

Minimum Wage Increase

Mr. Speaker, on April 1, 2018, the minimum wage in the Northwest Territories will increase from \$12.50 to \$13.46 per hour, the third highest minimum wage in Canada.

To ensure that our minimum wage continues to work for employees and employers, the minimum wage rate is reviewed by a Minimum Wage Committee every two years. The decision to increase the minimum wage to \$13.46 per hour was informed by options and extensive research provided by the Minimum Wage Committee, including current minimum and average hourly wages in other Canadian jurisdictions, as well as social and economic influences specific to the Northwest Territories.

I am confident that this increase will be both good for workers, who will earn a better wage, and good for business, which will be better able to attract workers for minimum wage positions. Most employers in the Northwest Territories already pay more than the minimum wage because higher wages are required to attract and retain employees here.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment informed employers of the scheduled increase at the beginning of January, to provide time for planning and implementation. The Department will continue to inform employers, employees and the public through advertising and reminders of the increase leading up to April 1.

Mr. Speaker, this Government is committed to maintaining fair and competitive wage rates while encouraging economic activity and supporting small businesses. I believe the increase to the minimum wage strikes that balance.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.