengths include flexibility for clients seeking services and an ambitious timeline for implementation.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work I did with my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Social Development to report on the treatment centres we toured 18 months ago and to make recommendations for this action plan. For example, we recommended that the department provide more information about how to access addictions treatment. We said, specifically that the department should provide plain-language documents describing what treatment facilities have to offer and the steps required to get in. I have spoken to many people who are unaware of how to begin this stage of their healing journey. I wish the department had included this recommendation in their plan.

I am happy to see our recommendation on enhanced aftercare has been partially adopted. We wanted to see stronger after care connections with the southern facilities and to help communities that want to develop peer support groups like AA. We want to ensure home communities are part of the plan.

When we did our tour, the committee and the Minister repeatedly heard facility staff and residents emphasize the importance of safe, secure, and sober housing after leaving treatment. We heard about the threats to mental and physical wellbeing posed by homelessness or the return to the site of one's addiction because of a lack of housing.

The reality is that many Northerners exiting treatment centres are in fact discharged into homelessness. I recently met a man in Behchoko who completed the program at Fresh Start in Calgary two years ago. He lives with his daughter in a house with 16 people. He is doing his best to stay sober but his housing situation is not helping. It makes no sense to me that we invest millions of dollars in treatment for Northerners but we do not assist them with the most basic means of maintaining their sobriety. It's worth mentioning as well that providing housing is cheaper than providing a return trip to treatment.

Mr. Speaker, the action plan says the department will "pursue basic solutions for basic needs such as safe housing." Mr. Speaker, I see unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Mahsi.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you. I will begin the quote again. "Pursue basic solutions for basic needs such as safe housing for individuals returning from addictions treatment programs." Mr. Speaker, this is just not good enough.

That leaves how many of the 181 people who completed treatment last year without safe housing? My answer is, even if it's one, that's too many. I will have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Deh Cho.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEH CHO HEALTH CARE SERVICE ISSUES

**MR. NADLI:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. [Translation] The government has done many things to improve the healthcare system for the residents of the Northwest Territories. [Translation ends]

In recent years, the management regime for our healthcare system was restructured in the NWT Health and Social Services Authority. This structure includes regional wellness councils that provide advice and support for the delivery of programs and services by listening to community residents and bringing forward ideas, suggestions, and concerns to a leadership council for the territory. Only time will tell if this new structure will result in better healthcare for residents in small communities, but my hope is that it will.

When it comes to health, the focus of the Department of Health and Social Services is on prevention, including the promotion of healthy living as a lifestyle. There are high rates of diabetes and smoking across the NWT, and we know that our dietary habits are not changing for the better. Further, we have high rates of alcohol and drug abuse, a well-known legacy of residential schools. Experience tells me that small communities are disproportionately affected by these issues.

In small communities like in my riding, we have health centres providing health and mental wellness programs, and services to help our residents heal and stay healthy. More specialized treatments like surgery and chemotherapy are delivered elsewhere, including at a brand new territorial hospital in Yellowknife. Other positive initiatives worth noting include screenings for colorectal cancers, immunization programs, and mental health counselling services.

Despite these positive developments for the NWT, healthcare services continue to be a concern in my riding. I continually hear concerns from my constituents about how they are treated at the local health centres. On occasion, people experiencing health issues do not even want to go to these facilities for help. Unfortunately, I regularly have to encourage my constituents to be persistent in their quest for proper medical treatment, and even to seek a second opinion elsewhere.

Constituents want to be treated with care and understanding. They want to work alongside healthcare professionals to get their health concerns addressed early, not later, when timing may be critical.

Mr. Speaker, a person experiencing health ailments knows their body, and if they feel something is wrong, they should have somewhere to turn to ask for medical assistance. It is important that a resident's concerns are heard and taken seriously by the professionals we entrust and pay to help them. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members' statements. Member for Nunakput.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON TUKTOYAKTUK VISITORS CENTRE

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last summer saw an unprecedented number of tourists taking advantage of the new Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway to drive all the way to the Arctic Ocean. It was estimated that over 5,000 people travelled to Tuktoyaktuk, or five times the population of the community. Mr. Speaker, that's equivalent to over 100,000 people coming to Yellowknife.

There are no campgrounds or RV parks at the end of the highway, so most of those tourists had no choice but to turn back around and return to Inuvik after dipping their toes in the Arctic Ocean. A small visitor's information centre opened in mid-July with funding from the Department of ITI, and I am pleased to note that we recently passed additional funds for a larger tourism facility which will include washroom facilities.

When I raised questions to the Minister last fall, he indicated that he would be continuing to have discussions with the community leadership on areas to be addressed, and on how to build capacity for the community to take advantage of this tourism boom. I look forward to hearing from the Minister on the results of those discussions this summer.

Mr. Speaker, the ferries are now crossing the Mackenzie and Peel rivers and this year's tourist season has started. I hope that the Department of ITI is planning to run tourism workshops in the community and in the region, so that this season sees only positive impacts and long-lasting benefits to the community of Tuktoyaktuk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Sahtu.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON MINING WEEK

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. June the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> is NWT Mining Week, an industry that is vibrant and a provider of benefits to many NWT residents, community donation recipients, workers, trainees, the business community, and government.

Mr. Speaker, mining is still key to the northern economy. In the earlier days, mineral potential began in the Sahtu along the shores of Great Bear Lake. Today's signs and exploration preliminary results show evidence of that continued potential in the region. There is a possibility this area can become a major player in contributions to the post-devolution GDP.

Through the mineral, oil, and gas strategies, it's comfortable to share by attendance of the annual AME Vancouver mining roundup conference and many other events that stakeholders of the North are open for business. Additional continued support I can see is our post-devolution legislation reviews and modernization. When witnessing this, I feel comfortable our government is taking our inherited devolution responsibilities seriously.

Advancing forward, Mr. Speaker, a recent report by the Fraser Institute ranked the Northwest Territories as the 10<sup>th</sup> most attractive global jurisdiction for mining investment. Allow us not to lose focus on government responsibilities such as building schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and designing supporting an economy for diversification. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later, I will have questions for the Minister of ITI.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

#### MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROTECTED AREAS ACT

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, we will read the Protected Areas Act for the third time. Should this bill pass, it will undoubtedly be a huge step towards creating a conservation economy unlike anything we have seen before.

The federal government over the last several years has budgeted large amounts of money for the conservation economy across Canada. This decision by the federal government demonstrates a desire to expand the amount of protected areas in our country. In fact, the federal government hopes to protect at least 17 percent of all lands and waters in Canada over the next few years. Our Protected Areas Act will give the NWT the ability to substantially participate in this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see all communities in the riding of Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh develop plans for protection of traditional and culturally significant

areas. Lutselk'e has Thaidene Nene, YK Dene may want to protect the shoreline from Detah to Francois Bay, and Fort Resolution may want to protect the lower Taltson River and the lower Slave River. Furthermore, each community should have an option to employ their own people as guardians of the land and water. For example, in Lutselk'e, there already exists an established group of guardians called Ni hat'ni Dene, which means "watchers of the land." These guardians are out on the land and ready to engage environmental organizations and industry alike.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the environmental benefits of protecting land and water, the protection of land and water will provide many social benefits that come along with protecting those lands. This includes employment for local people, and I have said many times in the House there are plenty of good socio-economic impacts that come with employing people. I will say it again. For every dollar spent on employing guardians of the land, you will see returns of \$2.50 in social spending reductions.

Mr. Speaker, people who are employed are better equipped to support their school-age children both financially and as positive role models for giving them a better chance in life and a more employable future. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Mr. Speaker, in our small communities, our graduation rates are low. There are too many youth unemployed and uneducated. We need to employ more youth, and the Protected Areas Act has the potential to provide more opportunities in the area of a conservation economy.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day of seeing our guardians protecting our cultural and traditional areas in all communities of the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Great Slave.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
BRENDA JOHNSON – NWT EDUCATION HALL  
OF FAME INDUCTEE

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate my constituent Brenda Johnson who was inducted into the 2019 Education Hall of Fame yesterday morning. Brenda spent 31 years working at Mildred Hall School as a program support teacher, eventually moving into coaching roles at Range Lake North as well as NJ McPherson schools. She is currently the curriculum

coordinator at the district level and continues to be a role model for others on how to work with diverse groups and students.

Her priority has always been building an inclusive environment for students. She develops and supports teaching practices that create an optimal environment for success for all of her students, but most importantly, Mr. Speaker, for those with diverse learning needs. Brenda is an extraordinary teacher, an excellent mentor, and a curriculum and assessment expert. Her true passion is making a difference not only in the learning experiences of the students she teaches, but in their lives, as well.

Brenda's education career demonstrates integrity, compassion, enthusiasm, and commitment. The only thing that surpasses her education philosophy is her passion for all the students and staff who she loves to work with. Thousands of children and youth have benefitted from her work over the years, and she is well-known throughout the city of Yellowknife, having taught many people as well as their children, even their grandchildren.

Congratulations, Brenda. We all value your hard work and dedication. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Member for Hay River South.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON  
SHEILA COOK – NWT EDUCATION HALL OF  
FAME INDUCTEE

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** [Microphone turned off] to speak today about Sheila Cook, who got inducted into the Education Hall of Fame yesterday. Sheila Cook was born in the nursing station on the K'atlodeeche First Nation outside Hay River. She attended the Hay River Federal Day School, followed by Sir John Franklin High School for grades 10 and 11, and then completed her high school diploma at Victoria Composite in Edmonton.

She realized that she wanted to become a teacher when she was working as a tutorial assistant for speech and language therapy with children and working as a classroom assistant. She began her studies in Fort Smith in the teacher education program, with two children and her husband at home. She graduated in 1985, while expecting her third child. Teaching young students at Princess Alexandra and Harry Camsell schools became the focus for Sheila, focusing on providing a safe and caring learning environment for all her students every day. After 10 years of teaching, she headed to Saskatoon, where she graduated with distinction with her Bachelor of Education degree. Her northern values continued to mould and shape her teaching for two more decades until she retired in 2010.

Sheila continues serving others through her volunteer work preserving Hay River's rich history as a director at the Hay River Museum, where she continues to promote and educate visitors on the northern heritage and culture in the Hay River area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members' statements. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

### Returns to Oral Questions

#### RETURN TO ORAL QUESTION 675-18(3): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES POWER CORPORATION GENERATOR PROCUREMENT COSTS

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a return to oral question asked by Mr. Testart on March, 11, 2019, regarding the Northwest Territories Power Corporation generator procurement cost.

NTPC recognized that Members have been interested in this project. The corporation is pleased to report that the project is nearing completion, with final commissioning under way for the last two generators. It was necessary to switch vendors for the final two units because the original vendor was unable to meet the required delivery schedule, even after multiple renegotiations. This vendor's bid was originally selected because it provided the lowest cost overall and met all other project requirements. The cancelled contract resulted in approximately \$750,000 in additional costs. Included in this total are additional costs to mobilize contractors, install the units from a new vendor, interest associated with the schedule delays, as well as some additional designing and engineering. By changing vendors, the corporation was able to install larger units with better insulation and saving \$170,000 of depreciation, partially offsetting these costs.

As a result of the challenges associated with this project, NTPC has strengthened its project management practices and procedures to be more industry standard, including adjustments to procurement practices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Returns to oral questions. Members, I am pleased to draw Members' attention to the presence of Mr. David Jones, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner for the Northwest Territories, who has once again joined us in the gallery today. Welcome. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today in the Great Hall, volunteers with St. John Ambulance in Yellowknife were recognized for their volunteer contributions with first aid training and the therapy dog program. In the gallery today, we have Phillip Clarke from Nova Scotia, the past chancellor of St. John Ambulance Canada; Brent Fowler, the CEO of St. John Ambulance NWT and Nunavut; and Teresa Toutant, the Director of Community Services for St. John Ambulance NWT and Nunavut. I would like to welcome them all to the House. Thank you.

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

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize this hardy bunch of young fellows up here who are sitting here today and look a little haggard. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize in the House today a group of men who have biked 10 days, 200,200 kilometres, from Whistler, British Columbia, to Yellowknife, in an effort to raise money to help support the Yellowknife Mountain Bike Park.

I would like to recognize Alex Conlon, Jamie Blades, Mark Taylor, Matt Tirrell, Will Cadham, Quinn Lanzon, Huw Thomas, Dave Kenworthy, and Braedyn Kozman, and congratulations to all of you on your amazing accomplishment. I know how tough that is, because I have tried to do 200 clicks in two days, and ooh!

---Laughter

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other day I recognized the Pages from Range Lake, but I hear we have a new Page from Range Lake. I want to recognize Lacey Lewis. Congratulations for being here, and I also recognize all of the Pages. Thank you for your work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, thank you very much to the Pages. I know that they have had at least one late night this week. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me a second time. I neglected to introduce Mark Heyck, former mayor of Yellowknife Centre, and Ms. Amy Lee. They are residents of Yellowknife Centre, and they are here to support their sons, Alex and Sam Heyck, who have been Pages in this House. Thank you.



**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member, and thank you for pointing out that I was bending the rules for you. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

### Oral Questions

#### QUESTION 774-18(3): MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND FUEL DELIVERY

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have heard the barge scheduled to go to the Kitikmeot last year was cancelled in May. Can the Minister explain the rationale for the barge being cancelled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought he was going to ask me about May of this year, but nothing has been cancelled, of course. I have explained the cancellation last year of the barge delivery to the Kitikmeot a number of times in this House. I have done a briefing on it. The public information is out there. It is clearly laid out, and it was due to environmental weather conditions that were out of our control. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. THOMPSON:** As part of the MTS business plan 2008, did MTS take on more private contractors than they did in 2017?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** MTS's objective right from day one was to grow this business, and we continue to do that. We will continue to satisfy all customers that we have in the system.

**MR. THOMPSON:** With the challenges that we saw last year, can the Minister advise us what MTS is doing to ensure that this doesn't happen in the future and whether MTS has a risk management plan in place?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As I have updated the House here recently on what was going on around the fuel haul, we are managing our risk accordingly. We are working with the fuel supplier, particularly for this particular season because of the fires in Alberta. We are working with our partners, as I have said before, with Transport Canada and the Coast Guard, and particularly to have icebreaker access up in the Beaufort when we are ready to go. We are currently loading our first sets of barges. As I said the other day, even with the rail line out, we are trucking fuel to Hay River, and we will continue to monitor the water and ice conditions throughout this season and adjust our plans as we see accordingly.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Final oral question. Member for Nahendeh.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for his clarification, and I agree that this has been asked a lot, but these are questions that people keep on asking, so we need to get this information out better, or more, I guess.

With the MTS having to store materials last year that did not make it to the Kitikmeot, will MTS be taking responsibility for any damaged material that occurred over these winter months? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Customers ship goods at their own expense and their own risk. MTS offers and encourages customers to take out insurance on their shipments, and we encourage that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

#### QUESTION 775-18(3): MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS PLAN

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. I would like to repeat my congratulations for getting the action plan done on mental health and addictions. I am curious about a couple of things that the plan is not doing. There is nothing in the plan about providing plain language material to people who are considering going south for treatment. My question to the Minister is: is the Minister planning to address this need? Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I answer the question, I just want to correct an unintended oversight from my Minister's statement yesterday. I acknowledged all of the people who have done incredible work to help us with our action plan, but I failed to acknowledge the important work that has been done by the Standing Committee on Social Development. They did their tour of the treatment facilities. They provided a report. We had debate in this House on the report. We agreed with the recommendations. We drafted our draft action plan. Committee did point out to us that it was a little lacking, that we didn't hit it square on the head. They made a number of recommendations for us for improvement. We took their recommendations and their thoughtful input to develop the plan that is before you today, and it is a better plan as a result of that interaction.

With respect to the Member's questions about how we are trying to ensure that our residents know of the different programs that are out there, we didn't include that in the action plan, because essentially we believed that that was already part of the job that we should be doing, and it was work that actually should have been done. We had relied on our professionals to get that information out there, but we realize that the information wasn't getting out there.

Recently, we updated our website to outline all of the different facilities and supports that we provide, including the different treatment facilities, but we are working more closely with our providers. That is not just staff within the Government of the Northwest Territories counsellors, but it is also counsellors in other organizations, like the Tree of Peace and other organizations, to make sure that they are aware of the different facilities and the strengths and the weaknesses of each of those facilities depending on your particular addiction. We are also trying to make sure that they are aware of all of the application processes, the ability to expedite referral, all of those things, so that they can share that information with those individuals who are coming to us. That is all on top of us doing the updates on our website. We are going to keep looking at these. We have put together some advisory groups to help us as we move forward.

If we keep hearing that we need to find other ways, we are certainly willing to explore that, but I didn't see that as an action item requirement. I saw that as a requirement of doing business, and after meeting with the MLAs and taking their recommendations, we did provide that direction to the department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. I will just remind everyone that we do have a lot of Members to get through today. Member for Yellowknife Centre. Oral questions.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the recognition from the Minister in his answer to my question, so this is an area that will be revisited. My next question is about housing. Having a place to live after leaving treatment is a basic need, as the report acknowledges, but the report has no specific actions about how to address this need. Can the Minister confirm that this issue needs to be a priority not just for study but for action and say how he intends to work with his colleague, the housing Minister, to address this need?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** There are a number of things that we are doing in the plan that tie together. The Member has had an opportunity to read it. Within the plan, we do talk about a seamless care pathway, which is from beginning to

end and includes coming back to the communities. There is no question the Member is absolutely right. We do have some transition issues bringing some of these individuals who were homeless before they went for treatment back into homeless situations. We are not just studying, Mr. Speaker. As part of this plan, we have already reached out to the Housing Corporation and engaged in discussions about how we can do better on transition housing and things we can do to support different organizations within communities, Aboriginal governments, and other bodies to help us put in some supports or support organizations that wanted support to help us address the transitional housing issues that some of our residents may experience when they return from addictions treatment.

I do want to put out there, though, Mr. Speaker, not all residents who are returning from different treatment facilities or treatment options are homeless, but there are certainly some. As the Member said, if there is one, that is too many, so we are reaching out to our partners to start exploring solutions, not just another study.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the Minister's answer that he is looking for solutions, that he acknowledges the issue. That is very constructive. My concern is, though, that it is discussion, it is not action. Is there any timing he can offer about when solutions might be identified and then implemented, something that moves us further down the road toward meeting this need?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Fortunately, in the Northwest Territories there are a lot of passionate individuals who are working outside of government to find solutions in these areas, and we are certainly willing and interested in working with them to provide transitional housing options. Recently, the Social Envelope Committee-of-Cabinet had some in-depth conversations about how we can work together as partner departments to support different initiatives that exist not just in Yellowknife but in communities throughout the Northwest Territories. We have more to learn on what these different organizations are proposing and how they would like to work with us or partner with us, but we are reaching out to them. I cannot tell you when a solution will be finalized, but we are doing the work and developing those relationships that I believe will give us the options we need to support our returning residents who have no housing options previously.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake. That was three? I apologize. It's been a long few weeks here. Oral questions. Final oral question, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I note that the Minister's plan is going to measure a suite of outputs such as wait times, staff training, and hospitalizations, but I do not see anything on the measure of outcomes, such as how many people completed treatment, accessed aftercare, or maintained their sobriety over a period of time. Can the Minister assure me that outcomes will be measured, as well?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Yes, absolutely. To help us with that, we are actually putting in a new information system. The price tag on that is \$1.55 million. It's the community counselling information system. That is going to help us track that information. Until that is fully in place, we will be doing our best to collect that data because we, like the Member, like all Members, we want to make evidence-based decisions in this area, so we will be tracking that information, as well.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

QUESTION 776-18(3):  
ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECTION  
OF PRIVACY PLAN

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Last week, this Assembly passed the historic changes to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act that had been in the works since 2012. The Minister worked well with standing committee, and we now have very good legislation. The next step is to follow through on some of the other changes recommended during the public consultation as documented in the "what we heard" report. Can the Minister of Justice explain what the next steps are in following up on the November 2016 "what we heard" report from public consultations and flowing from the changes we made to the Access to Information Protection of Privacy Act? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Justice.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The comprehensive review of the ATIPP Act involved extensive consultation with GNWT departments, public bodies, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, as well as the public. Feedback received during the course of these consultations, including the IPC's extensive submission, and recommendations identified by the standing committee were thoroughly considered and informed the development of the bill. The amendments will serve to address a number of concerns raised through the comprehensive review of the act. The focus for the department will now be on implementation. I agree with the Member opposite that this legislation is excellent legislation,

worked on every a very long period of time by Members of this House and the public.

**MR. O'REILLY:** A number of areas for further work flow from the public consultation and changes that we made to the legislation, including fee reductions, training, identification of classes of records that do not require an ATIPP application and so on. Can the Minister give us a sense of the priorities and timing of this work?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Generally speaking, it is expected that the majority of amendments proposed are expected to come into force by April 1, 2020. The department will need to work with other departments and public bodies to prepare for the implementation of the new provisions and provide training as is necessary. Planning for this work has already begun and will remain a priority for the department.

**MR. O'REILLY:** One of the major irritants we have heard about the current administration of access to information and protection of privacy are the fees that are charged to applicants. These are set by regulation. Can the Minister tell us what action he is going to take with regard to fee reduction and/or elimination?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes. Based on what we heard, the regulations will be revised to lower the fees related to the processing of access to information requests. The changes being contemplated are: firstly, decreasing the initial fee for general requests from \$25 to \$10; secondly, providing for 10 free hours of processing for general requests; thirdly, maintaining the charge of \$27 an hour for general requests after the initial 10 free hours; decreasing costs of photocopy charges to 10 cents per page; and maintaining personal information charges of \$25, but increasing the number of free pages from 100 to 200.

Of course, the ATIPP regulations will continue to allow public bodies the discretion to waive fees where they present financial hardship to the applicant.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Final oral question. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for those details. I was trying to scribble them all down. Can the Minister give us a sense of timing as to when these fees are going to be reduced and/or eliminated under Access to Information and Protection of Privacy regulations?

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** This work will require some time, but it does remain a priority. Understandably, the focus of the department has been on the development of the new act. With the passage of

the act, the attention of the department will turn to successfully implementing this work, including the development of new regulations. This work is already under way. Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

QUESTION 777-18(3):  
2019 MARINE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
SHIPPING SEASON

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to ask questions to the Minister of Infrastructure on MTS, which I didn't get to ask yesterday. I am wondering if MTS is well-prepared for the 2019 shipping season. I know the previous speaker asked about MTS, but I am just wondering if the Minister could provide a brief update on how things are going with Marine Transportation Services for the 2019 shipping season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that we are getting these questions so we can update the residents of the Northwest Territories. Things are going well in Hay River. This is a busy time of year down at MTS getting everything ready and in the water. It is a highly regulated business. Transport Canada is down there. The insurance companies will be there going through our vessels and through all the inspections.

To update the House with what is going on there, the Kakisa has been inspected. That is the tug that we use around the harbour to move stuff around. That is in the water for the last couple of weeks. The Vic Ingraham is in the water, now going through its annual inspection with Transport Canada.

All six barges for the first northbound tow from Hay River are approved for loading. They have already been inspected and ready to be loaded. As I said, the first load of trucks are coming in with our fuel. They will be loading those up and getting ready for them to be able to leave here in the coming days. That is six barges. They are going to depart on June 14<sup>th</sup>. This is the tentative scheduled sailing date of those.

Of the three vessels that were wintered in Inuvik last year, two are up and running. One is already performing services for Imperial Oil in the Delta. Barges in Inuvik have been loaded with southbound freight. The vessel Edgar Kotokak and the Kelly Ovayuak are preparing to leave Inuvik southbound

following behind the Canadian Coast Guard, Eckaloo. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I appreciate the update. It is good to know what is going on and how the logistics of preparation for shipping. I understand that our only rail line to the Northwest Territories is interrupted. If the rail line is interrupted, how will fuel come north, and what is the department doing about this?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As we have updated the House last week, we know the rail line is down with the bridge burning down at Steen River and a number of the rails are being warped. That work is being performed. As I have said, we are working with the trucking companies to bring petroleum products to Hay River. The department is in daily communication with our fuel supplier, Imperial Oil, regarding the impact of the recent interruption of rail services to the Northwest Territories. Imperial Oil is working closely with CN, with the trucking companies, and with their customers to maintain the supply of fuel into the territory. This is a priority for them as well as for us.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** I recall last year when we were talking about the cancellation and possibly shipping by truck and what the cost would be, definitely more expensive. Will the change from shipping fuel by rail to trucking fuel cause a delay in the barge departures or deliveries in the Nunakput region this year?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** At this time, Marine Transportation Services does not foresee any significant delay in the delivery of fuel to Hay River or delay in the sailing schedule. The department is working closely with the fuel supplier, with CN and the truckers, and has an alternate supply of sources and transportation plans in place. However, the situation is fluid and can change very quickly.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Final oral question. Member for Nunakput.

**MR. NAKIMAYAK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. Last year, the ice definitely had a big impact on shipping. I understand that trucking fuel is more costly than transporting by rail. Can the Minister tell me what impacts this will have on fuel prices for the communities of the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Yes. It does cost more to truck the fuel versus moving it by rail. However, Imperial Oil has stepped up to the plate on this. They have told us that they will pay the extra costs for transporting the fuel. They will also move the fuel by truck and will manage the transportation. The Government of the Northwest Territories will only be paying for the original rail

rates for the fuel supplied to the Government of the Northwest Territories for 2019 barge season. There is no impact on the price of fuel in the communities that are served by the Government of the Northwest Territories through the Petroleum Products Program. We owe a thanks of gratitude to Imperial Oil for stepping up to the plate for the residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Kam Lake.

QUESTION 778-18(3):  
BELLANCA BUILDING

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In recent weeks, there has been media reporting about the demolition of the Bellanca Building in downtown Yellowknife. This has been part of our skyline for many years, and many residents have been concerned about tearing down what seems to be a viable asset and whether or not there are options to convert it to, some of the ideas that have been brought forward, student housing, a university campus, or transitional housing or low-income housing. I would like to ask the Minister of Infrastructure if the GNWT has considered the Bellanca Building as an asset for any of its projects. Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I knew we would get questions on this one. This was raised in the newspaper with the Bellanca Building coming down. Now, we have to make one thing quite clear: it is a privately owned business. They own this asset. We are actively leasing space off the Bellanca Development Corporation in other buildings that they own in Yellowknife. They have never made anything aware to us as a government about this building. They haven't used it to bid on other projects in the Northwest Territories, or in Yellowknife, I guess.

For us as a government to look at this as an asset to use for something around the polytechnic university or other things in Yellowknife, we haven't had a viable look at this. We have to go through our processes, get money through the House to be able to move on a number of these projects in the Northwest Territories. The short answer is no, we haven't done that. If we were to do that, we would have to have a good, hard look at this because this is an older building. I suspect there are deferred maintenance issues on this building and hazardous material, depending on what type of renovation a person would have to do on this thing. At this point, we have not clearly had a look at this thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. TESTART:** I do share the Minister's caution. It is not all that appropriate for governments to reach in to private commercial matters, but there is some precedent when it is useful to government such as MTS. We bought those assets, and now we are using it. If there is a real need for a campus, could this be an opportunity to start fresh? I appreciate what the Minister is saying.

Now, there is some concern, as well, that the public has brought forward around demolition and all that material that as the Minister said, may or may not be hazardous going to the Yellowknife landfill and potentially being an environmental concern. Is the Minister aware of any procedures the GNWT has in place to assist in assessing those concerns if they do present a risk to the public?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** We have a lot of environmental regulations in place that the developer would have to follow if they were going to dispose of this building. They are going to have to deal with the City of Yellowknife, I suspect, around municipal waste disposal bylaw requirements. There are a number of environmental issues that would have to be taken into consideration on their side as well as probably ours and the City of Yellowknife if this building was to be ripped down.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you to the Minister for that clarification. The Minister hasn't looked at this. Has any analysis been done on it, not just on whether it is for a GNWT project, but just on the viability of the building as a commercial development? The GNWT rents space from this development corporation. Is there any reason why they are not renting space in this particular asset?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As I have said, they have not looked at any GNWT lease procurement opportunities with this building for office space proposals. We are not aware of any department that is looking for incremental space at this point. I don't believe there is any funding available to do that at this point. A lot of this is all speculation in the paper about what is going to happen with this building. I don't mind having a conversation with the Member if there is an opportunity to have a look at this thing for other projects that the Government of the Northwest Territories is having a look at, but that would be early days. We would have to look at a number of things, I think, to look at this thing. We would have to look at the operational needs, the technical upgrades that would have to take place on this type of building to meet those requirements, all these sorts of things. As the Member knows, the siding fell off there last year. There are code deficiencies, deferred maintenance issues. There are a lot of different things that we would have to have a look at, but I am willing to have those conversations.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Sahtu.

QUESTION 779-18(3):  
MINING ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following up on my recognition of NWT Mining Week, as we heard from the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation in his statement, the De Beers Group has made a meaningful contribution. This is an example of industry's presence in our territory, not to mention the absorbing costs of transporting fuel by imperial oil, as well.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister released the 2018 Socio-Economic Agreement Report for diamond mines operating in the Northwest Territories. This week is Mining Week, as mentioned, and again, we are hearing about the diamond mines. I recognize that diamond mines are very important to our economy, but what has happened to the other commodities? What has happened to gold, for example? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Sahtu. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All Members in this House know how critical the importance of the mineral sector is to our economy, and I have been out there promoting this sector, trying to bring back the investment that was gone since the 2008 crash. We are out there promoting the Northwest Territories of our economic viability and our engagement with Indigenous governments. We have been to PDAC. We have been to Roundup, and all of these great things, promoting the Northwest Territories. In those discussions, the juniors have told us quite clearly that access to cash for exploration projects anywhere is very tough. It's very tough. Most of the money has gone to the marijuana market. Raising money is extremely tough for these people. We are continuing to work with them the best that we can.

With that said, we have a couple of different projects that are past exploration stage. We have NorZinc, and we have Fortune Minerals, who are trying to move theirs into the operation stage. We will continue to work with them. We have Osisko and Pine Point, who have really ramped up their advanced exploration and are trying to advance their project rapidly in the Northwest Territories in Pine Point. We both have TerraX and Nighthawk Gold, who are trying to define their projects. We know that they are in a greenbelt situation, and they look very promising.

We are working with all of these guys, and we have our Avalon project with Cheetah Resources, who are trying to do the mini-project out at the Avalon site. These are all positives indicators in the mining sector for a market that is very tight, and we will continue to work on that and promote the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thanks to the Minister for that reply. That is good news there. Can the Minister tell me what his department is doing to support or promote this exploration and interest?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As we all know, we have done a number of things in the last three years, and we will continue to work on them. We have our mineral development strategies in which we will invest another \$2 million this fiscal year for the regions that are participating. We have the Unlocking Our Potential brand that we will continue to work to increase public and industry awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the Northwest Territories.

We will continue to fully engage with the federal government, particularly around infrastructure investments. We have been very successful in infrastructure investments in the Northwest Territories, and we will continue to work with our colleagues in Ottawa to invest in the Northwest Territories, to help us improve our mineral potential in the Northwest Territories and to the world.

The Minister of ECE continues to work on Skills 4 Success to help promote education around the jobs needed in the future of the Northwest Territories. A number of them are around the Mineral Resources Act. We have built the new building in Fort Smith.

There are a number of different things that we are working on. The geological survey is trying to update their information. Also, the mineral incentive program that we have in this House.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thanks to the Minister for that reply. Moving on to the next question, we have a manufacturing community in our territory. The Minister introduced the manufacturing strategy. It seems to me that a vibrant mining sector could be a good customer for manufacturing projects in the NWT. Are there any plans to link the two sectors together?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** A strong, prosperous mining sector totally helps benefit the many aspects of our economy, and the manufacturing sector is one of them. We will continue to work with that. The manufacturing strategy that we introduced in the House this week is to increase market size for the manufacturers, and the mining sector is an important sector of that. We will continue to work with them on that.

The other thing that I think we need to look at, and hopefully will happen, is to have the mining sector participate in the reverse trade shows that we will have the Manufacturers' Association participate in and build a showcase of what they have available to the mining sector in the Northwest Territories. These things are all important. They are all linked. Our economy is important to all of us in this House, and we will continue to work on them together.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Final oral question. Member for Sahtu.

**MR. MCNEELY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that allowance. When it comes to diamond mining, we have also talked a lot in this House about opportunities to manufacture diamonds. Can the Minister give us an update on the department's work regarding the NWT secondary diamond industry? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As all Members know, I just came back from JCK in Las Vegas. It is the premier event around diamond industry in the world. The world-leading diamond industry executives are there, and I had had an opportunity to talk to a number of them. At the same time, the biggest thing that came out of this event this year was our new diamond policy framework that we introduced last year in December in this House. I had a lot of support from Members across. SCEDE was very supportive of the initiative, but one comment I think was mentioned in committee when I was in front of them was, "It looks like a good idea, Wally, but I'm not so sure it's going to work."

Well, I would like to update the House today because, at JCK, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet people from South Africa, from Namibia, the President of Botswana; these people are very interested in how we change our beneficiation around diamond policy framework. It was a very interesting couple of days down there. Our diamond policy framework has obviously turned this thing upside down globally. They are very interested in what we are doing at the department, and kudos go out to all of our staff at ITI that worked on this. It was a very creative way of thinking about how we could benefit from diamonds in the Northwest Territories. People around the globe are paying attention to what they are doing, so kudos to them. I support the diversification of our economy, and this is one of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

QUESTION 780-18(3):  
ELDER FORCED OUT OF HOME INTO FACILITY

**MR. BLAKE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister responsible for Housing. As I mentioned in my statement, I have an elder in the community of Aklavik who is being forced out of her home and told that she has to move into the elders' home. I would like to ask the Minister: does the Housing Corporation support elders in aging in place, or is it aging in place that they decide? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the constituent's concern, I won't get into the specifics. The Member and I have had conversations on that.

One of the mandates of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly is promoting community wellness and safety to support elders in their own communities for as long as possible. I had questions from one of the Members earlier this week, and we talked about the seniors' aging-in-place retrofits, and we support that. We also want to make sure that, when we look at the work that we are doing in the communities with our seniors and our elders, it is done on a case-by-case study. I did encourage the Member that we will be working with his constituent and himself to address the situation.

Like I said, we do have a mandate. We have done a comprehensive seniors planning study that we're going to focus on. We do have a seniors aging in place retrofits. We are working with the Department of Health and Social Services. Over the past few years, we have constructed five seniors' complexes which I must mention; two of them are in the Member's riding. We continue to support seniors aging in place, or seniors aging in a place where they have the supports and the services that they need.

We will continue to keep the Member updated, and we will continue to dialogue with the Member and work on the case before us and come up with a solution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. BLAKE:** As I mentioned in my statement, I am happy to have these elders' facilities in my riding, and we do have elders who are looking forward to moving into these facilities, but we also have elders that enjoy being independent. In one of my other communities, I have an elder who is in her 90's who lives by herself with a wood stove, and hauls her own wood into her home, and she enjoys that. Will the department work with my elder in Aklavik and not force her against her will to move to the elders' home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** In short, yes, we will. We will work with the Member as well as leaders. We just had a housing summit up in Inuvik, and we had a lot of really good discussions on all the housing issues throughout the Northwest Territories. As you know, we are developing these community housing plans, and the leaders and the stakeholders and community members can tell us what their priorities are. We'll work with them to address them, and we do know that our elders are very important. They're the holders of our cultures, our traditions, our languages, and we want to make sure that we support them so that they can support us and support our youth and the ongoing traditions and cultures of our people.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 781-18(3):  
HEALTH SERVICES ISSUES IN THE DEH CHO

**MR. NADLI:** Masi, Mr. Speaker. I recall about two decades ago, people from the Dehcho communities decided and wanted to establish health boards so that they could have more local control of their health services within the region. That was two decades ago.

When people go to the health centre, they're seeking help. Most of the time, they want help in terms of critical care that they might need in emergency situations, or simply, diagnosis of their conditions. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Social Services: how are patients' experiences with healthcare services being monitored for quality control, and what is being done to improve patient experiences? Mahsi.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been talking about quality assurance and quality control within the Territorial Health Authority for a number of years now. This is something that needs to be done. We need to have mechanisms whereby we can hear what the residents are telling us, both good experiences and bad experiences. When they have a bad experience, we need to be able to look into that experience and actually come up with recommendations, how to improve and change.

I did listen very closely to the Member's statement earlier today when he was talking about some of the frustration that his residents were having, and it is troubling to hear, but it is very real that some people don't trust the healthcare system. Trust is hard to earn, but it's easy to destroy. In the Northwest Territories, we have many Indigenous residents who don't trust the healthcare system for

multiple reasons, whether it's residential school or other long-term situations. There is a trust issue. I would encourage the Member, and I would encourage all MLAs to work with the residents, to encourage them to engage with our quality assurance processes.

We know that we're still growing in this area. We're making some changes to try and strengthen and make it a little more accessible. We're currently working on establishing an office of patient relations that will give patients help actually navigating their way through the system, including helping guide them to quality assurance. Please, please, all Members, residents, please utilize our quality assurance process. It's an awesome way for us to learn, to listen, and to find ways to improve.

At a regional level, we still have regional wellness councils, which is a body that is able to bring us advice on what they're hearing from their communities and bring it back to their communities. There is a board member of the regional wellness council who now sits on the chair to our Health and Social Services Authority. Now the region has a voice at a territorial table that they've never had before, and that is as a result of moving to a single authority.

**MR. NADLI:** There are some instances where patients or constituents of mine had to have family members drive them out of the community and visit other hospitals or health centres just to get a proper diagnosis. My question to the Minister is: what support is available to residents of the NWT if they must seek a second opinion outside of their community?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** This is a good question, and it's important to note that every resident in the Northwest Territories, in fact, every resident of Canada, has a right to a second opinion if they're not happy with the information or the prognosis or the diagnosis that has been provided to them by their healthcare practitioner.

Obviously, in a smaller community, sometimes it can be more complicated because there may only be one or two community health nurses or NP's available, so they will have to come out of community. We don't provide medical travel support and those types of services for somebody who is seeking a second opinion. If they do go out on their own and seek a second opinion, for instance, if an individual from Fort Providence were to go to Hay River, visit a doctor there, and get a different diagnosis than the one that they had, we would be willing to cover that person's travel to and from that community using our medical travel rates. If the diagnosis comes back the same, obviously, we wouldn't be in the same position. If a new diagnosis



comes, we're happy to cover that individual's expenses using our medical travel program.

**MR. NADLI:** My other question is: what progress has been made towards the living healthcare services in Indigenous languages?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** As a health system and as a government, we have introduced many ways to ensure that our clients and patients are able to receive care in the most appropriate way, which obviously includes in their own language. Our preferred approach would be to have staff interpreters who speak the language of the population that we serve, so different languages in different regions. However, unfortunately, this isn't always possible.

The NWT Health and Social Services Authority has an Indigenous wellness unit that focuses on or ability to deliver care in many languages throughout the Northwest Territories, and we have Indigenous patient liaisons who are integral in our efforts to actually meet the needs that the Member is describing. In regional centres, we have access to patient liaisons, and also have clerk interpreter positions that are available to ensure that the patient has access to quality patient care. We struggle in some regions. We are effective in other regions. We're always looking for ways to improve the services we're providing here, and finding ways to work with communities to make sure that there are people available who can provide those services when our residents come in and want their services provided in their traditional languages.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Final oral question. Member for Deh Cho.

**MR. NADLI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everyone is pretty well aware that there's a new health hospital here in Yellowknife, and it's been an interest of elders to continue the diets, and one of them is country foods. My question is: what arrangements are being made to ensure that patients have a choice of country food, especially elderly patients? Mahsi.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** I did have an opportunity to speak about this exact issue earlier in this sitting. In the new Stanton, we do have the ability to prepare country foods. We've put in flash freezers and other tools that will actually help us prepare. Unfortunately, we're not going to be able to go live with this new program at Stanton until July. Right now, we're working to help train up our contractors who provide food services, to make sure that they are aware of how to do this. They will be visiting places like the Yukon hospital that actually already does a really good job in this area, and we are looking forward to seeing traditional

foods available in Stanton Territorial Hospital in July. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

QUESTION 782-18(3):  
ABILITY TO ENFORCE FIRE BANS

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Mr. Speaker, I understand from the questions that I posed to the Minister on Tuesday that, under the current suite of forestry acts, ENR officers do not have any real powers to enforce fire bans in the hinterland, so unlike the powers that enforcement personnel have currently with regard to parks and let's say even within municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear. I understand the need that, when some folks are on the land, they may need fire for heat and they definitely may need fire to cook food. So, notwithstanding that, let's use the example of a large bonfire outside a park. Can the Minister tell me what sort of powers are contemplated for ENR and other law enforcement personnel in the Forest Act that is under development? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the proposed Forest Act, the powers that have been contemplated that the officers would have are the ability to stop people when they are burning, for example, putting out campfires or other burning taking place and ask them to put out the fire, or the officer would have the authority to put out the fire themselves. Officers would also have authority to charge people with an offence that might include a fine.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you to the Minister for his reply. The Minister mentioned that it might also include the ability issue a fine. Can the Minister outline what the thinking is on fines and consequences for an improper fire when there is a fire ban on or even when there is not a fire ban on?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I agree with the Member that there need to be consequences for bad behaviour, and those who do things like that need to be held accountable for it. Having said that, in the proposed Forest Act, regardless of whether it's a fire ban or not, it outlines that individuals can be fined up to \$100,000, corporations up to \$1 million; fines could be doubled if there is a repeat offence that takes place. It also suggests in the act that, for each day the offence continues, it can count as a separate offence. Courts have the

latitude to increase the fines if they feel it is necessary.

**MR. VANTHUYNE:** Thank you to the Minister for his reply. It certainly gives us some motivation to work extra hard on the Forest Act in the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly for those who might return and for those who are new to the Assembly. Many of the forest fires we have are person-caused and, under the current acts, there are no provisions for a person who caused a forest fire to be held liable for their actions. Can the Minister tell this House whether such provisions are being considered in the new Forest Act in this regard?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I am glad the Member mentioned the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly coming in. One of the pieces of advice that I passed on to the department is to try to have all of the work done before the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly comes in, and then, once the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly comes in, my advice to them would be to take something like this and deal with it right at the onset of the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly. We spent a lot of time at the beginning of this Assembly on our 235-item mandate. Then we had the mid-term review. I do not think we really got much going until years three and four, so my advice to the incoming 19<sup>th</sup> would be to deal with a lot of these important issues right off the bat.

Having said that, again, it is important to note that the NWT does have one of the lowest rates of person-caused fire in the country. The proposed Forest Act ensures that, if anyone is found responsible for a forest fire, they could be held accountable with consequences that do include fines.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

QUESTION 783-18(3):  
STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN OR YOUTH IN  
CARE WHO GO MISSING

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. During my time back home, I have had a couple of concerns brought to my attention, and I have worked with the Minister. I thank him and his department for working with me on that. My first question is: is there a policy to guide social service workers when a parent, foster parent, or concerned citizens alert authorities of a missing child under the care of the director of Child and Family Services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, yes, there are some standards in place to guide staff in

the event of a child or youth who goes missing. One of the standards that we have is based on serious incidents. This standard provides direction to staff to ensure that they take required actions to address a serious incident, that they contact the RCMP where required, that they seek medical attention for a child or youth where required, and provide verbal and written notification to the director.

Serious incidents do have a range that are identified within the standards from 1 to 4, and, as a note, if a child under five were to go missing or be away from their placement without authorization for any more than three hours, they would actually be considered a priority 1, so we would engage the standards immediately.

We also have some standards in place, Mr. Speaker, for when an individual is out of territory in a placement. This standard provides direction to staff on how to initiate an alert both within the Northwest Territories and outside the Northwest Territories, in the jurisdiction where a person is placed. So, yes, Mr. Speaker, in short, we do have standards in place to address exactly these situations.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Can the Minister advise us: how is the child's safety addressed when they are reported missing? I think the Minister kind of elaborated a little bit in the first question, but maybe get a little bit more elaboration on this one.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** When a child is under the care and custody of the CFS system, the director is in a sense the parent of the child, the de facto parent, and the director does have the ability to provide some responsibilities in this area through child protection workers within the system.

The practice expectation when a child or a youth does go missing is that the child protection working is to take all measures required to locate the child. This includes, obviously, things like questioning last-known contacts of the child or youth; seeking out possible locations that the child or youth have visited or regularly visits; searching for a child or youth at those locations, both directly in person and in collaboration with other known acquaintances, foster parents, and the RCMP. So multiple individuals can be engaged in this.

Child protection services training actually includes training in these exact standards so that individuals know what their expectations are and know how to respond to this. We did just get audited. We have acknowledged that we need to do better in many of the areas, and we are enhancing training in many areas, including this area, to make sure that our staff know what they need to do when one of the children in care does go missing.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Can the Minister tell us what the department is doing to ensure social workers are aware of the standards and are using them to guide their practice in such situations?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The training I mentioned in my last response is currently being enhanced, and we are in the process of developing a more stringent training framework. We are expanding the length of the training from two months to three months, and we are designing new training processes that include a combination of in-class study, structured self-study, and supervision, ensuring that our staff are appropriately trained and that they are competent in the knowledge and the skills that they need prior to employment as child protection workers, so we are trying to do a lot of this work up front, before we actually appoint them as child protection workers.

Social workers in our system are not all child protection workers. Only those who have received designation and have certain specific training are, so we are trying to do more of that up front so that they have the skills to respond accordingly when those unfortunate situations do occur.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, and I appreciate the information the Minister has been able to share with us here today. My final question: will the Child and Family Services quality improvement plan that is effective soon support and align with these standards and the training? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Time is meshing together. I either made a statement on that today or yesterday. I'm pretty sure it was today. The bottom line is, the quality improvement plan is a living document. We're hoping to have the document go live, reckoning that it will continue to evolve over time, but yes, it does and will include these types of things as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

QUESTION 784-18(3):  
PERMANENT HOUSING FOR RESIDENTS  
DISPLACED BY ROCKHILL FIRE

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation. I took note of his response to you about the fire at the Hay River high-rise when you were in your regular position. In particular, that he had a multi-stage plan involving all the relevant departments to assist tenants to find

new accommodation. So then I thought about the situation at Rockhill which, as you know, burned down on October 1<sup>st</sup> last year. While the Y was able to rehouse some families, there are a number of them now at risk of homelessness. My question is: does the Minister have, or is he developing, one of these multi-stage plans for Rockhill? Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't say it's unfortunate, some of the things that have been happening throughout our municipalities and the Housing Corporation, but actually the government has taken a step up in addressing these issues, as well as some of our volunteer groups and NGOs. Really, in this case, the City of Yellowknife and the residents, that was a really quick response, and I know from day one when I did hear about the fire on the radio, I called up our present CEO to make sure that we were addressing the issue.

In this case, to the Member's questions, yes, we do have a multi-stage plan for the families and the households that are affected by the Rockhill apartment fire. After it did burn down, the GNWT social envelope agencies have worked with the YWCA to assess their operations, and develop options for a potential replacement.

The Housing Corporation is currently working with CMHC, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to identify and acquire a building to replace the Rockhill apartments. Currently, we have identified a 32-unit apartment building as a suitable building, and it would meet the needs of the YWCA for resuming their operations, and we're also supporting the YWCA through a multi-year contribution agreement under the rapid rehousing program to address the immediate rental needs of their clients. As I had mentioned, Mr. Speaker, from day one, they've been working with us. We've been working with YWCA, our stakeholders, and cross the GNWT departments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate that response from the Minister. My information is that, while a number of families have entered into leases with their landlords in a market setting, there are 14 families who can't get leases because of their income or arrears. My question is: are the solutions to this problem going to kick in in time to help these 14 families?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Yes, we are working with the YWCA to determine the best way that we can provide assistance for those who were affected by the fire. As I mentioned before, we have a rapid rehousing program that provides assistance to

cover such things such as moving costs, deposits, and the rental and/or utility assistance necessary to allow individuals to move immediately out of homelessness and to stabilize a permanent housing solution. The program also provides long-term and short-term rental subsidies, as well as financial assistance to the households.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for his response. The YWCA has been subsidizing rental costs for this group of 14 families from its own funds, but I'm told that these funds will run out at some point this year, meaning that those without leases will become homeless. How can the Minister ensure a smooth transition to the different solutions that he has outlined?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I mentioned, we will continue to work with the YWCA to adjust the situations on a case-by-case basis. Our contribution agreement with the YWCA under the rapid rehousing program should address some of these household needs until a long-term solution to their needs has been established. We'll continue to have that open dialogue and communication with the YWCA.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Time for oral questions has expired. Item 8, written questions. Member for Frame Lake.

### Written Questions

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 9-18(3): STRATEGIC OIL AND GAS LTD. HOLDINGS IN THE NWT

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I have two sets. First set, my questions are for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. It was responsibility for oil and gas rights in the Northwest Territories.

In February 2015, Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd. stopped production in its Cameron Hills field in the Northwest Territories. Strategic Oil and Gas is now in creditor protection. Trading was halted in April 2019 on the Toronto Stock Exchange, and some directors have resigned. What are the current holding of Strategic Oil and Gas in the Northwest Territories in terms of oil and gas rights, land use permits, water licences, and facilities, and:

1. has Strategic Oil and Gas submitted full financial security for all of the water licences, land use permits, and other rights for its holdings in the Northwest Territories;
2. what are the reclamation liabilities of Strategic Oil and Gas for its holdings in the Northwest Territories;

3. does a plan exist for closure and remediation of existing facilities and is financial security adequate for this work to be done; and
4. what is our government doing to prevent public liabilities and ensure that the interests of the Northwest Territories are protected with regard to the current state of Strategic Oil and Gas Ltd.?

#### WRITTEN QUESTION 10-18(3): GIANT MINE LONG-TERM FUNDING STUDY

**MR. O'REILLY:** The second set, Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, who serves as the lead on the Giant Mine Remediation Project for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Measure 6 of the June 30, 2013, Report of Environmental Assessment required that the project team investigate long-term funding options for the perpetual care requirements at Giant Mine, including a trust fund. Stakeholders and the public are to be involved in discussions on funding options and a detailed report is to be completed within three years. The study remains unfinished and a critical review by the Giant Mine Oversight Board of the draft report was tabled in the House on May 23, 2019. What role has the Government of the NWT had in the development of the draft report and:

1. does the Minister consider that the draft long-term funding study meets the requirements of Measure 6 from the Giant Mine Environmental Assessment;
2. what action is the Minister taking to ensure that there is adequate consideration given to a trust fund and other models beyond annual appropriations, to fund perpetual care requirements at Giant Mine;
3. what actions is the Minister taking to ensure that this long-term funding study is completed in a timely fashion and there is an opportunity for the public to review and comment on the study; and
4. has the 2012 study by the Pembina Institute recommending a trust fund as the most appropriate mechanism for long-term funding of perpetual care at Giant Mine been taken into account, and what are the Minister's conclusions on the recommendations from the Pembina Institute report?

Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Written questions. Member for Kam Lake.

WRITTEN QUESTION 11-18(3):  
WORKERS' SAFETY AND COMPENSATION  
COMMISSION FEES AND COMPENSATION

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the following questions for the honourable Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission.

1. Please account for the total amount of fees in dollar amount paid to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission by the private sector in the fiscal year 2017-2018;
2. Please provide a four-year average of fees in dollar amount paid to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission by the private sector;
3. Please indicate the dollar amount of Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission compensation paid out to private sector employees in fiscal year 2017-2018; and
4. Please provide a four-year average in dollar amount of Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission compensation paid out to private sector employees.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Mr. Thompson, or rather Member for Nahendeh.

**Replies to Commissioner's Opening  
Address**

MR. THOMPSON'S REPLY

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in reply to the Commissioner's opening address. The Honourable Margaret M. Thom, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, opened this Third Session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly on October 17, 2017. Today, I ask for my honourable colleagues' patience while I reflect on some of the government priorities Commissioner Thom spoke to and talk about where I think we need to go from here.

Also, I would like to tell my colleagues in the House and members of the public who are listening in that I intend to run in the next territorial election. I'm hoping I will be able to return to the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly and continue to work for the people of Nahendeh, who have put their trust in me for the last four years.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who knows me knows that I worked for many years in the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. My work in sport and recreation is what inspired me to seek office. I wanted to find a new way to help people living in the smaller communities.

Working as an MLA, it has been an eye-opening experience. I have learned that the government is a large, complex organization that spends \$1.8 billion per year serving the people of the Northwest Territories. The NWT has a relatively small population, but the territorial government's operations are every bit as complicated as any provincial government.

We provide healthcare, social services, education, transportation, housing. We build infrastructure, generate employment, drive the economy, and protect the natural environment. We run the machinery of government by functioning as an employer, by processing financial transactions, managing risks, and providing IT support and legal services.

We participate in intergovernmental activities on important national and global matters. Meanwhile, at home, we recognize the inherent right of Indigenous people to govern themselves, and we work to make that happen. We build relationships with other northern governments, and the way we do business evolves.

The GNWT is not the same government it was when I joined the public service. It is more sophisticated and complex. It has come a long way. There are a lot of things that the GNWT has done over the past quarter-century. However, the larger it gets, the more conservative it seems to become. In the early days, it wasn't unusual for a regional superintendent to do what needed to be done to help someone fix a problem. Those days are gone, but we shouldn't lose their "can-do" spirit. We need to guard against rules and processes getting in the way of creativity, new ideas, and getting problems solved.

As I said, I think the government has done a lot of great things in the last 25 years. It has dealt with some pretty big changes, like division and devolution. How you measure the government's success, though, depends on your perception. My perception has always been geared to the people living in the smaller communities. My worry is that, as the GNWT grows, it runs the risk of becoming a big bureaucratic machine that has lost touch with the most vulnerable residents.

As an MLA, I see examples every day of a growing disconnect between the territorial government and the folks it serves. I am worried about it. We need to find a way to be a modern-world, big-business

government but one that still serves the need of a population so small it wouldn't fill the stadium for a Toronto Raptors game on a Saturday night. We need to find a way to ensure that we remain a government that has not lost its heart or its ability to resolve the day-to-day worries of the people it serves.

Commissioner Thom talked about how the cost of living has a direct impact on Northerners' quality of life. These are people in communities like Fort Liard who have been struggling for decades with crippling property tax bills. These people have approached me for help, and I have seen their bills. It is enough to give a person a heart attack, and, believe me, some of these people are sick with worry. They have been told that they owe the GNWT insane amounts of money: \$68,000, \$127,000, \$138,000. These are people of modest means. Some are elderly. Some will never pay these bills in their lifetime, and they worry about what that means for their children and their grandchildren.

These property tax arrears date back, in some cases, to the early 1990s, 30 years, and nothing's been done. Here's an example of the disconnect I'm talking about. I saw a GNWT briefing note that said these people are refusing to pay because they claim that, as Indigenous people, they have a right to occupy the land. That couldn't be further from the truth.

These are not people who are ignoring their responsibilities or taking political stands. They are trusting people who believed the leadership in their communities. They were told they were on band lands and that they didn't have to worry about the property tax bills they were getting. They were told it didn't apply to them, and they believed their leaders. In some cases, the federal government transferred Indian Affairs Branch lands to the Commissioner, triggering the GNWT taxation, and the people living on the lots weren't even told.

MLAs have raised this property tax arrears problem in the House over the years. Yet, it still persists. I've been told that one or two people got help from the GNWT to have the interest removed from these bills so that they are just paying the principal. For the rest of the affected residents, the problem goes on year after year. So does the worry.

I have talked to the Minister of Finance about this issue, and I am hopeful we can get it dealt with. I would like to ask him to make a commitment to put together an interdepartmental working group with people from Finance, Lands, and MACA to identify all affected residents and fix this problem for good. Continuing to send massive tax bills year after year does nothing but cause people distress and send a message that this government doesn't care.

Housing is a problem closely related to land occupancy. Commissioner Thom noted that "addressing the urgent need for affordable housing" is a priority for this government. The GNWT has done some good housing programs, and I feel the former Minister, Minister Cochrane, and the present Minister, Minister Moses, have done a good job leading the NWT Housing Corporation, but, again, there is more that could be done.

People are suffering in overcrowded conditions. We are not doing enough to address the issue. We have rentals, public housing, affordable housing, and market housing. Even with co-payments, there are long waiting lists for rental accommodations. Every time we are able to assist someone to move up the chain, we open up a space for somebody who is homeless to find a place to live.

What about tiny housing as an alternative to shelters for the homeless? I would rather see tiny, manageable housing units made available for those with housing crisis needs than hear about one more person freezing to death in a tent. We need to look at creative ways to adapt and renovate existing housing in communities to meet the changing needs of residents. Is the GNWT looking at ways low-cost tiny housing could be used to supplement homeownership? This could especially benefit people in smaller communities, which lack the programs, such as rapid rehousing, semi-independent units and housing first that exist only in Yellowknife or the bigger centres. It could also offer an affordable homeownership option in communities that lack housing markets.

The Commissioner's opening remarks touched on GNWT's intent to address the shortage of market housing in tax-based communities, but I'm not sure if the government has achieved this at this time. I know the NWT Housing Corporation disposes of surplus housing units to get them off the government inventory and make them available at a reasonable price to people who want to own. If you look at the list on the Housing Corporation's website, though, right now there is nothing there.

We need to find ways to graduate people out of public housing and into home ownership. This is something that my colleague from Tu Nedhe-Willideh raised in the House last week. He suggested that NWT Housing must do more to divest itself of public housing, which keeps people trapped in the social welfare net. If a constituent has rent arrears, they become ineligible for moving into home ownership. Could the government look at ways to allow outstanding rental arrears to be rolled into the mortgage for a new homeowners? This might assist someone to get into a home which better suits their family's needs and encourages pride of ownership. When the rules guiding program delivery wind up

working against the people they're meant to benefit, there is something wrong. The NWT Housing Corporation must do more to identify how its own policies and processes are creating unintended barriers to housing access and fixing them.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard the sayings, "home sweet home," "home is where the heart is," and "a person's home is their castle." There can be no question that a safe, warm, comfortable home is a basic need for anybody to survive and thrive in life. I would like to see the incoming government make a commitment to completely eradicate homelessness in the NWT in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Speaker, meaningful employment goes hand-in-hand with housing as a key component for the residents to live successful, meaningful lives. Such has been said in the House about the importance of northern jobs, especially in the smaller communities.

The GNWT has a significant impact on northern employment through the design and location of its programs and services. Unfortunately, the government tends to put jobs in the capital and in other bigger centres to save costs and take advantage of economies of scale.

While it may save the government money in the short term, it only seems that way. When people live in smaller communities can't find employment, they either have to leave their homes, families, and traditional lands or stay in place and struggle with the impacts of poverty.

Either way, the lack of jobs and education opportunities can lead to alcoholism, drug addiction, depression, family violence which turns, raises government's social program costs while destroying the fabric of the community's life.

It bothers me that we don't hear much about decentralization these days. Look at what former Minister John Pollard did during his time as Finance Minister. I had the opportunity to talk to him about decentralization and how it was done during his time. He started by asking senior staff to come up with a list of positions with the department could be moved out of the region and to smaller communities.

This was eventually rolled out as the New Directions decentralization initiative of the 12<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, which championed the placement of positions in smaller communities, then trained up people willing to take on those jobs, which brought with them economic benefits to the communities.

I would like to see the government renew its commitment to put government jobs into smaller

communities wherever possible, and I believe we should be tracking this progress and holding government accountable for it in the next Assembly.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the Department of Executive's single-window service centres, which have put government service officers in 22 small communities. This program has also provided the residents of those communities with a place to go when they need help accessing government programs and services. We need to see more innovative initiatives like this to decentralize GNWT jobs and the political will to make it happen.

The GNWT also has a big impact on jobs as an employer. According to the GNWT's Public Service Annual Report, the GNWT's overall workforce on March 31, 2018, was made up of just under 31 Indigenous Aboriginal employees, even though the general NWT population is roughly 50 percent Aboriginal.

I hear from my constituents that long-term Northerners, who want to work for the GNWT, are not getting interviews. Also, the Indigenous Gateway and Regional Recruitment programs are not getting people into vacant positions. The GNWT needs to do more to ensure that Affirmative Action is working. Last week, I heard the Finance Minister say "about 46 percent of our workforce outside the capital are P1 candidates, getting closer to the 50 percent." This is good to hear, but outside of Yellowknife, the Indigenous Aboriginal population is at least 60 percent. This is where we need to be. Government needs to make sure that the Affirmative Action policy, which is at least 30 years old, is brought up to date and meeting current goals.

The GNWT also needs to take a look at its hiring appeal process. This process allows certain applicants with appeal rights to challenge administrative errors in the hiring process, but they aren't given the information they need to confirm that a procedural error has been taken in place. Applicant cannot appeal a bad hiring decision by management, even if that decision appears biased. For those reasons, it is an appeal process in only name. Maybe it is time for the GNWT to consider putting a public service commission in place to ensure that GNWT hiring is being done fairly with a focus on putting NWT residents to work.

The GNWT also affects northern employment through its contracting policies. Even with the Business Incentive Policy and negotiated contracts, too often valuable contracts go to southern businesses. Every contract that goes south is a blow to northern businesses employing northern people. It is not just the direct loss of the contract that hurts, but it is the ripple effect.

There is a perfect example of this problem in Fort Liard where a BC contractor, working on Highway No. 7, brought in his own food, fuel, and employees. When this happens, wages are going south and northern businesses that supply groceries, fuel, clothing, and amenities are missing out.

Again, we hear of these problems over and over and nothing seems to change. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly, I would like to see a standing committee with more proactive oversight over contracts, perhaps for negotiating contracts, contracts in Regular Member's constituencies, and contracts over a certain value, to ensure that the employment and economic spin-off stay in the NWT and to promote a better understanding of those times when they can't.

In her opening address, Commissioner Thom noted that "the high cost of energy is another burden on Northerners" and notes that the GNWT Energy Strategy would include renewable and alternative energy resources. Energy efficiency helps people lower their housing costs and helps government and businesses to bring down operations.

The government has done a great job of finding innovative ways to generate power. Look at the solar panels in the various communities and the wind turbine projects in the Inuvik region.

Unfortunately, it seems that if it is not a government idea, then it doesn't see any investment. Government could be doing more to work with and learn from innovative northern businesses, especially in the area energy efficiency. I have been advised that Fort Liard is sitting on a great opportunity to develop geothermal energy. Just think what would happen if the community could tap into this source of power. We could see lower power rates; a more environmentally-friendly heating source for GNWT and municipal buildings; cheaper, healthier food grown in geothermally heated greenhouses; and increased employment opportunities in sectors such as transportation and construction. I would like to see the GNWT partner with local businesses to get a geothermal pilot project up and running in Fort Liard, that builds on lessons learned in other areas such as Greenland and Iceland.

I would like to see the GNWT work in partnership with energy innovators in the private sector, people like Jeff Philipp of SSi Energy, a division of the NWT telecommunication company SSi Micro. Jeff's parents, who founded the Snowshoe Inn in Fort Providence, have more than 40 years of off-the-grid experience. Jeff has drawn on his experience to develop a made-in-the-North concept designed to address problems that contribute to high northern energy costs, that being the reliance of the small

communities on aging diesel-fuelled generators and the lack of a common energy grid.

The SSi Energy Solution, a combined heat-and-power system, would capture waste heat through the production of power and reuse it to warm houses, water, and buildings. Jeff says that about two-thirds of fuel used in power generation is expelled as noise, friction, and heat. He said that capturing that energy could cut a community's fuel consumption anywhere from 50 to 60 percent. The captured heat would be stored in thermal batteries at a central location and redistributed through a network of underground, insulated pipes. Renewable energy sources such as wind and solar could also be tied into the system. The GNWT needs more to get behind northern innovators like Jeff.

There can be no question that climate change is bringing drastic changes to the North. I am concerned about findings of the Auditor General's 2017 report that found ENR did not fulfill its leadership role or meet its commitments on climate change. The department did not develop a climate change adaptation strategy even though it committed to do so 10 years ago. This is very troubling.

One of the shortfalls I see is that when GNWT talks about the issue of climate change, the focus tends to be on the issues that affect our northernmost communities, such as shoreline erosion, impact on wildlife. Climate change is having a big impact on my riding, too. I heard about a situation in Fort Simpson where a piece of equipment sank into the ground at the airport. What caused this problem? The operator was trained and had been doing this task at the airport for years. The equipment was the same as it had ever been, same weight, in good working condition, and being used as it was designed. The only thing that had changed was the environment. Warmer weather and climate change are causing problems now that are only going to get worse in the future.

I can foresee big problems for our roads, airports, ferries, and other infrastructure. I want to give a shout out to Municipal and Community Affairs for the work that they have been doing to help communities prepare for climate change through their capital and asset management plan, which will help community governments identify ways to protect their infrastructure and bring in the new technology. Government needs to do even more to help communities deal with climate-change impacts. Each community needs to have an adaptation plan in place.

For years, I have seen shoreline erosion, and it's not getting any better. We need to come up with plans to prevent us from having to relocate



impacted communities. In the next government, the Minister responsible for Environment and Natural Resources will need to ensure that the department steps firmly into its leadership role in dealing with the climate change issue.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I've learned in my time here is that government can always find money for initiatives it wants to support, no matter how often we are told the government's financial resources are limited.

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Regular Members took great issue with government's proposal to reduce the GNWT's budget by \$150 million, which resulted in government reorganization, the loss of positions, and cuts to O and M funding, contract work and important programs such as multisport games.

While the standing committees haggled over program reductions, the GNWT was still able to go ahead with some big projects, such as the Stanton Hospital (\$750 million), the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link (\$82 million), the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway (\$100 million), the Mackenzie Valley Highway Project (\$700 million) and the Tlicho all-season road (\$412 million).

Many of these projects were done as public-private partnerships, with very little input from Regular Members on the decision to proceed with such massive investments. I look forward to reviewing future audits of these projects to see what lessons can be learned. Some of these projects have financial commitments lasting 30 years or longer. I believe that the approval of all 19 Members of the Legislative Assembly should be required for the government to enter into such huge commitments.

As important as these projects are to the territory's economy and future growth, there needs to be a better balance between infrastructure and social spending. Strategic spending on social programs and services may not result in big, shiny deliverables, but their worth can be measured in the health, happiness, and productivity of our communities and residents.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that many of the residents of the NWT struggle with addiction issues on a daily basis. Because there are no facilities in the NWT offering addictions treatment, NWT residents who seek help must travel outside of the territory for help.

The importance of aftercare support is crucial to recovering addicts trying to lead a healthy, substance-free lifestyle. Residents who have successfully completed treatment programs require a great deal of emotional, mental, and

psychological support and encouragement upon returning to their home communities.

People returning from treatment are vulnerable to relapse. Without the support needed to help people overcome their addictions and make healthy lifestyle choices, it can be difficult for someone in recovery to stay on the path of healing.

Government should assist our residents in their healing journey by creating a mobile support team of culturally sensitive, aware, and trained professionals who can travel across the North to assist and encourage residents who have made the choice to embrace their personal healing journey. Each community visit could be one to two weeks in length to assist support teams to nurture a connection with the client and their family, and to foster a relationship with the community's leadership and residents.

We need better aftercare for those who are hospitalized too. For example, I was reading about a situation recently where a family had an aunt in Stanton hospital who was not doing well. They wanted to get her back to her home community so she could spend her last days there with family and friends. When they asked the department to bring their aunt back home, health authorities told the family that there was no room available in the long-term care unit.

The family has a home and was asking about why the government does not look at creating live-in caregivers as a way to help with our aging population. This would be a creative way to deal with the shortage of long-term care beds and would allow our elders to remain at home, where they are most comfortable. We also need to do something for the non-medical escorts who are not family members. These people give up their time freely to help others and are providing a service that the government would otherwise have to provide. These volunteers should be provided with a small monetary fee or per diem to compensate them in a modest way for their time and show we care about their commitment to our elders and sick.

We should also be looking at social worker positions for elders, to provide someone who can advocate for these vulnerable members of our population. Elder abuse is a sad reality for many of our seniors. Mistreatment occurs behind closed doors and often goes undetected. Many seniors are unable to advocate for themselves, and the majority need protection from their own family members.

In the next Assembly, I would like to see the Minister of Health and Social Services bring forth legislation that is structured to protect vulnerable, at-risk elders in a manner similar to how the Child and Family Services Act is intended to protect

children. This legislation would encompass the scope of practice for elders' social workers and set out the protections for the client and the responsibilities of, and protections for, the social worker.

Currently, there is no such legislation available. As a result, the only way to deal with elder mistreatment is to report it to the RCMP. While there are some cases of elder abuse that should be dealt with through the criminal justice system, this system does not come into play until after a criminal act has happened. Having elders' social workers would enable these professionals to look at the systemic, cultural, and family dynamics contributing to the abuse and to work within this context to develop a safety plan to protect our elders and potentially prevent mistreatment before it happens. This position would be a regional position with all resources and supports available to assist at-risk elders in the smaller, more isolated communities. This would allow social workers for elders to advocate on a regional level, working collectively with all community and regional organizations and accessing out-of-territory support programs as and when required.

The elders' social worker would need to have extensive training regarding cultural sensitivity and awareness, in terms of the residential school legacy and the current social issues that this legacy has presented to the people of the North. The elders' social worker would work very closely with families; however, the focus would be the elder and their needs. Elders are important and valued members of our communities. We need to be doing everything we can to protect and nurture them and ensure that their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs are met.

We also need to ensure that the supports are in place for children and youth who are at risk because they are being raised in homes where there is substance abuse and violence. I was deeply troubled by the findings of the second audit of Child and Family Services done by the Office of the Auditor General in 2018, which found that things are worse than when the original audit was done in 2014. I believe that Minister Abernethy has worked hard as Minister of Health and Social Services, but the work of the department was too focused on replicating audit findings and not enough on making the lives of our children better who are in the system. We need to ensure that we are doing everything we can to protect these children before there is a disastrous failure that results in the loss of a child's life.

We need to ensure that there is adequate funding for early childhood education so that our youngest members of society get the best possible start in life, and we need to be careful that our youth don't

fall through the cracks when they are too old to access programs and funding for children and too young to access those resources as adults. It worries me to hear so many stories of students in the NWT who are trying to get an education while couch-surfing at the homes of friends and relatives.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I spent a large part of my career as a public servant working for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs. I will continue to support the work of the department if I return to the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly. I believe that many of our children get huge social, physical, and emotional benefits from participating in sport and recreational activities.

Municipal and Community Affairs, through Sport North, supports a lot of great programs for youth, including the Rising Star program, which enables young athletes exhibiting potential in their sport of choice to get additional training through a camp format, and the High Performance Athlete Grant, which helps gifted athletes who are down south with the costs of training and competing at national or international level.

Unfortunately, however, we have many athletes who stay at home and train and represent the NWT with little or no support from the GNWT. For these children, funding only comes if and when the athletes work to raise it or their parents fight to get it. We need to ensure that all children who want to play sports, regardless of the sport they choose or their level of expertise, have the opportunity to participate, especially in small communities where organized activities help kids stay out of trouble and on the right track.

To ensure that the territorial government is responsive to the needs of northern youth and is listening to our young people, I would like to see the GNWT put a Youth Council Secretariat in place so that the government has its young people in mind with every action it takes.

As I said at the start, my focus has always been on the people in the community in my riding. I worry about their ability to access government programs and services. I mentioned the GSOs in the single-window service centres as an example of innovative thinking that makes the GNWT more responsive to the people it serves.

I also want to mention the work done by the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly to establish an Ombud for the Northwest Territories. The new Ombud has a mandate to assist people who need help with solving problems with government. I am looking forward to seeing this office open to fulfil its mandate. I would also like to acknowledge the Legislative Assembly's Office of the Clerk who located the position outside of the capital, in Hay River.

While I support these changes, the fact is that most of the people in small communities, the municipal office is the first place they go when they need help from government. Our municipal government provides front-line programs and services in the communities. They make decisions on the local level. Through their administration, they provide water and sewer services, emergency services, economic development, and sport and recreation programs, and they do all this with inadequate funding.

In its mandate, the GNWT made a commitment to develop a strategy to close the funding gap, so that communities would have the funding that they need to meet core needs. This is one of the mandate items that the government has failed to deliver. Members have asked repeatedly for confirmation of the total amount of the funding shortfall on an annual basis and a strategy to close that gap, and we have yet to see it. If I return for another term, I will be pushing hard for this commitment to be met. We cannot leave our front-line municipal governments without adequate funding to deliver municipal programs and services.

I want to conclude my reply to the Commissioner's opening address with a few observations about the northern system of governance. I, for one, believe in consensus government system. I believe it works for Northerners, but I also think there is room for improvement. I started out by saying that I have seen the territorial government grow and evolve over the last quarter century. When I first joined the GNWT, the territorial government directly delivered a lot of programs and services to the people of the NWT. Slowly, this has changed.

More authority has been taken on by municipal level by community governments and Indigenous governments have made progress through the settlement of lands, resources, and self-government agreements. As the territorial government has evolved, it has become more complex. It has become less involved in the delivery of some of the programs and services and more adept at planning and research, but the pendulum has swung too far.

What I see now is a government that has a tendency to get caught up in an endless cycle of studying a problem but never getting around to fixing it. The GNWT has to balance this desire to study, analyze, and define with the needs to take action. Government needs to stop talking and live it. I want to see this next government held accountable not for the promises it makes, not for the studies it does, but for the action it takes to respond to the concerns of each of its citizens.

Some people see party politics as the next step in the evolution of the territorial government. I don't

think that a party system will make the GNWT more mature than it is already. In fact, I think that we will wind up trading the flaws that are inherited in our own consensus style of system for a new and different set of flaws that come with party-based systems. I would rather see us work to improve the made-in-the-North system of governance we already have in place.

I would like to see Ministers who are willing to engage with all MLAs on the day-to-day decision-making of government. I would like to see a greater willingness to seek out views of the MLAs before decisions are made so that all 19 Members can feel they have input in the direction of government. I would like to see the role of the standing committees strengthened because I believe that we do better when more people have a hand in developing that work.

I believe that all if this can be done but only with a strong commitment from Cabinet and the Premier to work collaboratively. I have seen examples where genuine commitment to work in collaboration has resulted a better product. It is not always an efficient to work that way, but in the end, the result is better. I want what is better for the people of the Northwest Territories, and I look forward to my continued work as MLA for the people of Nahendeh. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Nahendeh. Replies to the Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Members, at this time, I will call for a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will call the House back to order. Members, we were on item 14 of the orders, tabling of documents. Minister of Finance.

### Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 460-18(3):  
USING THE TAX SYSTEM TO ENCOURAGE  
HEALTHY CHOICES: IMPLEMENTING A SUGAR-  
SWEETENED BEVERAGES TAX IN THE  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – WHAT WE  
HEARD REPORT

TABLED DOCUMENT 461-18(3):  
INTER-ACTIVITY TRANSFERS EXCEEDING  
\$250,000 (APRIL 1, 2018 TO MARCH 31, 2019)

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following two documents entitled "Using the Tax System to Encourage Healthy Choices: Implementing a Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Tax in the Northwest

Territories – What We Heard Report"; and "Inter-Activity Transfers Exceeding \$250,000 (April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019)." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Tabling of documents. Minister of Health and Social Services.

TABLED DOCUMENT 462-18(3):  
NWT ON THE LAND COLLABORATIVE 2019  
REPORT

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table had following document entitled "NWT On the Land Collaborative 2019 Report." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Tabling of documents. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

TABLED DOCUMENT 463-18(3):  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION  
654-18(3): LIVING WAGE AND NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES' CHILD BENEFIT

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-up Letter for Oral Question 654-18(3): Living Wage and Northwest Territories' Child Benefit." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Frame Lake.

TABLED DOCUMENT 464-18(3):  
GIANT MINE PERPETUAL CARE FUNDING  
OPTIONS

TABLED DOCUMENT 465-18(3):  
DRAFT REPORT, CROWN-INDIGENOUS  
RELATIONS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA  
(CIRNAC) - DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIONS FOR  
CONSIDERATION FOR LONG TERM FUNDING  
FOR GIANT MINE

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I have two documents I would like to table. The first one is titled "Giant Mine Perpetual Care Funding Options," by the Pembina Institute, dated March 2012. The second document is entitled "Draft Report, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) - Development of Options for Consideration for Long Term Funding for Giant Mine," date August 2018. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Tabling of documents. Member for Nahendeh.

TABLED DOCUMENT 466-18(3):  
MTS NON-DELIVERY 2018 SHIPPING SEASON

TABLED DOCUMENT 467-18(3):  
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NATIVE  
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE NWT  
REGARDING HOUSING – JUNE 3, 2019

**MR. THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will table two documents. The first document is a letter dated May 29, 2019, addressed to me, from CHOU Consulting & Development Inc. The second one is a letter from the Native Women's Association of the Northwest Territories, dated June 3, 2019, addressed to me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

### Motions

MOTION 40-18(3):  
EXTENDED ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE TO  
AUGUST 12, 2019,  
CARRIED

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I MOVE, seconded by the honourable Member for Great Slave, that, notwithstanding Rule 4, when this House adjourns on June 6, 2019, it shall be adjourned until Monday, August 12, 2019;

AND FURTHER, that any time prior to August 12, 2019, if the Speaker is satisfied, after consultation with the Executive Council and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that the public interest requires that the House should meet at an earlier time during the adjournment, the Speaker may give notice and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and shall transact its business as it has been duly adjourned to that time. Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Motions. Item 18, first reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Minister of Justice.

### Second Reading of Bills

BILL 58:  
JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION STATUTES  
AMENDMENT ACT

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 58, Justice Administration Statutes Amendment Act, be read for the second time.

This bill amends various statutes administered by the Department of Justice to:

- repeal provisions of An Act to Amend the Children's Law Act and to amend the Children's Law Act to establish a recalculation service;
- amend the Coroner's Act to clarify the responsibilities of the chief coroner and coroners in respect of inquests, and authorize the release of the body of the deceased if an investigation is complete;
- amend the Evidence Act to add provisions in respect of the admissibility of electronic records, and repeal provisions that allow the court to refuse to admit photographic film prints into evidence;
- add an updated definition for "prime time" to the Judicature Act;
- add a reference in the Jury Act to exemptions from jury service contained in the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act;
- increase fee rates in respect of the registration of instruments and caveats under the Land Titles Act;
- amend the Public Trustee Act to establish a mechanism for the disposition of unclaimed property;
- amend the Residential Tenancies Act to provide for the appointment of a chief rental officer, adjust provisions relating to service and the giving of reasons, and allow regulations to be made in respect of fees for services provided; and
- amend the Retirement Plan Beneficiaries Act to provide for the discharge of the administrator of a plan.

This bill also deals with other matters of minor, noncontroversial, and uncomplicated nature in several of these statutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. To the principle of the bill.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 58 has had second reading and is referred to the Standing Committee on Social Development. Second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in

Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters: Committee Report 19-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2017-2018 Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories; Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement; Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services; Tabled Document 442-18(3), 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework 2019-2023 Action Plan, with the Member for Mackenzie Delta in the chair.

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

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

**MR. BEAULIEU:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Committee wishes to consider Committee Report 19-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report on the Review of the 2017-2018 Public Accounts of the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Are there any general comments from the committee chair? Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This marks the final review of public accounts for the Standing Committee on Government Operations in the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Over the years, the standing committee has gained a great deal of knowledge about the public accounts process and has developed its own best practices for dealing with public accounts. This is a really fascinating area of legislatures in Canada and around the world, and there is a great deal of knowledge to learn. It's our hope that some of our knowledge and experience will be transferred on to future Assemblies, and we will be able to see stronger public accounts, processes, and committees to review them moving forward.

Speaking to the contents of the report, we read the report into the record yesterday. I think our findings speak for themselves. We will get into the specific recommendations, but I did want to take this opportunity to recognize the incredible collaborative efforts that the committee recognized from the Comptroller General, Mr. Jamie Koe. Over the years, we have been reviewing the public accounts. Every time the public accounts came back, they were always a bit better.

The public service was very responsive to the concerns that were brought forward from the

standing committee. I think we see a much-improved public accounts process and much more legible and public-facing public accounts document at the end of the day. That is exactly one of the things the committee really hoped we would see, a public sector accounting that is transparent, relatable, and as plain-language as possible. It couldn't have been done without both the hard work of my colleagues on the committee with the assistance of the Auditor General of Canada's office and, of course, with the Comptroller General's Office. We greatly appreciate, again, that collaboration and the Comptroller General's attention to the committee's recommendations and the concerns that have been raised over the years.

That being said, the big sticking point remains the privacy concerns around student loan remissions. Although some changes have been made, the committee remains concerned that this marks a breach of student privacy and should be address. At this point, the committee is convinced that it will require legislative change, and that is outside our role as an audit committee. The recommendation speaks for itself, and our findings over the years speak for themselves, too. This is an issue that matters. Privacy, of course, matters. Students who are receiving a benefit and were encouraged to return to the Northwest Territories ought to have their privacy protected. We hope that successor committees and future governments will take this issue seriously and make the required changes to ensure that student privacy is protected in the issuance of the public accounts.

With that, I again would like to thank the Comptroller General, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, and all the Members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations for their hard work over the years and their diligence in reviewing the public accounts. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. I will now open the floor to general comments from committee on the committee report. Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the hard work of the committee in reviewing the public accounts. I sat in on the proceeding. I also want to recognize the work of the office of the Auditor General of Canada and of the staff who have been very helpful over the years. I agree with the assessment by the chair, the honourable Member for Kam Lake, about the working relationship with the comptroller general.

For me, there are a couple of areas that are still outstanding. One, of course, is this issue of naming individual students, which now includes our daughter, and the loan amounts that have been

remitted. I just want to read into the record here one paragraph of the complete report:

"Committee is of the view that it has exhausted the debate on this matter with the Department of Finance, and the best way forward to affect further protection of student privacy is to consider legislative amendments that would exempt student loan remissions from the degree of disclosure that GNWT views is required under current legislation. Given that the term of the 18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly concludes later this year, committee suggests this matter is best pursued by its successor committee in the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly."

For the record, and I think I tabled these earlier in the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly, there were two letters from the Information and Privacy Commissioner who was of the view that this practice breaches privacy and is not legally required. If I come back here in the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly, I am prepared to bring forward a private Member's bill to fix this problem for good.

I guess there is some work that is going to be done on environmental liabilities. I look forward to seeing how that plays out over time, as well. I agree with the chair. There has been a huge improvement in the public accounts, and I think it is a good thing for the public and for MLAs. Great progress was made. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Any further questions from committee? Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 153-18(3):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
THE 2017-2018 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES - CONSOLIDATED BUDGET,  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Finance annually table a consolidated budget that shows anticipated revenues and expenditures for the larger government reporting entity, consistent with the information that will be reported at fiscal year-end in Section I of the Public Accounts: Consolidated Financial Statements. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you. Okay. There is a motion on the floor. The motion has been distributed. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will just point out that, in our ongoing quest for more plain-language documents when it comes to very complex public-sector accounting such as the public accounts of the Government of the

Northwest Territories, we have always pushed for better ways to show how much the government plans to spend, how much they have actually spent, and everything in between. In our conversations this year, the committee noted that a consolidated budget would be a good way to get this around, and the comptroller general at the time indicated that the GNWT believed it was in a position to actually bring forward a consolidated budget somewhere in the middle of the year, after the public accounts are done, after the budget has been approved.

This motion just calls for that process to go forward so we have a very plain consolidated budget that is very easy for the public to follow the money and ensure there is good value for money in the commitments made in the budget and how the appropriated money is actually being spent. We believe this is a strong recommendation for a better public accounts process. I hope my colleagues will support it today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? All those abstaining? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 154-18(3):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
THE 2017-2018 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES - BEST PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC  
FINANCIAL REPORTING, CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Mr. Chair, I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Finance undertake an analysis of best practices for public governments with respect to public financial reporting and table its findings in the 19<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly prior to the review of the 2018-2019 public accounts; and further, that this report identify how the findings will inform any future changes to be made by the GNWT with respect to its public accounts financial reporting. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you. Committee, the motion has been distributed. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. One of the sources that we often look at to understand public sector accounting and how governments report on their own finances is annual reports from the C.D.

Howe Institute. That is not our sole authoritative source, but it is a very good one. They have done a lot of work on this, and they grade different provinces and territories in the quality of how they are reporting their public accounts. Unfortunately, the GNWT usually receives around a D. PEI got worse. They have a D-. It is imperative that we find better ways to improve.

A consolidated budget is one of those things that is going to help, but there are any other steps that can be taken to improve the public financial reporting. We didn't want to be prescriptive or only rely on one think tank's, not matter how qualified, reporting. This motion calls for the government to look into different options on how to better do public financial reporting and then bring those in to the Legislative Assembly. Hopefully, our successor committee can then pick up that report and make recommendations and, if there aren't changes that have been made, or, if there have been changes, endorse those changes. I think this is a good way to identify an evidence-based way to improve public financial reporting of the GNWT, and I hope my colleagues support it today. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Question has been called. All those in favour of the motion? All those opposed? All those abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 155-18(3):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
THE 2017-2018 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES – PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF  
CONTAMINATED SITES, CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Department of Finance provide the standing committee with the opportunity to review and provide comment on the platform and content used for the public disclosure of contaminated sites prior to the finalization of this work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. The motion is on the floor and has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Environmental liability has been a subject of

interest for the committee over the years reviewing the public accounts. Again, the transparency around these liabilities has improved year on year. We have recommended that the GNWT put this information on some sort of website or single portal so it's very clear what the environmental liabilities are, where they're located, and additional information that may be relevant to an interested member of the public. The Treasury Board of Canada has a similar digital repository for the environmental liabilities of the Government of Canada. We believe that model is an excellent one, and we have made recommendations to pursue it.

I should mention that the government is actually working on a single portal like this, and we commend them for that effort. Prior to it being finalized, and rather than be proscriptive and say do what the Treasury Board has done, this motion just calls for some sort of electronic platform, or a platform to come forward, and for the committee to be able to see it before it's finalized to make sure it conforms with the expectations of the committee based on its knowledge of the reviews of the public accounts, and this longstanding concern around how best to present environmental liabilities.

Again, we know this work is being done, and we commend the work. We just want to make sure the committee is involved in the final product. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Mr. Testart.

COMMITTEE MOTION 156-18(3):  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF  
THE 2017-2018 PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST  
TERRITORIES – RESPONSE WITHIN 120 DAYS,  
CARRIED

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Government of the Northwest Territories provide a response to this report within 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. The motion is on the floor and has been distributed. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? Any abstentions? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Thank you, committee. Do you agree that you have concluded consideration of Committee Report 19-18(3)?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agree.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Agreed. Thank you, committee. We have concluded consideration of Committee Report 19-18(3), Standing Committee on Government Operations Report of the 2017-2018 Public Accounts of the Northwest Territories. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you. Mr. Testart.

**MR. TESTART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move the chair rise and report progress.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Testart. I will now rise and report progress, and the motion in non-debatable. Does committee agree?

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Agreed.

---Carried

### Report of Committee of the Whole

Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Committee Report 19-18(3), Standing Committee Report on the Review of the 2017-2018 Public Accounts, and would like to report progress. Committee Report 19-18(3) was concluded with four motions adopted. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Do I have a seconder? Member for Kam Lake. The motion is in order and non-debatable. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

### Third Reading of Bills

BILL 38:  
PROTECTED AREAS ACT

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the



honourable Member for Hay River South, that Bill 38, Protected Areas Act, be read for a third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Question.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote.

#### RECORDED VOTE

All those in favour, please rise.

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

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** All those opposed, please rise. All those abstaining, please rise. The results of the recorded vote are: 15 in favour, zero opposed, and zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 38 has received its third reading. Mr. Clerk, will you ascertain of the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Margaret Thom, is ready to enter the Chamber and assent to bills.

**COMMISSIONER OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (Hon. Margaret Thom):** Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, good afternoon. I have been very busy for the past month or so attending various events to honour the achievements of Northerners. This includes the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aurora College, high school graduations, three Aurora College convocations, and the annual Territorial Showcase.

The Territorial Showcase involves northern students only, and I was very, very impressed with all the history projects that our young people presented at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, such a beautiful place to hold such an event. I would like to congratulate Madame Monique Marinier for her leadership and hard work to establish the Territorial Showcase, and I hope very much that it will continue even though she is retiring very soon.

I was also invited to present the Governor General Corrections Exemplary Service Awards to several NWT recipients, and I was so proud to take part in that event. Not to mention also, this morning, there was another beautiful ceremony that happened with the St. John's investitures this morning.

#### ASSENT TO BILLS

Now, as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, I am pleased to assent to the following bills:

- Bill 26: Statistics Act
- Bill 29: An Act to Amend the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Bill 30: An Act to Amend the Human Rights Act
- Bill 35: Supply Chain Management Professional Designation Act
- Bill 38: Protected Areas Act
- Bill 55: An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, No. 1
- Bill 59: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures) No. 2, 2019-2020
- Bill 60: Supplementary Appropriation Act (Operations Expenditures) No. 2, 2019-2020

Mahsi cho, thank you, quyanainni, merci beaucoup, koana.

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I would like to extend the appreciation of this House to the Commissioner, Margaret M. Thom. It is always a pleasure to have her in the House.

Over the past three weeks, we have achieved a great deal, and I want to thank each and every Member for your hard work and dedication to this House and to all the people whom we represent.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the honourable Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, who has announced he will not be seeking re-election this fall.

The member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh has served many official roles in this Assembly since 2007, including chair of the Standing Committee on Social Programs in the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Minister of Transportation, Health and Social Services, Human Resources, Seniors and Persons With Disabilities in the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and the chair of the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning in this Assembly. He has served as the Member for both Tu Nedhe and Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

Beyond these official roles, the Member has shared his wisdom and leadership with all Members and

has served as a mentor to many of us. Throughout the years, he has been and remains a valued member of this institution, and he will be missed.

Colleagues, please join me in thanking the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh for his dedication to this House and wish him all the best as he prepares for life after public office.

---Applause

I also have to thank the interpreters and Pages who have been with us for these past three weeks. Your assistance and contributions to our work are appreciated. It is a pleasure to share this Chamber with you all.

We know there is still plenty of work to be done in this Assembly. While it may be a short summer as a result of this work, I wish you all a happy National Aboriginal Day and Canada Day, and encourage you to take the time to enjoy our land and waters safely.

Madam Clerk, orders of the day.

### Orders of the Day

**COMMITTEE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Franki-Smith):** [Translation] Orders of the day for Monday, August 12, 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. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to the Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Minister's Statement 151-18(3), New Federal Infrastructure Agreement
  - Minister's Statement 158-18(3), Developments in Early Childhood Programs and Services
  - Minister's Statement 211-18(3), Addressing the Caribou Crisis
  - Tabled Document 442-18(3), 2030 NWT Climate Change Strategic Framework 2019-2023 Action Plan
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

[Translation ends]

**DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Madam Clerk. It's always good to hear one of our many official languages used in this House. This House stands adjourned until Monday, August 12, 2019, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:20 p.m.