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The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

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(Great Slave)

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Members Present

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

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayer

---Prayer

SPEAKER (Hon. Jackson Lafferty): Good afternoon, colleagues. Colleagues, today marks the 52nd Anniversary of the National Flag of Canada. It was on February 15, 1965, that our Canadian flag first flew above our nation's capital. Our national flag has been flown with pride since that day.

In 1996, February 15th was declared National Flag of Canada Day to commemorate and celebrate what has become one of the most iconic and recognizable flags across the world.

Not only is our flag recognized the world over as a symbol of this great country, but it is associated with the rights, freedoms, and ideals that we embrace as Canadians. While maple trees are not common in our territory, the Canadian flag is. We fly the flag proudly as a sign of our place within this country, and to show our solidarity with and respect for all Canadians, including those representing us around the world.

Members, please join me in celebration of National Flag of Canada Day. Thank you, colleagues.

---Applause

Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Health and Social Services.

Ministers' Statements

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 132-18(2):
PAN-TERRITORIAL ON-THE-LAND SUMMIT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, this government made a commitment in its mandate to enhance access to culturally-appropriate programs and services.

The last government convened a Minister's Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness to travel across the Northwest Territories and come back with recommendations that would have a real impact in dealing with addictions. The top priority identified by the forum was more on-the-land

healing programs. This is the wisdom of our communities.

This wisdom is supported by research that confirms that a relationship with nature has positive benefits for physical and mental health, as well as social well-being, and that this impact is stronger for those whose lives and traditions are fundamentally linked to the land. Research also indicates that health and Indigenous connection to the land are positively linked. This belief informs the GNWT's commitment to supporting and investing in land-based healing programs for Indigenous communities.

In keeping with this commitment, we will host a Pan-Territorial On-the-Land Summit in Detah next month. Over three days the summit will explore the themes of healing, culture, guardianship, collaboration, and evaluation. The federal government through Health Canada shares our commitment to land-based programming and is a major funder of this initiative.

On-the-land wellness programming partners and experts from the North, other parts of Canada, and the circumpolar world will come together to exchange knowledge, share best practices, and discuss opportunities and challenges. Leaders in land-based programming from across Nunavut, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories have been invited to attend, including elders, youth, Aboriginal governments, non-government organizations, and staff from Health Canada and the three territorial governments.

The summit will also recognize the knowledge in the room by prioritizing opportunities for open discussion between participants to build networks and dialogues. It will be informative, motivational, and will foster new relationships for those delivering programs to continue their work in improving community wellness.

The Department of Health and Social Services is working with Health Canada, the NWT Association of Communities, and an expert advisory committee to bring together the summit. The event is by invitation only due to space and budget limitations. However, we are committed to sharing the benefits and outcomes of the summit as broadly as possible. Webinar registration is available for some sessions, along with live broadcasts on CKLB radio,

so that all residents have an opportunity to hear the plenary presentations.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is a large disparity between health and social outcomes of Indigenous people and other Canadians. The legacy of colonialism and residential schools, and the resulting disconnection from land and culture, has played a part in this. This summit is an important venue that provides an opportunity for all of us to learn from one another, showcase and celebrate the innovation and successes demonstrated by land-based programs across the North, and continue our collective efforts to support connection to land and culture as an investment in the well-being of our residents and communities across the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 133-18(2):
BASIC 911 IMPLEMENTATION

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Mr. Speaker, this government has heard that the people of the Northwest Territories want 911, and we have listened to them. In his budget address, the Minister of Finance announced that this government plans to implement a territorial 911 program. Today, I wish to take this opportunity to expand on this important announcement. In 2015, the Government of the Northwest Territories departments, key partners, and community governments worked together to identify viable options for a territorial-wide 911 system. Experts were hired to examine the current environment and provide recommendations. Those recommendations are now being used as a roadmap for 911 in the Northwest Territories. Recommendations contained in the implementation study confirm that the Northwest Territories is positioned to move forward with basic 911, and an arrangement with an existing emergency dispatch centre located within the Northwest Territories is the most viable option.

Mr. Speaker, consistent with the recommendations, the Government of the Northwest Territories will proceed with basic 911, which is much more viable for territorial-wide implementation than the enhanced version. While enhanced 911 would offer improved location identification for callers, next generation 911 will soon bypass it, which is what the territory will prepare for in the coming years. During our work in 2015, the Yellowknife Fire Division was identified as the only option for a 911 call centre. Although this likely remains the case today, the Government of the Northwest Territories will reach out once again to other communities to validate this key planning assumption. Mr. Speaker, another key element of the new Northwest Territories 911 Program involves establishing new

territorial legislation to help manage and govern the system. Most jurisdictions in Canada that operate 911 do so on a cost-recovery basis. This means monthly fees to fund the ongoing operations of 911 after implementation will appear on the phone bills of our residents.

Similar to other jurisdictions, legislation will be used to establish the fee, which will be confirmed as further consultation progresses. Much like other jurisdictions, the program will be operated on a cost recovery basis, and also provide for further enhancements as required. We estimate it will take approximately one-and-a-half years to implement basic 911, and our goal is to implement the system in all communities as quickly as possible. While our roadmap does not recommend a phased-in approach, careful consideration will be given to that possibility if it makes sense. In the coming weeks, the Government of the Northwest Territories will also endeavour to increase awareness of the current emergency contact numbers, which will remain important until 911 is fully implemented.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making a presentation to the Standing Committee on Government Operations to discuss the draft implementation plan in the coming weeks. I also wish to commend community governments and the first responders for working hard to keep our residents safe. Theirs is an important job that needs to be encouraged and supported, and 911 will provide a crucial tool to support those efforts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to people in the gallery today with us. I am pleased to recognize a group from Ontario, Ontario Legislative Interns. They are here this week to learn more about the consensus-style government, our Government of the Northwest Territories. I'd like to say masi for coming to the Northwest Territories, and thanks for being here. Masi cho.

Item 2, Members' statements. Member for Yellowknife North.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
ADDRESSING SOCIAL CHALLENGES IN
DOWNTOWN YELLOWKNIFE

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest difficulties we have in the Northwest Territories is the social challenges faced by our residents. Sadly, some of the most present and visible manifestations of that take place every day, just a few blocks from this building. These problems are so prevalent that a major downtown landlord has recently issued a public

appeal for action, citing daily incidents of many kinds. Mr. Speaker, these are not new challenges and they are certainly not exclusive to Yellowknife. These are problems faced by every community, every family, and every individual. They are hard and difficult problems to resolve.

Another contributing factor to these problems is our relatively low levels of educational achievement and graduation rates. These in turn lead to under-employment, poor lifestyle choices, health problems, and general low standards of living. Add in a high cost of living and a narrow field of employment and vocational choices, and we wind up with these very difficult challenges.

Ultimately, the costs of these problems are borne by our social support systems, more stress on our legal system, and pressure on our correctional system. It's a steady drain on government resources, not to mention the economy. It limits our true capacity to serve ourselves as Northerners.

Mr. Speaker, in Yellowknife, I'm pleased to see that steps are being taken to combat some of these problems. The Homelessness Roadmap adopted by the city, along with the Housing First initiative, is an important first step. The extension of hours at the day shelter and the new street outreach program will be another step to reducing homelessness on our streets. The recently budgeted wet and dry centres are a step towards reducing public intoxication, and minimizing the impacts of addictions.

The challenge to us as leaders is to find solutions that will support long-term health and growth. We are taking positive steps on immediate issues, but how do we make sure our next generation finds itself in a healthier, safer space?

We must seek vision and innovation to inspire educational achievement, provide safe and secure housing, improve mental health, confront trauma, and support opportunities for growth and employment.

A healthier society will be a safer and more prosperous home for future generations; that must be our goal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON
YOUTH SEXUAL HEALTH WORKSHOPS IN THE
DEH CHO REGION

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware, mental and substance use disorders are among the most serious and key health issues facing our young

people in the North. If these disorders persist, the constraints, distress, and disability they cause can last for decades.

Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that mental disorders, even relatively brief and milder ones, can derail and disable, seriously limiting or blocking potential. In my research, I have been able to find further information that with mental disorders among youth are high rates of enduring disability, including school failure, impaired or unstable employment, and poor family and social functioning, leading to spirals of dysfunction and disadvantage that are difficult to reverse.

Mr. Speaker, with this in mind, I would like to inform this House that there were three days of workshops in Fort Simpson and Fort Liard aimed to educate young people on relationships, sexual health, and making healthy life choices, all part of mental health and awareness.

As I was doing my constituency tour, I had the opportunity to witness facilitators from FOXY (Fostering Open Expression Among Youth) and SMASH (Strength, Masculinities and Sexual Health) present school-based workshops at Echo Dene School in Fort Liard and at Thomas Simpson Secondary School in Fort Simpson. These workshops were held from January 24 to 26. What I witnessed was young men and women being totally engaged.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding this was the first time SMASH has come to the Deh Cho region since SMASH was launched in the summer of 2016. Mr. Speaker, SMASH was developed as the male counterpart to FOXY.

According to the Dehcho Drum Article:

The SMASH sessions are kind of based off the FOXY sessions. They do include conversations around sexual health, healthy relationships, that kind of thing, but they also have conversations and activities surrounding breaking down masculinity and maybe unfair expectations of men.

Mr. Speaker, the nice thing about this program, it gives young men and women the opportunity to have a frank discussion on topics they may not otherwise be comfortable having in class or among their peers. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to seek unanimous consent to finish my statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you colleagues. Mr. Speaker, the FOXY workshop focused mostly on sexual health, including issues such as sexually transmitted

infections, birth control, and establishing boundaries and communicating needs to a partner.

The great thing about these sessions is that the youth are the ones that identify priorities and lead the discussions.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank FOXY and SMASH for taking the lead on these types of workshops in the Deh Cho and the Department of Health and Social Services for funding this type of work. I personally believe this is a good investment in our youth. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON DEVELOPING TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DEH CHO REGION

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Tourism is hosting guests and showing them another way of life that is daily living, in most cases, based on thousands of years of culture.

Mr. Speaker, in the absence of natural resource development projects, tourism is the only industry communities have for employment and business opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, tourism activities complement the skills of local people. They have shared their vision with me of more tourism in Deh Cho: First Nations people working in the parks, highlighting historical sites, visitor information centres, interactive cultural camps, world class facilities with Wi-Fi and other amenities, a fishing lodge, and a naturalist lodge.

Mr. Speaker, some Deh Cho communities are interested in getting more involved in the management and operations of territorial parks. They have ideas for expanding the operations of some territorial parks in our region, including operating beyond existing seasons to provide more opportunities for tourism.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT environment is pristine and some of the best in the world. Opportunities for outdoor activities abound. Artisans in all our communities create intricate, uniquely northern traditional handicrafts that make distinctive gifts and souvenirs.

Mr. Speaker, the NWT needs to take the next steps to make this vision a reality. Small operators face many challenges: attracting visitors in a competitive market, insurance rates, ever-climbing costs of doing business, the need for training, product packaging and marketing, retaining qualified staff, cultural differences, and language barriers. Tourism operators require commitment, professionalism, and a range of skills to maintain a successful

business. Resources in our small communities are limited, especially for people just getting started.

Mr. Speaker, in 2013 the Government of the Northwest Territories released Recommendations for a Strategic Action Plan for Aboriginal Tourism. We need to implement that strategic action plan to grow our tourism industry and tap into the potential of Aboriginal tourism in the NWT. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON LONG-TERM CARE PROGRAMS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, monsieur le President. In his reply to the Budget Address, the Health Minister referred to the growing numbers facing us in meeting the demand for seniors' long-term care. We know that by 2026, he said, we have to put in 258 long-term care beds. That's \$139,000 in operational costs per bed, for a total of more than \$35 million annually by 2026 to meet the projected demand.

The numbers are taken from the 2015 Northwest Territories Long-Term Care Program Review report. The report provided a detailed analysis of the anticipated demand for long-term care, options for programs, and approaches to meet that demand, and an analysis of the financial resources that would be required. The report contains 11 recommendations for meeting long-term care challenges, including the possibility of private rather than public care facilities. That's an option I don't ever want to see take place, other than through non-profit organizations. We have the recent announcement of 72 long-term care beds to be located in renovated space in the old Stanton Territorial Hospital. Last week, the Health Minister said there were also some plans being developed to add another 48 long-term care beds at Avens.

Helpful progress if there are the funds to do it, but there will still be a very significant shortfall as our population continues to age and despite best efforts to keep people in their homes as long as possible. Where will the money come from?

Apparently not from the federal government. The recently signed Health Care Agreement has reduced funding to our government and an additional \$9.7 million over 10 years dedicated to long-term care, which is barely a drop in the ocean and it would about 2.7 per cent of the annual \$35 million operating cost for the long-term care beds that we need.

Perhaps more crucial than where the money will come from is whether it will come at all. The Health

Minister's reference to the long-term care funding crunch was contained in his monologue on the need for budgetary restraint, implying that today's austerity is in preparation for tomorrow's spending. For some years, the most often-heard refrain from this government has been the gloom of a coming financial crisis, all the while accompanied by huge plans for multi-million dollar infrastructure projects, roads to resources, and special warrants for mining property and a shipping company. Cabinet seems to be able to find money for its priorities. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to my colleagues. Cabinet seems to be able to find money for its priorities, but when we will get serious about our social infrastructure deficit? Later today I'll have questions for the Minister of Health. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON AURORA COLLEGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, [English translation not provided].

Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we debate the cutbacks proposed for Aurora College, we must ask ourselves as an Assembly: what kind of territory do we want to be?

When the devolution agreement came into force in 2014 we promised our people we would build a territory and shape our future ourselves. Today, three years later, we are talking about shutting down two flagship programs at Aurora College: the teacher education and the social work programs.

If we cut the Teacher Education Program we turn back time nearly 50 years in history, hard work and success in training northern teachers here so our teachers can be taught by our own teachers.

Mr. Speaker, we are forgetting about the cost of cannibalizing our public education infrastructure. If the Teacher Education Program is cut, we will lose its staff, curriculum, supporting materials, agreements with other universities. It is very expensive and time-consuming to rebuild. The Teacher Education Program needs to be improved. We should fix it, not kill it.

Mr. Speaker, we say our people are our greatest resource. We say that we will invest in them and in our territory. We say that lifelong learning is a goal that we want our people to be our teachers, taught

in an environment that respects and understands our rich history and the ongoing struggles of Aboriginal peoples in the territory.

All will be lost if we shut down TEP. If we are going to build our territory we must invest in the North and keep our education programs and infrastructure strong. Sending our students and education resources south to the provinces is a step backwards into the darker days of the last century. We will pay dearly for that in the long run. Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. We will be the only jurisdiction in Canada that cannot train our own teachers. If we do this, we will lose connection to the land, the culture, the history and the Indigenous people, all the northern learning so special to our Teacher Education Program.

Mr. Speaker, we must be forward-thinking. Our predecessors built this program investing in the North and our people. The 17 Assemblies before us stayed true to that fundamental principle. There have been many temporary difficult financial times, but Members of those Assemblies were strongly committed to training Northern teachers in the North. Are Members of the 18th Assembly wiser than all the other Assemblies combined? I think not, Mr. Speaker. If we change the course now, it will be a great mistake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PROGRAMS FOR SAHTU YOUTH

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the invited opportunity yesterday to participate in the 2017 Suicide Prevention Through Positive Life Skills and Inspiration Sahtu Youth Conference held in Norman Wells. It was a very good turnout, leadership support, parental support. I was very inspired on the initiation of this conference there yesterday upon my presentation, and I'm looking forward to more of these gatherings to our youth community.

Mr. Speaker, the Sahtu Renewable Resource Council are hosting the Dene Ts'ili On-the-Land School to earn your PAL, which is a firearms possession and acquisition licence. The program details, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be held out on the land mid-way between Great Bear Lake and the Mackenzie River at a place called Bennett Field and hosted by Benny and his wife Tisha Doctor. The program details are going to be directed towards the youth of 18-30 on a regional basis and

it will include storytelling, setting traps, setting nets, arts and crafts, and hunter education.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, but not least, we have approximately 10 trainees from Tulita attending the Pre-Trades Training project, a joint collaboration between the Tulita Land Corporation, NAIT, and the Sahtu ECE Service Centre in Norman Wells. The purpose of this project is to provide pre-trades training to the community members to make them more employable, enhance their skills; and, as we know, there is a shortage of qualified tradespeople in Tulita and the Sahtu Region as identified and initiated in the Skills 4 Success Strategy Plan by this government.

In cooperation with these three identified courses, I would like to -- and I'll have appropriate questions for the Minister later on a collaboration work plan developed by an action plan between this government and the DGG or the Deline Got'ine government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHERN-BASED ADDICTIONS TREATMENT CENTRE

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the closure of the Nats'ejee K'eh facility on the Hay River Reserve in 2013, many Northerners have been distressed with the lack of available treatment options here in the Northwest Territories. It is no secret that we have an unacceptably high rate of addictions in the Northwest Territories.

In fact, the GNWT's 2012 addictions survey found that 75 per cent of the population drank at least one alcoholic drink in the 12 months prior to the survey; 21 per cent have used cannabis those 12 months; and 22 per cent of NWT residents had tried an illicit drug in their lifetime, and hallucinogens and cocaine and crack being the most commonly used illicit drug. To give even more perspective to these numbers, Mr. Speaker, this only applies to a population at the time of 41,462.

Mr. Speaker, we have an undeniably concerning addictions problem in the Northwest Territories. It was a feature of the election; it's a feature of every election and every priority for every government in recent years and we need to ensure that we have real options here in the North. It's a shame that the closest place Northerners can receive treatment is 14,000 kilometres away in St. Albert, Alberta, at the Poundmaker's Lodge.

Although I am certainly in favour of many of the supports that we see coming out of the

Homelessness Action Plan for Yellowknife that does resolve to treat local addictions in local facilities, we need to do a better job at providing quality treatment that takes these rates down and supports Northerners getting well so they can go back, be productive in their communities, and be productive members of society and achieve the aspirations that they want for themselves and that we want for all the people that we serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NWT does not have a prescription drug monitoring program. It is time for the government to make that investment in order to prevent the injury and, worse, the death of NWT residents.

Mr. Speaker, last month media reported on a prescription overdose case of a man from Lutselk'e. The drugstore allegedly dispensed a dose 10 times greater than the medication he was prescribed by his doctor. After taking the pills for a while, he said he felt dizzy and tired. A nurse in his community caught the mistake before the excess medication damaged his health permanently.

Once this event was reported, a constituent came to me and reported the same kind of problem -- a mistaken dosage at the pharmacy that caused her significant health issues. Mr. Speaker, these problems are likely the tip of the iceberg. The NWT coroner has raised the alarm about another dimension of prescription drugs, their overuse and misuse. The coroner estimated 17 overdose deaths between 2009 and 2012 of people who were described as potentially dangerous amounts of legal drugs by seeking multiple prescriptions.

One means of providing oversight for both of these problems is the creation of a prescription drug monitoring program. Obviously, any prescription monitoring program needs to be consistent with the electronic medical records system, or EMR. Last I heard, the EMR system cannot produce a valid prescription for a pharmacist. Apparently, work is under way to make this possible within patient confidentiality requirements. The main problem at the moment, though, appears to be money.

What is required is dedicated staff time and an information system linked to all NWT pharmacies that can offer real-time access to patients' prescription histories. In the meantime, the department is educating clinicians about appropriate prescribing, which, of course, is a good idea.

I am putting this issue back on the table, Mr. Speaker. I realize this budget does not include funds for a prescription monitoring program, but it may be possible that eliminating multiple prescriptions could pay for the implementation of the program itself. While we wait for this program to roll out, prescription mistakes are jeopardizing the health of NWT residents. I will have questions for the Minister. Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Mackenzie Delta.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PUBLIC HOUSING RENT ASSESSMENTS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Public Housing Rent Scale was introduced in 2012 to help make monthly rent for public housing units simpler, more predictable, and much more fair. The scale ties rent to a household income and makes sure no one pays less than \$70 per month or more than \$1,625 per month. It also makes sure rent reflects where people live, recognizing the cost of living is much higher in the rural and remote communities.

In 2015, the rent scale was updated. The corporation announced that, like in calculations for income assistance, payments through the Canada Child Tax Benefit and payments for foster care parents would no longer count as income.

Also, instead of putting the burden of monthly reporting on tenants, the corporation now calculates rent using the household's total income as reported on income tax returns.

These are good changes, Mr. Speaker, but at the same time, this is also where a few problems come into play. Many of my constituents have seasonal positions, working and earning in the summer but then having a hard time making ends meet in the winter.

That means that the income reported on their taxes does not give the full financial picture and rent that could be paid easily during the summer become an obstacle once the summer -- and seasonal work -- ends.

Residents brought this issue forward at my constituency meetings in all of my communities. I expect that when the corporation's housing survey is done, it will come up there, too. In the meantime, people in the Mackenzie Delta and, I am sure, in other communities throughout the Northwest Territories are struggling.

The Housing Corporation has done a lot of work to keep improving the rent scale, and I am confident we could work this out, too. Thank you,

Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister later today.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. SPEAKER: Again, just recognizing Ontario interns here with us; masi for being here. Item 6, acknowledgements. Member for Nahendeh.

Acknowledgments

ACKNOWLEDGMENT 17-18(2): MALE SOCCER PLAYERS ON U16 NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES SOCCER TEAM

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate three young male soccer players for being accepted to the U16 North American Indigenous Games soccer team. They are Chase Berrault, Jolan Kotchea, and Angus Capot-Blanc. As well, Jordan Nelson was selected as an alternate. On behalf of the community, their parents, and coaches, we are very proud of their accomplishments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Acknowledgements. Member for Kam Lake.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT 18-18(2): PASSING OF JEAN PIRO

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on January 30 of this year, my constituent Jean Piro passed away peacefully, only weeks away from her 94th birthday.

Mrs. Piro came to Yellowknife in 1947, and two years later she married her husband, local businessman Mike Piro. In her 70 years in the NWT, Jean had many jobs and was an active member of many clubs and associations and even brought a bowling alley to Yellowknife.

It is without a doubt that Jean's greatest achievement is the roots she laid down with her four children, Gordon, Brian, Lorie, and Sandra, and her many grandchildren.

Jean was one of the city's longest-standing residents, and her legacy is as one of the community's "Golden Girls." My condolences go out to her family, friends, and all those who had the honour of knowing her, from Yellowknife. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Our condolences to the family, as well. Acknowledgements. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT 19-18(2):
PASSING OF ALBERT BOHNET

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge the passing of my constituent Albert Bohnet of Avens Manor. He was 100 years old.

Mr. Bohnet came north from Alberta and made Fort Smith his home. He made his living driving heavy equipment and teaching others that skill. He was named Citizen of the Year after he retired for his volunteer work. He was well known for his love of curling and cribbage.

Mr. Bohnet was predeceased by his wife Febula. He is survived by his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and his many friends. I offer the family my deepest sympathy for their loss. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our condolences also go out to the family, as well. Masi. Acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 572-18(2):
SOCIAL SERVICE FACILITIES IN DOWNTOWN
YELLOWKNIFE

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I talked about taking on social challenges. I am very pleased to see that the City of Yellowknife, in support with the GNWT, is doing a lot of good things, in particular in downtown Yellowknife in that regard. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services, and I am wondering if the Minister could kindly provide us an update on the status of the relocation of the day shelter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the last sitting, I indicated a willingness and a desire to move the day shelter. At that time, I also indicated that we were hoping to tie it in with a sobering centre and co-share a location; separate entrances because they are different programs, but co-share a location.

Unfortunately, we have had an incredibly hard time finding a location downtown for a sobering centre. I think we have looked at as many as 12 properties, and all of them had to be rejected for one reason or another. Some of them were space issues. Others

were landlords weren't prepared to rent for this purpose. Some of them had other structural issues that we couldn't deal with.

We are still moving forward, trying to find a location, but we have had to think a little bit broader, possibly moving the sobering centre out of the downtown core, at least for the interim, until we can find a more permanent location in the downtown core. Short story long, it is taking way longer than we anticipated.

Once we have a sobering centre figured out, we will be in a better position to figure out if we can immediately move the day shelter or if it is going to have to be moved in transition. I don't have any dates, Mr. Speaker. I wish I did. I am hoping to have some additional information by the end of this week, at which point I'd love to have a sit-down with the honourable Members opposite to discuss our options and see if we can find some resolution. This has got to happen, Mr. Speaker. It is a priority of this government. I know it is a priority of the Members. We have got to find a way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: The Minister just spoke about how there might be consideration of having the day shelter and the sobering centre together. Are there possibilities in finding a quicker solution by having these as two separate entities?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think in the short term, we are not going to have any options but to consider them as two separate entities. I think in the long term, it would be great if we could find a way to co-locate them. At the end of the day, we need both services. If we cannot find a way to roll them into a single building with separate entrances because, once again, they are different programs, we have to absolutely, without question, be open to alternate locations.

Obviously, one of the reasons we are looking at co-locating is to get some economies of scale, and help us reduce and control some costs. As I've indicated, we have made a commitment to move the day shelter. We made a commitment to finding a sobering centre, and implement a sobering centre here in the Northwest Territories. We are still living up to that. We are frustrated by the fact that it is taking a little longer than anticipated. As I said, I am hoping to have some information by this weekend. Hopefully, we will have a chance to meet with committee, and have a conversation, hopefully, maybe as soon as next week.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you to the Minister for his reply. I wonder, also, if the Minister can provide us an update on what we would refer to as the "Wet Centre." There is discussion that we were going to have the possibilities of a facility where those who

were in need could go and have portioned amounts of alcohol to help them, and we have, I believe, put some funding towards this. Is there a location, and is there a program that we are going to be following through with, Mr. Speaker?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: There has never actually been a budget allocated to a managed alcohol program. It is a commitment we have made, but as I indicated last October, our first priority is to get a sobering centre in place. A sobering centre is probably the most ideal location to have a managed alcohol program.

Since then, it has come to our attention that the City of Yellowknife has put in an application to the federal government for a managed alcohol-type program. We are waiting to see what the results are there, and whether or not they are going to need us to be involved, partnering in providing some technical expertise. We are open to that. When it comes to managed alcohol programs, you have got to make sure that it is well-designed and makes sense.

I had an opportunity to visit a managed alcohol program in Ottawa where we heard a lot about the positive aspects, and the negative aspects, and how important it is to have a thoroughly and properly designed program, focused on the clients who will be utilizing the program.

We are still open to it. We still have made the commitment, but it was never going to be immediate. We wanted to get the sobering centre in first, and move from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 573-18(2):
AURORA COLLEGE TEACHER EDUCATION
PROGRAM

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Education on the Teacher Education Program. Mr. Speaker, if we eliminate the Teacher Education Program, I predict that fewer Northern students will study to become teachers. The department must have looked into that before proposing the cut. What is the department's forecast in future years for the number of Indigenous students studying to become teachers? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On average, we get about 29 students who enroll in Aurora College's TEP program. Over the last three years, we have also averaged seven graduates out

of that program. Indigenous, non-Indigenous, we don't have those numbers right now, but we do support all Northerners when they are seeking post-secondary education. We also supported 33 students this academic year studying to become teachers in the South, in southern institutions. We continue to support them, and we are committed to continue to support financially, and support through counselling, and any support that the students in the Aurora College TEP program are currently in. We are committed to supporting them to complete their program by June 30, 2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: We are committed to training teachers and incorporating Indigenous knowledge in our practise through our pledge to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. How will we meet that obligation if we eliminate the Teacher Education Program at Aurora College?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I had a similar question yesterday when we talked about the social worker program. Our governments, our departments, through the JK to 12 system, run students through Aboriginal language and culture, basic education. We have On-the-Land programs. You have language programs. We have other programs that we are piloting in certain regions that focus on culture and awareness.

Over the last year and in the last government, we did implement a residential school Northern Studies training. We are working on developing Northern Studies that are going to focus on self-governments, land claims, and any teachers regardless of if they are Northerners or any Southern teachers who want to come up to the Northwest Territories, we do have a New to the North program that has a lot of cultural awareness in that program as well. Plus, we also run a teacher cultural orientation days that focus on residential schools, the history of residential schools in the Northwest Territories so that teachers, regardless of if they are Northern or Southern, have an understanding of how our families have grown up in residential schools, and understand the environments, and the communities, and the school environment that they're getting into. I believe that we are still going to be promoting that cultural awareness in all of our students that come back North for employment.

MR. BEAULIEU: What was the conclusion of the most recent evaluation on the Teacher Education Program, and what improvements were suggested, if any?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The whole process of looking at reductions was in Aurora College. The department worked with Aurora College to look at their programs and reviews, and as all Members in

this House know, our job is to make tough decisions at times; and sometimes, those decisions are not popular. After the reviews on looking at the programs, these two programs were selected and brought forth to this government.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister: what is the expected economic impact on Fort Smith if the Teacher Education Program is eliminated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We don't know that at this time. As I mentioned, this is a program that is going to be phased out. June 30, 2020 will be the last day of this program. In that time, we are working on developing a strategic framework and strategy coming forward that might replace it with another program. We are going to see what that strategic plan says, while we are also going to be working with the Thebacha campus on the next steps as we move forward. We cannot make any predictions at this time on the economics that this will bring to Fort Smith.

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

QUESTION 574-18(2):
MENTAL AND SEXUAL HEALTH PROGRAMS
FOR YOUTH

MR. THOMPSON: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I got lost with my conversation with my colleague here. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke about mental health and the work that FOXY and SMASH has done in my region. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and Social Services has spoken about the work the department is doing on the Mental Health Action Plan in the stages that they are presently. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please advise this House what the department is doing in the meantime in this area for the youth? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have been asked a number of these questions similar to this over the last couple of days, but I will try to provide a fulsome answer for the Member. The department is taking a holistic approach, the development of a Youth Mental Health Action Plan to address the challenges that we are facing here in the Northwest Territories, but at no time have we stopped providing services to youth.

Community counselling is available to youth throughout the Northwest Territories. If it isn't located in your community, we have access to it through other means. The department funds a number of on-the-land programs, run and organized by different Aboriginal groups and organizations. Many of those groups and many of those on-the-land programs are focused primarily on youth, so there are opportunities there. We do have specialized treatment options for youth through a number of out-of-territory treatment programs that individual youth can go to when they're struggling to receive some of the services, whether it's for addictions or behavioural issues or other mental health issues that a child or a youth may be having.

We are continuing to move forward with the action plan. Other areas, when it comes to an organization like Stanton and the design of the new hospital there, we've actually created a section for youth which didn't have a designated section in the old hospital, so there are a number of things that we're doing. More needs to be done, Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear. The Members have said it; I've heard it. The public have said it; I've heard it. This action plan will hopefully allow us to move forward in making enhancements and improvements and increasing the services and bettering the services we already provide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answer. Mr. Speaker, in the past I've heard the Minister speak about how they have been involving FOXY and SMASH as they move forward on the Mental Health Action Plan. Can the Minister advise this House if they're getting this organization to engage the youth across the territories about the plan when they do the community tours?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: In moving forward with the framework which was already tabled in this House, we did engage with FOXY and SMASH who helped us through the validation exercise to make sure that we were on target on moving in the right direction with the framework. We've also indicated and have talked to them about being part of the validation exercise as we move forward with the development of the specific action plan for youth mental health and addictions, and we're looking forward to having them as partners, as well as other groups like youth ambassadors who have a pretty good insight about what's going on across the North as a whole. So we're absolutely looking to engage and we have already engaged them on the framework. We're excited to engage them on the action plan as well.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for his answers. During the past two weeks we've heard the Minister talk about funding the department has been giving FOXY and SMASH. Can the Minister

advise this House if the funding was for a specific project or a program that the department runs?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: We funded FOXY and SMASH in a couple of different ways. We've given them money in previous fiscal years. I think it was in 2016 -- 2015-16 we gave \$50,000 and I think last fiscal year we gave them \$90,000; that was for some specific things they were doing in the organization. Their engagement in the validation exercise, we provided them with \$25,000 so that they could reach out and we're looking at providing them \$25,000 so they can reach out again this year. So there are multiple ways that money can flow to FOXY, but this \$25,000 was to help engage in the validation exercise.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that answer. It's actually really encouraging and kind of answered my first question about reaching out to the communities.

Mr. Speaker, in the past I've heard the Minister speak about how they are working with other departments to address this issue. Can the Minister please provide this House with some examples of collaboration with Education, Culture and Employment, Justice, and MACA? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, the government has been working really hard to break down silos across the departments and I think in some areas we've made progress; other areas, it's certainly taking longer to reach that progress.

In this particular area -- and I'll just refer to the work on the Child, Youth Mental Health Act or, sorry, action plan. We're taking a real whole of government approach and we're making sure that Education has stakeholders in there and Justice has some stakeholders from within the department to help us develop this plan. They're also going to be included in the validation exercise to make sure that we haven't missed something, as well as other stakeholders like FOXY and youth and some of the Aboriginal governments that are out there as well. So we're really trying to make sure that we have the right people at the table in the design and implementation of this action plan.

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

QUESTION 575-18(2):
NORTHERN-BASED ADDICTIONS TREATMENT
CENTRE

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I made a Member's statement earlier about addictions treatments and the concern that there aren't treatment options here in the North; that we have to send our residents south to pursue treatment. Can the Minister of Health indicate whether or not we are looking at options to provide treatment here or if we're going to continue the practice of relying solely on southern facilities? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to correct the honourable Member just a little bit. There are a multiple number of programs available to residents in the Northwest Territories. We have community counsellors throughout the Northwest Territories, we've been running on-the-land programs across the Northwest Territories with our Aboriginal partners. We have piloted and we're looking to do more pilots of a mobile treatment option, which is a treatment-type program that can move from region to region rather than relying strictly on a particular facility. We travelled throughout the Northwest Territories, Mr. Speaker, and heard from residents across the Northwest Territories who said one option is not enough for people in the Northwest Territories; we need lots of different options. Dealing with addictions is very personal for some people and a facility-based treatment is not right for them. So we've worked hard to create options.

Yes, we don't have a facility-based treatment facility in the Northwest Territories, but we have contracts with four very reputable, high-quality institutions or facilities in the South. Earlier or later last year I had an opportunity to travel to Poundmaker's with some Aboriginal leaders from the across the Northwest Territories as well as some MLAs. We got to meet Northern residents who were participating in the Poundmaker's program who gave us very, very positive feedback and input on their stay and their experience in Poundmaker's, indicating that it was some of the best facility-based treatment that they've ever had, and some of them had attended facilities here in the North.

I'm not saying our system is perfect, Mr. Speaker. We've clearly got work to do. We've talked about moving forward with a mental health and addictions action plan which will hopefully address some of these issues, but the people told us clearly they want options and today they have more options than they've ever had. We can do better, we will do

better, but we're moving in the right direction, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: The Minister has answered a number of my other questions. Of those options -- as he wanted to do. Out of those options, have we established a criteria for assessing these and what is that? Is it based on the number of people who are reporting successful treatment? Is it the number of patients processed? I'm just wondering how we're really understanding these options and how effective they are.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: It's a good question and the answer is yes, yes, no, yes, no. Bottom line is there's a multiple range of programs that are out there, on-the-land programming being one. We don't currently have an evaluation mechanism to let us know or help us understand how effective these on-the-land programs are, but we're currently working with a stakeholder group who is helping us design an evaluation program for on the land. So yes, we're going to get there.

When it comes to treatment programs, what I can tell you, facility-based treatment programs, is traditionally our number in the Northwest Territories has been a dozen. We've had about a dozen people attending facility-based treatment from the Northwest Territories, whether that was Nats'ejee K'eh or one of the other facilities that failed here in the North.

What I can say is for the first time ever with an expedited referral process to these treatment centres with the high-quality program the word is starting to get back to individuals who are struggling with addictions, and we're actually for the first time seeing our numbers go up. I had a briefing last week and we were able to confirm that over the last little while it's been on average of 18 people from the Northwest Territories enrolling in treatment facilities, so we have seen some increase.

Then when it comes to community counselling, we can provide numbers. One of the difficult things with addictions is somebody might come back from a facility or from an online programming or from a community counsellor and they might be good for two years and then they relapse; is that success or is that not success? It's a hard thing to assess. We're trying to find a way to assess that so that we can continue to provide high-quality programs and enhance programs to our residents.

MR. TESTART: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. Certainly it is difficult to create a perfect program, and that's part of the concern with the Nats'ejee K'eh facility. One of the issues that was raised about that is there was a bit of credentialism creep that imposed very high standards of training and credentials that were required to provide

treatment at that facility, and potentially limited our options to provide that treatment. Can the Minister speak to that? Would it be possible to design something that is based not in Western understanding of addictions but more traditional, Indigenous-driven process that could be facility-based and potentially could be a service not just for our territory but for the entire north and Indigenous peoples across Canada?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Just before I go to that question, I would just like to point out that, in the Northwest Territories, following up on the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, we are looking to put in a sobering centre here in Yellowknife, which I know is not a treatment centre, but it is certainly a step in the right direction to providing a local facility-based type support to those individuals that are struggling.

The Member is right. We have facility-based treatment programs that are available that can tend to be very clinical. Poundmaker's is really fantastic in the fact that it provides a lot of cultural-based supports. Nats'ejee K'eh, I think, well before my time, so I obviously reserve the right to not be a hundred per cent accurate on this, but, when it started, it was more of a cultural healing, more focused on traditional medicine, traditional healing, and it evolved into more of a clinical-based model.

The clinical-based model does not work particularly well in the Northwest Territories due to economies of scale. They can be effective when they have a psychologist or a psychiatrist. A small institution with a low demand can't retain that type of professional.

We have been in conversation with the K'atlodeeche, the leadership in K'atlodeeche there, and we are looking at having them take over that facility to provide wellness programming and wellness-type focused healing to help people deal with some of the root causes of addictions, but it wouldn't be a traditional treatment facility. We think this is a huge opportunity for the community. We think this is a great opportunity for our Aboriginal residents who might be struggling with addictions or impacts of colonization or residential schools, but it wouldn't be considered facility-based treatment, so there is a distinction between the two.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Minister raised a key component of this work, which is trauma-informed care and trauma-informed therapy. When we are evaluating some of these alcoholism and addictions issues, they are symptomatic to the abuses of colonization and the residential school in particular. Is the department or

is the Minister's staff working on a trauma-informed care model to address addictions in the Northwest Territories, whether or not that is working with Indigenous partners or the southern facility-based care we have? Is trauma-informed care becoming the lens that we are focusing this effort to bring wellness and safety to our people? Thank you.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Essentially, yes. I don't think that is the exact terminology that we are using, but we are looking at a holistic approach, recognizing the impacts and the reasons an individual might be struggling with addictions or mental health issues and building upon those. So, essentially yes, but we have been using different terminology.

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

QUESTION 576-18(2):
PUBLIC HOUSING RENT ASSESSMENTS

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in follow-up to my Member's statement, I have a few questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. As I said in my statement, there have been a number of changes in the rent scale over the years. In the past five years, I have seen a number of positive changes, but one change that my constituents and others throughout the territory are having challenges with is based on your income tax, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister: what kind of feedback has the corporation received on the rent scale, particularly after the changes made in 2015? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members already know that I did extend the housing survey. We have not gotten all the feedback from that survey yet. I am interested in seeing it. I have seen some issues come across my desk, though, regarding the rental scale and the deductions from the income tax.

One of the things I should note is that I know that it causes some seasonal employment difficulties, but, if you look at the areas, it ranges between \$10,000 and \$20,000 that a person can make extra, depending on their income, before they actually get increased rent, so that is significant. The other thing that is really notable is that, since we have been using the income tax to determine peoples' rent, we have noticed that quite a few hundred people actually have been reassessed their rent because of failure to report during seasonal occupations, so that is a concern that I wanted to bring forward, as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BLAKE: I would like to ask the Minister: how can the corporation support the spirit of the rent scale, fair rent for all public housing tenants, for tenants like I have described whose income taxes don't show the full picture of their employment income?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: One of the conditions within the new determining of rent scales is that people who have difference in income can go in monthly and provide that to their local housing organization. If they do that, they will be reassessed based on their monthly income. However, again, it is important to note that the income tax has been showing that not everyone has been reporting their income, and so that is also a concern for us.

MR. BLAKE: We often see residents falling behind on their taxes and not filing. How does the corporation and its rent scale respond to households that don't have current income tax or tax information on file?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: We are really trying to work with our tenants to actually file their income tax, especially for lower-income people. When people do not file their income tax, they are losing out on income, for example, the Child Tax Benefit, et cetera, and their tax return monies if they are lower-income, so it is something we are really trying to advocate for tenants, that it is in their best interests to actually file for their income tax.

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

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how much time would the department need once the survey is completed to actually make this change if that is what the people want? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier the other day, the housing survey, once we get the results in, will be divided up. Some of them will be very easy fixes. Things like, for example, students being able to leave their communities without being penalized, people going for medical assistance and things, those are easy decisions.

Tougher ones, this one that might impact other departments, those ones will take a little bit longer. For example, if housing rent is contingent on them getting income support, then that is a cross-departmental issue, and so we will have to work cross-departmentally to find out answers to make things easier so that people can retain, maintain, or obtain housing.

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

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I may have to wait until the Premier returns. My question is to the Premier on the Deline self-government file. Thank you.

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

QUESTION 577-18(2):
PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. In my Member's statement today, I talked about two kinds of problems that stem from overprescribing medication. The first is that pharmacists sometimes make mistakes in dosage. What kind of government oversight exists to protect patients from this kind of a mistake? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know the department works very closely with the pharmacy association and others to ensure that prescriptions are being dispensed appropriately. For the detail, I don't have that at my fingertips, so I will take the question as notice and get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

QUESTION 578-18(2):
DELINE SELF-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last September 1st we saw the first community-based self-government in Deline, the Deline Got'ine Government, and since the birth of this historic milestone, my question to the Premier is: to enhance and develop a model for others, what is this government doing since the signing of that agreement last September? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, along with the Member from Sahtu, was very pleased to be in Deline on September 1st to help celebrate the implementation of the Deline Final Self-Government Agreement, and since then our government has been working with the Deline Got'ine Government and the Government of Canada to fulfill this self-government aspirations of the Deline Got'ine Government as set out in their Final Self-Government Agreement.

Our government is committed to working in partnership with the Deline Got'ine Government to build capacity within our respective governments to improve program and service delivery to residences of the Deline district, and in the coming weeks, representatives from our government and the Deline Got'ine Government will be discussing an approach to formalizing the government-to-government relationships between our governments. Going forward with implementation we will be able to work with the other self-government communities in the Sahtu so that they can reach their final agreements and they can learn from what we did in Deline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: To better develop a model on a cooperation action plan through a series of collaborations, for example, will the Premier commit to having this team meeting with the DGG Government team to develop this action plan as a start?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Recently, our government and the Deline Got'ine Government collaborated on the delivery of a lands administration course to the Deline Got'ine Government, and this is to improve the capacity of both of our governments to understand and manage the Land Administration Program. Also, through the Deline Self-Government Agreement Implementation Committee, we will collaborate on future initiatives that will support program and service delivery improvements in the Deline district. The representatives on this committee will also work so that we can pass on this information to the other communities in the Sahtu, and as a result we'll have an action plan and we'll also see more immediate progress on those negotiations as well.

MR. MCNEELY: Will the Premier commit to sending me a schedule on the implementation committee and their progress that was made and the future schedule so I can keep posted on the program delivery initiatives of both governments?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I'd be pleased to do that, and I'd like to advise the Member that the first Deline Implementation Committee meeting was held on January 12, 2017, here in Yellowknife, and going forward we'll advise him of the schedule and the progress that we're making.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

QUESTION 579-18(2):
DEVELOPING TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN
THE DEH CHO REGION

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I talked about the Aboriginal Tourism

Business initiatives that could be advanced by this government, so my question is to the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. One of the challenges that we have as an impediment in the small communities is that sometimes we have bureaucracy and red tape that becomes an impediment and a challenge. One example is Aboriginal businesses, especially in small communities, want to take on boat tours and there's the challenge of getting the proper boat insurance. So my question is to the Minister, as I said earlier, recommendations for a strategic action plan on an Aboriginal tourism was released in 2013. What progress has been made towards settling guidelines for cultural experiences so that visitors know that they are paying for an authentic Aboriginal tourism product? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we tabled in this House here last fall, we tabled Tourism 2020 and it has a number of initiatives in that document: attract experience, Aboriginal tourism, community tourism and development, skills development, as well as tourism research and planning, and that's the focus areas of Tourism 2020. To answer his question directly on how do we work to promote Aboriginal tourism and cultural experiences, within that initiative, we moved forward, and one of the things is Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program. That's a new initiative in this. We built it on three previous ones that are still in there that are carried on and there's a bunch of new ones; but the one particular one is Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program, where an individual can come forward to work with the department and we will help them expand and improve authentic Aboriginal Tourism in the communities and help diversify products and initiatives for Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal Culture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for his reply and it seems that there are great advances being made, and one of the examples that he's highlighting is the idea of mentorship. The second question is: what partnerships have been developed in support of Aboriginal Tourism for education, training, and funding product development? Perhaps maybe there's you know the ideal partnership with Aboriginal governments in each region that could possibly happen with this leadership.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Member is quite right. We've worked on a number of initiatives, and the one particular one, to directly answer his question, is a Community Tourism Coordinator Program that has just been enhanced in the new 2020. The communities can come forward and put

funding towards hiring this individual. I don't believe that we totally fund the whole program. It would have to be a cost-shared basis with the communities or Aboriginal governments that want to come forward. We're even open to ideas of where multiple communities within a region may apply for this individual to help promote tourism and be the coordinator on that. As we've said, we've got the Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program that can come forward for each community.

MR. NADLI: Those are great initiatives that the department is undertaking and advancing. The whole tourism is about promotion, ensuring that people do know of the NWT and some of the unique gifts that we have to offer the world. So I wanted to follow up on the question in terms of the Community Tourism Coordinator, having an individual work with the community. Does that also mean the next step of perhaps communities developing a local tourism strategy for the communities?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: That's exactly what this position would do. It would advance a regional product development of the region and packaging and the communities that hire this individual and work together, or Aboriginal governments that hire this person, to help them do exactly what the Member has said.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Deh Cho.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is: has ITI considered broader partnerships in aligning efforts with the Yukon, Nunavut, and the Aboriginal Tourism initiatives in other parts of Canada? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: We continue to reach out to all the territories and provinces on how we can enhance Aboriginal tourism in the Northwest Territories. The last report that I read, there are 32,000 Aboriginal people involved in Aboriginal tourism across Canada, and I believe the initiatives that we brought forward in Tourism 2020 are only going to enhance and improve tourism in the Northwest Territories and reach out to the world and show that Aboriginal culture and our languages that we have here bring more people to the North.

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

QUESTION 580-18(2):
LONG-TERM CARE FUNDING

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Health before the clock runs out. Cabinet seems to be able to find resources for its preferred projects, whether it's

NTCL, Mactung, or roads. We're still waiting to hear, though, about improving our housing stock and other social infrastructure needs. Can the Minister of Health comment on how we're going to fund our growing social infrastructure needs, including the shortfall in long-term care, or shall we just tell our seniors to hit the many roads we keep on building? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member's question is dripping with cynicism. Bottom line is we know that we have significant needs in long-term care, 258 beds by 2026, and that's also factoring in doing more around aging in place, which is something clearly the Members want to see, as does Cabinet.

We know we have a capital need. That capital need has been included in the 20-year plan. That 20-year plan identifies capital projects but also some of the pressures that that will put on O and M which is utilized during our budget planning sessions when we're trying to figure out what we have money for today, how is tomorrow going to impact where we could spend today, and those types of things.

There's no question that there are going to be cost pressures on this government in the future as we roll out the 258 beds, and we know the cost is about \$139,000 per bed to operate, which is about \$35 million. We need to work together, we need to set priorities, and we need to be fiscally responsible so that we can make these important investments in this area but other areas as we move forward and we're committed to doing so.

MR. O'REILLY: I do appreciate the response and the work of the Minister. In an article that I'm going to table later today in the House it talks about how our territorial government, along with some provincial governments, caved in on the issue of the new healthcare agreement. As I understand it, the offer that was on the table in December was better than what we signed off for in January. So can the Minister responsible for the future of healthcare funding tell us why we signed this deal that offers us less money and will contribute very little towards our long-term care needs?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: With the reduction in the Canada Health Transfer from 6 per cent to 3 per cent, which was actually implemented by the Conservative government prior to the election but adhered to and supported by the Liberal government when they came in, we were going to take a significant reduction in growth in CHT moving forward. That reduction has been maintained; it's still going to be 3 per cent, but on top of that we are going to get \$6.1 million and \$7.4

million for aging in place, long-term care, homecare, as well as mental health.

Those dollars are limited funding so they are time-sensitive. They come, they last for a period of time, and they're gone. We're going to have to be creative about how we utilize those funds in order to increase the services and support the design of meaningful as well as cost-effective programs moving forward. It does leave us in a position, though, Mr. Speaker, there is no question, where we're still going to have to find money from within to invest in these critical areas like long-term care, aging in place, mental health, and addictions. We are still going to have to find those dollars moving forward and we're going to have to do it in an age of slow growth. We're going to have to be creative, but I'm optimistic that we can. We know what we need to do. The trick is finding our way together as a unified Assembly to make that happen.

MR. O'REILLY: I do appreciate the response from the Minister, but as I understand it the original offer was for 5.2 per cent increase annually in healthcare, in the agreement that was under discussion. So why did we sign off on 3 per cent when the original ask was 5.2 and the offer that was on the table was 3.5?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: What does not change and what cannot change is the federal government made a decision to reduce the CHT by 3 per cent gross, so it was only going to be 3 per cent or GDP, whichever is greater. GDP is tended to not be too high over 3 per cent, but that change was going to happen no matter what.

The provinces and territories attempted to get the federal government to see reason that 5.2 was a sustainable number as opposed to a growth number. There was a disagreement. They took the 3.5 per cent off the table completely. It was gone in December, but they did approach the territories and indicate that there is some money for homecare and there is some money for mental health as well as the 3 per cent.

There are other areas that we're certainly having conversations about; we'll continue to work with the federal government, who has been a great partner with us. They have contributed money to homecare above and beyond the money for Aboriginal homecare. So we're going to continue to work with them, see what other opportunities there are to get some specific funding to support the initiatives of the Northwest Territories, and we'll move forward. In the meantime, we continue to have fiscal challenges. I think we can find a way forward and I'm looking forward to moving forward with a plan to roll out 258 long-term care beds in the life of this Assembly so that we have those beds in place by 2026.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the response again from the Minister but I just don't think that that deal that was signed will cut it for us, and certainly this side of the House was never really consulted in terms of what was on the table or what they actually signed off on, but Cabinet seems to think there's going to be a bunch of federal dollars that are going to rain from heaven that are going to help us meet our social infrastructure needs. So can the Minister give us any details on this funding or when we can expect some details and how this is going to help us with our long-term care needs? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Mr. Speaker, I know that there's some social infrastructure money that is available by application by the provinces and territories. I believe the Housing Corporation has been able to get some of those dollars. Those dollars are going to be used for basing the criteria. It's my understanding that those dollars are only available for independent living units in communities throughout the Northwest Territories, so it probably won't directly help with the long-term care. In the territories, where we want to do more to help people age in place and stay out of long-term care, the 258 is based on a low number of people going into the long-term care and doing a better job on aging in place, which is something we're also committed to.

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

QUESTION 581-18(2):
PUBLIC HOUSING RENT ASSESSMENTS

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend from Mackenzie Delta was asking the Housing Minister some questions in regard to clarification on calculation of rent. So can the Minister please explain how rent is calculated if the income tax is not submitted? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So like I said earlier, we are trying to get all of the tenants to file their income tax. We have made some allowances for seniors, in all honesty, who aren't really receptive to change, and so within a few situations we have allowed them to come in and give a monthly breakdown of rent. I should note that within our applications, and it's not new, it's been forever, we can still ask for the income tax for verification of rent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer; however, I'm still trying to understand. If they cannot do their income tax, they don't do it, how is rent calculated so they have to pay for it? I have lots of -- I shouldn't say a lot, I have a number of constituents who have asked this question and I cannot honestly give an answer. So I'm asking the Minister: will she please explain how it is calculated and it's implemented?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: So we do try to base our rents off income. We are moving with the income tax and some people have been allowed to file their monthly income statements. However, if neither of those are provided to the Housing Corporation, in all fairness to people we still have to define a rent, and so we do charge the top market rents on our rent scale to people who do not either give any form of income provided to us.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Minister for her answer. I totally support the idea of making sure people file their income tax. So I guess my next question is: now that we understand that it's at the top rent if they don't file their income tax, will the Minister make a commitment if people do file their income taxes that they'll be retroactive to look at their cost for the rent?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: It is not the priority of the NWT Housing Corporation to punish people. People who do come forward and bring in their income assessment, we have gone back and renegotiated their rent charges based on their income that they supply us.

MR. SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Nahendeh.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I really thank the Minister for her answer. I have never, ever said that the Housing Corporation has been punishing the clients there. We are just trying to get them educated to get their income taxes in so that they can verify their income.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the survey that the Minister has talked about, has the department been calculating or tabulating the results that have come in? She's talked about over 1,000 people who have submitted their results. Has the Minister been able to get the department to start tabulating these results from the survey? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am actually quite glad that I get a chance to talk on that. I think the department knows how anxious I am to get the survey results in. It was really painful, actually, to extend it for another month to get people. Not that I don't want to get the feedback, that's why I agreed to extend it, but because I recognized that we have a lot of work to

do. Yes, we are very fortunate that we, actually, most of the people, the replies have been done on the Survey Monkey, the electronic tool. We only had a few that came in in written form. We have been busy right now. We have been implementing those written formats into our Survey Monkey tool, and we have begun the process of categorizing. If people are talking about, for example, home ownership, we are putting them into a batch. We are beginning to split things up so that we can find common themes.

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

QUESTION 582-18(2):
AURORA COLLEGE TEACHER EDUCATION
PROGRAM

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, my honourable friend, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh asked about a program evaluation for the Teacher Education Program. I'd like to ask the Minister of Education: has a program evaluation been done, yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, at the beginning of this process, our department, the Department of ECE, worked in collaboration with the Aurora College staff and executive to identify reductions within their program services. I will have to find out from the department if there was a full evaluation done on the program and get back to the Member on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: It is a little concerning to hear that we are not sure if this was an evidence-based decision to cut this program, or if it is, in fact, a political decision to cut, to save some money and support the fiscal strategy of the government. Can the Minister at least clarify that point? What is motivating this decision? Is it, again, to meet a reduction target, or is it because we want the best quality education for Northerners?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I had mentioned earlier, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, sometimes you have tough decisions to make. In terms of reductions, my department, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, worked with the department at Aurora College to identify where reductions could be made in Aurora College. The consultation took place. They looked at the programs, looked at what the impacts were, and as you have heard on many occasions the fiscal situation that this government is in and the fiscal responsibility that we have as legislatures on

the public purse, sometimes you have got to make those difficult decisions. These were two areas of reductions that were brought forth to the government, and we are in the process of debating that at the moment.

MR. TESTART: I do appreciate that the Minister is taking a firm position on this, and arguing that position. Just as a matter of course, I do not agree with it. I think if we are going to find those redundancies that we can live with, they should be based on evidence. Again, we see that the Minister does not have that information at his fingertips. The strategic planning process, what is the criteria for that? Is the criteria for that broad statements of fiscal responsibility and political direction like that, or is it a strategic plan that is based on evidence, that is based on feedback from students and course facilitators? Which is it, Mr. Speaker? Are we making decisions for the college based on political expediency, or are we making decisions based on sound, solid evidence?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned earlier when I was responding to another Member's questions, on average, for the last three years, we have had 29 students enroll in through the TEP program. For the last three years, on average, we have graduated seven. We are currently in the same process this year, and I encourage all the students who are in the program right now, to study hard, to work hard, and to get that degree so that we can employ you in our schools, in our communities. We are also currently working and supporting 33 students outside of the territory.

These are evidence-based decisions that were made when we looked at the programs. Obviously, we do not want to put a number to each graduate that we have, but when we make our investments, they have got to be strategic investments that gives us the best outcomes that will help our communities and help our northern education system. We continue to support the students who are in there right now. We continue to support students who want to go and get educated down south. These were evidence-based decisions, and as I mentioned, as a Member of this Legislative Assembly, there are times that we have to make hard decisions based on the fiscal situation that we are currently in.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think we have to give our students the benefit of the doubt. There is an awful lot that goes into pursuing an education degree. I hear the Minister say this often, that he's encouraging them all to study hard and get those degrees. Will the Minister make the

commitment to saving this program if enough students graduate? If the entire class graduates, will he put the money back in the program, because that seems to be the criteria he's putting forward today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The whole process of this, when it came to light, there was information that was shared with standing committee. The standing committee was aware of this last year. We worked with the board. The board executive was known of this when we worked with the executive moving forward. None of this is new. This is where we debated in the House during budget session, and that's what we're having now is a healthy debate on the programs. These two programs were identified, and we will be debating that when we get into the main estimates in Committee of the Whole.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Time for oral questions have expired. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, Reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Minister of Environment and Natural Resource.

Tabling of Documents

TABLED DOCUMENT 279-18(2):
FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ORAL QUESTION
484-18(2): KAM LAKE ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the following document entitled "Follow-Up Letter for Oral Question 484-18(2): Kam Lake Environmental Assessment." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

TABLED DOCUMENT 280-18(2):
'THE HILL TIMES' ARTICLE - DIVIDE AND
CONQUER: HOW THE FEDS SPLIT THE
PROVINCES IN HEALTH TALKS

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following document. It's from The Hill Times dated February the 1, 2017. It is titled "Divide and Conquer: How the feds split the provinces in health talks." They have outflanked their provincial counterparts entirely, says one source close to the talks. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Member for Nunakput.

TABLED DOCUMENT 281-18(2):
INUIT-CROWN PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
(ICPC) JOINT TERMS OF REFERENCE

TABLED DOCUMENT 282-18(2):
MINISTER OF HEALTH MANDATE LETTER TO
MINISTER PHILPOTT

TABLED DOCUMENT 283-18(2):
MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN
AFFAIRS MANDATE LETTER TO MINISTER
BENNETT

TABLED DOCUMENT 284-18(2):
MINISTER OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANDATE LETTER TO
MINISTER DUCLOS

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table four documents. The first document is Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. The second document would be, Minister of Health Mandate Letter from the Prime Minister's Office to Minister Philpott, and also a letter from the Office of the Prime Minister to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, a mandate letter, and also an office of the Prime Minister letter to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, a mandate letter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Minister of Finance.

Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills

BILL 17:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, February 17, 2017, I will move that Bill 17, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Minister of Health and Social Services.

BILL 18:
AN ACT TO AMEND THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES PROFESSIONS ACT

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 17, 2017, I will move that Bill 18, An Act to Amend the Health and Social Services Professions Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Notices of motion for the first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Item 18, first

reading of bills. Item 19, second reading of bills. Item 20, consideration in Committee of the Whole of bills and other matters, Bill 7, Bill 13, Committee Report 6-18(2), Tabled Document 261-18(2), with the Member for Hay River North in the chair.

MR. SPEAKER: The mic was not on. By the authority given to me as Speaker by Motion 18-18(2), I hereby authorize this House to sit beyond the daily hours of adjournment to consider the business before the House. Member for Hay River North in the chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, committee wishes to consider Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018, hopefully completing the Department of Health and Social Services and also considering Industry, Tourism and Investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Simpson): Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will take a short recess and resume with consideration of the document. Thank you.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I now call Committee of the Whole back to order. We will continue with our consideration of Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018, Department of Health and Social Services. We left off on the departmental total on page 155 with information items up to page 158. Comments or questions? Ms. Green. Sorry, I jumped the gun again. Minister, would you like to bring witnesses into the Chamber?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Sure, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses to the committee.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. With me on my left is Jeannie Mathison, director of finance, on my right Debbie DeLancey, deputy minister of Health and Social Services.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Welcome to the witnesses. To continue with our consideration, first I have Ms. Green on my list. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, before we leave this budget, I would just like to review the investments that the Regular Members are looking for in this section. They are small relative to the size of the whole budget, approximately \$2.5 million, but they address key program areas in a grassroots way and I believe will deliver good value for money.

The first is an investment in homecare. As we know, with the aging population, there are increasing demands to keep seniors safe and well in their own homes. That is what most seniors want. An investment in the upstream care for seniors prevents a larger expense downstream. Homecare resources are stretched very thin in the territory. For example, there are more homecare resources in the Beaufort Delta than there are in Yellowknife, where half the population lives. I know the Minister is working on a continuing care plan, but I feel that there is a need to invest in homecare resources in this budget.

Secondly, we are looking for a small investment in the anti-poverty fund. We know from last year that it was oversubscribed by a factor of 4:1. One of the reasons it is oversubscribed is because there is very little money available to grassroots organizations to address poverty in their communities and to provide immediate help for people who are experiencing hunger and other issues that relate to poverty. Our ask there was to increase the size of this fund because it is a good value for money in terms of addressing immediate problems.

Finally, we are also looking for an investment in youth mental health and addictions. I know the department is working on a plan that will follow on from the Mind and Spirit framework that was released last year. The framework really emphasizes early intervention and prevention, and the investment that we are looking for in youth mental health is a part of this. If we can help youth regain their mental health, their mental wellness, as young people rather than waiting for them to age, we would be giving them a better opportunity in life as well as making an investment for ourselves, as a government, to treat them while they are young rather than waiting until they need more significant and perhaps more costly treatment.

I just wanted to bring those investments back to the Minister's attention before we leave this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate all the comments and suggestions that I have received over the last two days, especially in the areas of homecare, anti-poverty, and youth mental health and addictions. These are areas that are clearly in our mandate, and I would suggest that there is no disagreement with anybody on committee that these are areas that we have to invest in and make sure that we are doing more and better work moving forward in this Assembly. You know, to repeat myself, it is completely consistent with the mandate that we have accepted as the 19 Members.

Having said that, as we accepted our portfolios and moved forward with the work of government over the last 14 months, I have been pretty clear that we have some timelines that we put in place in order to do the meaningful work necessary to help quantify and express how to enhance areas like homecare and youth mental health. I believe, and I think everybody in this House believes, that we are going to have to make additional investment in this area. I am simply saying that we are not done the work. The timeline was not to have the work done at this point, but to be ready to make some informed decisions for the 2018-19 budget instead of the 2017-18 budget.

I hear the Members. This has certainly, I think, been heard by all the Cabinet Members. I have indicated that, if we make more progress than we hoped or planned -- and I am certainly prepared to push the department to move at a faster rate -- we are certainly willing to explore the possibility of a supplemental, but that would have to be supported by Cabinet, FMB, and the House. At this point, I still feel that it is a little premature to be putting money into these areas without a concrete, well-informed plan. Getting the money and having nothing to spend it on, that we have not done and planned for, might not give us the results we want, whereas allocating the money appropriately based on a plan could give us real positive results moving forward.

So I don't disagree with anything I have heard. I think it has been well articulated. I think the passion is there. I think the Cabinet has it. We just feel, in these particular files, that we just need a bit more time. This budget isn't the one. The next budget is the most appropriate place to make these investments moving forward.

Once again, I thank committee, and I look forward to continuing to work on these files to make improvements for residents of the Northwest Territories today, tomorrow, and into the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I had a couple of questions on page 155 about revenues. I am just wondering: is this where we find the federal revenues that help us with healthcare? Given that these main estimates were prepared quite a while ago, does this reflect the reduced payments that we are going to receive from the federal government as a result of signing off on the recent healthcare agreement? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. We're referring to the total revenues on page 155, and then there is a little more detail on page 156, for those following along at home. Minister, would you like to respond?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this revenue summary does not include the Canada Health Transfer. That Canada Health Transfer money goes into general revenues of the Government of the Northwest Territories, of which we receive over \$440 million to provide health services. It also does not include new money that may be coming from the federal government based on these agreements, because we have not actually signed agreements on those.

What you will see, I think towards the back of the document, at 185, is a list of work performed on behalf of others. That is where those numbers will show up once an agreement is signed and we know what dollars are going to be flowing. It will change every year because we understand the money is going to go up, level off, and then drop over the 10-year period. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So, I guess I will have to ask that question when we come to the Department of Finance departmental budget. I am just looking at a couple of other things here, chargebacks and contract services. There are some changes here between 2016-17 and 2017-18, and I am wondering if the Minister and his staff can explain the reduction in the chargebacks, and then there is a fairly significant increase in contract services? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I read fairly well, and I understand words, but I don't see anything on this page making reference to that. What page is the Member referring to?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. It is page 155, the one that we were just talking about. If I may, thank you, Mr. Chair, if he looks under the expenditure category, chargebacks is the fourth line. The sixth line or whatever is contract services. There is a reduction in expenditures under chargebacks and a fairly significant increase in contract services, so if I could get some explanation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am happy to go back and go through each of those lines, but this is a consolidation page of all the other pages that we've gone through, and when we were discussing the other pages many of the Members asked questions of why did this go up or why did this go down and we answered a number of those questions at that time. So to answer that question, we'd probably have to go back through the departments because every division, every section, is having some increases and decreases as a result of forced growth, new initiatives, and those types of things. This is purely just a summary page of all the amounts that we've already discussed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the answer. I just have one other question on 156, if I may. It says regulatory revenue, and then there's professional licence fees and environmental health fees and vital statistics fees. What's our sort of regular cycle for reviewing these and whether there should be any sort of increases even to keep pace with inflation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we're committed to doing these reviews every five years. The last review was done in 2013, so we anticipate the next one will be 2018. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I see nothing further from Mr. O'Reilly. Do I have any further questions or comments? Mr. Beaulieu.

COMMITTEE MOTION 49-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-18(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES, DEFERRAL OF FURTHER
CONSIDERATION OF THE ESTIMATES FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES,
CARRIED

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I move that committee defer consideration of estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Committee, the consideration of this department has been deferred. I want to thank the Minister and his witnesses. Sergeant-At-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber. Minister, please take your regular seat. We will continue on with, as agreed, our consideration of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Does the Minister have any opening remarks?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to present the 2017-2018 Main Estimates for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Overall, the department's estimate proposes a decrease of \$4.4 million or 7.3 per cent over the 2016-2017 Main Estimates. These estimates continue to support the GNWT's objectives of ensuring a strong sustainable future for the government and its programs by effectively managing expenditures due to limited revenue growth. The 2017-2018 Main Estimates include an increase of \$124,000 from the 2017-2018 Business Plan Review by Standing Committee in September.

This change is primarily due to the reinstatement of the proposed reduction to contribution funding for community transfer initiatives totaling \$110,000. The mandate of ITI is to promote economic self-sufficiency through the responsible development of the Northwest Territories mineral and petroleum resources; the development of natural resources industry, including agriculture, commercial fishing, and the traditional economy; and the promotion and the support of tourism, trade and investment businesses in manufacturing and secondary industries to create a prosperous and diverse and sustainable economy for the benefit of all NWT residents.

ITI's 2017-2018 Main Estimates include budget reductions totalling \$2.6 million. The department will look for ways to be more effective and efficient with the funds that it has available to ensure programs and services are providing the best value for money for our residents and our businesses.

The 2017-2018 Main Estimates also include new funding, specifically:

- \$132,000 to establish a new full-time tourism development officer position for the North Slave region. This increase is in response to the growing number of tourism operators in the North Slave region, supporting the 18th Legislative Assembly's priority to lead economic diversification by investing in tourism.
- \$132,000 to establish a new full-time investment and immigration officer position. This investment directly corresponds with our mandate commitment to increase the number of immigrants working in the NWT and increase investment by immigrants by implementing an immigration strategy that prioritizes streamlining application and processes, increasing awareness to immigration programs, and consolidating our administrative supports.
- \$51,000 to establish a full-time territorial parks maintenance officer position to allow for winter use of our parks. The position is currently only a seasonal position. The department's 2017-2018 Main Estimates continue to support the priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly's.

Specific activities in support of these priorities include:

- \$4.79 million in total for the Tourism Product Diversification Program, Community Tourism Infrastructure, Tourism Industry Contribution, and Tourism Skills and Development, which aim to support tourism operators and product diversification and expansion into growing markets, contributions to municipalities, NGOs, and Aboriginal governments and organizations to support tourism through infrastructure contributions, NWT Tourism and the development of youth mentorship and community tourism coordinators.
- \$3.87 million for the support of entrepreneurs and economic development, which provides a wide range of assistance to businesses and individuals to support and stimulate business development and diversification. It also supports community-based initiatives that stimulate the local economy.

- \$3.64 million for the Business Development Investment Corporation and Community Future Contributions to support the economic objectives of the GNWT by encouraging the creation and development of northern businesses.
- \$1.59 million for community transfer initiatives which provide funding for economic development officer positions in NWT communities.
- \$850,000 for the Northern Food Development Program and Growing Forward 2 to expand the agriculture sector and remove barriers to creating employment and facilitating the development of a northern food production sector. These initiatives provide support to the commercial producers of northern fish, meat, and other food products for sale and consumption in the NWT.
- \$155,000 in contributions for the marketing and promotion of the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur.
- \$225,000 for contributions to support commercial fisheries by offsetting high freight or production costs.
- \$400,000 for the mining incentive program that provides contributions and support of mineral exploration in the NWT.
- \$100,000 for Aboriginal mineral development support which assists Aboriginal organizations to prepare for and share in the benefits of the mineral development in their area.

That concludes my opening remarks. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Do you have any witnesses you would like to bring into the Chamber?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I do.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses into the Chamber. Minister, would you please introduce your witnesses to the committee.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Julie Mujcin, director of finance for ITI, and on my right is Tom Jensen, deputy minister of ITI. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. We will begin with opening comments from committee. Committee members are allowed 10 minutes each for their opening comments and then, after the committee has spoken, the Minister

will be given 10 minutes to respond and then we will move into the activities. Do I have any general comments on ITI from committee? First I have Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to open up with some general comments. You know, I think that if we're to just maybe touch on a couple of highlights. Of course, I think all of us here believe that clearly the Northwest Territories has some incredible economic development opportunities, especially going forward when we look at the potential for exploration and mining. We also want to look at the potential that we have as a territory to diversify our economy and take advantage of traditional economies that we've once upon a time had robust results from; fisheries is a good example.

We also have, of course, before us many challenges: the high cost of living that keeps increasing; the high cost of power production that we have in this territory; and, of course, the limited road infrastructure that we have. We have also these challenges that are before us in terms of continuing to modernize legislation and whether that's on lands or resources. We also, of course, have world markets that we have to compete with when it comes to a number of our resources that we have available to the world.

Low commodity prices right now are having a major effect on, in particular, the oil and gas industry in the Northwest Territories, and we see that now throughout the Sahtu and the Beaufort Delta, and this is all leading to the opportunity for our small communities, and it's our small communities that we need to create jobs for.

Further, as it relates to potential opportunities on some work that we've done recently. Of course, the near opening of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway and eventually the road to Whati will also present some pretty good economic development and some good diversification opportunities. We need to create some certainty and public confidence in our regulatory system, as I touched on before, and it's not only to do with major project approvals but it's also to do with how we allow our new up-and-coming entrepreneur and business opportunities to take place, and, of course, supporting mineral claims and exploration opportunities.

Lastly, I think one of the things that I want to touch on is that this government, and in particular this department, needs to make investment to improve the climate for entrepreneurs and small businesses, and one of the main focuses in that area is going to have to be with regard to reducing red tape and redundancy. So those are just some of the general observations and opening comments, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Next I have Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that this is a good example of one of our budgets where we see a lot of numbers in the Minister's opening comment that have been unchanged for many, many years. The SEED Program, the Mineral Incentive Program, these are very useful subsidies to industry that remain stubbornly resistant to investment from, again, a government that's primarily driven by fiscal reduction targets and fiscal strategy rather than investment in growth, which is the source of the great budget debate we find ourselves in.

There are some troubling cuts. There are cuts to the Business Development and Investment Corporation in the amount of \$477,000; reduction to community futures contributions of \$42,000. These functions are crucial to front-line business support and supporting entrepreneurs and providing them the support they need to access capital, access opportunities for themselves and by extension create jobs in our communities. In particular, the Community Futures Contributions, dollar-for-dollar, those are high-impact investments and we've seen the success of those funds used very effectively in Indigenous communities. So why we are looking at rolling back some of those, I don't understand.

The SEED Program as well, it's a very useful program. It has a great deal of subscribers, and yet we're not looking at increasing it. The Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning has suggested an increase of \$1.2 million in order to support the needs of a diversified economy.

One of the things we hear from entrepreneurs, from our constituents, and even from the department in business plan review is that there is not a lot of capital to go around and in times of economic recession or decline, government increasingly becomes the primary source of capital and access to those funds that can make diversification possible, and we need to do more. We need to do a better job of making those funds available so we can start to see that diversification which has been a long-stated goal of previous assemblies and is a goal of this Assembly.

You know, we're just skimming the surface, and what we are recommending as a committee is to do a bit more than that. To put a bit more capital out there for our entrepreneurs to access and, as my honourable friend mentioned, cut the red tape on business and increase the amount of loans that entrepreneurs can have access to.

I think we've seen incredible growth in tourism as well, and this plan has a lot of investment in that sector, and that's good, but we can't forget about

manufacturing, we can't forget about agriculture, we can't forget about our creative fields such as the film industry. There have been a number of recommendations around film and increasing the Film Rebate Program and creating the capacity for Northerners to produce their own films; not just be a place where films are shot, but actually set up a bit of an industry. That may seem daunting, but again, if we work with our industry partners and provide them with the tools and resources they need, I think we could start to see some of these industries take off in very surprising and very fruitful directions.

Something that I often talk about, the Mineral Incentive Program is an incredible program for, again, giving some much-needed capital to junior miners. We hear Ministers of ITI talk about this often, that this is a great program, they're very proud of its success, and yet we do not invest in it. It has remained unchanged.

Our neighbours in the Yukon have a very similar program, except it has an advanced projects category and is currently in the range of \$1 million of available funding, and ours is \$400,000. So the committee is calling for an increase to top that up to a million dollars and to look at how best we can make those increased funds available to those engaged in exploration activities.

If we want mines, mines take 10 years, Mr. Chairman, and if we want to see new mines, then we need to encourage their exploration. We had a Cabinet attend the Roundup in Vancouver, which I think gives industry very strong signals that the North is interested in this field and wants to be open for business. Now we need to back up that investment with our policies and by making more resources available. Nothing sends a stronger signal than putting mineral incentives into our budget, and ultimately that's where I would like to see this department, in particular, focus its efforts on developing a strong plan for growth that's based on the grassroots and what we do best. We know there's proven success in mining. We know how to work in that industry. We have a lot of expertise in-house to develop that industry, so let's do that, but let's also focus on putting more resources into diversifying our economy. It's not going to happen by itself and, if it is a political goal of this Assembly, it's time to inject the capital we need to make that diversification happen.

So I'm looking forward to discussing this department in-depth and to making further recommendations around the committee's recommendations towards this department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Like my colleagues, I, too, want to talk about the need for economic diversification. It is in our mandate, yet there are no increases in economic diversification in the ITI budget. In fact, there are several cuts proposed. If you look at the budget overall, even in the Minister's opening remarks, this is a budget that overall is going to be cut, the department, by 7.3 per cent, \$4.4 million. This is, I guess, driven by Cabinet's fiscal strategy.

In terms of economic diversification and business support, there is a 17 per cent cut in grants and contributions, and that is largely made up by a 15 per cent cut to the Business Development and Investment Corporation, and I have to wonder whether this is really a prelude to getting rid of the corporation. Is that what the intention of Cabinet is and the Minister is, to get rid of this entity that helps with economic diversification and business support?

Regular MLAs, we have asked for that particular cut to be rolled back. We have also asked for cuts in community futures to be rolled back.

Then, where is the real investment in economic diversification in this departmental budget? Where is the agricultural strategy? Where is the money to back that up? We are still waiting for that. We have offered comments on that. We are still waiting for this agricultural strategy, and there is no new investment of money in this departmental budget around agriculture.

Where is the manufacturing policy that has been promised by this department? It is in our mandate, as well. There is no new money for manufacturing policy implementation or an action plan. So there are just no additional investments in real diversification in here. Regular MLAs, we have suggested that there be an extra \$1.2 million into the SEED program as one way to help spur further economic activity here in the Northwest Territories, promote economic diversification and support businesses. That is the kind of direction that my two previous colleagues have talked about, as well, but, in this department, in this budget, the main estimates, there is very little real economic diversification effort that is being expended.

I will have some other issues, Mr. Chair, that I will raise as we work our way through the main estimates for this department. One that I am concerned about is the slow pace of legislative changes. I have been on record in this House as talking about how not one word of the devolution mirror legislation has been changed in three years. This department is responsible for a number of important revisions to legislation that are supposed to be brought forward.

Recently, the request for qualifications on a Mineral Resources Act has been made public, and it looks like we are not going to get that, or the latest that we will get a new Mineral Resources Act is March 31, 2018, and we are contracting out that work, so I really have to question what kind of capacity we have within the department to bring forth these legislative initiatives. I expect further delays.

There is also in the business plan supposed to be -- or the department is supposed to be looking at legislation for geothermal energy, and I will have questions for the Minister around the status of that legislation. There is also an oil and gas strategy that is supposed to be developed. That hasn't come forward yet. What is happening with offshore negotiations as a result of the federal government's decision to prohibit any exploration in the offshore for five years? We will have some questions for the department on that.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, I will have some questions with regard to the Environmental Studies Revolving Funds and its governance and how the money is being expended there. It is an interesting model, set up in legislation, and there are some interesting comparisons between that and, wearing a different hat, the Minister is talking about Yellowknife Airport Economic Advisory Committee that is done through terms of reference rather than legislation. This fund and how it is governed and so on might be an interesting example for the Minister to take away and have another look at, as well.

So, Mr. Chair, in conclusion, this government talks a lot about economic diversification but does not deliver with this budget and the funding for this department. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, look forward to the activities of this department and focusing on the programs identified within this department and comparison to what we have existing in the Sahtu.

If you were to take away industry, which industry is gone, for example, and take away government capital projects, you virtually have nothing, so you are kind of depending on the initiative, marketing initiatives, of this department as one component and relying on this department for diversification and marketing initiatives and supports to the existing enterprise, which is hard enough in our area, operating within an isolated seasonal-access community.

Quite a bit of our businesspeople and leaders do rely on the activities of this department's plans financially, fiscally, over the next 12 months, so I,

too, would like to get on to business here and review this file and this department so we can move on. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Let's get on with business. Minister Schumann, do you have any responses to the general comments from the Members?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I think I want to get right into it. It sounds like they have got a number of questions, so let's do it.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. The department begins on page 189. As is our custom, we will defer the total department until after consideration of the activities. The first activity is corporate management, and it begins on page 197, continuing until page 199. Members can make comments, ask questions, about this activity. Please indicate which page number you are talking about before you discuss it so we can all follow along. First, I have Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I have some questions about the organizational charts on 190-191. Is this the appropriate time to talk about those, or will they come at the end when we look at the departmental total? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I believe the appropriate time would either be during the final, when we are looking at the departmental total, or they can be addressed, if there are positions under corporate management, if you would like to address that part of the organizational chart within the corporate management sections, the Minister could probably answer questions about that. All right. Thank you. Do we have anything further? Corporate management. I will give committee a moment. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just in terms of corporate management on page 197, we have three communities that are borderline caught in between two districts, either Fort Simpson or Hay River. So just for the record, I just wanted to come to an understanding from the Minister of his perception in terms of which office would preside over delivering services to Fort Providence, Kakisa, and Enterprise, whether it is the Dehcho office out of Fort Simpson, the district office, or else the South Slave office based out of Hay River. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That would be serviced out of the Hay River office. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to clarify the Minister's reply. If I understand him correctly, for the three communities, including Fort Providence, Kakisa, Enterprise, they are serviced out of Hay River. Am I correct? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nadli.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's correct. It would be serviced out of the Hay River office.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Mr. Nadli, go ahead.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a last question: the Hay River Reserve, would they be serviced out of the Fort Simpson District Office or else the Hay River South District Office? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. Mr. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. They also would be serviced out of the Hay River District Office. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Anything further, Mr. Nadli?

MR. NADLI: No further questions.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Recognizing Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm on page 198, Corporate Management. Under policy, legislation and communications, I see that last year the department was not able to spend the amount that was put into the main estimates. This year there is a further reduction. I mentioned in my opening remarks how this department has a number of important legislative initiatives that it keeps saying it's going to bring forward. Can the Minister explain to me how these legislative initiatives are going to come forward on time when the department is making reductions? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we have said, we have talked about it in the House a number of times on how we are going to bring LPs forward. We believe that we can get the job done within the life of this Legislative Assembly, and we have a number of initiatives that are coming forward as the Member has said in his opening comments, and we will be bringing those forward in a timely manner; and we believe we will be able to

do that in the length of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister, but I'm just not sure how he can commit to bringing forward legislation while he's cutting the budget for it. I will just leave it at that for that one.

I have a further question under the expenditure category. I see where contract services is once again, last year, not all of the money was spent, and this year, there's a reduction in that. Can the Minister or his staff explain what's going on with the money allocated for contract services? Now, I presume that some of this might be used to help bring forward some of the legislation that's been promised. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister, the first portion was a comment to the question.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will turn that over to the director of finance. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Director of finance.

MS. MUJGIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The decrease from 2016-17 to 2017-18 is a result of a reallocation, an internal transfer we did to reinstate the Tourism Product Diversification Budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the answer, thank you. Can the Minister or his staff explain the decrease in purchased services from 2016-17 to what is in the current estimates for 2017-18? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Minister.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will direct that to the director of finance as well.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ms. Director.

MS. MUJGIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is an internal reallocation to compensation and benefits. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think that is all the questions I have for corporate management. I just am scrolling through. Once again, I want to go on record in saying that I find it difficult to understand how the department is going to continue with a very ambitious legislative agenda while it is cutting its policy legislation and communications budget at the same time. We have already seen delays, and I am afraid we are going to see more delays from this department, and I think evidence, the request for qualifications for the Mineral Resources Act, we may not see that until 2018 now.

Once again, I urge the department and the Minister to bring forward this important legislation as timely as he can, recognizing he's got less money to do the work. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Your comment is noted. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: This section deals with strategic planning policy. My colleague touched on much of it. Our mandate states that ITI will develop a manufacturing strategy. In the 2016-17 business plan, there is mention that it is planning to develop an NWT manufacturing strategy. The 2017-18 business plan, there's a partial sentence that says, a future NWT manufacturing strategy. I was wondering, what's the status of this manufacturing strategy? Is it on the radar? I know that, in Hay River alone, there have been, in the past year, 50 jobs created in manufacturing. I'm not sure what else, what other industries are growing like that, so I'm not sure why the department isn't putting a premium on this. What's the status of this manufacturing strategy? When can we expect it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Mr. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Member knows, this was something that I was working on before I got elected, and it is definitely not something I am going to drop the ball on as the Minister of ITI. We continued to work with the manufacturing strategy as recently as when I was home lately. I brought up the conversation with some of the Members who are on the Manufacturers' Association, and when are they going to try to pull together another meeting and get things moving on their side of things. We are supporting a development of marketing and promoting of them. That is what the department has worked on. I have seen a draft of some of the literature that is going to be sent out to all departments in the Government of Northwest Territories to help promote and ensure that people are aware of who is developing what, or who manufactures what, and what's available to all

departments in the Northwest Territories. We will continue to work with the Manufacturers' Association to try to improve manufacturing in the Northwest Territories. Like I said, reassure the Member, and he knows well full that I was a big part of this before I got elected, and we will continue to work on it moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the Minister for that answer. I was well aware that you were a big part of the Manufacturers' Association. It does not mean I am going to let up on this for the next two-and-a-half years. I will have some comments about the marketing sheets that the department has produced in the next section.

Does the Minister say that he is waiting for the association to get together and have a meeting? Is the department being proactive, or is it just sitting back and waiting for this association to have a meeting and bring forth some sort of proposal to the department? Has that been communicated to the association formally, that they need to bring something to the department in order to get this started? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Mr. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's funny that he has asked that question because, as of lately, I have asked the ADM to reach out to the Manufacturers' Association because they haven't been in much contact with us with their association since last year, and I've asked her to reach out to see what we can do about facilitating at least an annual meeting and see what kind of a discussion we can have them then. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I imagine the Members are quite busy because it's a growing, thriving industry and so I can't wait to get some additional support in the form of this strategy. No more questions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Next I have Mr. O'Reilly, I believe.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Since the previous speaker opened the door to consideration of policy matters under corporate management, can I ask the Minister: is this where funding is found for drafting of the work that's going to get under way

soon for a Mineral Resources Act, or is it found further on into the departmental budget? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Is this the appropriate place to discuss this or would it be better suited in minerals and petroleum resources? Thank you, Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My understanding is part of it is here and part of it is under MPR, so it's in both sections. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. It sounds like the Member can speak to it here if he wishes. Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Do we have anything further on corporate management? Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Is this the area where the farm strategy is in or is it on page 202, Growing Forward 2? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's under the economic diversification and business support page.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. I'll just remind all Members to indicate when you are done speaking so our tech team knows when to change the mics. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll ask the questions on that page. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Do we have anything further? I'm seeing nothing. I will call the section on page 198, Industry, Tourism and Investment, corporate management, operations expenditure summary, total activity, \$8,078,000. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will continue on to economic diversification and business support. It begins at page 200 and continues on to page 204. When discussing this activity, please indicate which page you are on so we can all follow along. Do we have comments or questions? Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple of questions for the Minister. I attended something with the Minister or the Minister was making a speech about Community Futures. There was an indication there that Community Futures was a program that had tremendous leveraging abilities. I'm wondering why

the budget has dropped? As slight as it is, if it has great leveraging possibilities, why is this budget going down slightly? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, this is the second year of the reduction from before and one of the community future development corporations had lower volumes of activity, therefore sustainable part-time level. So that's part of the reason for reductions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I notice that Business Development Investment Corporation is dropping by almost a half a million dollars. I was wondering if the Minister could just explain that decrease? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. BDIC is aware of this reduction, of course, and it's a reflection of their corporate plan that's coming out. First of all, we don't think that's going to have an impact on any of their programs and services, and the reason that we've done this is just part of our reduction exercise across the board. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, during my travels into my riding, there have been many occasions when individuals have asked for support to get into some sort of economic development. I have the program SEED, Support Entrepreneurial and Economic Development. The budget hasn't grown, in fact, compared the last fiscal year that that has been closed off. It's gone down a bit. Not a whole lot, but 70-some-thousand dollars. I'm wondering if this program is fully subscribed or if there's money left after the SEED Program is delivered? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. SEED is usually fully subscribed right across the Northwest Territories. The one thing that I've looked at since I became the Minister of ITI is how are we using SEED and how effective is the SEED Program being implemented for economic development in the Northwest Territories. I could

speak of this program because, before I got elected, I used this program to start off my business and I imagine there are a couple other people in this building who have done as such. It's a great program; but once I became the Minister of ITI and had to look at SEED, how it's being implemented in the regions, I believe that we need to have a little better look at how we're using the money for this program. Is it actually going to create economic development and diversify our economy in the small communities? That's one of the things that, as a Minister, I'm having the department have a good hard look at. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, has the department determined that this program isn't achieving its objective? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe SEED is an important part of our portfolio to help diversify the economy, help entrepreneurs get into business, help support businesspeople in the Northwest Territories. What I'm saying is I believe that we need to have a serious look if we are using this program effectively in a way, in a manner that helps diversify and grow our economy, and just have a harder look at how we're actually using this money. That's my goal as the Minister of ITI. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, a quick check, I guess: under this economic diversification and business support is there an opportunity to speak on the Business Incentive Policy?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister, can you advise? Is this the appropriate place to speak about the Business Incentive Policy?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, I believe it is, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chair, I'd like to ask the Minister if the department is still contemplating possible review or maybe revamping of the Business Incentive Policy, first question. Second question is: is the Business Incentive Policy meeting its intended objective?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just had to get it clarified because I know we're doing some stuff. Well, constantly we're always reviewing BIP, of course. BIP is a big part of giving people in the Northwest Territories, businesses that are up here, a kind of a head's up or leg up on southern people competing against us.

We're doing a review right now of all registrants of BIP; I think we're almost done most regions. We're still trying to finish off the North Slave, as it probably has the most number of registered BIP companies in the Northwest Territories. We're trying to make sure that the registered BIP companies are compliant to the policies that we have, and that's one of the reviews that we're doing. So we're not doing a full-blown review on BIP right now, but we are always currently working with the BIP program and doing a review and make sure that it's doing what it's supposed to do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the review is going to include the community portion of BIP? Right now there's certainly an advantage for NWT BIP companies over southern companies; I should say, it sort of evens the playing field between North and South, but I'm wondering if the Minister is also looking at the difference between North and local? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister, you have one minute to answer.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's already a difference in local and northern because a local person gets an extra percentage for BIP versus a company that's from outside the community, so that's already in place. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu.

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'm not asking if there's a difference; I know there's that threshold. I'm asking if that threshold is being reviewed also. The Minister answered the question previously saying, "We're always reviewing BIP, it sort of gives a leg up to the northern companies versus southern companies." My question was specific to northern versus local. Is that part also being looked at? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The answer is no, we're not at this present time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Beaulieu, your time has expired. Mr. Testart is next.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm just going to jump right into my honourable friend's -- or follow up on my honourable friend's comments.

The concern I hear from constituents who are business owners is that in some cases there are companies that have been grandfathered into BIP that are no longer 100 per cent northern-based, although they may have a portion of northern ownership. So are we taking that approach in evaluating BIP, if it's still meeting its objectives?

If you have a company that is owned by, let's say, a European holding corporation but still has a branch in the Northwest Territories that is on a preferred procurement list, is that really what we were trying to achieve with BIP in the first place and are we evaluating it along those lines? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess to get right to the crux of his question, we're having a hard look at the 51 per cent ownership portion of BIP and we're having a look at it and seeing if anything can be done at all. We are having a look at it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Schumann. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and before I go any further I just want to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Tom Jensen, the Deputy Minister for ITI. I believe this is his first appearance as a witness in this Chamber.

There's a lot to cover in this section. We've talked a bit about SEED. I'd like to talk a bit about the agricultural strategy. We heard from the Department of Lands -- the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Environment heard from the Department of Lands, and they indicated that there may be some difficulty in this department's ability to properly access land for agricultural development. So what kind of internal resources have been allocated to the development of the agricultural strategy, and do we have dedicated resources and staff working on this very important initiative? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll redirect that to the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Deputy Minister Jensen.

MR. JENSEN: We do have dedicated resources working within the department to develop the strategy, and the strategy is actually going to be tabled in this session. We have a penultimate or final draft of it, and we will be tabling it in this session. So the actual strategy has been completed primarily using internal resources at this time, but previously we did contract some resources to start the work; but we are there right now and have completed the piece of work and it will be tabled.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Deputy Minister Jensen. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. With the tabling of the strategy, are we going to see resources or money dedicated to implementing this strategy as we saw with the Economic Opportunity Strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we roll out this strategy and bring it to the House in this Assembly we're probably going to use internal resources to initially kick it off. As the Member said, there's a number of legislative things that need to be worked out to fully implement the strategy around the lands issue in particular in the Northwest Territories and we are working with other departments, Health and Social Services and ENR, on this initiative on how we're going to do that. At some point, I think as the thing gains traction in the next couple of years. I don't think this is something that's going to be resolved overnight; we're going to have to start looking at how we're going to fund this moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reduction of the BDIC annual contribution in the amount of \$477,000, what is the rationale for that cut? If the Minister can answer. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, as I said earlier, this is one of the reductions that we've asked the department to take. They're fully aware of our ask and they told us that they could move forward without any implications on

their funding or supports for small business in the Northwest Territories. So it's part of our budget reduction for the department, and we've asked them to basically take a haircut and they said they can do it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's an expensive haircut; it's 15 per cent of their operating budget. So, I mean, this feels all too familiar to what we see with Aurora College, where they were asked to make a reduction. They apparently are developing a strategic plan or a corporate plan and yet decisions are being made prior to the release of that plan. So can the Minister just clarify, Minister, you said there was a corporate plan being developed for BDIC. What is the status of that? Is ITI involved in developing it and when will it be available for review by committee and honourable Members of this Assembly? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. BDIC is working on their own corporate plan, but I believe that we have to table it before April 1st of this year in the House, so that will be coming forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you. Is ITI's sole involvement in the development of this plan setting reduction targets for BDIC? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We went to them and asked them what they can do to help offset our reductions, and they came forward with what they think would work. They believe, as I said already, that they can carry out their programs and meet the objections of the BDIC for the people of the Northwest Territories for economic development. That is what we have brought forward, and we stand behind it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister, are there future cuts contemplated apart from this, or is this the extent of the reduction exercise that we will see for BDIC over the remainder of this term of government? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the remaining life of this government, after this session is done and we get the budget passed, no, we will not be asking the BDIC for any more cuts. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you Minister. That is a welcome commitment. You will note that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning has also asked that this cut be foregone, so I will leave that with you for consideration. Another area of concern is, of course, the SEED program. I note that the SEED program has remained stable in funding, which is also welcome, but why have we not looked at enriching this program? Are all areas of the many buckets available for access, are they being fully subscribed, or are there some areas that have less interest than others? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I said in an earlier answer, the SEED is fully subscribed in the Northwest Territories. My concern is: how are we actually spending this money? Are we targeting it properly to diversify and grow the economy in the Northwest Territories?

Also, to the other Member's comment that he mentioned, there are many buckets of money. There are a number of programs in the Northwest Territories for people to access, from community futures, to SEED, to BDIC, to different funding in ITI for tourism support, so there are a number of initiatives that are available through the department and outside sources of funding in the Northwest Territories to help people grow their businesses or start a new business in the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Testart, you have a little bit of time left.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Noting the clock, I will yield the remainder of my time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What is the total amount that BDIC has available to lend? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We would have to look that up and get back to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is unfortunate. I figured that would be something that would be in one of those big briefing binders. What is the total amount that BDIC is able to lend each person? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Chair, I believe the maximum they can lend an individual is \$2 million. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How long has that number been in place, and is it indexed to inflation? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that is been in place roughly about five years, if I remember correctly. I do not believe it is tied to CPI. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, the money in this budget, this line item here for NWT Business Development and Investment Corporation, almost \$3 million, that is just to manage the lending of the money. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is also for the collection and the subsidiaries of BDIC. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You can see why it is difficult to vote on these types of items without more information. What exactly am I voting on here? It is not clear in these main estimates. In the coming years, they really need to be fleshed out a bit more.

We discussed SEED already, but I have a few more questions. The Minister said he was looking into how that money is actually used. Is there some sort of a system that each region is using, some sort of uniform system that the information is being put in: who the money is being lent to, what sector it is going into, and then returns on investment? Is there some sort of unified program that the department will be able to look at to make a determination, evidence-based determination, of how that SEED money is being used? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that information is already out there. It is all in the grants and contributions reports. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, just to confirm, the grants and contributions report will tell us how effectively that money was spent, what the return on investment for the GNWT was, which sectors the investments are most needed in, most useful for, and most profitable in, and have created the most number of jobs and the greatest economic diversification? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann, if you want to add the amount of the lending portfolio to the question, as mentioned by Mr. Simpson, go ahead. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is why I said I wanted to review how SEED is getting allocated, but, in the grants and contributions, if you look in there, it is broken out into five different areas right now, sector support, micro business, entrepreneur support, community economic development, and business intelligence and networking. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that the Minister is probably trying to -- we are trying to get to the same point here, of being able to look at where the money is being spent and how well it is being spent to make some decisions about it.

Are there policy changes coming as to how SEED can be distributed? I believe it is \$15,000 per person right now, but are there options to maybe make that a bit more flexible, say if a cooperative or some other entity needed some money to do something that might cost more than \$15,000? If it was a micro fish plant that might \$100,000, are

there opportunities to fund those types of endeavours with SEED? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: With SEED, I already have the authority to go over \$15,000, so if something came forward and there was an initiative that I believe we can support, the Minister can sign off and go above the \$15,000.

Just back to the Member's earlier question, though, about sectors, if you actually go into the grants and contributions, in there on page 12, it also breaks it out by activity. It has all the sectors, I believe, that he was trying to get to. It has agriculture, arts and crafts, business conferences, e-commerce, education. All these sorts of things are broken out by percentages and amount of money, so all that information is available there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You mentioned manufacturing, the new manufacturing sheets, the promotional sheets. What has been the response to those from industry? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The sheet that I seen was just in draft form, so I don't think we have actually sent them out and shared them with everybody yet. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. From what I have heard from industry who have seen them, they might need a bit of work. Finally, I just have some questions. I would like the rationale for having the manager of Traditional Economy, Agriculture and Fisheries located in Yellowknife. I know I discussed this in the House. The Minister stated that the other person in that department, the other position, is located in Hay River, although the government's website states that that is located, actually, in Yellowknife, along with an intern who is also located in Yellowknife. This manager manages that person, an occasional intern, and the person in the fur section, which is in Yellowknife.

Now, this position talks about setting the direction for the sectors, the fisheries and agriculture sector. I am not discounting fur. It was a million-dollar sector last year. Fisheries was \$1.2 million and, according to the strategy, it could grow tenfold.

Agriculture is also on the move. Both of those are centred in the South Slave.

Now, this position needs to have industry consultation meetings, needs to know what is going on with the industry, what is going on with the people on the ground. With the way the GNWT is set up, you don't need to be in Yellowknife if you are a manager. You don't need to be in Yellowknife to be in touch with headquarters. We have Internet, telephones, all that kind of stuff now, so I would just like the rationale why this position is in Yellowknife instead of where it could do the most good for the territory as a whole? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Minister Schumann, on the position transfer.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The reason it is in Yellowknife is because it is looking after the Northwest Territories as a whole. It is a pan-territorial position, so that position is located here to do that stuff. As the Member alluded to, we talked about it in the House, the position is going to be getting re-profiled in Hay River to look after the fishery and agriculture strategy, and they also have the full support of the superintendent of ITI in this House, who also works on all these files and helps direct some of that stuff. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Simpson, there is time allowed for another.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I understand the position is pan-territorial. Take, for example, fishing. I believe 1.3 million pounds came out of the South Slave, was brought to the fish plant in Hay River. I think 10,000 or 16,000 pounds came out of the North Slave and 10,000 came out from up in the Beaufort. So when you have 90-some per cent of the production happening in a certain area, why won't you focus efforts in that area, especially when it is such a promising one?

I see my time is up, but that is just maybe something to think about, and that is something I will come back to over and over again. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Go ahead to the commentary, Minister Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to make it quite clear. This position that is in Yellowknife, it is pan-territorial. It is not just fish. It is agriculture, and it does fur, so it does a number of things. I guess when we come back to the first page and, when we close off on ITI at the end of all this, you will see the layout and how we

have redirected the supports around some of this stuff. That is the reason that job is in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A number of my colleagues have asked some of my questions, but they have opened up the door for a number of other questions. The Business Development and Investment Corporation, the corporation is developing a corporate plan. The Minister said it is going to be tabled by April 1st. We are done here on March 10th, so is it going to be done by March 10th and tabled in the House, or is it going to be tabled in our later sitting? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to the Member for asking that question. Actually, I have to approve it by April 1st, and then it will be tabled in the summer. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we won't see anything until the summertime. Potentially, if it takes a while for the department to look over it, it could be the fall time. So when will the Minister commit that this report will be tabled in this House? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let's make it quite clear. They can't go forward with their corporate plan until the budget is passed in the Legislative Assembly for this next fiscal year, so that is tied to that. Once it is done and I approve it, then, whenever the next sitting is after the spring session, that is when we will be tabling it. I thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for informing us that they can't do anything until this budget is passed. Well, we understand that, so now we are going through the business here.

When it comes down to the SEED program, and we are talking about that, is the department developing an evaluation? You are talking about looking at it, but, if you are going to look at it, there should be an evaluation put forth so we can actually make an

informed decision in seeing what is out there. Is the department going to develop an evaluation program? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I have said, we are doing a review of this right now. We are having a look at it internally. I have directed the department to see, like I said, best value for money and if we are targeting the right stuff. If something comes forward that is a red flag for us, we will definitely be sharing it with committee and deciding what we are going to do moving forward and if we are going to do a full-blown review. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. Unfortunately, it is internal. It should be a review. It should be an evaluation process. We need to have informed information to make informed decisions. If we are looking at the SEED program to make it more efficient to do that, you need to do an evaluation. So will the Minister work with the department to come up with an evaluation process that will actually look at the program, and not just do it internally but have an evaluation program to it? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I just said, we are going to do what I said we are going to do. I have directed the department to have a look at it and, if there are some red flags, we will bring it forward and decide if we are going to do a review.

To get back to the earlier question that I got on this department earlier, grants and contributions has a number of initiatives and information on where this money, what sectors it is being spent on. My concern, as I said, is: are we doing this in an effective manner? This is the early stage of this. I am not saying that I would not do a full review of it, but, as the Minister, I want to have a look at it, just because I feel that we could be targeting certain sectors and different communities, maybe, or regions in a different manner than we are. Once, if I find something that is a red flag for me, that we need to do, we will bring it forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We could be going back and forth. I disagree with the Minister. If we are going to look at a program, we should be evaluating it so we can make informed decisions. I will leave it at that. Going forth, when they are talking about this agricultural strategy, have they worked with the Department of Lands as they move forward with this strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I said in my earlier comments, we are working with not just Lands, but we are working with Health and Social Services and ENR on this whole issue. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the Minister for his answer. However, we have heard in some issues out there that Lands -- especially from my riding, I have heard from a number of people wishing to develop this -- Lands is a big issue. The biggest challenge going, it is not ITI, it is not Health and Social Services, but it is Lands. So I guess my question is: will the department work with Lands, because that seems to be the biggest challenge, to address these issues that are out there? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. As I have said, we are working with all departments, cross-departmental, on how to move this initiative forward. Agricultural strategy is only getting tabled here. Hopefully in this session we are going to bring that forward and table that. It is part of our portfolio to diversify the economy of the Northwest Territories, and we believe that there is valid investment into it.

It has hit a roadblock on the Lands issue. We are going to work on that to try to get that alleviated so the people who want to go into super-large commercial farming in the Northwest Territories will be able to do that, but this is the government of the territory, and some of this stuff takes time to work its way through. We will continue to do that so the people who want to tackle agriculture as an industry and help the Northwest Territories move forward with this initiative, well, we will all work together to do that. That is what we intend to do. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, I am very happy to hear that answer. That is potential for moving forward. In regards to this program, was there any money left over, left at the table, since this is a federal and a territorial combination? Is there money left over on the table? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This was a five-year initiative by the federal government, the territorial government. We are on our last remaining year, and we are working with the federal government on Growing Forward 3, and how we are going to try to access as much money as we can through another issue through cross-departmental initiatives to see what fits within Growing Forward 3 with the federal government to leverage the most dollars we can for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I just have to come back to the question. I understand it's the last year, but is there any money left at the table? We left at the table with this program. Has it just been implemented? Have all the funds been utilized, or has it been left at the table? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we have said, it is a five-year initiative, and we are in our last year. I guess we will have to see who all comes forward to apply for some of this stuff, and what initiatives we move forward. We won't know until the end of the five years, but I suspect that we probably would not have any money left at the end of that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good to hear that. I am glad we are not leaving money at the table. My last question is, one of my colleagues asked about the BIP, local versus northern. You said that you're not looking at the northern component to it. Can you please explain why that is not being looked at? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What I said was, we are not looking at the local component of 5 per cent that local people get. We

are looking at the BIP, making sure all the registered people within the BIP system are compliant. That is what we are doing right now. We have one more region to finish up, as I said, the North Slave region, as it being the largest, probably, subscriber to BIP, entrance to the BIP. Once that is done, then, we will look at how these people meet the BIP policy, and if we are going to have a review of it moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I realize my time's going to come up real quick. I guess the thing is, I understand the BIP, and I totally understand the government doing that, or the department doing that. However, there are two components of BIP: there is the territories; and there is local. That needs to be looked at, and see how that is being implemented so we can make sure that we are doing it properly. So I hope once they have done BIP, that the Minister and the department will look at the local component of it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: (mic off)

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Next is Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some questions on page 202 on grants and contributions. I see the film industry rebate program; last year, the main estimates were \$206,000. Again, the same was totally used in revised estimates. Why is it dropping down to \$100,000 this year? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have a film rebate program that sunsets at the end of 2017-18. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The entire program is sunsetting at the end of this year? Is that what the Minister said? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, that is the exact rate that is sunsetting, but we are still going to allocate \$160,000. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am looking at a figure of \$100,000, but if the Minister wants to bump it up to \$160,000, I would be very happy with that. Is he proposing an increase? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$160,000, to make it clear, comes from SEED. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. There is \$100,000 listed here in the mains on this page. Another \$60,000 comes from SEED. Is that what I am hearing? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I think I got this right. Actually, I am going to defer it to the director.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Ms. Mujcin.

MS. MUJGIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In 2017-18, there is \$100,000 for the film rebate program along with \$160,000 in SEED allocated to film. The rebate program sunsets after 2017-18, at which time it will be \$160,000 from SEED still allocated on an ongoing basis for film. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Mujcin. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you. I appreciate the clarification from the departmental staff. Does this represent good value for money? Are we going to just rely on SEED to do this, or are we going to invest some of our own money in this as well? More directly, Mr. Chair, can the Minister answer that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I read this correct, amount rebate approved that was spent was \$94,000, and the film rebate program resulted in \$344,000 in spending in the NWT, so it would be good value for money. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am glad to hear that, because that is my understanding as well. What is the plan moving forward? We are just going to have \$160K, then, in SEED that is available for support for the film industry? What is the feature of this effort on this sector of the economy? Are we just going to let this die, or are we going to continue to invest in it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. From my understanding, the \$160,000 is going to be hard to spend, the way things are looking right now. As we move forward, as the industry grows and picks up and diversifies the economy and brings bigger production films to the Northwest Territories, just like anything else, we will have to review it and see if we need to put more money into it. Right now, we are comfortable with that amount. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the comments from the Minister, but if we do not continue to provide support for the industry, I do not think it will continue to grow. I do want to move on, if I could. I think it is 204, the active positions page. Is that something I can do at this point, Mr. Chair? Yes.

As I understand it, there are two positions that are going to be lost in the department as a result of this budget. The only two positions seem to be in economic diversification and business support. Can the Minister explain to me how this supports our mandate of economic diversification, when the only two staff positions that are being lost are in economic diversification and business support? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is a reduction of three regional petroleum advisors on this page. These positions are located in the Beaufort Delta, Sahtu, and Deh Cho region. Oil and gas activities are very low, so that's one of the reasons for that, is we know that's -- we don't believe that thing is going to happen there for at least another 10 years. These reductions were offset partly by the addition of investment in an immigration officer position which is located in Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just want a second here to review my notes, if I could. I don't think I have any other questions on this. Actually, I do, sorry.

The agricultural strategy, it's going to get tabled in the House. The only funding, then, that we're going to have available for this is whatever we might be able to negotiate with the federal government for Growing Forward 3; is that what's going to happen, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we said we were going to try to look after this internally, this initiative, but we also have the growing forward money going forward with that and we also have the Northern Food Development, which I believe has \$550,000 in it, too, as well, to try to this move this initiative forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So as I understand it then there's no new money in this budget for anything that might come out of the agricultural policy; is that the case? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, there is no new money, but one of the things that we did when you look at this budget moving forward, we have created a new division to help prop up the agriculture strategy, and we believe this is early days in this initiative and that's a good investment moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can the Minister tell us where this new agricultural division is going to be located, and how many staff, and so on? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's not a new agricultural division per se. When you look at -- as the Member asked -- when he first did his opening comments on page 190 is how we've divided up the department. If you look on page 190 there's a director of economic diversification on the bottom of that page. That person is going to look after agriculture, commercial fisheries, arts, fine

crafts, hide procurement program, and marketing and promotion of the Mackenzie Valley fur, as well. So that's been separated out of the diamond division stuff. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I want to congratulate the Minister for doing that. That's something I raised in the last review of the main estimates during the business plans as well. The need to make sure that the organizational chart actually reflects a concrete effort at economic diversification, because we've got these big stuff and big sections in here for mining and oil and gas but nothing really concrete on the economic diversification side. So congratulations to the new leadership in the department. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly, your time has expired. Next I have Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I got part of my question answered here, but I'm going to ask it anyway and it might be a carryover to the next activity. We lost one position; it's a small community, and I know the individual. I can see the merit behind the cut, but by the same token if it's the petroleum advisor initiative there's still petroleum beneath where this position sits. So I'm kind of thinking, if this is going to be a carryover or a possible carryover mid-term to this budget, if there's allowances for re-hire on a part-time basis should remedial responsibilities and potential opportunities in the reclamation of the Norman Wells oilfield occur that might warrant justification for reinstatement. Is that being considered? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, we would not be considering doing that right now. As I've said, we don't believe oil and gas is going to come back into the Northwest Territories for some time. The duties for this position, though, we believe will be carried forward by the client service and community relations division and ITI, which manages similar duties. So we believe that, if something does happen in the short-term, we will be able to fill that from internally. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll wait for my second half of the question here on the next activity. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. Anything further? Comments or questions? Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the commercial fisheries industry supports there was \$1.4 million earmarked in the last budget to go towards the development of a facility in Hay River. Yourself, Mr. Chair, would have raised this in question period. I wonder if the Minister can just clarify why that disappears in this budget and what the plan for that funding is. Has it been spent? How is this money being disposed of? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$1.41 million was included in the 2016-17 main estimates and was an initiative funding approved for one year, so it was there for one year as part of the Economic Opportunities Strategy.

As I've said in the House, this is sunseting in 2017-18 and if we don't get something done with our partners in leveraging this money we'll be looking for a carryover and hopefully be able to get something done after the next fiscal year-end. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So accounting mechanics aside, the intention is to invest this money in the commercial fishery in Hay River? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that's exactly what we want to do with it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you for that answer. Mr. Chairman, if the Minister could answer. The commercial fisheries subsidy, freight subsidy, is that currently meeting the needs of our fishers? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess that question would be depending on who asked. If you're asking me, I'm going to say it meets the needs of the commercial fisheries right now.

This payment includes to subsidize the freight costs which go back to the fishermen; that amount is

\$205,000, as well, to cover a portion of operations, maintenance and capital replacement costs of \$20,000. So that's what we're giving to the commercial fisheries right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is that all-season operations or only summer operations? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe that's going to summer operations right now, as there is probably no point in commercial fishing as the plant is not open in the wintertime. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So if the Minister can just confirm, there is no commercial fishing activity taking place outside of the summer months? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's commercial fishing going on in the winter, right, but that's all private people doing it and running their own operations. Anything to do with the Freshwater Fishing Corporation, the federation is -- like I said, is not open in the wintertime so there's no commercial fishermen supplying the Freshwater plant in the winter. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If this fund was enriched, could the commercial fishery expand their operations outside of the summer and increase their capacity and their productivity with a greater subsidy? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Part of the fishing strategy moving forward is how do we encompass all seasons of fisheries and to grow the fishing industry to a sustainable level where it becomes viable and economic for the fishermen to make a more substantial living than they are.

One of the challenges moving forward with the whole strategy is going to be how do we get people to fish in the winter. That has to be a vital part of how we move this strategy as the plant needs to be open longer than shorter to make it economical; and when we look at our strategy moving forward there's a number of initiatives that we need to look at to make this thing a viable operation.

The other side of it is I'm from Hay River and it doesn't matter if you put a subsidy or not, you've got to get the people who want to fish. So that's part of the challenge moving forward, and getting people to fish in the wintertime seems to be even a tougher problem, so we're going to have to have a look at how we're going to move this strategy forward and work with the fishermen in Hay River or in the NWT who are in the commercial fishing industry who want to supply the Freshwater Marketing Corporation in a year-round operation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and certainly there are challenges to developing any kind of industry. My understanding of the fishery as well is that it has been in decline, but there are hard-working people trying to keep it alive, so our government can help do that. I think we are obliged to do so, and it's low-hanging fruit. We have some of the best fish stock in the world and it's a product in high demand. So again, I would just like to reiterate that the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning is firmly behind the idea of enriching this fund and supporting our fishing industry, and again low-hanging fruit for expansion of a diversified economy, and we continue to stand on that principle. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): The Minister would not like to respond. Do I have any further comments or questions? Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm not sure that there's too much to say or ask in terms of questions, but just in regard to some comments of what I've been hearing. I know that the Minister is aware that colleagues in the Priorities and Planning Committee have shared with the Minister some of our concerns previously on things that we would like to see possibly reinstated and/or even added, and so, you know, I just want to highlight that the committee is certainly supportive of the SEED Program. You've heard a lot of commentary around that tonight. I think it's a positive thing to know and

understand that the department is going to work on committing to a review. However, you know, we're pretty confident that this is one of the government's most popular programs and, as was alluded to, it's often over-prescribed, and we see this as the pot of funds that really had the most potential to diversify the economy. As the Minister may be aware, we would actually like to see some degree of increase put towards this program.

Also alluded to is the support for the fishing industry as it relates to freight support. We see that amount as being fairly steady over the years and would like to see a commitment to more investment there. This is clearly an item that's within the mandate commitment to revitalize the commercial fishing industry. We also recognize the Revitalization Strategy needs to be a strategic and targeted investment to be successful, and we see that in the support for freight support.

Mr. Chair, we also, as the Minister is likely aware, would like to see an increase in the maximum amount that's eligible for BDIC loans. BDIC is clearly an established and well-recognized resource for our entrepreneurs here in the North, and they certainly provide more flexibility for small businesses and small business start-ups.

Mr. Chair, we're not supportive of the reduction of the annual contribution to BDIC. To some degree, this is kind of seen as undermining the role and the potential of BDIC. BDIC is not just a lender. They also provide assistance in getting financial support from others. They host entrepreneurial workshops and they advocate and build a number of partnerships that are important to the success of our economy here in the North.

One thing that we would certainly like to see the department make a clearer commitment to is reducing the administrative complexity of establishing a new business. It's often been referred to by a number of Members in this House about how start-up businesses or even existing businesses are struggling with the red tape and the ability to find efficiencies in getting permits, and so we'd like to see the department have a clear kind of departmental commitment in that regard.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, the committee is certainly going to be overly supportive of the reduction of the Community Futures contribution. We see that as a pot that's continuing to trend down and not up, and that to some degree we see as undermining the small communities and their economic potential, and this has impacts on their ability to create much-needed jobs. So those are just some comments that we cared for the Minister to hear. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try to respond to all five of them, I believe. As I've said, SEED, we're having a look at it. My concern was when I got the portfolios, are we making the best bang for our buck, and I will not commit to a review right at this point. I'm going to have a look at it for sure, and if there's a need for it we will definitely be having a look at that, but I'm paying close attention on how we're spending SEED for sure and getting value for our money.

The fishing industry, as you know, we're going to table our strategy moving forward. I think the amount of money that we initially have right there, right now, the \$200-and-some thousand for support plus the \$1.4 million this government has set aside to leverage the federal government, it's going to be important how things go with Freshwater Marketing Corporation. If need be I will be back down in Ottawa and being on the Minister's ear about how we're going to move that initiative forward, because we believe that's something to diversify our economy; not just in Hay River, but the whole Slave Lake system is important to the Northwest Territories.

BDIC, again, we believe that from everything they've said they can continue to service the economic sector of the Northwest Territories. The one thing about BDIC I think a lot of people don't understand is the application are taken in regions and they're all put forward to BDIC, and they review them and decide if they're going to fund those things. So those are regional things, and different regions have different types of activity in the Northwest Territories and different needs and wants and asks. As the economy is up and down in some regions there's definitely a lot less activity, and it has to be something that's viable moving forward. It just can't be some pipe dream and just think we're going to lend people money. There's got to be a viable business plan with it.

Red tape, we've talked about it in this House already. With the CFIB and their report, we are always working to improve how we do business, especially in the small business sector how they can navigate their way through all the different types of red tape, being, you know, especially the forms, GST, registering your business, all these sorts of things, and BizPal, as we did a Minister's statement in the House, is certainly helping with that and we are working on those items moving forward.

Community Futures reduction, I hear what the Member is saying, but that is something that was already put forward in the last budget and we're just

making some small adjustments to that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Vanthuyne, anything further?

MR. VANTHUYNE: Nothing further at this time.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions here. First, under the Film Industry Rebate Program. I know I asked this last year and we are still waiting for the proposal, but one of my constituents had a great plan to do a film. Some of you may be familiar with the race they had from Fort Providence to Inuvik. I believe one of our Members might have partaken in that. You know, he is planning to do sort of a documentary on the people who took place on that and took part in the race. We have some survivors who are still with us to give their stories. He is from Fort McPherson and wants to work with the elders in the communities. They are planning to do a similar race from Fort McPherson to Aklavik this summer, but he would like to do this film, and he would like to know if there are funds available to do this. I know I asked this last year, but would this pot of funds be suitable for that? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is the exact type of thing that the film sector is looking at. We would encourage the Member to have him get hold of the Northwest Territories Film Commission and see what kind of support that they can help him with. I know there is more than just money there. There is a lot of mentorship in the sort of things that are happening there.

I have had an opportunity to talk to a number of people in the film industry in the Northwest Territories, and everything I have heard has always been positive. People have come up to me and thanked us for the initiative of bringing this forward to help diversify our economy. There has been a lot of North American interest in the projects in the Northwest Territories. This is probably something that could probably get some real attention, so thank you for that, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Next, under the fur program, the department has done a good job lately, well, for a number of years, on the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program. I know I brought this up a couple of years back.

I am really glad to see, as I mentioned last year, again, as more and more we are seeing the young fellow there from Hay River who is on satellite TV now, who is really putting it out there that in the Northwest Territories we use humane trapping methods, and I really feel strongly that we need to promote that a lot more. Watching other programs, like Yukon Trapper or whatever, the methods they still use are leg-hold traps, which we don't use in the territory. You know, I think it is very important that we continue that and continue these funds in the future. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Would the Minister like to comment?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this is another program that we believe is important to diversifying our economy in the Northwest Territories. Last year, over \$2 million in direct revenues was realized through the traditional economy. Over \$1 million was paid to NWT trappers last year in revenues and advances and grubstakes under the Mackenzie Valley Fur Program. Over \$200,000 was paid out to traditional artists last year, generating an estimated \$900,000 in product sales. So we believe it is a great program, and we will continue to support that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Mr. Blake?

MR. BLAKE: The other thing that is under commercial fishing is there is interest in my riding, as I mentioned last time, I know they will be working very shortly on some sort of commercial fishing plant, possibly in Tsiigehtchic, where we do have the best whitefish in the territory. Seriously, they are making plans to do this, and I know the department was willing to work with them, so I am looking forward to that. I can't wait to see that in my riding for sure. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Blake. Would the Minister like to respond?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, the last time I was home, the superintendent told me about Tsiigehtchic getting hold of them and wanted to know a little bit about doing a commercial fishery in Tsiigehtchic. I think he has actually said that he would probably go up there and have a discussion with them on how they can move that initiative forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Anything further? Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Good, Minister.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Next, I have Mr. Vanthuyne.

COMMITTEE MOTION 50-18(2):
TABLED DOCUMENT 261-28(2): MAIN
ESTIMATES 2017-2018, INDUSTRY, TOURISM
AND INVESTMENT, DEFERRAL OF ECONOMIC
DIVERSIFICATION AND
BUSINESS SUPPORT ACTIVITY,
CARRIED

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that this committee defer further consideration of the activity, economic diversification and business support, under the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Main Estimates, 2017-2018, on page 201, at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Vanthuyne. There's a motion to defer. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. All those in favour? All those opposed?

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): This activity has been deferred. Mr. Beaulieu. Sorry. Minister.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Could we take a two-minute break, please?

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We will have a five-minute recess. Sorry. You know what, I will cancel the recess. I will go to Mr. Beaulieu.

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

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

---Carried

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will now rise and report progress. Thank you, Minister. Thank you to the witnesses. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses from the Chamber.

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

Report of Committee of the Whole

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Tabled Document 261-18(2), Main Estimates 2017-2018. I would like to report progress with two motions being adopted; and, Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Do I have a seconder? Member for Deh Cho.

---Carried

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Item 22, third reading of bills. Item 23, Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Acknowledgements
7. Oral Questions
8. Written Questions
9. Returns to Written Questions
10. Replies to Commissioner's Opening Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motion
16. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
 - Bill 13, Marriage Act
 - Committee Report 6-18(2), Report on the Review of Bill 7: An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act
 - Tabled Document 261-18(2), Northwest Territories Main Estimates, 2017-2018

21. Report of Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

MR. SPEAKER: Masi, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 16, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 5:52 p.m.