



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

18th Assembly

**TERRITORIAL LEADERSHIP
COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Pages 9 - 54

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Glen Abernethy
(Great Slave)

Mr. Bob McLeod
(Yellowknife South)

Mr. Wally Schumann
(Hay River South)

Mr. Tom Beaulieu
(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Robert C. McLeod
(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Mr. Louis Sebert
(Thebacha)

Mr. Frederick Blake Jr.
(Mackenzie Delta)

Mr. Daniel McNeely
(Sahtu)

Mr. R.J. Simpson
(Hay River North)

Ms. Caroline Cochrane
(Range Lake)

Mr. Alfred Moses
(Inuvik Boot Lake)

Mr. Kieron Testart
(Kam Lake)

Ms. Julie Green
(Yellowknife Centre)

Mr. Michael Nadli
(Deh Cho)

Mr. Shane Thompson
(Nahendeh)

Mr. Jackson Lafferty
(Monfwi)

Mr. Herbert Nakimayak
(Nunakput)

Mr. Cory Vanthuyne
(Yellowknife North)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly
(Frame Lake)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

**Principal Clerk,
Committees and
Public Affairs**

Mr. Michael Ball

**Principal Clerk,
Corporate and
Interparliamentary Affairs**

Ms. Gail Bennett

**Committee Clerk
Trainee**

Mrs. Danielle Mager

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson
Ms. Malinda Kellett
Mr. Glen Rutland

Box 1320
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2200 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784
<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| CALL TO ORDER | 9 |
| PRAYER | 9 |
| REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA..... | 9 |
| OPENING REMARKS BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY..... | 9 |
| ELECTION OF SPEAKER..... | 10 |
| Results..... | 10 |
| SPEAKER-ELECT ASSUMES CHAIR OF TERRITORIAL LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE | 10 |
| CONFIRMATION OF PROCESS FOR ELECTION OF PREMIER..... | 10 |
| ELECTION OF PREMIER..... | 10 |
| Questions by Members | 10 |
| Voting..... | 37 |
| Results..... | 37 |
| CONFIRMATION OF PROCESS FOR ELECTION OF CABINET | 38 |
| ELECTION OF MINISTERS | 38 |
| Nominations..... | 38 |
| Candidates' Speeches | 39 |
| Voting..... | 53 |
| Results..... | 54 |
| ADJOURNMENT | 54 |

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Wednesday, December 16, 2015****Members Present**

Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Blake, Ms. Cochrane, Ms. Green, Mr. Lafferty, Mr. Bob McLeod, Mr. Robert McLeod, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Moses, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Testart, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Vanthuynne

Call to Order

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Good morning, Members. Please be seated. As Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, it is my duty to call this second meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee to order and preside over the selection of a Speaker-elect. I would like you to first rise and ask Mr. Beaulieu to lead us in prayer.

Prayer

---Prayer

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Before we begin today's proceedings, I would like to draw attention of the House to the presence of several special guests in the visitors gallery. First, former Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, former Speaker, former Minister, former Member, former Sergeant-at-Arms, Honourary Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Honourary Captain of the Royal Canadian Navy, Mr. Anthony W.J. Whitford.

---Applause

I would also like to welcome Mr. Michael McLeod, former Member of the Legislative Assembly, former Minister and currently Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories.

---Applause

Last, but by no means least, I would like to welcome Mr. Bill Braden, former Member of the Legislative Assembly.

---Applause

Members, you all have a copy of the agenda in front of you.

Review and Adoption of Agenda

The next item on the agenda is the review and adoption of this agenda. Are there any additions or deletions to this agenda? Seeing none, is the agenda adopted?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Agreed. Thank you, Members.

**Opening Remarks by the
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly**

This is the second meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee for the Members of the 18th Legislative Assembly. In front of you, in addition to the agenda, is a package of information in various forms, including the guidelines and procedures for the selection of your Speaker, Premier and Members of the Executive Council.

There are several items that will assist Members in how they are to conduct the proceedings in the House today. The process for the election for the Speaker will begin with self-nominations from the floor. In accordance with your agreed upon procedures, I will ask Members to indicate if they wish to allow their names to stand for the Speaker's position. Once Members indicate their interest, each candidate will then be permitted to make a five-minute speech. The speeches will be made in alphabetical order by surname. Questions to the candidates will not be permitted. Voting will then commence by secret ballot. If only one nomination is received, that Member shall be acclaimed. Are all members of the committee in agreement with this selection process for the selection of your Speaker?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Agreed. Thank you, Members. Once you have chosen your Speaker-elect, that individual will assume the chair of the Territorial Leadership Committee and will preside over your proceedings for the balance of the day.

Respecting technical matters, Members should be aware that you are not required to turn your microphones on and off. That will be done automatically for you by our sound technicians.

Also in front of Members and built into your desks are the timing mechanisms. When speeches are being made, the clocks will count down the time available to you, and you are asked to please be mindful of the time limits that have been set and agreed to by all of you.

I wish to make Members aware that your proceedings today are being broadcast live on the Legislative Assembly television network and on CKLB throughout the Northwest Territories. Our

proceedings today are being simultaneously translated into the Tlicho language. Tlicho is on channel 2.

I would also like to remind Members that although this is a less formal committee than the House itself, you are each asked to stand while speaking, asking or responding to questions.

Election of Speaker

The next item on the agenda is item five, election of Speaker. You have the Speaker selection guidelines in your packages. As per the guidelines, my first duty is to ask all Members who wish to allow their names to stand for the position of Speaker to please rise in their places now.

Results

As Mr. Lafferty is the only nominee for the position of Speaker, it is my duty to advise you that Mr. Lafferty, Member for Monfwi, has been acclaimed to the position of Speaker-elect. Congratulations, Mr. Lafferty.

---Applause

This appointment will be formalized and confirmed in the Legislative Assembly in formal session tomorrow afternoon. However, at this time, I would ask Mr. Lafferty to please assume the chair of the Territorial Leadership Committee as your Speaker-elect. Mr. Lafferty, please come forward.

Speaker-elect Assumes Chair of Territorial Leadership Committee

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Good morning, Members. [Translation] First I would like to say thank you very much for the position of Speaker that I am chosen for the next four years. Today there are a lot of things that are happening in the House. There is going to be a lot of selections of Ministers. I would just like to say thank you. [Translation ends]

Thank you to each and every one of you who elected me as your Speaker-elect. I will have more to say tomorrow during the official opening of our 18th Assembly session. I would just like to say mahsi to all of you.

Confirmation of Process for Election of Premier

We have a big day ahead of us. The next item on the agenda is the election of our Premier. As we agreed upon the procedures, it will call for a series of questions of the two previously nominated candidates. As we all know, the candidates for the Premier position are Mr. Glen Abernethy and Mr. Bob McLeod.

Election of Premier

Members are now permitted to ask two questions to be directed to both the Premier candidates. I will open the floor up for questions now for Members. Member for Yellowknife North, Mr. Vanthuyne.

Questions by Members

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Through you, my question to both of you is as follows: Many of the issues with the 17th Assembly fell under the us versus them mentality between Cabinet and Regular Members. Many feel that this was a result of Cabinet's lack of collaboration and communication. That is the purview of the Premier, as I see it, to be a leader in communication.

Can you provide comments to the Members today on what you will do specifically to break down the us versus them mentality and, more specifically, how you will develop and strengthen a unified approach between Cabinet and Regular Members? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Vanthuyne. Now I will turn it over to Premier candidate Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne, for the question. In my speech I indicated that past predicts future, and if you look at the way I have done business in the past, I have been very collaborative with committee. As a Minister, I ensured they had information on the projects we were working on, and we worked collaboratively together on a number of bills: the Mental Health Act, the Child and Family Services legislation, as well as the Hospital Insurance legislation that allowed us to move to one authority.

In my speech I also indicated that, moving forward, I would like to have mandate letters come out to all the Members to have discussions on. But in those mandate letters I want to be very clear on what the role of Ministers are, how they will work with committee, how they will be required to travel to communities throughout the Northwest Territories and engage in public discussions with residents across the Northwest Territories.

In this House it is about relationships; it is about working together; it is about being willing to come down the hall and have conversations with Members and having your door open so that Members can come into your office and have discussions as well. I have already started to do that in this Legislative Assembly. I have tried to engage in dialogue with all the Members in this House and I will continue to do that. This is about a partnership; this is about working together; and I am committed to that action. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Further questions? Continuing on to Premier candidate Mr. McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Thank you for the question. During this election it was clear that people were tired of adversarial politics and what was perceived as petty infighting. The Northwest Territories residents deserve a government that is focused on making good public policy, not scoring political points.

I believe all of us here share the view, and I am committed to working with them to establish a new, more cooperative approach. I will address past complaints that MLAs are not in the loop, by setting up internal systems to ensure information is being shared with MLAs in a timely manner and track how we are doing. I will look for more opportunities to work with MLAs on specific initiatives and files.

I also indicated in my speech that we would look at setting up joint committees of Cabinet and Regular MLAs and we would work with MLAs to make committee meetings and briefings more open to the public. These are just ideas, and I would work with all of the MLAs to come up with more.

Also, more cooperation includes sharing responsibility. There are some very difficult issues ahead and we will need input from Regular MLAs. We also need them to take responsibility for decisions we make together and explain them to the public. We made the mandate letters for Ministers public four years ago and again will make them public this year. In those letters we will require all Ministers to work very closely with MLAs and to make as many committee meetings public as possible.

Also, I will name a Minister responsible for transparency and democratic engagement and ask him or her to begin work on an open government policy. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. At this time I would like to recognize some of the members here. Henry Zoe, former Member of the Legislative Assembly, welcome. We also have here with us the grand chief of the Tlicho Government, Mr. Eddie Erasmus. Welcome.

---Applause

Questions to our Premier candidates, I have next on the list, Mr. Moses, Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. As we see, going into this year and this government, we do have the downturn in the economy, and I want to ask both Premier candidates, and on top of that I want to congratulate both of you for having the courage to put your name forward to represent this government during some hard times ahead, I think, in making some tough decisions. As mentioned, we do have a downturn in the economy. I just want to

ask both Premiers, especially in some of the regions, such as the Beaufort-Delta and the Sahtu, we are seeing less work happening, I want to ask both Premiers, what opportunities do you see for economic diversification and how do we look at creating a new revenue generation, seeing that some of our big businesses are leaving the Northwest Territories? We just passed a \$1.6 billion budget earlier this year. This government can't sustain those types of programs and operations.

What are your plans to get in some different types of revenue and create jobs in other regions? Thank you, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Moses. Now I turn it over to Premier candidate Mr. McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. Economic diversification is critical to the future success of the Northwest Territories. Obviously, we will build on what we have now, which we've been surviving on mining, which is the largest part of our economy – 40 percent of our economy – and we would like to see that continue and maximize those benefits.

In the past when we've been in a situation where there have been downturns in the economy in different parts of the territory, we have relied more on the traditional economy. That's part of it as well. In every region we would have to look at developing some economic development opportunities, whether it's having some strategic infrastructure or working with the Government of Canada, which has announced that they are doubling their infrastructure funding. I think there are opportunities to apply for and get our share of the infrastructure funding. I think there are opportunities in tourism, agriculture, fisheries. I think we should work that every community would have some economic development projects or opportunities. We will work to make communities more self-sufficient, to find employment for local people so that they can have jobs and, obviously, education and training for our students I think is very important, so that they have the skills and opportunities to take advantage of benefits to them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I'll turn it over to Premier candidate Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The reality is that the non-renewable resource extraction sector is still going to continue to be our largest revenue generator here in the Northwest Territories, and we must make some strategic investment to ensure that there's more exploration, more work done in that area. But there will be booms and busts, and we must be prepared to survive the booms and busts, which means we have to explore diversification of our economy here in the Northwest Territories.

There are a number of things that we can do. We can invest more into renewable technologies here in the Northwest Territories to help us reduce our energy costs, but also create a sector where people have to be trained and develop skills so that they can maintain this technology.

We know that in the Northwest Territories right now we have a large number of individuals who are 18 to 24 who don't even consider themselves to be part of the workforce here in the Northwest Territories. We need to focus in on those individuals and provide training to those individuals in a wide range of areas, including business. Give them the skills they need so that they can start small businesses back in their communities, back throughout the Northwest Territories, so that they can start moving forward with things like agricultural businesses, fishing businesses, more tourism opportunities in communities throughout the Northwest Territories. We have to invest in our people.

We also have to invest in some start-up costs for some of these industries like fishing or farming so that we can see movement in these areas. We have to consider some short-term debt for long-term benefits for people of the Northwest Territories. We have to invest in our people; we have to invest in small, local businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list I have Ms. Green from Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. During the campaign my constituents spoke to me about what they perceived to be the shortcomings of consensus government, and there was an appetite for a public conversation about consensus government, not aimed at the introduction of party politics but aimed at investigating and potentially strengthening our current system.

My question to each of the Premier candidates is: Will you make a commitment to facilitate a public conversation on consensus government? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Ms. Green. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I think something like that would be more valuable towards the end of this particular government. It would give us time, actually, to do the work necessary to help people understand what consensus government is and what consensus government can do.

We need to work within this particular system to improve our transparency, improve our communications and improve our information flow. I don't know how many times I went to doors during the last election where individuals came to me and

said, "Glen, you need to put this program in the Government of the Northwest Territories," or "you need to do this," and my response to them was, "We already have it. We already do that," but people don't know. I think the same is true for consensus government. People don't know how it works. So, I think, over the next couple of years, this group of 18 and the Premier and the Members of Cabinet have a real opportunity to be collaborative, to work together, to help people understand how consensus government can and should work. Towards the end of the Assembly, we'd be better positioned to have that public dialogue, prior to the next election, so people might be more engaged. I'd hate to see another election where we have voter turnout to the degree that we actually had the voter turnout in this last election.

But I like the idea. I think it's something we should shoot for towards the end of the Assembly, once we've had an opportunity to make this system work the way it should. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Now I'll turn it over to the Premier candidate Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The consensus system is about more than just one individual. Decisions are made collectively and reflect the will of the Assembly and Cabinet.

As a Premier, my goal is to provide leadership to implement the decisions we have taken collectively. I'm not interested in simply giving direction.

A review on consensus government I believe is long overdue. I think that we have to move away from hearing about the faults of consensus government only once every four years. I think that we have to be prepared to listen to the people and find out exactly what their concerns about consensus government are and find ways to fix it.

I'm prepared to have the Minister responsible for transparency and democratic engagement and have him or her begin work on an open government that could include looking at and reviewing consensus government and fulfil public expectations about what consensus government should be all about. I would ask the new Minister to prepare and table a work plan in the Assembly in the New Year.

Also, we have other bodies that could do work in this area. We have the Electoral Boundaries Commission that does work in this regard. But certainly if Members feel that consensus government is not working properly, we have to find a way to fix it, to make it work better, and a review would certainly be one way to do it, and I would support that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I have next on my list, Mr. Thompson from Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations on your position. To both individuals who want to become Premier, thank you very much for stepping up and being leaders for our new government.

During the 17th Assembly there were some challenging negotiations with Aboriginal groups as they were trying to settle the process. In the Nahendeh riding we have two that are very close to being ratified, according to the Dehcho grand chief and Acho Dene negotiating team. However, it seems to be that the Government of the Northwest Territories seems to be the one putting up the barriers.

Therefore, can you please tell me what you will do differently so that these two processes and others in the Northwest Territories can be signed and ratified in the 18th Assembly, so that we can have clarity and certainty in the Northwest Territories? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Thompson. Now I'll turn it over to Mr. Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I want to thank the Member for providing his question ahead of time.

As I indicated in my nomination speech, I'm committed to finalizing and implementing land resources and self-government agreements throughout the Northwest Territories. Negotiations on land claims, self-government and land use plans have dragged on for far too many years. We need to make setting and implementing claims a clear political priority of this Assembly. I have committed to establishing a joint committee of Cabinet and Regular Members to provide oversight and give direction to the negotiating process.

Getting a deal that is good for all parties remains a major priority for me. I believe that the style of negotiations needs to be changed. The old way is far too adversarial, it's taking far too long and costing far too much in time, energy and money. That's why I've indicated that interest-based negotiations would benefit all parties. Mandates need to be flexible and respect that each of the Aboriginal governments are faced with different circumstances, and in many cases, the challenges they face are unique to their region and their people. It is time to focus more on collaboration and partnerships, and that means changing the way we interact with our Aboriginal governments. I am prepared to meet with the leadership of the Dehcho First Nations, Acho Dene Koe First Nation and the leaders of other Aboriginal governments that are in negotiations, the NWT Metis Nation, with the GNWT and Canada at our first opportunity. In fact, I commit here to meeting with the leaders within 45 days and presenting new offers within 90 days.

Let me be clear, the main contentious issues that have prolonged negotiations between the Aboriginal governments and our government have been centred on the amount of land available or the land quantum to be selected by the Aboriginal government.

Shortly after meeting with the Aboriginal leaders, I will meet with the new federal Minister of Indigenous Affairs and let her know that an increase to the land quantum offer needs to be considered. The increase has my support.

In the case of Acho Dene Koe, I remain committed to finalizing this agreement. Part of the problem is their traditional territory includes land in BC and the Yukon. I will work with the Premiers of those two jurisdictions to find a resolution that benefits Acho Dene Koe. I will direct our officials to get on the land selection in our territory immediately.

Another issue is with the mandate where, with the Acho Dene Koe splitting out from the Dehcho First Nations, there is a mandate that requires, on a regional basis, they not establish new processes but they use joint processes, which has been a challenge and I think that is something that we can fix by reviewing the mandate.

In regards to Akaitcho and the Northwest Territories Metis Nation and their negotiation process, immediately following a meeting with their leadership and once we understand the outstanding issues, I commit to finding innovative ways to get these negotiations on track and finalize them in a timely manner.

We are presently negotiating self-government agreements with other Aboriginal governments. The Deline Agreement was recently ratified, and I will engage with those Aboriginal governments to listen to them on finding new approaches to finalizing agreements in a timely manner. Thank you for the question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, candidate for Premier.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I believe it is going to be a priority of this Assembly to move forward with land resource and self-government agreements to get to AIPs or conclusion of agreements. It's going to be a priority of this Assembly, and it needs to be, frankly.

There is a lot of uncertainty here in the Northwest Territories for exploration and development as a result of significant amounts of land and interim withdrawals, and a lot of uncertainty on where people can look and where they can't. We need to work with our partners.

I don't know exactly why we went off the rails with the Dehcho and I am committed to the leadership in the Dehcho as early as I can so that we can start

beginning that dialogue on how we went off the rails in our negotiations and, more importantly, how we get back on track in the Dehcho, how we can get back on track with all the other Aboriginal partners and governments that we're working with here in the Northwest Territories.

There has been some reference to a special committee. I understand the point of that but I don't necessarily agree. I believe we have a committee called P and P who should be informed and updated. This is a territorial issue; this isn't a regional issue. This is affecting all people in the Northwest Territories. As Premier, I want to work with P and P and Regular Members and Cabinet to find a way forward, and I will work with all Members to find a way forward.

We need to work with the federal government. We need to make sure that we have a relationship with the federal government and that they understand the realities here in the Northwest Territories. We are now responsible for land management as a result of devolution. This was their responsibility previously and they did it from afar. We are here; we know how our people are affected by things like land claims. So I commit to working with the Dehcho, I commit to working with all of the partners to find out why we went off the rails, find a way to get back on the rails. We, as a government, have to be willing to reopen our mandate to make sure that our mandate is realistic, so the Dehcho and all the other organizations of governments that we happen to be negotiating with.

It's about relationships. It's about working together. It's about having the ability to sit down at a table and have a frank conversation about what's right, what's just and what is in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories.

At the end of the day, we must all work together to ensure that all people of the NWT can share lands, resources, power and hope for their future, while at the same time respecting our similarities and our differences. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. O'Reilly, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker-elect. Congratulations for agreeing to serve us all here in the Assembly. In 2015-16, GNWT will raise more money from taxes on alcohol and cigarettes – \$37 million – than it will keep from resource revenues – \$30 million.

What commitments will each of the candidates make to examine new and/or increased revenues to help us pay for much needed programs and services, rather than budget cuts? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. We heard during the campaign that cost of living is affecting people in negative ways here in the Northwest Territories, so we need to be cautious about increasing the cost of living and, therefore, cautious about raising taxes.

There are a couple of areas that we can explore, raising luxury taxes on things like tobacco and liquor, but that won't bring in significant money. It will bring in some but it won't bring in significant dollars, but it is certainly something that we can look at. As a matter of fact, we used to have the highest rates on tobacco, until about six months ago when Manitoba actually crept ahead of us, so I'd like to be number one in that category again.

But if we really want to increase our revenues, we need to get our people working. As I indicated earlier, we have a large number of individuals 18 to 24 who don't even consider themselves to be part of the workforce here in the Northwest Territories. Many of those people are receiving some degree or some level of support. If we can get those individuals working through strategic, focused training on a diversified economy – on farming, fishing, renewable technologies, those types of things – we can get them working in the communities. They can be the experts in the communities to deliver these particular programs; they'll be off income support and they'll be paying taxes. We need to focus on getting those people to work, to help increase our revenues and decrease our expenses as a government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Now I'll turn it over to Mr. Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. I agree that we need to find ways to increase our revenues. The downturn in the economy has affected our revenues significantly, and we need to find ways to replenish those revenues.

I think that the possibility of increasing taxes is always there, but I'd be reluctant to go in that direction, other than taxes on tobacco and alcohol. I think that also provides incentives for people to improve their physical health as well.

We, as a government, review our fees on an annual basis and increase them on a regular basis so that we maximize those revenues. The best way to increase our revenues is to find opportunities to attract investment into our territory and to create business opportunities so people can find jobs. I think we have to remove some of the trade barriers for foreign investment. Of course, I'll work very closely with the Regular Members and Cabinet so that we can find innovative ways to increase our revenues to help us pay for our much needed programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Members, anything further? Mr. Testart, Kam Lake.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations. Voters voted for change. It wasn't just to change the faces at the table here, it was to change how we do business and to get results.

As part of this government's leadership process, the Premier and the Executive Council have a responsibility of establishing a clear and concise mandate to govern the next four years of the 18th Assembly.

My question to the candidates is: Are you willing and will you commit to restructuring the senior management and operational structure of the GNWT and public service to better serve the mandate and the people of the Northwest Territories?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. I must say welcome to the government because that's what government is all about, restructuring and reviewing mandates and making changes so that the government is as efficient and effective as possible. I think we do that on a regular basis, and we will be doing that again this year with this new 18th Assembly. We will work very closely with all Members, so we can all agree on what the best future is for the government and how we can move forward in an effective and efficient manner to deliver the programs and services to our people here in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you for the question. If the Member is asking will I move deputy heads around if becoming Premier, the answer is yes. There is absolutely benefit in moving individuals around. Deputy heads are not intended to be technical experts; they are intended to be leaders, leaders who can lead any file. I think there is value in moving some of these individuals around and bring a breath of fresh air as well as new ideas into different departments. So, absolutely, I am willing to move some of the deputies around.

If the Member is talking about restructuring and changing complete departments, we heard, during the session on the 14th, some suggestion that we actually look at the structures of departments. We are here to provide a service. We are here to provide services to the people of the Northwest Territories, and the government is our vehicle. If it isn't working the way it is supposed to, we need to be prepared to change it and do business in a different way. We've heard in this last election that people want things done differently. We need to be open to that possibility and be open to changing the

way we do business, which means we may have to structure...(inaudible). That's not just the job of the Premier, that's the job of this Assembly. This Assembly is going to have to come up with ideas how to change the departments that we provide here in the Northwest Territories.

I am committed to working with the Members to explore all opportunities and ways to improve our services, enhance our services, and that may require restructuring of the public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list is the Member for Sahtu, Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Good morning and congratulations, Mr. Speaker-elect. The government is responsible for providing services and programs. I want to know the position of the two individuals running for Premier.

What is your suggested approach on program reform or delivery and the time frame for each region?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McNeely. I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Wow, that's a huge question, Mr. Speaker-elect. We have over 5,000 employees within the Government of the Northwest Territories. We have 14 different departments providing an incredible range of services, and those services are being provided to people across the entire Northwest Territories.

We heard that people are ready for us to do things different and to think differently. One of the things I would like to implement within the Government of the Northwest Territories for all program delivery staff and policy staff is an equity-based analysis, so when they're designing programs, they are aware of some of the challenges that some of our different groups across the Northwest Territories are feeling so that they can design programs that are really focused on the clients. So, when they are reviewing programs, they are reviewing programs with a focus on the diversity that exists across the Northwest Territories. I think this will help us design and build better programs.

This Assembly is about reviewing our programs and services, and all Members are going to be participating in a business planning process where they are going to bring ideas back to Cabinet and the Premier. Cabinet and Premier must be open to the suggestions that Regular Members are bringing forward because, in this case, Mr. McNeely lives in the Sahtu. I do not live in the Sahtu and have never lived in the Sahtu. He is my best resource for information on how programs and services can be delivered. So, I look forward to a relationship with the Member, as I do with all Members, so we can

make sure we are making informed decisions here in the Northwest Territories.

As far as timelines, we have a business planning process. We do need to sit down and figure out how that's going to work out. We need to remember where our clients are, where our residents are, and we need to make sure that our programs and services meet the needs of those individuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I will turn it over to Mr. Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Program review is something government has been doing for some time. We have a Program Review Office that has a plan for the programs that they review. They have a schedule. We can tell them what programs we want to review and they come back and make recommendations. The hard part seems to be in deciding on what changes we want to make, because change is difficult at times and certainly if there are recommendations for significant change, it is difficult.

For the regional programs, the approach we should take is we should move them as close to the people as possible. Those programs that are not providing services on that basis should be reviewed and should change so it's effective and efficient to maximize the delivery of these programs.

Also, we have a Decentralization Policy where we are decentralizing positions out so the benefits of decentralization can be felt in the regions. I believe that process should continue, and I would like to see the Members endorse that process, so that we continue to build houses and build office space, so we can move positions into those communities. Obviously, we want to make sure that our programs are effective and efficient and are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Next on my list is Member for Deh Cho, Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect I thank the candidates for putting their names forward. Yesterday the Truth and Reconciliation report was tabled and Prime Minister Trudeau issued an apology. The legacy of residential schools and its impact on First Nations communities, in terms of how the federal government will address that dark chapter, there is hope. The federal government is poised to bring fundamental changes to address the dark chapter in Canada.

What would you do as Premier to ensure that the GNWT plays a key role in collaborating efforts with the Government of Canada in bringing positive changes and program initiatives to address the generational impacts of residential schools in the Northwest Territories? Mahsi.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Nadli. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Our government, largely through the interest of our Members, has played a leading role, not only in the Northwest Territories but in Canada, in participating in the Truth and Reconciliation process. I was very pleased, having attended residential school myself, to see the Prime Minister be very open about adopting and working to implement all 94 recommendations of the Reconciliation committee. I believe they are serious about making changes to address the effects of residential schools and our government.

If elected Premier, I will continue to work very closely with the Government of Canada and the people of the Northwest Territories to implement the recommendations of residential school. As a government, we have responded to the 94 recommendations and we will follow through. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I think yesterday was an incredibly important day for the victims of residential school here in the Northwest Territories as well as across Canada, as my colleague has already indicated. The GNWT and the NWT have taken a real lead role in working with the TRC and other organizations as they have moved forward. We opened our jails so they could go in and do interviews. We were the first jurisdiction that did that.

The former Minister of Education actually started beginning work on curriculum development around the residential school experience. We've already started doing a number of things and we need to continue to be that leader. We have already seen the 94 recommendations. We have already started to work on the recommendations. Our Building Stronger Families here in the Northwest Territories already addresses a number of the recommendations. We're on the right track, but we still need to be a leader in this particular area because of the large number of our residents who have suffered through that experience.

I'm committed to meeting with the Prime Minister at our earliest convenience to talk about the different priorities that we have here in the Northwest Territories. On Monday when we were talking about our priorities, I mentioned this particular situation, the TRC report, the final report that was coming out, and I indicated at that time that it must be one of our priorities moving forward.

I'll meet with the Prime Minister. I'll meet with all the individuals across the Northwest Territories, all the Aboriginal leadership across the Northwest

Territories, because it needs to be a collaborative effort as we continue to move forward with addressing these recommendations and this important healing process.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. Blake, Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The cost of living is a major priority throughout the Northwest Territories. For example, in Aklavik my constituents are paying \$1.99 per litre for gasoline.

If elected as Premier, how will you address this issue?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Blake. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. There are many factors to cost of living in the Northwest Territories, and the Member is talking specifically about fuel. In a number of communities throughout the Northwest Territories, we provide fuel to those communities, and we provide it at no profit. We get our fuel at a price, we ship it into the community – the price of the fuel is basically the price plus the shipping – and a small, little amount that goes to the local distributor. We need to do better. We need to find ways to bring those costs down, but it's really going to depend on the actual price of the fuel that we pay, because we don't make a lot of profit on that.

Around fuel, it's going to take a little bit more creativity. I don't necessarily have any solutions how to bring the price of fuel down in Aklavik. But when it comes to other things like food security, there are real opportunities that we can utilize across the Northwest Territories. Food security in a community like Aklavik will help control the costs and ensure that people have access to fruits and vegetables, vegetables more specifically. We've got a number of programs that we can support community gardens, greenhouses and other things to help bring down the cost of living in communities like Aklavik.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Certainly, the cost of living is an issue that is raised by everybody who I talk to, and it's a large part of the reason that people are complaining. Certainly, I think it's very inequitable that in Aklavik the cost of gasoline is \$1.99 and here in Yellowknife it's \$1.09.

As a government, we provide fuel services in communities where there is no commercial provider of fuel. In Aklavik there is a commercial provider, and I think that if we were to deal with that we'd have to change our policy and recognize that it is a unique situation and it's a high cost to bear, and

certainly, we would be prepared to look at the specific situation.

On the overall cost of living, I think that we need to review our food baskets so that we can make sure that we are providing for them on an equitable basis. When Prime Minister Trudeau wrote to us about what we could do about the high cost of living, he indicated they are prepared to increase the northern resident tax deduction by 33 percent, or 32 percent. Certainly, we would want to follow up to take him up on that offer, and I think that that would significantly benefit the Northwest Territories. In past dealings with trying to find solutions for the cost of living and dealing with industry, everybody said the best way to reduce the cost of living is through taxation, and certainly, with the northern resident tax deduction, that could be done.

The Nutrition North is also another federal program, and the federal government has indicated they are prepared to increase the number of communities they provide it to and also increase the amount of money they provide by \$40 million over four years. I'm sure there are other opportunities to reduce the cost of living, but those are the ones we've thought of so far.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Moses, Inuvik Boot Lake.

MR. MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. With such a big job ahead of us, there are a lot of questions that we could ask both Premiers. As Members of the Legislative Assembly, we deal with a lot of constituency concerns. Some of them, in some cases, can't get addressed due to the complexity of the issue of the complexity of how government operates.

Establishing an office of the ombudsman in the Northwest Territories has been under discussion since the 12th Legislative Assembly and, most recently, three motions were passed during the 17th Legislative Assembly, one asking for the GNWT to bring forward legislation for the establishment of an ombudsman for the Northwest Territories. That came back with the response that there are appeals processes provided to people of the Northwest Territories.

Secondly, when that response came back, it gave the Government Operations an opportunity to review what are the good chances of an ombudsman's office. What came out of that was that we needed to create legislation so that the members of the public understand their rights and that the ombudsman provides a single point of contact for people who have difficulty dealing with the GNWT

A final motion called for legislation once again, and that response was tabled in February of 2015. Most recently, a draft Ombudsman Act for the Northwest Territories was tabled in this House October 1,

2015. This was big on the agenda of many Members in the last government who sat on Government Operations. We do have a lot of appeals processes throughout the Northwest Territories, but when you go to one area, you get passed to another person, to another person. If we had that single point of contact as an office of the ombudsman here in the Northwest Territories... A lot of jurisdictions have it. The Yukon has it.

I want to ask both candidates running for Premier, will you support the creation of an office of the ombudsman so that people in the Northwest Territories who are having difficulties dealing with the GNWT have a single point of contact to get their issues addressed?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Moses. I'll turn the floor over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The question of ombudsman, as the Member indicated, has been around for some time. I think every jurisdiction in Canada except perhaps for one or two provinces and territories don't have an ombudsman. In the past there have been questions of cost. I think an ombudsman office costs up to \$10 million in Quebec. I guess Yukon is the closest example, where it's about \$400,000. That was one of the issues.

The Government Operations committee supported it. It was recommended. The 17th Assembly ran out of time to get it done, so it was put forward as a recommendation from the 17th Assembly to the 18th Assembly as a transition item. Certainly, if I am elected Premier, and all Members support or reinforce the need and agree for the need of an ombudsman, I would be very prepared to do so. I think that certainly I am aware of instances where individuals have long-standing issues that they've tried to address through the government and come up against many dead ends. I know last Assembly we also interacted with the ombudsman from Ontario who was very persuasive and he was very proud of the work that he did as an ombudsman and of the fact that he could resolve long-outstanding issues for employees, government employees or individuals in Ontario. Certainly, I'd be prepared to move forward with it and move forward in a timely basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Now I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I have read the report prepared by Government Operations. I think it's a very good report. I think there is significant value in an ombudsman here in the Northwest Territories. A couple of things. I don't see it as being an officer of the government. I see it as being an officer of the Legislative Assembly.

Given that we'll actually be doing reviews of things the government is doing, it can't actually be a body of government. Therefore, I think it's the responsibility of Caucus to direct whether or not we move forward with an ombudsman. If Caucus says yes, I am fully supportive of it. As a government leader, I would be happy to help facilitate the development of some legislation, but ultimately it's going to be legislation of the Legislative Assembly as opposed to legislation of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

This is a good idea. This is something that needs to happen. We need to make sure that we're not duplicating any of the services that we're providing through a number of our other statutory officers. There might be some opportunities to start rolling some of those in under an ombudsman, but it's something that its time has come and we need to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. Sebert, Thebacha.

MR. SEBERT: Thank you, Speaker-elect, and congratulations on your election. As a result of low water levels in the North Slave, the Power Corporation has been subsidized to the tune of \$50 million in the last two years. Additionally, warmer winters such as this one are likely to lead to a decrease in revenue. I suggest that this model for the corporation is unsustainable.

I would ask that the candidates for Premier articulate their vision for this important Crown corporation as we move forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Sebert. First I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The Power Corp is the people's corporation. It is a corporation of the people of the Northwest Territories responsible for providing power. As a result, we must listen to the people who are saying we need to find other alternatives for energy supply and production.

We need to consider going into our short-term borrowing in order to put in new technologies that allow us to generate power during the low water levels. Nobody wants to be in a situation where we actually have to take money out of our borrowings just to cover the high cost of diesel. We need to be creative about that. We need to explore other partners who are willing to provide some power. I understand the Power Corp has recently gone out seeking some RFPs to create power in using renewable technologies.

This is what we need to do. We need to find new ways of generating power, distributing power, and in an affordable means in order to help control costs to people of the Northwest Territories, so that

we're not hit by the peaks and valleys of low water years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Mr. Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. The NWT Power Corporation is a Crown corporation, as everyone knows, and it's certainly been the main distributor of energy and also producer of energy. It's very important in every community because of our cold-weather climate. We expect that it will continue to provide that service.

My vision is that it will begin to move to more alternative and renewable sources of energy generation. As one of the experts talked about in the two energy charrettes that we hosted here in Yellowknife, the 56,000 kilowatt hours of electricity that we generate is the most complicated 56,000 kilowatt hours than anywhere else.

So, there are a lot of issues when you're generating electricity. You have to produce for redundancy so that if the power generators break down, that we can maintain or put in alternative sources immediately. So, I see the Power Corporation as looking at changing the way we deliver.

We're starting to use a lot of solar. We have moved to LNG in Inuvik, and we are looking at the potential, perhaps, to use more LNG in communities that are on the highway system.

Here in Yellowknife, we're pretty well maxed out on electricity generation, and we're looking at opportunities, perhaps, to do more on the LNG front. We're looking at wind; we're looking at solar.

I'm very excited about what they're doing in Colville Lake, where they have not only wind, they have solar and they have diesel and storage capacity so that they have all forms.

On the energy conservation side and making people more independent, perhaps generating more of their own electricity, working with this Assembly, I'd like to look at what we can do as a government to increase investment in energy efficiency and energy conservation so that people in their own homes can convert to these different forms of electricity and reduce their demand on electricity generation. But I still see the Power Corporation as continuing to have an important role.

Reading the Liberal platform, they are indicating that they're prepared to have green funds. They have green bonds and they're prepared to invest in different energy technologies. So, we need to examine those to see if we can access those programs as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I have next on my list, Mr. Nakimayak from Nunakput.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Congratulations. My question is on housing. First of all, thank you both for standing up so much this morning. I know it's a long day. We're pounding you with questions.

But my question to the both of you is: Are you open to restructuring housing in the GNWT; as well, looking at different models for single dwellings, multi dwellings and families in the Northwest Territories? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Nakimayak. Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I think housing is probably one of the most critical areas in the North. If you have suitable housing, affording housing, it really changes your quality of life. I think, as a government, with the fact that CMHC housing money is continuing to reduce on an annual basis and eventually running out in 2038, I think that certainly we can look at different models, different approaches.

I know, even myself, although I don't have much of a housing background, we get approached by people who have all kinds of different ideas on how to have cheaper housing. I don't mean cheaper, but that they can provide housing at a lower cost. The question always is: Can it be adapted to a northern environment?

We have invested in housing. We have housing programs so that we can retrofit houses and make them last longer.

Again, when we wrote to the Prime Minister, he wrote back and said that the federal government was going to resume their leadership role in housing. So I think there's an opportunity here to look at different approaches, perhaps even go as far as to have them reinstate CMHC funding. Who knows?

Obviously, we need to be innovative. We need to look at different ways on how to deal with housing.

Private ownership of housing I believe is the best way to go, and if we can find a way to have people own their own houses, I think they take better care of their houses if they own them. So, I would certainly be prepared to look at different opportunities for providing housing in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Obviously, we need to work with our federal partner to work on this like CMHC, as well as any other opportunities for money to come in. But to me the question was more about what are we going to do with our communities with respect to housing stock in our individual communities.

I've had an opportunity to travel to every community in the Northwest Territories and talk to residents from across the Northwest Territories. When you do travel to communities, one of the things that often comes up is housing. There are a number of really great programs in the NWT Housing Corp right now, and there have been significant changes over the last two Assemblies to things like rent scale. Even though that's happened, people are still frustrated. Some people still don't know what programs exist, or they know programs exist but they don't know how to access them and they don't understand what the requirements of them are, or worse, the programs are so strict or rigid that they're unable to access them, and they might be individuals who would be perfect candidates, with a little bit more flexibility in the program.

They've also told me that they don't usually see people from the Housing Corp out there talking to them and helping to customize programs to meet the needs of individual communities. There are different realities in every community through the Northwest Territories. Yes, we have to have some general guidelines, but we have to be willing to be flexible in order to meet the unique realities of different communities through the Northwest Territories and the different needs of communities through the Northwest Territories.

If I'm Premier, what I want to do is see the Ministers and the bureaucrats get out to the communities, talk to the individuals in the communities about the programs that are being delivered. Programs like housing. How can we change the way we're providing housing in a community like Paulatuk in order to truly meet the needs of the people? We need to do that by getting out and talking to people, not just working out of a Yellowknife office and looking at stats and reports. Good information, but get out and talk to the people and find out what's really going to make a difference for the people. Does that mean more duplexes? I expect that it might. Does it mean changing the layout of homes? It could. But you know who's going to be the best people to tell us that, Mr. Speaker-elect? The people in the communities. I'm going to encourage and require the departments to get out and talk to people throughout the Northwest Territories, to make sure that our programs meet the needs of people in all the communities throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Ms. Green, Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. As we can see in this room, only two of us were elected as women in this 18th Assembly, yet representation of women at the federal level is closer to one-third. Obviously, we have a lot of catching up to do.

So, my question for both of the candidates is: What is your plan to foster the participation of women in publicly elected positions in the NWT? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Ms. Green. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. During the last Assembly, actually participating in the campaign school I thought was a good way for me to share some of the knowledge I have about how to campaign in the Northwest Territories, for women who might be interested in campaigning. That's something I think more of us, as Members, need to consider doing and encourage people to run.

But more importantly, what things we can do within this Legislative Assembly is, as Premier, I can actually look at our senior management staff and try to bring more equity into the senior management staff to make sure that there's better representation, or more equal representation of women and Aboriginal peoples at a senior management level.

I also, and I indicated it earlier, would like to incorporate an equity-based analysis as part of the training that all policy and program development staff are required to take. This will give them the skills they need to design programs that meet the needs of all of our residents and the diversity of the residents across the Northwest Territories. I think these types of things will help us start evolving our programs, get more involvement of individuals who are not adequately or appropriately represented in government as well as in politics.

We also need to look at things like child care. I talked to a number of different women who were looking at running, and they're final decision for not running was: "I still have to take care of my family. I don't have the time. I don't have the resources. If we had better, more affordable daycare, I may have been able to run." So there are a number of different things we can do.

But as you probably noticed, Mr. Speaker-elect, I'm not a woman, I am a man, and I truly cannot understand what it is like to be a woman. So, I need to work closely with my colleagues on the other side of the House to find real solutions to make change here in the Northwest Territories, and I'm looking forward to that relationship and trying to find ways to improve our representation in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I'll turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I believe that the best way to get more women into the Legislative Assembly is to find ways to have more women running for office. I believe that it was very encouraging to see an increase in the number of women who ran in this most recent

election. I, as the Minister responsible for Women in the last Assembly, worked to have election forums so that we could show women what is involved in running for office, and there was quite a turnout. I believe that we need to start earlier, rather than the last year of a term of a government. We should start right away and continue to do work on an annual basis, perhaps, and find the funding. When we did it, we were criticized because we only did it here in Yellowknife, and women outside of Yellowknife, if they wanted to participate, had to pay their own way to participate in the election forum. So, perhaps we can move it around and have it in more centres, more regional centres, more communities, so that other women can have access to it.

I believe that, looking at our government, we've been able to increase our deputy minister cadre, so at least 50 percent of the deputy ministers are women, and our workforce is 65 percent women. Our senior management is improving. One area where we need to improve is the number of indigenous women who are senior managers. We need to improve in that area.

But we have to keep working at it. I think that with the benefit of a lot of women who have run for office, we will continue to improve in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. [Translation] The next speaker will be Tom Beaulieu, Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh Member.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Speaker-elect. The cost of living in small communities is very high. Often, as governments, we have looked at ways to reduce costs, but I think the answer is in jobs, in giving people an income to be able to afford food.

As Premier, what would you do to increase employment rates in small communities? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Beaulieu. [Translation] The person that will be responding to that question is Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: We believe that one of the ways to increase jobs is to work with people in the communities, to give them some capacity so that they can do a lot of the work that's required in a community. I know that projects that come into a community, if we can find ways to have the local people do the jobs, that would be a benefit. I know in the past, the government provided negotiated contracts for local work, but we also have the Business Incentive Program. But if we can work closely with the different governments and organizations in the community so that we can identify projects and opportunities, generally if we have enough lead time, we know the work that's going to be done, the government work, we can find ways to do it. That's something that needs a lot of

planning; it needs a lot of collaboration between departments and the communities. I think working with industry or small business, they can develop connections with communities so that they can hire local people when they have jobs in the communities as well. Thank you, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. [Translation] To respond to that question would also be Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. As I've indicated previously, I've had an opportunity to travel around the Northwest Territories to different communities and talked to the residents of the communities. There is a lot of excitement in communities about what they can do, but they often don't feel that they're able to pull off, as with respect to small business, their opportunities.

There are great ideas in the communities. Every community is different. Farming might not be appropriate in Ulukhaktok but it might be appropriate in Fort Liard. We need to be open to what the communities see as their opportunities and work with them to actually provide training in those communities for opportunities that exist, whether it's tourism, green technology, farming, fishing and those types of things. We need to make sure that the training we're providing is focused on those opportunities that exist in the individual communities. This will allow individuals to start businesses, to start their own opportunities with their communities.

I've also heard that a lot of individuals aren't interested in travelling from their communities and working in a mine for two weeks or three weeks, so they're looking for local opportunities. We've indicated, as a government in previous Assemblies, that we do want to decentralize some jobs, and we must continue to do that, but government jobs are not going to solve all the problems. We need to find local opportunities, local businesses that people in the communities can start up and run. But we also do know that there are government jobs coming to communities. There are a large number of nursing positions throughout the Northwest Territories, and that's often done by people who are coming to the Northwest Territories rather than people who are coming from the communities. We need to focus back into the schools and start early to encourage people to pursue things like nursing, resident care aides, home support workers, so that we can get our local people into the professions that actually we do provide in communities as government.

So, a couple things: training and development for government-type jobs, supporting youth in communities to pursue education and training so that they can start their own businesses, and some supports for start-ups so that they can start businesses in communities.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. [Translation] The Member for Thebacha. Mr. Sebert will be asking a question.

MR. SEBERT: During the recent election there was a good deal of discussion in my riding, and perhaps some others, about the possibility of the transition of Aurora College to a university. I would like to hear the candidates' views on this possibility. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Sebert. [Translation] Premier candidate Mr. Abernethy.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I heard a lot of discussions about options for residents of the Northwest Territories for post-secondary studies, options at the community level. We do have a fantastic campus in Fort Smith that has provided high quality programs over a number of years, but it is becoming less and less utilized and we need to find a way to re-engage that facility. It's an incredible facility and I would encourage everybody who has an opportunity, to get down and see it.

We need to be open to new possibilities. I don't know what those new possibilities are at this point, but I have had discussions about a possible university. I need more information. I need more detail. I think this Assembly needs more information and more detail before we move forward with some hard and fast decisions. But I think, as an Assembly, we must be open to this concept in how we can improve and provide more options to our residents at a community level but also at an institutional level, utilizing the amazing campus in Fort Smith.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): [Translation] Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. The Premier candidate Mr. Bob McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. I believe we should aspire to a university of the Northwest Territories. We have the Aurora College. I know Dechinta Bush College is also mentioned quite a bit. I know that Aurora College has programs that are affiliated with universities in the South, and even when I was in Tromso, one of the universities there, which is a regional university, was affiliated with Aurora College through the Arctic Research Centre.

Over a period of time, I think we have to have a plan and a vision for eventually becoming a university. One of the ways, one of the areas is the ability to access research money. Because of the designation of Aurora College, we are not able to access the significant amounts of research funds that are available to educational institutions in the South. If we are able to access those, we could expand very quickly. I know a lot of students who have to go south for university or post-secondary education have indicated they would prefer to start

their early years of university in the North, and then as they finish their first, second, or third years, then they could move to the South to get their final years if they have to or if they don't deliver it here.

I'm saying it's not out of the question. We need to work towards it. We need a vision and a plan to get to a university of the Northwest Territories

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Mr. Schumann from Hay River South.

MR. SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations. My question to both Members would be: Due to the tight fiscal outlook of this 18th Assembly, can both Members comment on what their fiscal strategy would be moving forward with this 18th Assembly?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Schumann. I'll turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Well, we will get briefings on the fiscal situation in the Northwest Territories as part of the transition. There will be a number of different scenarios which will be outlined to all Members of the Legislative Assembly, and I think we need to have a discussion and a public forum like this on how we would address our fiscal situation. What areas should we change or what areas need to be tightened up going forward?

Obviously, we have four collective bargaining agreements that have to be negotiated, so we need to take that into consideration. We need to take into account the revenues that are coming in, the tax revenues, the personal income tax revenues. We need to take a very close look at our formula financing and the grants that are coming in, because they change on a regular basis as the spending priorities in the southern provinces go. We need to look at the programs and services, working with the departments to identify what areas we want to change.

I know that we need to do more on our economy, and I think that we also have to take that into consideration, that we need to find funding so that we can invest in our economy, because we need to have an economy so that we can continue to have jobs and opportunities. We have to deal with our fiscal situation and also what areas we are going to invest in going forward.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Now I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Late in the life of the 16th Assembly, the Minister of Finance stood up in this House and provided a fiscal update, which was quite bleak. We do know that there are significant cost increases in the GNWT and our revenues don't tend to be growing at a rate that's going to continue to cover these in

the long term, so we have to think differently about how we do business.

We have to look at how our departments are operating and how our departments are running. We know that there are programs out there that have been around for a really long time that haven't necessarily been reviewed or updated. We need to make sure that those programs and services are continuing to meet the needs or the intent of why they were created, and if they are not, we need to change them or eliminate them in order to bring in programs that are going to meet the needs of our people.

I've been sitting around with Members for the last two weeks and there's a lot of talk about what we need to do, and a lot of those things come with a price tag. But once again, we don't have significant revenues coming in and we have a lot of pressures on us. Like my colleague said, collective agreements are coming due. We have a lot of things happening, so we need to be responsible with our finances. We need to look at our programs to make sure that they are continuing to meet the needs that they were originally intended to, and if not, we need to do something differently. As we design new programs, we need to make sure that we have solid evaluation frameworks so that we make sure they are meeting their needs over time so that they can be assessed on a regular basis, and if they aren't meeting the needs, change and modify accordingly.

All the Members in this House are going to be required to make some incredibly tough decisions over the life of this Assembly, given our fiscal reality and the demands for more and more programs all the time. We are going to have to sit down and have long discussions, informed discussions, which means Cabinet is going to have to provide all the updates, all the information so that we can make informed decisions together on how to manage our finances. This is a partnership. This is teamwork that we need to have in order to move this Assembly and this government forward and I look forward to that opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list I have Ms. Cochrane, Member for Range Lake.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The GNWT has an unacceptable rate for youth within our school system for dropouts, especially within the communities.

How do you propose that the GNWT will address this issue to ensure our children gain the education they need to succeed and prosper?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Ms. Cochrane. I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. We do know that the graduate rates here in the Northwest Territories are not as high as other jurisdictions, and we know that is even truer in other communities where dropout rates and lack of graduations are quite high, often under 50 percent, which is deeply troubling. We do know that a number of things are happening right now. Education Renewal is underway. I have heard it's a good step in improving education here in the Northwest Territories. There is some concern that it's not moving fast enough. We need to continue to push, as an Assembly, to ensure that that moves forward in a timely way. More importantly, we need to make sure, through Education Renewal, that they are engaging communities and speaking to the people in the communities who have the real life experiences that can help develop and improve the education system here in the Northwest Territories.

In my speech around priorities on Monday, I talked about youth and our need to be bold, to talk differently, to push as we move forward. If we want kids to graduate, we need kids to attend school. Bottom line, if you aren't attending school, you aren't going to graduate. We can stand around in this Assembly and talk about ideas and talk about things we can do to encourage kids to get in schools, but unless we are out in communities talking to leaders in the communities, engaging leaders in the communities who can help us and work with us to set a priority for the children and residents in the communities, we aren't going to get those kids in school. So we, as politicians, need to be bold. We need to get out into the communities and talk to leadership throughout the Northwest Territories and find what resources they need, whether it's human or supports to find ways to encourage their people to get into communities. It has to be a joint effort. It has to be all of us working together to make sure our kids are educated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I truly feel education is the best way for our children to reach their full potential. We need to make sure that no child is cheated out of this opportunity. When I travel around to the communities, when I go to the schools I find that the teachers and principals tell us that most of the students do really well until they reach grade 6 or 7. The girls usually do pretty well. The young guys seem to have a few more problems and some of them drop out. I think that's the crux of the issue. We need to find ways that they are engaged, that they see education is their way to the future.

We need to work very closely with the education authorities, the Department of Education. I know they have found very innovative ways to make sure

students keep attending school. If you don't attend, you fall behind, and when you fall behind, eventually you drop out. Those who have taken very innovative ways, the mentoring teachers, teachers who are assigned to different students and all the different ways you can use to engage students, make sure they attend classes and listen to the parents and education authorities, work together. I think that's the best way so we can keep our kids in school. As I always say, we ask our kids to stay in school, so we have to keep our end of the bargain so there are jobs and opportunities for them when they graduate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): At this time I would like to give the two Premier candidates a break. We will take a 10-minute break. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Members. Welcome back. We are still in the process of asking questions to the Premier candidates. We will continue with the list of names I have before me. Next on my list I have Mr. Simpson, Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations. The rates of family violence in the Northwest Territories are a long-standing territorial disgrace.

I would like to know what the candidates would do to reduce these rates, provide better supports for the victims, many of whom suffer considerable trauma, and how you would better work to rehabilitate the offenders. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Simpson. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. As everyone knows, issues around family violence are complex and that's why having a discussion is important. Blaming victims is unacceptable, but condemning perpetrators is not helpful. It's important to recognize and acknowledge the value of honour and respect whenever we talk about how we are going to address family violence. We need a comprehensive, holistic, family-centred approach. We do this with health services, so we should have this approach with family violence as well.

There are many services and support programs across the GNWT departments and we need to review all of those. The Tree of Peace has a program that helps men who have admitted to family violence. This is a program that's funded by Justice, and I think it's very helpful to deal with this issue.

We also are very aware of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, and we have taken a lead role in dealing with this at a national level. We certainly support a national inquiry and we

commend the Government of Canada for agreeing to host, to fund a full national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and have provided \$40 million to do this.

We know the root causes of family violence are complex: historical trauma; intergenerational impacts of trauma; poverty; addictions; mental health; lower education attainment; unemployment; systemic development of indigenous people and specifically women and girls.

Our government has led the country in recognizing and respecting relationships with indigenous people and their government leaders, and we have responded to all the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's reports, and we have also developed a residential school curriculum. So, all of these things we contribute in a way to continuing to allow us to deal with this problem. Thank you, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The rates of domestic violence and family violence here in the Northwest Territories are incredibly high, and I actually think they're underreported. I think there is still a large number of people out there in the Northwest Territories who aren't actually identifying themselves as victims.

We need to do more to prevent it, as a starting point. We need to make more people aware of the issue. We need to get people talking about the issue. We need to get people identifying when they see people who are struggling, and offer them guidance as to where they can go for assistance or support.

We do have a number of programs available here in the Northwest Territories, and I think one great program that we do have is called What Will it Take. It's an education program to help people understand the issue and how pervasive it is throughout our society, and that our statistics, although high, are probably misleading, because it's probably a bigger problem here in the Northwest Territories. We need to push that program out. We need to get that program into every community in the Northwest Territories, into schools and into other meetings, so that people can take the program so they can begin to dialogue and start working towards eliminating the problem. Information on this one is key, and awareness is going to be key.

We also need to work on some of the root causes. We need to help address things like poverty here in the Northwest Territories. We need to make sure that our children are getting educated and that they're entering the workforce and people are working, so that they have some hope and pride in what they're doing and where they are, as opposed

to some of the hopelessness that comes with poverty. We need to deal with the root causes.

If and when, you know, individuals do end up in the situation, we also need to make sure that there are supports and mechanisms available to them. We do have the Domestic Violence Court Option. We do have the program for men who are violent, but we also have community counsellors. One of the things that I've noticed over time is not everybody is aware of the programs that we're offering.

We need to actually put together a list of the different programs community by community and what are available for people, whether it's a shelter, whether it's a counsellor, whether it's another program. Once we have that, we'll be able to start seeing where some of our larger problems exist, so that we can actually focus some of our efforts to make sure that there are programs available for individuals who are experiencing this family violence situation.

But first we need to focus on creating awareness and prevention, then we need to continue to enhance the programs and services we have for victims and their support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. Robert C. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations on your appointment as Speaker-elect for the Legislative Assembly. During the recent federal election, there was commitment made by the new government that's coming in now, of \$147 billion in infrastructure spending for the next eight years, I believe it is. We have a lot of challenges here in the Northwest Territories. We have some projects we need to do on the go, especially transportation projects such as the Mackenzie Valley Highway, which I think is needed and long overdue. We have roads to the Tlicho and we have a road to the Slave Geological Province.

I would like to ask the Premier candidates, what would they do to foster our relationship with the new government and ensure, when the funds are distributed across the country, that the Northwest Territories ends up with the funds they need to address a lot of the needs that we have? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Robert C. McLeod. I'll turn it over to Mr. Glen Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I think we're actually in an incredible position now that we have a Member of Parliament who is actually in the governing party. He also happens to be the brother of one of the Members of this Legislative Assembly. So, I think we've got a great opportunity to start building new relationships in

Ottawa. We also have Members who have key relationships with different bodies and different groups in Ottawa. I think – this is a consensus government – we all must work together. We must utilize the relationships that we have and build upon those relationships.

If elected Premier, I'm intending to go down to Ottawa to meet with the Prime Minister and other Ministers, to start articulating some of the challenges and desires that we have as an Assembly of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

But when it comes to some of the more specific projects that we're trying to move forward here in the Northwest Territories, it can't just be us. For example, things like the Mackenzie Valley Highway. We're going to need to make sure that we take leaders from the Sahtu and the Deh Cho with us when we go to Ottawa, so that we can really clearly articulate needs of people. I think we're talking the road into Whati. We're going to need to bring representatives from the Tlicho who can really talk to the needs. We're going to have to get onto the same page with these different governments, these different organizations, so that we're talking from the same page, from the same script, and we're looking for the same thing. I think those are the types of relationships that we need to develop, and we need to make sure that we're working together with our partners and that we're going to Ottawa with a common message. If we have a couple of asks, we'll get a lot more headway than if we have a thousand asks. So we need to, as an Assembly, start focusing our asks on what are the big picture items that we want to get out of Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I'll turn it over to Mr. Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. Right off the bat we have to recognize that we're a month behind every other jurisdiction in engaging with the Government of Canada, so we have to take that into account as we develop our federal engagement strategy. We have a whole host of areas where we are looking for federal investment, and we have to make sure that we have a good idea of our priorities, because if we don't take a focused approach, then it's difficult to access the programs that we want to. So, we have to have a good plan, a good vision. I don't even think we have had the opportunity, other than to congratulate the Prime Minister and Members of Parliament, to make contact with key federal Ministers and we need to do that right off the bat, once we have a Premier and a Cabinet in place. We also have to go to Ottawa and engage them very quickly. I think that we need to also work with Aboriginal governments and MLAs so that we all agree what

the priorities are when we go to Ottawa, then we begin to work on it.

Over the years, as a consensus government, we know that we've had to make contact with the leaders of the federal parties. Over the past four years, I've been meeting with Justin Trudeau on a regular basis. I've met him in other settings such as state funerals and so on. So, he's very familiar with the North. He's been north probably six or seven times, in his own estimation. Of course, it helps to have my brother as the Member of Parliament, although I told one of the media that I wouldn't use that...

---Laughter

...but that's the truth though.

Also, in the past it's very important to keep a good relationship, and I know the Prime Minister has always been able to keep things moving. When we're trying to get projects done, it helps when we get bogged down and we can go to the Prime Minister, and we can also have our Member of Parliament making sure everything stays on track. I think that will really benefit the Northwest Territories. All of the Members of Parliament and the Ministers, it's good to work with the Northern Caucus, it's good to work with the Aboriginal Caucus and the federal government, and we have to use every venue that's available to us to advance our goals and objectives so that we can further develop the North and provide jobs and opportunities here in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list, Mr. Nakimayak for Nunakput.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Thank you again, Bob and Glen, for answering some of the questions.

This may be three or four questions. This is my last question that I have. There are a lot of Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. Our language, our culture is diminishing every day. I'm an example of that. I've lost my language. I'm doing my best to keep my culture.

Is there any sense in starting an arm for culture and language within the Northwest Territories, especially with the TRC's report on residential schools and survivors, to not only help the elders but also going into the youth moving forward? I think we need to focus on that.

My question is: How are we going to move forward from here, starting an arm for that, if possible, with the GNWT, as Premier?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Nakimayak. I'll turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. I guess I too lost my language. I used to be able to speak at least three languages. I think it's very

important to deal with culture and languages and maintaining a way of life. I know that, as a government, we invest and provide funding to help promote traditional economy because that's one of the best ways to make sure that people can continue to live off the land and it's also one of the best ways to get funding into the small communities.

I know that on the Aboriginal languages, it would be a shame if we would see any one language or more than one disappear. As a government, it's very important for us to work very closely with the people in the communities, with the Aboriginal governments and find ways to maintain and revitalize the language and get more people to speak the language. The best way, of course, is for the youth to speak the language in their homes. I know people, even members of my family, who have taken Aboriginal language training and have been even able to converse in their Aboriginal languages.

We negotiate agreements with the Government of Canada for French language and also Aboriginal languages, and that helps significantly in this area. We, as a government, have taken the approach that the Aboriginal governments and communities are the best way to preserve and maintain the language, so the funding for Aboriginal languages goes directly to the Aboriginal governments.

There are cultural programs that funding is provided for, and it's very important to continue to have Aboriginal culture or maintain our culture, because that's what signals what unique people we are. We need to be able to show that and we need to preserve it. That provides for the pride and dignity of the people. It's a very important responsibility.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. During the 16th Legislative Assembly, I actually participated in the review of our Official Languages Act here in the Northwest Territories. At that time, we did travel throughout the Northwest Territories and talked to different languages groups and heard the frustrations that they were expressing with respect to the loss of their language. We do know in the Northwest Territories there are some languages that are in critical condition, very close to being gone completely. We know that the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit are struggling and the Tlicho is quite strong and doing well. We need to learn what's working in one area and find ways to translate to another area.

As a result of that report, we came up with a significant number of recommendations. I know, to date, not all of the recommendations have been implemented and we need to go back and reflect on the recommendations and then the follow-up recommendations from the 16th Assembly to help

the communities revitalize the language. Like my colleague said, it has to come from the languages groups. We need to be there as a support; we can't be a barrier. We've got to work with them in the ways that they feel are going to bring back the revitalization. I don't think the government should stand up and say you shall do such. In this case, it's definitely got to be a push back and we've got to be partners.

If Premier, I'm committed to going back and looking at some of the recommendations and make sure that we're still on track. If we haven't been moving on some, we'll certainly be able to find out why. I'll share that with Member so we can have discussions on how to move forward. We need to find ways to work with our communities and hear from them on how they intend to help revitalize our languages. Then we need more Members in the House speaking languages over time. There are a lot of great apps out there where you can go and you can learn words and phrases, and I would encourage all the Members to go to those apps and start using the languages in this House.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. Thompson for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I'm going to advance on Mr. Blake's question here. Throughout the campaign and having listened to my colleagues here through the last three weeks – it seems like a year, but it's been three weeks – there is a challenge out there about accessing affordable nutritious food, which has an impact on our health and our children's ability to learn in school.

What are your plans to increase food security for all residents in the Northwest Territories, and most importantly, how are we going to fix the Nutrition North program?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Thompson. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I hope it's our plan moving forward. There has been a lot of discussion over the last number of weeks about the types of things and the priorities we need to set, and I think food security is one of the issues that has certainly come up a number of times. There are a number of things that we are currently doing, and there are a number of organizations out there who are doing a large amount of work. Recently, Ecology North, with a number of partners, has started trying to put forward an NWT food network that's going to help grow food and distribute food around the Northwest Territories. I think this is a great opportunity and I think the GNWT must be partners. We've also got a number of programs that are delivered through some of our departments, like ITI, that are focused on community gardens and Growing Forward and those types of things. We need to make sure that

those are rolling out in the communities, again, to support the needs so they continue to produce food in our local communities.

There are also great organizations like the Territorial Farmers Association that is working with the government to develop an agricultural strategy for the Northwest Territories. We've got greenhouses in a large number of communities. I was in Paulatuk this summer and they had a greenhouse there. I was a little surprised, but quite happy to see it. Things are happening to support the growing of food here in the Northwest Territories.

In some of our smaller, more isolated communities, Nutrition North is still a program that's available, but we've heard, and I think we've all heard, that it's not working for our people, for our residents. That's not likely going to benefit the communities in the Deh Cho, but it will certainly benefit the communities in Nunakput. We need to work closely with the federal government to make sure they get that program right. They have committed to some change, so we need to make sure that we're there making sure our voice is heard moving forward.

There are a number of things we can do. I think this is part of diversifying the economy, as well, and we need to have some strategic investments in this area so that we can make sure that there is food being produced in communities and being distributed to the communities. We've also got fish that is being harvested in the Northwest Territories, and I think we're making progress there as well. There are a number of different things that are happening. We need to continue to work together and as an Assembly. I think we need to have a strategy for moving forward to address food supply in the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Communities without all-weather roads are particularly affected by the high cost of food. These costs are affected by a complex set of variables; however, through a collaborative approach between Cabinet and Regular Members, community groups and residents, we can find solutions to improve the availability of affordable healthy food options for families and children.

Our efforts should focus both on the effort of lowering the cost of food itself and changes that result in more income for our residents. Part of the answer includes investing in infrastructure so that we can lower the cost of transporting food to communities, and the energy costs contribute to high food prices. For example, when I was in Colville Lake, they have the highest food costs anywhere in the Northwest Territories. If they order food from Edmonton, it's handled 12 times between

Edmonton and Colville Lake. Those kinds of problems exist.

Part of it also includes promoting more efforts to produce food locally and to support the northern fishing industry. As a government, we fund harvester programs. Those harvester programs are very successful in having harvesters go out and hunt and trap and fish. As a child, growing up in Fort Providence, our whole world existed on foods, subsistence. We would catch rabbits, eat, hunt, fish, and anything we caught the family would eat it.

Also, agriculture is very important and the final component is, now that we will have a very improved, a very good ability to work with the new federal government to improve Nutrition North. When I used to work with Indian Affairs, Nutrition North was a very successful program and I think it needs to be expanded. I think we need to find a way to go back to the start of the program when the subsidy went directly to the northern resident. That seemed to work very well. When they changed it, the objective kind of changed.

We also need to increase the northern resident deduction so people have more money in their pocket and they will be able to buy more food or grow more food. Community gardens are very important. Everybody used to have community gardens, and I think by having those, that would really improve the availability of food. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list, Mr. Vanthuyne, Yellowknife North.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. In recent months, issues surrounding Syria have brought the matter of immigration to the forefront. Many organizations and families in the North have shown interest in wanting to sponsor an immigrant family or individual. We, as a government, are engaged in a Population Growth Strategy but we lack a territorial immigration policy.

As leader of the government, would you support an NWT immigration policy? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Vanthuyne. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. If elected as Premier, I would love to have an immigration program, but right now immigration is a federal responsibility and so we have been hampered by our ability to increase our population because we have quotas that we have to live with. I think we have 160 quota and we have been able to increase our immigration on an incremental basis by, I think we are up 50 to 60 people. We would like to have it more in maybe the 1,000 range or so, but it is very difficult to do that.

With regards to Syrian refugees, we contributed \$50,000 to the United Nations on behalf of the Syrian refugees. We are actively involved with the

Government of Canada on Syrian refugees. We are looking at what we can do. We are working with city council, who has a committee of interested citizens to sponsor Syrian refugees. We looked at the process. In order to sponsor refugees, you have to be recognized as a sponsor. In the Northwest Territories we only have one sponsor that is registered, and that is one of the local churches which has gotten recognition through the national church arrangement. The officials in the Department of ECE are canvassing the churches to see how many would like to find a way to be recognized as an official sponsor, and I think, as more Syrian refugees come into Canada, we can get into that program by adding those sponsors and having everybody working together.

We also have a Foreign Investment Program through ITI which we need to... There is a lot of interest in foreign investment in the Northwest Territories with the influx of foreign tourists from China, Japan, Korea. There is lots of interest in building resorts and so on for these tourists to visit and live in, but we are hampered by a number of things. One is that we don't have enough resources in our foreign investment division to process all of the applications, so it has taken some time. It's frustrating to foreign investors. Again, we need to be able to access more immigration quota from the Government of Canada. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I'll turn it over to Mr. Glen Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The GNWT actually is supporting a couple of different programs here in the Northwest Territories to help increase the population by bringing immigrants or other individuals into the country. We have a Foreign Investment Program, as my colleague indicated, and we also have the Nominee Program, which is delivered by Education and ITI. These are programs that I think we are starting to see results in, in bringing some individuals into the Northwest Territories, which I think is a good thing.

When it comes to immigrants or refugees, as my colleague indicated, there is a quota system that is in place and we have been asked to obviously bring some in, but we have to find sponsors here in the Northwest Territories. I believe there is one sponsor at this time.

Having said all that, it suggests that maybe we need to have a bit more policy based on how we are approaching this. I wouldn't necessarily commit to developing a policy at this point because I would be more interested in hearing what the Member had to say and what Members thought about a policy to begin with. I do think it is something that we are going to be faced with more and more as time goes on, and I think it's something that this Assembly does need to talk about, so that when we are faced

with situations where refugees are coming in, we are prepared, ready, and know where we stand and know what steps we have to take to support them appropriately. I certainly won't commit to it right now. I say that we need to have discussion as an Assembly and figure out how to move forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. McNeely from Sahtu region.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I would like to thank my colleague from Inuvik for his comments on the long talked about Mackenzie Valley Highway, and I look forward to working with my colleague in the Deh Cho, because it has to cross two jurisdictions.

Getting back to the questions, I am allowed one more. So, I am going to try to massage it a little bit here to squeeze in something that just popped up here.

Seeing both candidates are from the previous Assembly, the 17th Assembly had some carryover priorities which were informed and put into our transition document. For the listeners in the audience out there, we have done some education in that area and along came our list of priorities. To summarize and to more or less have a few candidates providing answers, after today everybody is going home, leaving with the assumption of the get-go this is what our government is going to do underneath this leadership.

My question is: Summarizing what hasn't been done in the previous Assembly, hearing it over and over, in your view what one or two priorities you would see over and above the priorities set for this 18th Assembly. There is still some unfinished business. So let's identify the unfinished business with listeners in the audience, what are they, one or two of them, or three for that matter, and as a suggestion you can include maybe your position in taking over the Nutrition North program. As we all know, it's a costly one, a controversial one, especially in my area along with other areas where it's all fly-in and no other way in with fresh food. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. To make sure I understand the question correctly, the Member is asking what priorities we had in the 18th Assembly that we didn't finish in the... Sorry.

The question was what unfinished business was in the 17th Assembly that didn't conclude and rolled over into the 18th Assembly. There are some specific items we started in the 17th Assembly that are likely going to carry over into the 18th Assembly. I can speak from some of the portfolios I was

responsible for. There was some work that we started that we didn't get done and we will certainly carry forward to the future Minister of Health, and one of those was the medical travel review. Medical travel is an essential service that we are providing to our residents of the Northwest Territories. A significant amount of work was done on medical travel, but a lot of the results haven't trickled down so that the residents and the patients who are utilizing medical travel in the Northwest Territories have started to see the results. It is a very expensive program, but it is an essential program and we need to make sure we get it right. I believe that is something that does need to continue as we move forward into the next Assembly. It doesn't necessarily show up in the priorities that we have identified as the 18th Assembly, but it is something that must continue.

Another area that we made progress on but we didn't finish is our review of seniors facilities in the Northwest Territories and a plan to identify where future long-term care facilities should be constructed to meet the upcoming demand of residents across the Northwest Territories. We have significant pressure in the Northwest Territories. Almost all of our long-term care beds are full. We have long-term care beds that are full in Inuvik, Yellowknife, and there's significant pressure in Hay River. We do have new beds coming in in Norman Wells, but we know there is a continuing demand, and we need to have that plan moving forward so we know where we need beds in the future.

With respect to my position on taking over Nutrition North, no. I think what we need to do is work hard with the federal government to make sure they get it right and take another stab at getting it right. If they don't get it right, maybe it's something we are going to have to take a look at taking over, but right now it's their responsibility. They have a significant investment. I think it's up to you, me, and all the Members of this House to make sure that we help them get it right. If it doesn't work after that, then we can have the conversation, but I don't believe we should be rushing out to take it over until we have an opportunity to help them get it right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I guess the three areas that are in transition that I think it's very important for us to follow through on, the first one is on selective infrastructure funding. There were projects that were in the hopper, specifically the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Whati all-weather road, the Slave Geological Province overland route extension. We want to follow up to make sure those funds and

infrastructure money are identified with and dealt with.

In the second bundle of infrastructure projects there is the Canyon Creek project. I would like to see that addressed.

Another area that we were not able to finalize when we came to the end of the 17th Assembly was on energy. We had a lot of discussion on that. We had some good intentions for our government to invest some significant resources in alternative and renewable forms of energy so that we could have our citizens become more self-reliant, independent on producing their own energy and reduce the demand on energy generation and also to provide increased interest in energy conservation and energy efficiency. That's an area that's very important for the 18th Assembly to deal with.

Of course, devolution. There is still unfinished business we need to deal with. We need to put a northern stamp on it. We need to deal with the MVRMA process. When we left it, we said we would review it after five years. Maybe the new federal government might be willing to advance it so we don't have to wait five years for a review. We still have to negotiate the management of the offshore in the Beaufort. That's a very important area.

On Nutrition North, obviously I would be prepared to take it over if the federal government is ready and willing to turn over the money, the \$40 million they are going to invest in it over four years. If we can take that money and design our own program, I would be more than willing to take it over. Thank you, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list is Ms. Cochrane, Member for Range Lake.

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is my last question as well. The GNWT acknowledges that land claims and self-government are critical to move forward.

How do you plan to support communities with self-government so that the transfer of programs and services is smooth and successful? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Ms. Cochrane. I will go to Mr. Bob McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. Self-government is a very important process. Aboriginal people have always had self-government. This is a matter of the function of the modern treaties. There is one self-government agreement that's in place right now. That's with the Tlicho. Deline has community self-government where their final agreement has been signed. We work on a government-to-government basis with the Aboriginal governments. We all sign the self-

government agreements, the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Aboriginal government or the Tlicho Government. So, for us, it's in all of our interest to make sure self-government is implemented properly and that the programs are drawn down by the Aboriginal governments at a pace that they are comfortable with.

We work with them to help build capacity and to also make sure that programs are delivered and that people will continue to receive the services on the scale that the Aboriginal government would like to see it delivered. I expect services will improve as self-government comes into effect. We want to make sure that as you have a whole host of self-governments across the Northwest Territories that there is an ability to have some consistency in the level of service. As people travel around the North, they can access programs if required, and those are negotiated into the agreements going forward.

There is still quite a number of self-government agreements that have to be negotiated. I think, as a government, it's in our best interest to facilitate those negotiations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I will turn it over to Mr. Glen Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: This is about trust again. This is about building relationships with our Aboriginal partnerships; with the Tlicho, in this example, because they are the only ones who have a finalized self-government agreement. The relationship that we need to have needs to happen before we even start drawing down programs. At this time the Tlicho has the ability to draw down a number of different program areas and the GNWT currently provides programs in those areas. We need to work with the Tlicho in this program area, to make sure that those programs are meeting the needs of the Tlicho so that when they draw down those authorities, they actually know and had some opportunity to participate in the design of the programs within their region so it's a little easier to roll them in at that particular time.

We're going to have to come up with formula financing agreements so that we can figure out how to fund the different programs that they're going to draw down, to make sure that they have the resources, that we're not shortchanging them and that they have the resources to deliver the programs to a standard that we agreed to. This is all negotiations; this is conversation; this is working together now before we even start drawing down programs, so that they know what the programs are and they're involved in the development of the programs so that they meet their needs. It's about partnerships, Mr. Speaker-elect. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. O'Reilly, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. [English translation not provided.]

I have one more question for the candidates, and I neglected to thank them for putting their names forward last time, so I'd like to do that now. I held a constituency meeting last night and this issue has been raised to me in my constituency during the election. It's a territorial-level issue as well as an issue of official languages. There are many francophone parents in the Frame Lake electoral district, and Ecole Allain St-Cyr is also located there.

What specific actions will each of the candidates take to improve relations with the territorial francophone school board to expand each of the two francophone schools in the Northwest Territories and to delegate the authority over school admissions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. I'll turn it over to Mr. Glen Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. There have been a number of court challenges on this particular issue and our relationship with the French school association, or French school board. Those have, I think, come to some resolution. We have, in our capital plan, planned for the construction of a gym expansion at the school here in Yellowknife, and that is something that we actually have to now sit down with the school board and talk about.

With respect to the relationship with the school board, I think it's going to be important for the future Premier and the Minister of Education to actually sit down with the school board and have some conversations about how we can work together better, moving forward.

When it comes to school admissions, there is some legislative requirement that the individuals attending schools do have to be right-holders. So, we'd certainly have to have some conversation about that as well. I know there's a desire to allow some individuals who are not right-holders into the school. I think the court proceedings came down and said you have to be a right-holder. But is there any room for flexibility? I think we need to have a sit-down and make sure that it's still enrolling as intended and that we are meeting the needs of the French community here in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I'll turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. I guess it's unfortunate that a lot of the relationships

with the French francophone schools has been in the courts for some time. I think, for the most part, they've largely been resolved and the government will be investing in the schools here in Yellowknife. I think there's a lot of room for improvement in our relationship. I know that through the Education Minister, we can improve in that area.

As Yellowknife MLAs, we meet regularly with the other school boards, and I would suggest that we do so in this case as well. Certainly, that makes for a much better relationship, much better understanding of the issues that are faced by the francophone schools.

On the school admissions, this is something that I know has been before the courts and I know it's something that has been discussed with the Department of Education. In my view, anything you can resolve outside the courts, we should try to do so. If we can find a way to move it out of the courts into a discussion between the francophone school board and ourselves, I think we should do that. Thank you, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Blake from Mackenzie Delta.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Speaker-elect. Through our campaign, climate change has been a big topic in our territory, especially in the Beaufort-Delta.

If elected Premier, what steps would you take to address climate change? As we move forward, will you ensure there's funding available for communities like Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk that have impacts of erosion? Thank you, Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Blake. I'll turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Speaker-elect. The effects and impacts of climate change on the Northwest Territories are very troublesome and have had a serious impact on almost every aspect of our lives. Here in Yellowknife, for example, we've had low water problems. We've had extensive fires across the Northwest Territories. I've been to Tuktoyaktuk to see the soil erosion. I grew up on the Mackenzie River and you can definitely see the serious impact of climate change on the rivers of the Northwest Territories.

The clear trends in the Northwest Territories are that the temperatures are rising. We've experienced it here for the past two or three months. What we need is to find a way. There's just been a very significant Climate Change Protocol that's been negotiated in Paris at COP21, and it's very important for us to learn and understand what the provisions are. I know that some significant funds have been provided for, to deal with climate change. I think that some of the disaster funding should be looked at, to see what can be made available to deal with soil erosion in Tuktoyaktuk,

for example. We've met with the mayor and council. They do have funding that has been identified in the capital budget, as far as the capital budget of the community. They are working on developing a plan. When I used to be at MACA, we used to haul several million dollars' worth of gravel into Tuktoyaktuk, only to see it washed away with some of the serious storms that are getting more and more drastic because of the fact that the sea ice is now open much longer in the Beaufort Sea. They used to have open water for four and a half weeks a year. Now the open water is, like, 15 weeks a year, so they're much more prone to very large storms.

In every area, certainly we can't afford to be paying \$28 million every year to deal with low-water surcharges because there isn't enough water in our hydro reservoirs in both the Snare and Bluefish. The same with forest fires. We can't afford to pay \$50 million a year to fight forest fires so our communities don't burn down. Of course, we live in a permafrost area. Thawing permafrost is another big problem. It affects our transportation infrastructure; it affects our water quality. We also just saw one of the lakes in your riding drain and collapse and wash away. So we need to adapt to the effects of climate change, especially in the transportation system as well. We need to improve surface and drainage conditions on highways. We've seen pictures of how it's affecting our highways. You just have to drive from here to Behchoko and see how it is affecting our highways, and our airport runways, realigning winter roads to overland rights-of-way, adapting ice bridge building technologies to extend ferry service operations, and we need to build permanent bridges to extend and stabilize the winter road season. So, there are a lot of areas where climate change is affecting us. That's not even talking about how it's affecting wildlife, how it's affecting fish and so on. So, it's a very big area and it's getting bigger every year. It's affecting us more and more, so we will have to work not only here in the Northwest Territories as individuals but we have to work with other governments nationally and internationally, and other groups that are doing very well in educating people about climate change.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Now I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The evidence of climate change is upon us. We see it every day. On November 2, 2014, I went sailing on Great Slave Lake, which is, frankly, bizarre. We need to do something here in the Northwest Territories. That doesn't mean we haven't done anything. We have done a significant amount to reduce our carbon footprint. We have more pellet boilers I think in most organizations and we have done a lot of internal work with our lighting in a lot

of our buildings. That's not enough. We have a Greenhouse Gas Strategy that has expired. It's time to come forward with a climate change strategy with two components. Mitigation is a first priority. What do we need to do to reduce our footprint, but not just the government's footprint, the territorial footprint and how we can support families, homes, businesses and others reduce their footprint and find alternative sources of energy and to reduce their carbon footprint or footprint.

On the other side, we also need to acknowledge that changes are upon us now and we need a mitigation strategy and adaptation strategy as well. We, as a government of 19 Members, have to come together. We have to work with our partners in the South, in Ottawa. We know the federal government has recently signed on to COP21, and the Prime Minister has indicated he wants to meet with Premiers in the next 90 days to start working out details that each one of the jurisdictions, provinces and territories, can undertake in order to help Canada meet its targets that it has signed on to. We need to be part of that.

I think there are great people in this room with significant background in this area who could really help us develop a strategy that is going to make a difference moving forward, and I look forward to working with Members, I look forward to working with our federal partners, and I look forward to working with business, industry, residents and people across the Northwest Territories who have some great ideas on how we can develop a really comprehensive climate change strategy focusing on mitigation and adaptation.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list, Mr. Testart, Kam Lake Member.

MR. TESTART: Mr. Speaker-elect, building on the theme of climate change, the recent Conference of the Parties meeting in Paris has resulted in a new protocol that has been signed by the federal government that calls for carbon markets to be established, and the federal government has been supportive of that, leaving it up to provinces and territories to decide. Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia have all started their own carbon markets and are participating in international markets in some cases. This is a significant question for the future of how we engage the strategy. Although both candidates have outlined some ideas about climate change, I'd like to know specifically what your thoughts are on carbon pricing and entering carbon markets and how you will go forward with that in the future.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Testart. First I will go to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. There have been a lot of options discussed out there, including a carbon tax. I'm a little leery of a carbon tax at this point because residents of the

Northwest Territories continue to tell us the cost of living is too high and, unfortunately, in the Northwest Territories, many of our residents do still heat with diesel, and our heating season tends to be a month or two longer than other jurisdictions. We don't want to increase the cost of living, so we need to look at other alternatives to help our individuals reduce their costs. But I still think we have an obligation under this agreement signed by Canada to do some work around carbon limiting and whatnot in the Northwest Territories. There are options out there. I think we have fantastic people in this building who can help educate me and my colleagues so that we can make some informed decisions on how to move forward to address some of the carbon market, whether it's carbon sharing or other things. We need to be open to these opportunities in the North.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I'll turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is a very important area, a very important question, and especially when we see the effects of climate change, especially when we know that the world is seeing a significant change with the signing of this Climate Change Protocol. Certainly, we will do our part.

Previous governments have looked at the fact that carbon tax or carbon pricing would increase the cost of living for people in the Northwest Territories. We're already paying a very high price for fuel and energy, so we've tried to address that by having government pay for ways to reduce carbon emissions. We have the Greenhouse Gas Strategy where we've been able to reduce our emissions so that we reached 2005 levels in the government, and we've been very successful by introducing programs into our government whereby we reduce emissions and we've saved money. We're also leading the country in biomass and we, on a per capita basis, I find it unusual, but apparently per capita we're one or two in Canada utilizing solar energy.

We want to invest more into energy efficiency and conservation, and I think this is one of these areas where I think it would be an excellent way to go out and have public engagement on this issue to confirm that NWT residents are willing to pay more on carbon pricing or carbon tax or what have you, to see if they're interested and they're willing to do that to help reduce the carbon footprint. I think this is an area that, as an Assembly, we could look at doing and could do something fairly quickly. We could engage the public and get direction from the public and take appropriate action.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Nadli, Deh Cho Member.

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker-elect. [English translation not provided.]

Consensus government means that we work to involve everyone in decision-making of all 33 communities. There has been discussion, in light of fiscal constraints, to examine more effective management systems through boards.

If elected Premier, how would you work to ensure small communities will be involved in decision-making in the areas of health and education?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Nadli. I'll turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Sorry, Mr. Speaker-elect. My microphone is not working, so I didn't catch the last part of his question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Okay. I'll get Mr. Nadli to repeat that last question.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. The question is: There has been discussion, in light of fiscal constraints, to examine more effective management systems through boards.

If elected Premier, how will you work to ensure small communities will be involved in decision-making in the areas of health and education?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Nadli. Mr. McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you for repeating the question. I think it continues to be very important to get input from communities, from the small communities. I don't see having a board preventing that from happening. I think that having a board in the health area will make things more efficient, will provide for better programs, and I think there are still ways to engage the communities. We have not done anything similar in education. I think the education right now, the district education authorities remain as is. With the board for health that would look at delivery of operations, we will make sure that the information goes back and forth to the communities and that we get input from communities as well.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I'll turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. In my speech last Wednesday, I talked a lot about past predicting future and the way we've done business in the past is often the way we will do business in the future. When it came to health information, I travelled to every community in the Northwest Territories and sat down with residents and leaders in those communities to talk about the health care system and how it can be improved. We took that feedback and incorporated it into the model moving forward.

With respect to health care and boards, there will be regional advisory councils in every region and community, so there will be members from communities in the Deh Cho who will be sitting on the regional board and chair that board and will be

sitting as a member of the territorial board. This gives us a real ability to make sure we are getting the voice from the communities through the system so that we can customize programs at a local level but also have an opportunity to provide inside guidance on to the territorial programs. Places like Stanton, things like medical travel, this has been a very successful process and has been very collaborative.

I also convened a meeting of Aboriginal leaders, which was the first time that was done, to discuss health and social services and how we could move forward with the construction and development of these wellness councils. We received a significant amount of really positive feedback on how we could do that and engage with people.

In my speech I also indicated that through the mandate letters, I would be requiring Members or Ministers to travel to the communities to meet with residents and talk about the issues that they have, especially around program areas that are maybe going through modification or design. I think this is critical to ensure that we have public engagement. As Premier, I will ensure that the Members are getting out, meeting in public, meeting in communities. But it can't stop there. It has to be some of the bureaucrats, some of the deputy heads as well as program staff. They need to get out to the communities so that they see the reality of living in smaller, more rural, remote communities, so that they can design the programs appropriately, can meet the needs.

We need to have flexibility in our programs as well. I think it is important to get out there. As Premier, I would ensure that the Ministers and staff get to communities to learn from our people. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list I have Robert C. McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. First of all I need to commend the two Premier candidates for putting their names forward, answering all the questions today, and there were a lot of very good questions that are being asked. Good on you for that.

I have a very straightforward question. The Northwest Territories is facing a number of challenges, as we all know in here. I would like to hear from both candidates.

What is the biggest challenge, the single biggest challenge the Northwest Territories is facing, and how would you deal with it? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I will go to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. There are a lot of problems, as the Member indicated. The bottom line is that if we can't find

some way to revitalize the economy, whether it's through diversified economy or whether it's through more supports for non-renewable resource extraction, we are going to continue to be in trouble.

It is multi-pronged, obviously. We need to deal with some of the social issues so that when the jobs come, our people are the ones taking those jobs. With our revenues on a flat line, we are not going to provide the social programming that we need unless we can continue to have some revenue generation coming in.

It's really hard, and I thank the Member for his question. It's really hard to identify one problem because they are so intermingled and inter-twined. We have a lot of social problems that are stopping our people from being able to enter the workforce. We need to address those as well.

But if we don't have an economy, more people are going to leave the Northwest Territories, our GDP is going to continue to go down and we're not even going to be able to provide the programs that we have. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. It's very difficult to pick the biggest challenge, but I think the ones I have are both tied, so I have to use two.

Obviously, growing and diversifying the economy is a very big one. The economic outlook over the next five years is mixed at best. I see, in the next five to 15 years, the data suggests a protracted decline in resource production with really nothing in the works to replace it. Also, there is no resource exploration going on, and resource exploration is necessary for further development. It is also slowing down.

Growing the NWT economy requires some very major investments. We have the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link; we have the Inuvik-Tuk Highway; we are working on the Mackenzie Valley Highway; the Whati all-weather road; the Slave Geologic Province overland route, and this is something we need to pursue. In order to have a vibrant, robust economy, we need jobs, and part of it is obviously the cost of living. We have talked about it many times today. The cost of living is a big, big problem which is very difficult for us to address. We are starting to make some inroads, certainly in this area. For example, the price of gas was \$1.389. It is now \$1.09. I think food costs, I'm told, are probably on par with Edmonton or Grande Prairie, if you buy on sale. Housing is very expensive, and so the cost of living is another big one. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Beaulieu, Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker-elect. Taxing is a huge issue in the communities that I

represent. There is taxing of lots, there is taxing of cabins, and many of the people I spoke to during my campaign had an issue with it. The government has some programs out there that they would like to access because of limited employment opportunities in the small communities. They would like to access some programs to create employment for some people in the small communities, yet the tax bills, once the taxing authority has issued the tax bill, if it's not paid then it goes to the Department of Finance and it affects their ability to receive various programs that normally come from the government.

If elected, I would like to ask the two Premier candidates what they would do to resolve the taxing issue in the small communities, perhaps in the small communities where claims are not settled. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Beaulieu. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I know this is a problem. I guess it has been around now for a few years. It's primarily been felt in the South Slave. I think there are a number of things that we can do.

First and foremost, some of the other regions have been able to deal with that through negotiating exemptions in their land claim. They have been able to deal with it on that basis. We've had many discussions with the NWT Metis Nation, and where we left it just before the end of the 17th Legislative Assembly was our legal people were meeting with the legal people of the NWT Metis Nation so that we could find out exactly what the problems were, exactly what the issues were and we could find out how to deal with it. It involves Aboriginal rights to hunt for food and also trap. It is the ancillary rate that is there that we are missing the mark on. I think that is another aspect. If it's not negotiated through their land claim, then we should look at changing the legislation, if that is the intention, so we have fairness throughout the Northwest Territories. We could look at the legislation and see what would be required to fix this problem. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. That's a very specific question, as my colleague has indicated.

This was an issue that was brought to Cabinet in the 16th Legislative Assembly and it's an issue that the Cabinet of the day asked for some more research and some legal reviews to be done. Until such time as we've had the opportunity to review those findings and have a discussion with the Members of this Legislative Assembly, I'm not sure which direction we would necessarily take, but I

think it is important that that information be shared with Members. We have discussion on how we would move forward; we have discussion with the affected parties on the south side of Great Slave Lake in order to figure out what would be the most appropriate way to move forward, to ensure that people still have access to their cabins. It's certainly something that does need to be looked at. We need to be informed as we do it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next on my list is Mr. Simpson, Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. We have a deficit, a lack of tradespeople and educated professionals in the Northwest Territories. Businesses who want to hire locally often have to look south and hire people who don't have ties to the Northwest Territories who often come here, work and leave.

Recognizing that the programs we have in place currently aren't working, what can we do to train more tradespeople and train more of our local Northerners to be educated professionals? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Simpson. I will go to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This kind of goes back to some of the questions we were asked much earlier about developing a northern workforce. We have a significant number of individuals, as I've indicated I think three times already today, in the 18 to 24 year age that don't even consider themselves to be part of the workforce. We need to focus in on these individuals, identify the type of work that's required in the Northwest Territories. We need people who can do bookkeeping; we need people to do finance; we need people in trades. There is a significant amount of trades work that is still being done here in the Northwest Territories.

We also have a fantastic college in Fort Smith that actually provides trades training. That college seems to be having lower and lower enrolments. We have to figure out why that is. Why are enrolments decreasing in Fort Smith and what can we do with our residents to encourage them that this is the right place to go? We need to actually get out and talk to some of these young people who are not working and find out why they aren't working. We need to continue to move forward with the development of a workforce development strategy so we can figure out what type of training is required so we can get out there and pursue these young people, as well as others, and ensure we are training them for jobs that actually exist in the Northwest Territories. Train our Northerners for northern work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Thank you, Mr. Abernethy. I will turn it over to Mr. McLeod.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is a very important area and something that we've been trying to address for a long time. I know not everyone should aspire to go to university. I think trades is a very good way to make a very healthy living. I think we've had a lot of discussions with the mining industry. We've run out of northern Aboriginal or even northern tradespeople. What we need to do, I think, and it's been suggested and we've looked at a number of different models, the German model where they stream people at a younger age into the trades. That seems to work quite well. In trying to hire more people at the mines, we've worked very closely with the mines to increase the number of apprenticeship positions. I think we need to focus on apprenticeship programs and find ways to get more northern youth to take apprenticeship programs, so not only will they benefit from having a trade but also they will get jobs and utilize our post-secondary education facilities here in the Northwest Territories. I think we have to work very closely with the schools and make sure that students are aware of all the different opportunities.

I did a radio show yesterday morning and one of the students called in and asked where the jobs were. Certainly one of the best areas is getting into the trades program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Next on my list is Mr. Schumann, Member for Hay River South.

MR. SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. My question to both Members today will be around the potential building of the pellet mill in Enterprise.

I would like to know what they would do to ensure capacity building for both FMA holders in Fort Res and Fort Providence in ensuring that this project moves forward and from all levels of government and from all departments. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Schumann. First I will go to Mr. McLeod, Premier candidate.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I see the building of the pellet mill in Enterprise as a very important addition to our economy. We've been trying to develop the forestry industry for many, many years and there's always been a problem with access to timber. I think it was a very significant achievement for the proponent to be able to negotiate forestry agreements both in the Fort Providence area and Fort Resolution area.

As a government, we have been totally supportive every step of the way. We have to deliver in the areas of building capacity, helping build the necessary expertise to be able to harvest the timber on a feasible basis. We've committed to fund on that basis. Our departments are very involved in

that area on the production side. Also, we would have to work with the proponent to determine the types of jobs and skills required at the pellet mill.

On the consumption side as a government, we have indicated we purchase a lot of pellets because we have converted almost all of our facilities to wood pellets. So, we think it's in our best interest to buy pellets, northern-made wood pellets. We will continue to work very closely with the proponent and his business partners in communities that sign on. It's very exciting to see, if you look at the vision for not only the pellet mill but for the pellet mill and for the harvesting for the communities that could potentially benefit from this project. We will be doing our part, working with the proponent to see this come to fruition and be a very successful part of our economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. I will turn it over to Mr. Abernethy, Premier candidate.

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. This is actually an incredibly exciting project. This is the type of project that we, as Northerners, must continue to pursue and make happen, make a reality here in the Northwest Territories. This is a great example of many departments within the Northwest Territories working together. Public Works and Services took the lead in arranging our purchase agreements with the future provider and we are going to buy all our pellets from that individual, that company, to heat our buildings, our facilities here in the Northwest Territories. We have made a commitment to that for an extended period of time. It also took ENR and ITI working together around stumpage and forest management. I think this is a great example of how working together we can accomplish things, but it's mostly due to the proponent, who has been an incredible champion and advocate for new businesses speaking outside the box.

I think we need, as a government, to get more people looking at this type of opportunity. This industry is bringing people from communities all over the South Slave together to do harvesting, which is going to create meaningful employment. We're going to have a product in the Northwest Territories that is completely renewable, and we are going to be spending our money in the Northwest Territories on a northern production, rather than buying oil and having our profits shipped directly south.

This is a great project. I can't really add more than my colleague has already indicated. We are working together with the proponent. We are going to continue to work together with the proponent, and I think we should use it as an example of what is possible here in the Northwest Territories thinking outside the box in making real change in how we're

supporting diversified economies here in the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Mahsi, Members, for your questions. It appears that all Members exhausted all their questions to the Premier candidates.

Members of the public, before we vote, I would like to thank both candidates who have agreed to put their names forward for Premier. This has been a long morning, but a worthwhile initiative. You have given us all confidence in whoever is chosen to be our Premier will be up for the job. We all know that. I think this experience indicates the process we use to select the Premier is an open and transparent one.

Voting

Members are now asked to proceed to the Clerk's Table where they will be given their ballot. If Members could then proceed to the voting booth to mark their ballot and then place it in the ballot box in front of the Clerk's Table.

---Voting Commences

Are there any more Members wishing to vote who have not voted yet? There being none, I will proceed with my vote.

---Voting Commences

Members, I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office where ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring Members back in once the results are determined. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

Results

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I would just like to say we just had a vote count. I declare you have elected Mr. Bob McLeod as your Premier.

---Applause

Mahsi, Members. Congratulations to Mr. Bob McLeod. The appointment will be confirmed tomorrow by motion in the House. I would now like to give Mr. Bob McLeod an opportunity to say a few words.

MR. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I just had to make sure I grabbed the right speech.

---Laughter

Welcome to the 18th Assembly. This will be an Assembly of change and better government. Mr. Speaker-elect, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Members in demonstrating their confidence in me by designating me to be the Premier of the Northwest Territories for a second term.

I would also like to take this opportunity to formally thank the people of Yellowknife South for electing me to represent them as their Member of the Legislative Assembly for a third term. They have placed their trust in me and my leadership and I intend to honour that trust.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my wife, Melody; my family: my son, Warren; his wife, Shannon; my grandsons, Carter and Cooper; my brother Michael McLeod; my niece Joyce McLeod; my niece Brenda Gauthier; and all my friends who are here today. Your support and patience is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

---Applause

Thank you, as well, to Mr. Glen Abernethy for standing to be Premier.

---Applause

I know Mr. Abernethy to be a committed and experienced Minister who believes wholeheartedly in his duty to the people of the Northwest Territories. In the past government, he was responsible for advancing significant government priorities like anti-poverty and health system reform in a quiet and effective way.

Should I be confirmed as Premier, I look forward to working with Mr. Abernethy again and will be relying greatly on his insight, common sense and good judgment.

I also want to thank all of you who will be standing for election as Members of the Executive Council and congratulate those of you who will be selected by our colleagues to make up the next Cabinet. As Ministers, we will be entrusted with a significant responsibility by our fellow MLAs, and we will all have to work hard to maintain that trust given to us on behalf of the people of the Northwest Territories.

A clear message that I heard from voters during the election campaign is that they want to see positive change in territorial politics. They want to see a government that is more transparent and open to input from the public on priorities and decisions. They want Members of the Legislative Assembly to work together more closely to provide solutions. It is incumbent upon us all, as Members of the 18th Legislative Assembly, to give the people of this territory the kind of government they want and deserve.

I have already stated my own commitment to greater openness, transparency and accountability. I believe Members here share a similar commitment, and I am confident that working together we can forge a new style of government, one more in keeping with the expectations of Northerners.

It is also incumbent upon us to represent all residents of the Northwest Territories in communities, big and small. In our work here

together, we must ensure that we take into account the interest and concerns of all residents. People in small communities must sometimes feel that their challenges and concerns go unheard. Making their voices part of the discussion will be an important goal for me, so we can ensure we are governing in the best interest of the whole Territories.

We have devoted much of this week to discussing the priorities that will guide the work of the 18th Legislative Assembly. I have heard many good ideas this week and seen a great desire of Members to make a positive difference for the people of the Northwest Territories. We have talked about addressing the high cost of living, settling land claims, investing in our young people, meeting the need for housing and about making the switch to alternative renewable energy, among many others.

We have also talked about the fiscal realities facing the territory and the resource limitations that will shape our work going forward. We know the revenue outlook for this government is flat at best and that we will have to make some tough choices together to align our expenditures with the money we are bringing in. That is not an ideal situation, but this is not the first Assembly to face this kind of challenge. Previous Assemblies have managed their way through similar situations and I have every confidence that we will as well.

Pending formal confirmation of the motion of appointment tomorrow, I am committing to working with you all to advance the priorities we have established together within the resources that we have. With challenges, there are always opportunities. I will be relying on Members and on my colleagues in Cabinet for their advice, input and direction on how we identify and make the most of those opportunities.

Mr. Speaker-elect, in electing the 19 of us to represent them, the people of the Northwest Territories have given Members of the Legislative Assembly both the opportunity and responsibility for shaping the future of this territory. As I look around this Chamber, I see the right mix of enthusiasm and experience, energy and new ideas to get that job done. I will be honoured to serve as your Premier and thank Members again for their confidence in me. Thank you.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Bob McLeod and Members. I will now adjourn our proceedings this morning. We will reconvene at 1:30 this afternoon for the election of the Executive Council members. Mahsi cho.

---SHORT RECESS

Confirmation of Process for Election of Cabinet

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): I would like to call the Territorial Leadership Committee back to order. The next item on our agenda is the election of the Members of Executive Council. In accordance with our agreed upon procedures, I will ask Members to indicate whether they wish to allow their names to stand for the Executive Council positions. The 2-2-2 geographic balance on Cabinet will govern all aspects of this selection process. Once Members indicate their interest, we will entertain a 10-minute speech from each nominee before we proceed to voting. Let's get things underway.

Election of Ministers

At this time I will ask all Members from the northern constituencies who wish to allow their names to stand for a position on the Executive Council to rise. Mahsi.

I have Mr. Alfred Moses, Mr. Robert C. McLeod and Mr. Danny McNeely who have indicated they wish to be considered for Executive Council membership. Mahsi.

Nominations

I would now like to ask all Members from the southern constituencies who wish to allow their names to stand for a position on Executive Council to please rise. Mahsi cho.

I have Mr. Schumann, Hay River South; Mr. Thompson, Nahendeh; Mr. Sebert, Thebacha; and Mr. Beaulieu, Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

To bring this proceeding to an end, I would like to ask all those Members from the Yellowknife constituencies who wish to allow their names to stand for a position on Executive Council to please rise. Mahsi.

For Yellowknife constituencies I have Mr. Abernethy, Ms. Cochrane, Ms. Green and Mr. Vanthuyne.

The nominees for Executive Council positions are as follows: northern constituencies in alphabetical order, Mr. McLeod, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Moses; southern constituencies, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. Thompson; Yellowknife constituencies, Mr. Abernethy, Ms. Cochrane, Ms. Green and Mr. Vanthuyne.

At this time each candidate is permitted to make a 10-minute speech. The speeches will be made in alphabetical order by geographical area and by surname. We will start with the northern constituency nominees. I call upon Mr. Robert C. McLeod. Mahsi.

Candidates' Speeches

Mr. Robert McLeod's Candidacy Speech

MR. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. First of all I would like to congratulate our Premier-elect, Mr. Bob McLeod, and congratulate yourself on your election as Speaker. I am confident you will lead and represent this institution with the respect and dignity it deserves.

Members of the 18th Legislative Assembly, I stand before you to put my name forward for your consideration as a member of the Executive of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

I treat people how I expect to be treated, maintain an open and transparent relationship with MLAs and Ministers, committees, Aboriginal governments, federal Ministers and non-government organizations. I am straightforward and honest and come from the old school of ripping the band-aid off as opposed to doing it slowly. I believe in fairness and the equitable application of government policy and programs. I do not believe in special deals; and if there is something wrong with a government policy or it does not address an issue, we need to look at that policy. Many times Members of committees have identified flaws in government policies under departments I had responsibility for. Where it made sense, I directed the department to develop options and work through the committee process to effect change. I believe in the committee process. It adds value to the work of the government and ensures the insights and different perspectives of MLAs in regions and communities and their constituents are included in the discussions.

I believe our committee system allows for the development of the best possible policies and legislation because we work together, and I want to assure you all that this is a priority of mine.

I also believe in being open with Members and their research staff. Since I became Minister, I have directed departments to provide the research department with the same briefing material that I am provided for business plans and main estimates, with the exception of notes containing personal information. I know this was useful for staff and Members and made for better discussions when I was a Regular Member.

It is very important to keep committees in the loop on emerging issues. Where practical, I have appeared before committees to brief them and seek advice, or have sent correspondence to committee chairs, seeking input and outlining what the issue is and the proposed steps that are being taken. I maintain that is very disrespectful of the role MLAs are expected to have in consensus government, if they are finding out about government decisions in the media.

I have an open door policy and welcome your input and advice. I may not always take it, but I will tell you why I won't take it.

I believe I have a good track record as a Minister. Sometimes hard choices have to be made, and I believe we have to focus on the end result and what the consequences for the residents will be in making these hard decisions.

In conjunction with standing committee, I was successful in transferring responsibility for rent tax calculation back from ECE to the Housing Corporation. We heard a lot that the involvement of two government departments in the delivery of social housing was confusing to clients and, while well intentioned, caused more problems than it was supposed to solve.

I am grateful to the MLAs from the 16th and 17th Assemblies who had the political courage to affect change. This was a whole change in the housing culture for the NWT. If you did not pay your rent or your mortgage, there were now consequences. It was hard on MLAs and housing staff as those who chose to ignore their last chance to stay in their homes were evicted or foreclosed on. But it was these hard times that set the stage for us to lower the maximum rental rates for public housing from 30 percent of a family's income to no more than 19 percent. This, combined with the graduated rental scale, effectively removed the disincentive to work.

This also allowed us to retool the Mortgage Program so those clients who faithfully paid their mortgages saw their mortgages either paid out or greatly reduced and gave those mortgage clients with less than stellar repayment records the opportunity to remortgage and enter into an affordable repayment plan.

I have no issue in stating that the number of housing complaints that MLAs in my office were getting at the end of the 17th Assembly were lower than any time since they built the first social housing units in the valley back in the '50s and '60s.

In MACA, with committee support, the amount of money available for youth programming was increased threefold in the last seven years. The Youth Ambassador Program is being emulated across Canada as a way to develop future leaders. I am very proud of the support and opportunity for NWT youth that our programming provides.

In the last Assembly I directed the department to work collaboratively with the NWT Association of Communities and the local government administrators to develop a new funding formula to deliver funding to communities. The end result is a formula that recognizes the need for increased funding for larger regional centres and does not overly penalize those communities that are currently overfunded. We need to work together to

find the money to implement the new funding formula; and it's a major priority for me, as an MLA or as a Minister, should you see fit to put me on Cabinet again.

I was also the first Minister responsible for the Department of Lands. As one of the three responsible Ministers, I took my role very seriously as we worked through what our responsibilities are in a post-devolution world.

I think change in the federal government in Ottawa bodes well for a truly regulatory regime, one that recognizes our regional land and water boards and takes into account the wishes of this Assembly and the people of the NWT. This past weekend we met with members of the Aboriginal governments, the YWCA, the Native Women's Association and the NWT Association of Communities and heard from them what their priorities are.

We also went through our own priority-setting exercise over the last few days, and I listened closely as Members outlined their priorities for the 18th Assembly.

I welcome the opportunity, with the support of my colleagues, to be part of a team that will be tasked with moving many of these priorities forward.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McLeod. Next on the list is Mr. McNeely.

Mr. Daniel McNeely's Candidacy Speech

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Speaker-elect, Premier-elect, and the 18th Legislative Assembly colleagues here. Just bear with me. I've got a bit of a cold here. Not to mention any names where it came from, but watch out.

---Laughter

Anyway, to carry on. Our NWT democracy has spoken on November 23rd that brought us here together today. Voters granted us, 19 of us, the respectful honour to define a clear mandate for a pan-territorial vision built on the solid foundation of transparency and accountability. Although we face many headwinds, I have every confidence that we will all work together and capitalize on the individual strengths of our diverse team sitting around here today. We will be able to overcome any challenges confronting our territory.

I am not a defender of the status quo. If change is needed, and it certainly is, as a Minister, I will take that directive to heart. Every team needs a strong leader and leaders who aren't afraid of hard work, and I am respectfully seeking your support today for a ministerial appointment within Cabinet.

My own varied background has prepared me well for this senior role within the Assembly. This includes:

1. 35 years spent working in the private and public sector;
2. experience as a Sahtu land claims negotiator;
3. understanding the challenges faced by our communities through time spent as an elected counsellor in Fort Good Hope;
4. a strong desire to build a brighter future for all residents that grows out of 33 years-plus I've spent with my caring wife, Beverly, three wonderful children and seven grandchildren.

Nationally, we all know that we have a newly-minted federal Liberal government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who is clearly focused on stimulating the economy with infrastructure development while protecting the environment and creating jobs. Fortunately, for the first time in more than a decade, our Member of Parliament is part of that government and will have a strong voice for us in Ottawa, providing we speak together with clarity from this institution.

When I look at the obstacles before us, like the recent closure of the Snap Lake diamond mine, for example, I remain confident in our ability to succeed. The 17th Legislative Assembly has set a table for us in many ways. They have opened new doors for us into international markets like China, which has huge implications in terms of tourism, growth and resource development potential.

Our predecessors have also completed the devolution deal with Ottawa. We must now follow through on the implementation and remaining issues for completion. Having been intimately involved in the Sahtu Land Claim negotiations, I understand the benefits of clarity. At the same time, I see the need for renewed efforts to encourage the completion of land claim agreements throughout our territory. To help deliver this commitment, Cabinet must help plot a new course for territorial negotiators, one that includes amended policy and revised mandates so that the system has enough flexibility to reach deals with unsettled claimant groups. We need to build respectful government-to-government relationships with all Aboriginal groups throughout the territory. We can't continue to allow paper to divide us.

I welcome mid-term reviews and the policy being developed to address that. This surely is a principle for prudent and effective management. I would support finding new ways to connect with the public. Decentralizing Caucus and committee meetings and getting them out of Yellowknife and into the regions would be a good starting point.

Our government inherits the construction of the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway. Additionally, the Department of Transportation is the proponent in the ongoing Mackenzie Valley Highway extension project from Fort Wrigley to Norman Wells. It is currently the focus of review board environmental

assessment with public hearings expected within the first half of this Assembly. Combining these two highways will cost Canadians in excess of \$1 billion. If we are to see them through to completion, it is critical that Cabinet include leaders with intimate knowledge of these projects as well as others being discussed with increasing regularity, such as the Tlicho region's Whati all-weather road. It would be imperative that we engage with the federal government to access appropriate funds for these critical investments in our territorial transportation network.

We also need powerful voices in Cabinet who understand the importance of building strong, healthy communities. In addition to our targeted infrastructure investments to reduce the cost of living and improve the quality of life for residents, we can't lose sight of other important community capital needs ranging from the new school in Colville Lake to upgrades on Highway No. 7 through the Wood Buffalo National Park, and from an updated health centre in Fort Simpson to dealing with the ongoing housing issues facing our Northwest Territories area.

It has always been my experience that local people understand the best untapped opportunities around them. We need to find new, creative ways to invest our people by seeking leadership roles, especially our youth in looking for further education to start their own home-based community businesses or other initiatives they may choose. We must find ways to help them pursue their dreams. I hope to be a champion within Cabinet for any good ideas.

Our environment. Our environmental regulatory regime is also at an important stage in its evolution as we will be the first MLA group to collectively hold the reins of our world-class co-management system for the entirety of our term in office. In the Sahtu, for example, I've seen how a process based on regional control and engagement leads to respectful, sound decisions for the benefit of all residents without sacrificing our natural environment.

Around the NWT our integrated system has grown from settled land claims. Although it is working well enough today, it still needs much attention. There are legislative blind spots that must be fleshed out. Other updates are likely coming soon to the federal Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, and we have new regulatory tools like the NWT project certificates slated to take effect in the coming months. It's now our fundamental responsibility, in most cases, to oversee the implementation of these changes. We need to take the same co-management approach when engaging with Aboriginal groups on wildlife issues that we can better understand the challenges impacting the caribou herds, in particular the most reversed Bluenose-East and Bluenose-West herds and the

Bathurst collapses, which are an important resource to so many people in so many communities. We need to answer these challenges together using both traditional and scientific knowledge, so that the cornerstone of the North, our caribou, are available for generations to come.

We also need to take clear steps to help free our communities from the independence on diesel power. With a suite of cleaner energy options now proven to the North, as leaders we can encourage broader options of those climate change fighting technologies such as wind, water, solar, LNG, geothermal, biomass. All hold potential in different corners of our territory. We need to invest in the technology that advances this important initiative. The federal government is making \$100 million available each year for clean energy infrastructure. We need a Cabinet dedicated to ensuring the NWT gets its fair share of funding.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mr. McNeely, your time has expired. Thank you. If you can conclude your comments in 30 seconds, please. Mahsi.

MR. MCNEELY: I ask for your support to commit to working all together constructively, ensuring this institution is dignified by the representation. The responsibility of government is to build schools, infrastructure, jobs, to create jobs, and tailored programs and services. Mr. Speaker-elect and colleagues, I aim to do just that. Mahsi.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. McNeely. Next on my list is Mr. Moses.

Mr. Alfred Moses' Candidacy Speech

MR. MOSES: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker-elect. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you in your new role as Speaker of the 18th Legislative Assembly. It is a very prestigious role and I am confident you will do your very best and represent this House and the North with honour and dignity.

I would also like to take this time to address our new Premier-elect, Mr. Bob McLeod. Congratulations on being elected to your second term as the Premier of the Northwest Territories to serve the great people of this territory. I wish you the best of luck in the next four years. You have support from all Members here today, and I know collectively we will all work to making the lives of Northerners better.

I would also like to thank and congratulate my colleague Mr. Glen Abernethy for putting his name forward for Premier. Mr. Abernethy has done a lot for this government in the eight years that he has been here. Working alongside of him as chair of the standing committee in the last government, he did a lot of great work for the people of the Northwest Territories and I am confident he will continue to

bring that work ethic into this House day in and day out.

I would like to begin by congratulating all my colleagues who are here today. We have 11 new Members and the Members who got re-elected to the 18th Legislative Assembly. It is a very challenging job but, at the same time, a very rewarding experience. You will all get to see that over the course of the next four years.

From what I have witnessed over the past few weeks, I know, and I am confident, that everyone in this room will do an amazing job in representing their constituents with respect and integrity. To all Members today who are putting their name forward to try to get a seat on the Executive Council, thank you and good luck. It takes a lot of courage and commitment, dedication and, even more so, sacrifice to work on behalf of the 44,000 residents of the Northwest Territories.

I thank the people of Inuvik, once again, for putting their trust in me to represent them for another four years in the Legislative Assembly. It's very humbling, but at the same time very gratifying, knowing that I can make changes in this House for not only residents of Inuvik but residents right throughout the Northwest Territories.

I would also like to thank those who supported me throughout the 17th Legislative Assembly, who made my job a lot easier, who made my job challenging at the same time, to get things done. Those who continue to support me here in the 18th, I will commit to do my best on your behalf.

Early last week we heard a comment that past predicts future. I find those words very fitting for myself. During the 17th Legislative Assembly I worked very hard for my constituents and the people of the Northwest Territories, and I worked equally as hard on the committees that I served on to get as much work as possible for the well-being and benefit of all Northerners. This, however, was not done by myself. It was a team effort from the public, non-government organizations, staff from this building, also Members who may or may not be here today. We are all able to accomplish so much by working together.

I would like to take a moment just to recognize the work of the two committees that I was part of in the 17th Legislative Assembly, the Standing Committee on Social Programs and Government Operations. I want to assure the Members who are not here with us in the 18th Assembly that, moving forward, we will continue to do the work that you did during the last government, and I am confident that this group of elected officials will continue to be strong advocates of the work that was started in the 17th and build on it for the people of the Northwest Territories.

For the new Members who really don't know who I am, here is a little history. I started my career as a community health representative in Inuvik for about four and a half years, where a lot of health initiatives were accomplished, which eventually landed me on town council in Inuvik. When I got on to town council, I was officially into politics and worked just as hard then, and I would say a big accomplishment was creating the first community tobacco bylaw in the North. When that job was done, I moved to Yellowknife to take a job as a First Nations and Inuit health branch coordinator, where I travelled to 32 of the 33 communities in the Northwest Territories where I lobbied governments, where I created policies, worked on legislation that came into this House and we created tobacco legislation, we dropped smoking rates for all youth, as well as adults.

On those travels I was able to see each and every one of your communities, the struggles, the challenges that they have. They were still the same when I got in to chairing the Standing Committee on Social Programs, and I know what is needed in these communities.

After working in the tobacco field, I did work as an occupational hygienist, health and wellness coordinator over at Diavik, where we created policies for occupational health standards to ensure that all companies abided by the laws of this territory. I then moved and worked for Municipal and Community Affairs as a regional youth and volunteer coordinator back in Inuvik. The main reason I went back to Inuvik was so that I could work on making a difference in the lives of people once again, specifically the youth. Eventually I became a Member of the Legislative Assembly in 2011. Every job that I have had, I was able to work with great people throughout the North with one common goal in mind: help people and improve their health and well-being. Every job that I have had has been very rewarding, but none so rewarding as that of an MLA. I am not here for myself. I am here for the people of the Northwest Territories and I am here for the people who need a voice in this House. I feel that is why I probably speak so loud.

---Laughter

During the last government, I sat on two hardworking committees. I learned a lot about the government, departments, policies, legislation, action plans that needed to be changed. It made it easier for me to fulfill my duties as an MLA. It also helped that I had one of the best attendance records during the 17th Legislative Assembly. If there is one piece of advice that I could give to all Members here today, make sure you keep your butts in the seats during committee meetings and during session. It will really help make your job a lot better.

It would help me instill changes and in making improvements in many programs, services, policies and legislation, such as the Child and Family Services Act, the Mental Health Act, the new governance act, Pharmaceutical Strategy and the Pharmaceutical Act, which is saving people's lives.

We also did a lot of work on creating and modernizing action plans and strategies that are going to help improve the lives of people in the Northwest Territories and give supports to those NGOs and those people in the North who do good work on behalf of the government and for the people of the Northwest Territories. What we also did was create legislation that we tabled on the creation of an ombudsman, which I think is truly needed in the Northwest Territories. We also put into place the Public Accounts Practice, which was never done in about 10 years before the last government came in. In every initiative that we tackled, we did it to the best of our abilities with the best of interest of Northerners in our minds.

Throughout the duration of my first term, I was very optimistic, with lots of energy and a strong work ethic. If elected to Cabinet, I will bring that same energy and work ethic into the Cabinet room, as when I chaired the Standing Committee on Social Programs, to ensure we do the best for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Over the past four years, I committed and dedicated myself to helping people across the North in every region. This will not change if elected to Cabinet. I will work harder to bring the voices of the people into the Cabinet room as I did into this House. They deserve it.

As I move forward into the 18th Assembly, I will continue to have that optimism, but being a Member in the 17th, I will bring in the realities that we face and address the issues the best that we can. I am confident that building on the work of the 17th and can see development in areas of supports in terms of mental health and addictions. I'm still a strong advocate for a treatment centre. The Housing First Strategy, creation of an inspector monitor for the Business Incentive Policy, and to promote and support small businesses in the North.

We have heard that building stronger relationships with Aboriginal governments, stakeholders and our partners is also very important, and I look forward to strengthening those relations.

In closing, I just want to say that a vote for me is not a vote for me. It's a vote for you. It's a vote for your constituents. It's a vote for the people of the Northwest Territories. Mahsi cho, quanami, merci beaucoup, thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Moses. Before I proceed to southern constituencies, I'd just like to recognize Chief Betsina, who is here with us. Thanks for coming.

---Applause

I'd also like to recognize, from the Tlicho Government, Chief Nitsiza and Behchoko Chief Daniels as well.

---Applause

Members, we'll continue with our southern constituency candidates. First on the list I have Mr. Beaulieu.

Mr. Tom Beaulieu's Candidacy Speech

MR. BEAULIEU: Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker-elect. I would first like to congratulate yourself and the new Premier-elect. I would like to say mahsi cho to... [English translation not provided.]

I'd like to speak on key issues facing our people across the Northwest Territories. If elected to Cabinet, the work that I will do are the changes that are needed and the work that must be continued. Throughout my speech, the theme is creating employment opportunities where they are needed most.

I would like to start with changes in the way we do business in housing. I believe that we must develop a strong communications strategy. We still have tenants who think that maximum rent in Housing Corporation units is 30 percent of their gross income, and it has been 19 percent since the last changes to the rent scale.

Our homeownership programs need to be revamped. The current suite of programs is not working. The people continue to live in core need. I will, as a member of Cabinet, work on actively lowering core need across the NWT, including Yellowknife. In addition, we must renovate seniors homes so that seniors age in place, to avoid spending millions of dollars that would otherwise be needed to place seniors in long-term care. Health and social services programs will also have to be enhanced in order to do this.

We must continue our work with the federal government, to bring more Building Canada funding to the NWT and continue work on our proposals to build a Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Tlicho all-season road and the road into the Slave Geological Province.

In our small communities, where employment is often seasonal, we must continue to work with the MLAs' committee on the Sustainability of Rural and Remote Communities to support the traditional economy and continue to offer world-class fur products on the world market. We must support subsistence hunting and put healthy food on the tables of people who need it most.

I feel we, as a government, must develop a youth strategy, a strategy for youth employment and youth development, a strategy for youth leadership and develop new youth programs. I feel that if we

added youth officers to work in our communities and our regions, we would see tremendous returns.

This government must invest more money into early childhood development, such as midwifery, prenatal work and healthy families, targeted at aged zero to three and preschool. Most of the programs are in place, but they are underfunded. We should have more money available for daycares, Aboriginal Head Start. Recognizing that those are federal programs, however, there are tremendous returns in early childhood development spending.

We must review our programs to make sure that every dollar this government spends is spent strategically, so that we maximize our spending and benefit as many people as possible in the NWT. We must move the Akaitcho claims to an AIP within one year, and we must move towards the Dehcho claim in two years, moving that to an AIP.

We must work with the federal government, utilizing our Devolution Agreement, to clean up the 600-plus waste sites that exist across the NWT.

We must support small businesses to remain in operations so that they can continue to employ Northerners.

We must look at different ways of doing things in our correction facilities. We spend over \$100,000 per year per inmate while they do not add to our economy by not paying taxes and not being productive members of society.

We must look at ways to deal with the taxing and leasing and renting of lands in the communities where it's still viewed as a strange concept to pay for their own land and pay taxes on property that they've owned for many, many years.

Our government must look at increasing our support to ensure that we are graduating students who are ready to be successful when attending post-secondary education, and we must remain in touch with our post-secondary students, to ensure that they complete their studies.

We must increase the number of summer students that work for the GNWT, and provide incentives to small businesses so they can offer a competitive wage when hiring summer students.

We know that addictions is a drag on our economy and we must find ways to address that issue.

In closing, I offer myself as an experienced Cabinet Minister. I have been a Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister for Seniors, Minister for Persons with Disabilities. In the last two years, I have served as Minister of Transportation, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Human Resources. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Beaulieu. Next on the list is Mr. Schumann.

Mr. Wally Schumann's Candidacy Speech

MR. SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I, too, would like to congratulate you and Mr. McLeod on your positions today.

Good afternoon. I would like to start by acknowledging everyone here today to the important journey we have embarked on. When I look around the room, I feel nothing but optimism. We have worked very closely in a short period of time, to bring forward our priorities and set the stage for the 18th Assembly. I am confident we are on the right track. We have already laid the important groundwork for a brighter future, a future that will give everyone in the NWT a chance to prosper. I look forward to working with each and every one of you to make this happen. That's what it will take.

Our teamwork will either make us or break us. I think we've already laid the foundation to keep a good working relationship here in the past few days, but there are some key factors that will ensure our success going forward. This is where I believe my extensive business and governance experience can be a real asset to the Executive Council. A lot of us have already called for a need for transparency. I believe collaboration, consultation and innovation among us will also be instrumental in our success. I have championed this approach and leadership in every one of my previous business and governance roles. I also intend to champion here, if elected to Cabinet, what I believe will help and define the success of the 18th Assembly.

Let me take a moment to tell you a bit about my background. Thirty years ago I moved to Hay River because of an opportunity. I wanted to raise a family and grow a business in one of the most exciting communities for economic growth in the North. I am eternally grateful for the continued opportunities that have kept me there. As a Red Sealed auto body journeyman, I started with a small auto body repair shop, which quickly grew into one of the largest sign manufacturing businesses in the NWT.

Like my other northern entrepreneurs, what I lacked in formal business education was learned the hard way, trial and error. I worked around the clock to get the job done, keep clients happy and run a profitable business. That's not a bad thing. I developed a strong work ethic early in my career because I had no other choice. My reputation and the well-being of my family were on the line. However, just like my new role here in this Assembly, I quickly learned my family wasn't the only stakeholder in my success. My business success also played an important role in the strength of my business community, both in Hay River and the Northwest Territories.

The livelihood of our local business communities has a direct impact on each and every person in the NWT. It impacts jobs; it impacts family incomes; it impacts the cost of living; and it impacts the amount of money we can reinvest in our communities. That's a big responsibility; hence, to underline one of my first lessons in the importance of collaboration. I took a more active role to promote the growth of my business community and town when I became a director of the Hay River Chamber of Commerce. I saw firsthand the impact that collaboration with fellow directors could have on our community. It's been rewarding to see our successes as a board translate into successes for the businesses, families and youth.

Similarly, I think we can have the even stronger impact on our priorities if we find ways for better collaboration within this Assembly. Every one of us should be seeking to collaborate with federal, municipal and Aboriginal governments. We should be working with the organizations and stakeholder groups within our communities, and we should be working with each other. Collaboration will be key to working smarter and faster towards our goals. It will also be vital to making sure we can create the relevant policies at the centre of health, well-being and the prosperity of our people and communities.

I think even new MLAs such as myself have already had a good deal of experience with consultation during our campaigns. This will be another critical factor to our success in this Assembly. We have already heard from numerous constituents, stakeholder groups and organizations about the issues at the heart of our communities. But the job isn't over. The truth is, it's never over. We need to keep an open dialogue with our constituents, committees and everyone here today. We have a duty to give a voice to every single person in our communities and to bring it right here.

Giving people a voice is one of the reasons I got involved as president of the Hay River Metis Government Council and vice-president before that. One of my proudest achievements at the Metis Government Council was overseeing community wellness contribution funding with the GNWT. I led a large-scale consultation to make sure the entire community could benefit from these dollars. I also saw the value in consultation in my work with the NWT Chamber of Mines and Aboriginal Participation Committee to help me give my voice to my community by sharing some of the real impacts on resource development on our businesses, youth and our communities.

The key part of our job in the next four years will be to maintain a strong relationship with our communities. That is the only way we can truly listen and give a voice to our constituents. We need to do the same within our Assembly. We must keep open dialogue between our Members, Ministers

and our committees to make sure we include as many viewpoints as possible in our decision-making. It's the only way to ensure our efforts are relevant and consider the well-being of every single person in the NWT.

Our constituency very clearly voted for change on election day and we have to be held accountable to that. This is why innovation will be critical to defeating the status quo. I think we're all pretty aware of the limited resources at hand with the declining economy. We have to get creative; we have to get uncomfortable; and we have to think long term. As a business owner, I've always had the future in mind.

Innovation has been key to my success. With an evolving economic climate, it can often mean the difference between sink or swim for a business. It's one of the reasons I feel so strongly about investing in youth. Fresh minds bring a lot of value into a company. In fact, I've recently passed the baton to my star protégé, who has been running the show since I was elected as MLA. The young people are good at seeing things in a new way. It's amazing what you can learn when you stop and open your mind to new ideas and ways to doing things. It's one of the reasons I participated in schools with the SNAP program. It's a great initiative that connects youth with local apprenticeship opportunities to help inspire them to find meaningful careers within our communities.

I've also had the opportunity to work with youth in my role as the president of the Hay River Metis Government Council. I attended weekly student council meetings at the Diamond Jenness High School to mentor youth, the future leaders of our communities. It is these experiences that have helped instill in me the importance of innovation for longevity. The future is never certain. The only thing that is constant is change. That's exactly why we must value innovation in this Assembly that will help us set priorities that empower our people and our communities with the flexibility to adapt and thrive into the future.

Back into my community, some of the most respected peers refer to me as a man who gets things done. I take great pride in that. But I also know my success has never been the result of just one person. I'm looking forward to building a positive working relationship with everyone in this Assembly. Whether a Cabinet or a Regular Member, I am committed to bringing the same work ethic that has driven my business and leadership success to every task, and I'm also committed to fostering a working environment that's centred on consultation, collaboration and innovation. I strongly believe that it will help define our success as an Assembly and help set a positive, new direction for the people of the Northwest Territories.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Schumann. Before we proceed with the next speaker, I would like to recognize at this time Mr. Herb Norwegian, grand chief of the Dehcho, and also with us is the vice-president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Norman Snowshoe. Welcome.

---Applause

To continue on with the speakers from the southern constituencies, next on the list is Mr. Sebert.

Mr. Louis Sebert's Candidacy Speech

MR. SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-Elect. First of all I would like to congratulate you again on your election as Speaker. The election of a bilingual Speaker fluent in an Aboriginal language sends a strong message about our commitment to the strengthening and enhancement of Aboriginal languages and culture.

I also congratulate our new Premier-elect, Bob McLeod, on his election. Mr. Premier, in your speech last week and again reiterated today in the questions you answered, you committed yourself to more transparency and accountability in government. I think I can speak for the whole of the House in saying that we will support you in this initiative, and I look forward to working with you over the next four years.

Friends and colleagues, I seek your support as I put my name forward for Cabinet. I am committed to working through the consensus government system to realize the goals and visions articulated in our priority statement. We have set a new tone and direction for the 18th Assembly and I will be guided by the priorities that we have worked upon and agreed upon this week.

When I was elected on November 23rd, I was aware that there were many new responsibilities in my office, far beyond those of my constituency alone. That is particularly important for a Cabinet Minister who must take into account all of the wishes, concerns and needs of the whole of the territory, not only his region or town.

We need Cabinet Ministers who will look beyond the concerns of their riding, and I will, should I be selected to Cabinet, listen carefully to your concerns and advice, of all MLAs. My door will always be open to you.

I want to tell you a bit about myself. I was born in Ottawa and raised in various military bases throughout Canada and the United States. I have practiced law for almost 40 years, the last 31 years in the community of Fort Smith where I live with my wife, Anne.

In my career as a lawyer, apart from appearing in all levels of court in the Northwest Territories, I have served on the Human Rights Adjudication Panel, the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, Employment Standards Board and Legal

Services Board. I was also involved in assisting clients in collective agreements.

Although I am newly elected to this body, I am not without experience in the public sector. I served for 14 years on Fort Smith Town Council, the last three as deputy mayor. I also had the privilege of serving for seven years on the Board of Directors of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and was chair of the Audit Committee, which deals with such issues as budgets, for the last three years of my term.

I have also taught at Aurora College as a part-time instructor for 31 years. I taught mainly in Fort Smith, but also at the Inuvik campus on one occasion. I taught in the Business Administration, Renewable Resources and Social Services Court Interpreters programs.

This varied background, I believe, has given me expertise in several areas. I am able to deal with complex legal and regulatory issues. I am able to deal with and analyze budgets – we have very large budgets to deal with at the Power Corporations and somewhat smaller at the Town of Fort Smith. I have also had to deal with various educational issues, and as I mentioned, I have dealt with labour issues in negotiating collective agreements.

I believe that this experience would, should you select me to be a member of the Cabinet, give assistance in areas of education, finance and justice.

I spoke on Monday of some of the issues that were important priorities in the new government, issues of child care, justice, minimum wage, municipal funding. I know that you, my fellow MLAs, share many of these concerns. I believe that working together through consensus government we can achieve the lofty goals that we have set for ourselves this week.

I realize, of course, that there is a cost to many of the programs that we have spoken of, including the ones that I have spoken of, particularly daycare. While the fiscal outlook is not as rosy as it might have been a few years ago, I don't think this is time for excessive restraint. While we cannot spend ourselves back to prosperity, we should not abandon the programs which assist the most needy among us. They need a hand-up, not a handout, as I said the other day.

I was looking for where I got that quote and I think it was from Mr. Obama. I don't think it came from Mr. Trump.

---Laughter

I believe the programs such as universal daycare, increased minimum wage and housing will actually, in the long run, lead to a stronger economy.

I believe that I now have the experience, maturity and temperament to serve as a Cabinet Minister. I look forward to working with you.

When I walked out today at lunch, I saw something that I had not seen for the last two weeks: the sun. It is an omen. We have a great future ahead. I look forward to working with you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Sebert. Next candidate for the southern constituencies is Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Shane Thompson's Candidacy Speech

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. First off, I too would like to congratulate yourself and the Premier on your new positions. I know you both will do us well and represent the Northwest Territories with dignity.

Good afternoon, colleagues. I would like to start off with congratulating each of you for being elected to your respective ridings. I can honestly say, campaigning and then being elected as the representative for Nahendeh riding was a humbling experience, and I am sure each of you feel the same.

Looking around the room and knowing not only how much you did to get here but also all of the work that we have done together over the last three weeks, I can say I am very proud to be part of this team. The next four years will surely require immense effort from each of us. I believe we are up to it. The next four years will also be intense work, work which we committed to do on behalf of the people who made it possible that we sit here today, the residents of the Northwest Territories.

These residents also include people of non-voting age, our children and youth. As you are all aware, I am an advocate for youth development. Given the social challenges our communities face every day, every one of us has a part to play in growing our children and youth to secure our future. It is really that simple.

My life work has been in the field where the primary focus is on creating positive change in peoples' lives. I decided to run for office because I wanted to continue this work in another capacity. I feel blessed to be here and I have the support from the leadership in my riding. I would like to officially put my name forward for the Executive Council within this Assembly.

My speech today will not be about specific topics or priorities, as we spent the last two days exploring, debating and polishing them. Rather, my speech will give you a glimpse of who I am and the initial but critical work that just lays ahead of us and our team.

From my prior speech, you will have seen that I am a passionate person, especially when it comes to the territory I have lived in for my whole entire life.

I was born and raised in the Northwest Territories and have had the opportunity to work within 31 of these communities. I understand their unique opportunities and challenges that our people face. You will find that I am also passionate about these opportunities and challenges.

Every one of us represents a unique constituency. We were elected basically on platforms designed to address priorities that constituents identified. However, there are also common threads that are woven through each of the ridings. These threads unite us as a territory, much like the residents of the NWT is to our differences and our similarities that we create the best path forward. Indeed, we are a unique territory with 11 official languages and even more culture and ethnic diversity. As we create the path forward, we must respect our diversity, diverse history, our seniors and elders and all our rich, traditional culture. Our culture is what defines us, and while we move forward creating our territory's future, it will be through our culture that we remain rooted in our traditions.

Over my career, no matter my position, I have always strongly believed in an open door policy, and this will remain the same. As my platform stated, people matter. Their thoughts and ideas matter. Being accessible is, and will be, one of my priorities, not only for the residents of Nahendeh but especially each of you, my colleagues. As part of the Executive Council, I vow to listen. More than that, I love to listen, to understand each of your perspectives while working for the greater good of the NWT. I emphasize listening to understand, because simply listening is not enough. Too many assumptions can be made. Asking questions and doing necessary research will help me see your perspective.

In our new roles in the 18th Assembly, we must be active listeners. I firmly believe that solutions can be found at the ground level, and often diverse perspectives offer the best and most robust solutions.

Throughout the last 23 years, I called Fort Simpson my home, raising five children, all of whom are young adults who have children who make the North their home. I've invested 23 years as a public servant with the Government of the Northwest Territories and five years with the municipal government. I have volunteered with many boards and committees from local to national levels. I have spent 24 years as a justice of the peace, presiding over matters throughout the Northwest Territories.

To achieve common priorities, I have worked alongside municipal and First Nation governments, and this must remain a priority. Collaboration, especially across governments, takes purposeful attention and continued investments. Great progress was made in the 17th Assembly in this regard, but there remains work to be done. New

relationships must be forged, and old relationships must be maintained. Collaboration is not something that just happens, especially across government, but it certainly should be more achievable with one organization.

Within the GNWT there are 14 departments and 13 agencies. Note I said "within the GNWT." One organization with many areas, but still one organization. GNWT should be a model of collaboration, starting with this Assembly.

In fact, within this Assembly's website, under consensus government it states: "Compared to the party system, there is much more communication between Regular Members and Cabinet." This communication and collaboration must be extended to all GNWT departments and agencies. Fundamentally, we are all one organization and we must work together holistically to achieve this Assembly's priorities.

In my extensive background in community and capacity building through sport and rec, I have firsthand experience not only shaping but also working within many complex and diverse team settings. It takes many different perspectives and a true collaborative effort to move forward on opportunities and find solutions to issues.

Our 33 communities are made up of people. It will be the health and well-being of our people which will determine the health of our communities. The role of the GNWT is to ensure there are supports and services in our communities, and ultimately to move forward, achieving the priorities we came to consensus on early this week.

What our territory needs are high-performing leadership teams, teams which are absolutely focused on our goals and objectives in order to achieve excellence. As the 18th Assembly, I see every one of us as a valuable part of this leadership team. We each have unique and important roles, which also involve the honour of representing the people of our respective constituencies.

As part of my core values, I hold transparency and accountability at the highest level. There has been evidence that this has been evident throughout my life, especially within my career as well as my various volunteer roles. In fact, over the last year, my commitment and accountability brought me to pursue a graduate certificate in the social program evaluation with the University of Victoria and Carleton University. This educational pursuit underscored the importance of setting obtainable, and identifying, performance measures. To assist with accountability, I am an honest and committed person. I do what I say I'm going to do when I say I'm going to do it. This you can count on.

As we move forward to form the Executive Council and the various committees and structures with this Assembly, I would like to wish each of you a most

inspiring and productive tenure. We are 19 elected officials working for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Let's keep that in the forefront as we lead our people into a healthy and prosperous future.

In closing, I would like to share that I am thrilled to be here to work alongside each of you. I personally would like to thank all the Members who put their names forward today, whether it was for Speaker, Premier or Executive Council. As well, thank you to all who will be dedicating themselves to work on the various committees. As I stated earlier, every unique role within the 18th Assembly is valuable, important to the people of the NWT. I look forward to being an active contributor in changing the legacy of the 18th Assembly, and I would be honoured to serve within the Executive Council. Thank you, mahsi cho.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Thompson. Continuing on to Yellowknife constituencies, we have four candidates. First on the list will be Mr. Abernethy.

Mr. Glen Abernethy's Candidacy Speech

MR. ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Speaker of the 18th Legislative Assembly. I'd also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Bob McLeod on his re-election as the 12th, not the 13th, but the 12th Premier of the Northwest Territories. Congratulations. I look forward to working with you.

I've had an opportunity to spend a lot of time in the last couple of days standing before you, talking. I spoke for 20 minutes last Wednesday and I spoke for probably much more than 20 minutes today. Thank you all for all the questions that we had earlier today.

The commitments I made in my speech and the commitments I made during my QA period today, I'm still committed to. This is still an incredibly important institution. I'm still committed to working with each and every one of you.

This isn't going to be an easy Assembly. Anybody who thinks we're going to have an easy time is out of their minds. We have stagnant revenue growth. We have hard economic times in front of us. We put together a set of priorities that are going to be pretty darn demanding. There is a lot of hope in those priorities and we can accomplish that by working together, but it's not going to be easy. There's no way that even one of us is not going to get out of this 18th Legislative Assembly without some bumps and bruises, but it means that we need to work together. It means that we must be united. We will have different roles in this Assembly. Some of us will be Regular Members and some of us will be Cabinet members, but together we can move forward on the priorities we've set, making hard

decisions, and we will have to make incredibly hard decisions. I look forward to that. I look forward to being on the Executive Council, and that's why I'm standing in front of you today. I'm standing here today, seeking your support as I put my name forward for Cabinet of the 18th Legislative Assembly.

I'm not going to talk for much longer because you've already heard me go on and on and on and on and I know you're tired, but I am committed to working with and for you and with and for all the people of the Northwest Territories for the next four years and well into the future. Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Abernethy. Next candidate for the Yellowknife constituencies is Ms. Cochrane.

Ms. Caroline Cochrane's Candidacy Speech

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations on your position as Speaker-elect, and also congratulations to Bob McLeod for Premier-elect.

It's really exciting, actually, to be part of the new Legislative Assembly. This Assembly speaks of proactive change. Transparency and accountability have been themes throughout. It's also an honour to put my name forward for Cabinet, and I congratulate all the others who have put their name forward, as well, with the purpose of ensuring that the priorities defined by this 18th Legislative Assembly are completed within the next four years.

I can't talk about what I've done in government previously, as this is my first turn at it, so I'm going to talk about who I am. I'm going to give you a small summary of what I see as my strengths, because I realize it's really difficult to choose a Cabinet when we've only had a few weeks to get to know each other.

I'll start by saying that I'm Metis, which for me represents a blending of cultures, and it truly represents it of the NWT because we are a blending of cultures here. This also assists in my always being conscious that I need to consider the needs of the people, all the people, with any decisions that I make.

Another of my assets is my 30-year history in business and financial management. As well, I hold a degree in social work for almost 20 years, and I brought two non-profit agencies out of serious debt into financially stable positions while, at the same time, improving service delivery.

This brings me to the topic of change. In thinking about what change really means to me, I think about a new way of working. I think about a way of working based on best practices and guided by principles of incorporating the opinions of all stakeholders, consideration of current research,

and commitment to staying focused and working hard to meet the priorities identified.

I also have seven years' experience with implementing and maintaining accreditation standards. In order to maintain accreditation, an agency must constantly review best practices and regularly consult with stakeholders both for the program design and for evaluations. Transparency and accountability are a large part of accreditation as long-term plans with clearly defined actions to meet each priority must be developed, approved and evaluated on a regular basis. The actions accomplished are constantly reported to the governing board, who then define if the actions are appropriate or if they need to be revised. As well, I was responsible for developing two sets of policy manuals based on accreditation standards, legislative requirements and agency and stakeholder needs.

If elected to represent you on Cabinet, I will bring this knowledge and skill with me. As a Cabinet Minister, I will work closely with the committees established by the Legislative Assembly to assist in guiding my work and ensuring I am progressing towards the priorities. I will also commit to keeping Regular Members as informed as possible within my decision-making and my progress. As well, I will seek the expertise of each individual MLA, as we all bring a host of skills and knowledge to the table and it would be unwise for me not to utilize the knowledge that each individual has.

Although I say I will work hard, I must also state that it will be a pleasure working towards the defined priorities as each priority has not only addressed my concern and the wishes of the people within my riding, but they also represent all the people within the North, and it will be an honour to bring these wishes into actualization.

One of the benefits of being 55 years old is that I hold a wealth of experience and not only am I a strong leader and have the ability to actualize priorities, my education and my career choices have also provided me with extensive knowledge in the areas of human development from preconception to the aging population, child care provision and early childhood development asset building, parenting skill development and supports, literacy and language retention strategies, homelessness, poverty, marginalization, the necessity of food security, mental health, trauma, addictions, the reliance on the mineral exploration field, the struggles of small businesses, the effects of colonization and residential school, the need for indigenous self-governance, and working with community people throughout the North. This knowledge will assist me in addressing many of the issues that face the people of the North.

As well, I believe that for Cabinet members to truly represent the whole NWT, we need to not only

meet in Yellowknife but to conduct business in all communities on a regular basis. Visiting each community is critical so that we can get a better glimpse into the strengths and the challenges of each region and recognize the diversity and similarity of each of us as northern people.

The duty of a Cabinet Minister is to work as a team and to take into consideration the needs of each individual riding and work towards the collective betterment of us all. It is therefore imperative that we learn as much as we can about the people we represent.

My vision for the 18th Legislative Assembly is to address many of the issues long talked about but not acted on. My vision is to think outside of the box and consider the needs and ideas of each Member and stakeholder in deciding the actions I take.

It would be an honour to represent you on Cabinet, and I promise to work hard towards being as inclusive of each riding as possible and truly representing your wishes in the leadership position. I am committed to the North. My family moved to Yellowknife in 1963 and my partner and I will retire here. All of our children live here, and I will soon have grandchildren who I hope will make the North their permanent home.

The future of the North is important to me and I promise to do my best to make the North strong, vibrant and sustainable for many generations to come.

In conclusion, I again thank you for allowing me to put my name forward for Cabinet. In this short time I've had getting to know each of you, I have come to trust your judgment and I know that whoever you vote for will be the best person to represent the Northwest Territories as a whole. In whatever capacity I serve in, I look forward to working with you all in meeting the defined priorities and making sound decisions for the North.

---Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Ms. Cochrane. Next, Yellowknife constituency candidate, Ms. Green.

Ms. Julie Green's Candidacy Speech

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect, and congratulations on your acclamation to that position. I'd like to echo what Mr. Sebert said, that I feel it's a tremendous benefit to this Assembly and to the North to have a bilingual Aboriginal language Speaker in your role, and I look forward to working with you in that role.

Also, congratulations to you, Mr. Bob McLeod, for your strong leadership and more to come in the Assembly ahead.

On November 23rd the voters of Yellowknife Centre answered my call to vote for change by voting for me, and change is what I represent here. As with

Caroline, I don't have a long experience of previous Assemblies to speak about. This is my first time being elected to any office.

Why I want to be in Cabinet. First, an opportunity to work on our shared priorities. I'm not going to reiterate them, but what you've heard is that we want a better life for the people of the NWT. Not just people in Yellowknife but people in the small communities and the regional centres. We know they have tremendous needs and we know that our job is to find ways to meet them within the money that we have available.

I also am running for Cabinet to improve the communications between the Cabinet and the Regular Members. We've heard lots about how that communication was not very effective in the last Assembly and that there was a polarized House. It's my ambition to work collaboratively so that we are if not of one mind, at least of one purpose, and that we are effective together rather than at one another's throats.

I'm also very interested in being a strong voice for creating the government-to-government relationship that we heard so much about on Saturday from Aboriginal governments, to be a strong voice for women, to talk about the unique role of downtown Yellowknife in the life of the whole territory, and to work on behalf of vulnerable populations across the NWT.

About myself, I stand here living the immigrant dream. All of my grandparents were servants in stately homes in England. One was a gardener, one was a nanny, one was a chauffeur and another one was a cook. My family came here when I was a child, and it's obviously the best thing they ever did for me. This would not have been my life had I remained in England. But by coming to Canada, I became the first person in my family to go to university. I earned a Bachelor of Arts in History, a Master of Arts in History and a Master of Arts in Journalism before I was convinced I could really do it. I am also a proud lifelong learner, most recently this year earning a Certificate in Fundraising Management from Ryerson University.

What you will get from me is evidence-based decision-making. That is the person that I am. I do the research, I do the reading and I provide good analysis of what I've learned.

I was able to develop tremendous skills and knowledge through my career at the CBC, where I worked for 16 years, primarily in Labrador, also briefly in Nunavut and then, finally, here for the last nine years of my CBC career. In all that time, I used information that I had acquired in my Master's Degree in History to cover resource development, particularly mining. That was coal in Cape Breton, nickel in Labrador and then diamonds when I arrived here. I feel that I have a very solid base of

information about mining economies like our own on which we depend.

From the CBC, as many of you know, I went into the non-profits and specifically into the YWCA. There I had a tremendous lesson in the needs of vulnerable populations in the Northwest Territories. Although many of the YWCA services are based here in Yellowknife, many of the clients are not and their needs are in common, no matter where they come from, with issues of homelessness, a lack of skills in various areas and instability in their lives. It was a tremendous opportunity to learn about these people and to figure out how to help them.

In the time that I was with the Y, I had several very large projects. One was to organize the annual meeting of the YWCA of Canada here in 2011, which brought women from the 33 member organizations of the YWCA here to Yellowknife to learn what we do within this unique environment and how different it is from where most of them came from.

I also did the fundraising for furnishing Lynn's Place in getting Lynn's Place up and running as transitional housing for women. That was a tremendously large project. I didn't do it on my own, but I certainly am proud of my leading role in that.

Then, finally my last substantial project for the Y was to help resettle the families who were burned out of the Polaris Apartment building in June. Somehow we were able to find furniture for those 17 families and get them set up with new beds in their own homes within a week.

So, what I want you to know is that I am quick on my feet and I can get things done.

During the time after I left the CBC, I became very interested in advocacy on issues around poverty. I participated in volunteer work on the Northern United Place Board, which is one of the largest non-profit housing providers in Yellowknife, and also on the Yellowknife Housing Authority, which is the largest of those providers, and on the city Social Issues Committee.

During this time, my partner started a business and, as with many businesses, it is primarily an owner-operated business and it is on demand, so we learned how to write a business plan, we learned how to run the business and to get up at four o'clock if need be, at four in the morning to answer a call for service. I am tremendously proud of that business as it has made it past the critical five-year mark, now in its eighth year of operation. I have also operated my own business as a consultant for the last three years.

I have an excellent history of working together, mostly recently on anti-poverty initiatives. I worked with then-Minister Glen Abernethy, with chiefs, municipal councillors and other people to create the Anti-Poverty Strategy. This was a new departure for

the government in bringing people from outside of government to help write a strategy. It wasn't without its bumps, but 20 drafts later we were able to table a document that we all could support and we were all still talking to one another. It was a great process and I am very proud of the accomplishment of both the strategy and the action plan that was tabled earlier this year and the ongoing funding of the Anti-Poverty Fund which provides for grassroots action on poverty, that pilots new approaches and challenges.

What happens now is that we need, in addition to our other stated priorities, to open a public conversation on consensus. We need to have this conversation with the public in order to build their confidence in this system of government which they felt was tested in the last Assembly and before.

We need to support the mid-term review of the Executive Council and also of the Premier so there is additional accountability for the public and for ourselves that we are, in fact, making progress on the mandate that we set for ourselves. We need to make decisions, explain them and listen. This needs to be an Executive Council, and I am prepared to do my part in making it open, accountable, results-oriented and available to the Regular Members.

In summary, what I offer you is the ability to work hard, my integrity, a results-based orientation, strong team work. What I have to tell you is that I have made no promises and I have had none made to me. I stand here on my own merits as a contender for a position on Executive Council. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Ms. Green. Now we have proceeded through to the last and final speaker, our Yellowknife constituency candidate, Mr. Vanthuyne.

Mr. Cory Vanthuyne's Candidacy Speech

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect. I was officially that last elected MLA to this Assembly due to a recount, and with a name like Vanthuyne, I better get used to speaking last.

First, like most, I want to take this opportunity, or like everybody, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate yourself for becoming Speaker of this House. We look forward to your oversight of this Chamber and the 18th Legislative Assembly. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Bob McLeod being elected as Premier of our territory for a second term, and I look forward to seeing his leadership guide us over the next four years.

I also want to congratulate and commend Mr. Glen Abernethy for letting his name stand.

Speaker-elect, in this Chamber each of us represents a number of different views, and of

course, we reflect the concerns and needs of our respective constituents. Over the past couple of weeks we have come together here at the Legislative Assembly to share the views, opinions and perspectives in an effort to define and describe our territory's future.

I know that you can all agree, as Northerners, that it is important that we unite in a common vision for a great territory. But now, in order to deliver upon that vision, we must set a mandate and match that mandate with a budget. The majority of that task will fall to the Executive Council to conduct, and that is why we are here today to select amongst our colleagues those who will be responsible for carrying out the Caucus-approved mandate and delivering the many approved programs, services and infrastructure that we're required to build that common vision for a great territory along with full participation and oversight of all Members.

I am pleased to announce today that after long and careful consideration, I have decided to let my name stand for a Cabinet position on Executive Council.

Having now served Yellowknife for two terms as a city councillor and having contributed to a number of non-profit boards and volunteering for many local charities and having owned and operated two successful businesses, I have reached a time in my life where I want to be involved in the process of effecting positive change.

I believe I am a person of integrity and I am letting my name stand for the right reasons. I believe my colleagues see me as an authentic and down-to-earth person, and I want the job not to serve myself but to work collaboratively with all my colleagues to solve problems with effective solutions and improve the quality of life for all Northerners.

As a lifetime resident of the North, I have always envisioned myself as being a hardworking representative in this Assembly who will work diligently to protect our territory's best interests. I have a passion for helping others and I believe I have the ability to improve lives and change minds, to change the way people think, and that is why I believe I can help set our territory on the right course for a better future, a better way.

As we are all committing to, my goal is to work toward and promote a government committed to transparency and collaboration. As a leader for positive change, I will value inclusiveness, creative ideas, and I will champion social, environmental and fiscal responsibility.

I believe that my diversified background will serve me well if selected for the Executive Council. My work experience includes apprenticeship training in two trades, carpentry and cabinet making. I emphasize "cabinet making."

---Laughter

I spent time as a mill and autoclave operator at Con Mine in the early '90s. In the mid-90s, I decided to go back to school and received an associate degree in management and took that education into the sports and recreation industry for nearly 10 years and a golf operations management. In 2003 I made a career shift and decided to combine my past construction knowledge along with my education and management experience and focused my skills on becoming a project manager. I would like to share with you some of the employers that I worked for and projects that I have been responsible for over the last number of years.

I started with Tlicho Logistics back in 2004 as a project coordinator responsible for small to mid-sized projects that ranged in value from \$50,000 to \$500,000. Projects included the new office location that Tlicho Investments Corporation is located in currently, to old mine remediation projects like the Salmita cleanup project up in the tundra near McKay Lake.

I then moved to ATCO North, a large electrical/mechanical contractor where I was project manager responsible for overseeing four different contracts up at the Snap Lake diamond mine during construction phase. These contracts ranged in value from \$250,000 to \$2 million and managing a workforce of roughly 35 employees.

Upon completion of the mine construction, I took a general manager's position with a local business called Energy Wall and Building Products. Although the projects we did were much smaller in nature and value, the objective I was tasked with was redeveloping the business plan for the company so they could start doing contract work for the mines. Aside from general management, my duties included developing a new quality assurance and quality control plan as well as a health, safety and environment plan.

Sometime after, I joined the North Slave district office for the NWT Housing Corporation as their manager of technical. Here is where I took a rather large leap in responsibility. As the North Slave district, I was responsible and accountable for the management of new housing construction as well as housing operation and maintenance for eight communities. This included three district project managers and arm's-length oversight of all the local housing organizations' maintenance operations. The annual budget for the new construction at that time was roughly \$12 million and annual operating and maintenance budget was roughly \$3.5 million. It was during my time here that I built many positive relationships within the communities we serve.

In 2009 I was elected to city council. I soon discovered it was difficult to be an elected official for one order of government while being employed by another due to the many issues having overlap and causing conflict, thereby inhibiting my ability to

serve the residents of Yellowknife to the extent I felt needed to do so. So in 2010 I took a big risk. I founded my own consulting business, called CORVAN Consultants Limited, and started providing professional services in project management, business development and technical services to a number of clients and corporations for the next five years. For me, this was exciting work. I developed business plans, negotiated joint venture partnerships, managed projects, facilitated workshops, wrote numerous proposals and even, in one instance, was hired to settle a dispute. On many occasions I would join existing project teams to provide specific services, either in technical writing or in developing construction methodology for any given project. These are commercial projects ranging in value from \$2 million on up to \$40 million.

I also provided these services up and down the entire territory, and through doing so, I built a number of positive working relationships with many individuals, businesses, band councils and community governments over the years.

Politically, as mentioned, I served two terms as a Yellowknife city councillor and two years as deputy mayor. Much like our roles here, we were responsible for setting the strategic direction of the city through goals and objectives and developing a budget to operate from and being accountable to that strategic plan. The City of Yellowknife's annual budget was roughly \$65 million.

As you can see, my experience crosses a number of industries with each new role gaining more experience and responsibility. As each new endeavour arose, it allowed me the opportunity to grow and build relationships throughout the territory, and of course, none of the outcomes from these experiences would have been possible without collaboration and teamwork, and that is what I look forward to doing with all of you, working together to serve proudly the residents of the Northwest Territories.

Members, I will close by saying I want us to lead the NWT into a prosperous future, capable of facing new realities while valuing our past accomplishments and the richness of our diverse history and culture. I want to see us pursue new opportunities and initiatives. I want to see our people energized by imagination and motivated by the optimism and belief that our vision for a greater territory will be successfully realized.

No matter where my feet land in the Legislative Assembly, I consider myself fortunate and grateful to be here amongst you and look forward to proudly representing the constituents of Yellowknife North and the territory in the most effective way I possibly can. Thank you to all those who put their names forward and who have spoken here today. I wish

you the best of luck. Thank you, Members, for your consideration, and thank you, Mr. Speaker-elect.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Mr. Vanthuyne. I would just like to say thank you to those Members who let their names stand for Cabinet. Good luck.

Voting

At this time Members are now asked to proceed to the Clerk's Table to receive three ballots, one for a northern candidate, one for a Yellowknife candidate and one for a southern candidate. Please proceed to the voting booth to mark your ballots and then place them in the box located in front of the Clerk's Table.

---Voting Commences

Are there any more Members wishing to vote who have not voted yet? Seeing none, I will proceed with my vote.

---Voting Commences

I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back, once the results are determined. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Members. Before I proceed to the next step, I would just like to recognize some people who are a long ways from home who are here with us today. They are Paulatuk residents Noel Green, Julie Green and Mary Marsh. Welcome to the Assembly. Mahsi.

---Applause

Members, it is my duty to announce that two candidates have received 10 votes in the southern constituencies and that there is a tie for the fewest amount of votes. According to the agreed upon procedures, all names will remain on that ballot for the next round of voting for the southern constituencies.

As well, it is my duty to announce that you have elected two individuals to represent the northern and Yellowknife constituencies. However, as per our agreed upon procedures, the names of those four individuals will not be announced until all representatives have been determined.

Before we proceed to the vote, are there any nominees wishing to withdraw at this time? There being no such withdrawals, the southern constituency ballots are available before you. Please proceed to vote.

---Voting Commences

Are there Members who haven't voted yet? Seeing none, I will proceed with my vote.

---Voting Commences

Members, I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office where all the ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring Members back in, once the results are determined. Mahsi.

---ADJOURNMENT

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): It is my duty to announce that there is a need for a third ballot for the southern constituencies. The nominees for the third ballot are Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert.

Before we proceed to the vote, are there any nominees wishing to withdraw at this time? There being none, the ballots are available as before. Please proceed to vote.

---Voting Commences

Are there any more Members wishing to vote who have not yet voted? There being no one else wishing to vote, I will proceed to vote myself.

---Voting Commences

Members, I declare the voting process closed. The ballot box will now be taken to the Clerk's office where the ballots will be counted. The bells will be rung for five minutes to bring the Members back in, once the results are determined. Mahsi.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Lafferty): Mahsi, Members. Thanks for being patient and going through the process. It's been a long day but finally we do have some names of the candidates for the three constituency areas.

Results

First and foremost for the northern constituencies: Robert C. McLeod, Mr. Alfred Moses.

---Applause

For the southern constituencies two names came forward: Mr. Wally Schumann and Mr. Lou Sebert.

---Applause

Last, but not least, for the Yellowknife constituencies, two names came forward: Mr. Glen Abernethy and Ms. Cochrane. Congratulations.

---Applause

Mahsi, Members. Congratulations to the new Cabinet-elect. These individuals will be recommended for appointment to the Executive Council by way of formal motion in the House tomorrow. I would like to thank everyone for their contribution and participating today.

Adjournment

This meeting of the Territorial Leadership Committee is concluded. We are adjourned. Mahsi cho.