



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2nd Session

Day 67

18th Assembly

HANSARD

Thursday, March 9, 2017

Pages 2289 – 2328

The Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories

Members of the Legislative Assembly

Speaker

Hon. Jackson Lafferty

(Monfwi)

Hon. Glen Abernethy

(Great Slave)

Government House Leader

Minister of Health and Social Services

Minister Responsible for the Workers'

*Safety and Compensation
Commission*

Minister Responsible for Seniors

*Minister Responsible for Persons with
Disabilities*

*Minister Responsible for the Public
Utilities Board*

Mr. Tom Beaulieu

(Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh)

Mr. Frederick Blake

(Mackenzie Delta)

Hon. Caroline Cochrane

(Range Lake)

*Minister of Municipal and Community
Affairs*

Minister Responsible for Northwest

*Territories Housing Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Status of
Women*

*Lead Responsibility for Addressing
Homelessness*

Ms. Julie Green

(Yellowknife Centre)

Hon. Bob McLeod

(Yellowknife South)

Premier

Minister of Executive

*Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and
Intergovernmental Relations*

Hon. Robert McLeod

(Inuvik Twin Lakes)

Deputy Premier

Minister of Finance

*Minister of Environment and Natural
Resources*

Minister of Human Resources

Lead Responsibility for Infrastructure

Mr. Daniel McNeely

(Sahtu)

Hon. Alfred Moses

(Inuvik Boot Lake)

*Minister of Education, Culture and
Employment*

Minister Responsible for Youth

Mr. Michael Nadli

(Deh Cho)

Mr. Herbert Nakimayak

(Nunakput)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly

(Frame Lake)

Hon. Wally Schumann

(Hay River South)

*Minister of Industry, Tourism and
Investment*

Minister of Public Works and Services

Minister of Transportation

Hon. Louis Sebert

(Thebacha)

Minister of Justice

Minister of Lands

Minister Responsible for the Northwest

Territories Power Corporation

Minister Responsible for Public

Engagement and Transparency

Mr. R.J. Simpson

(Hay River North)

Mr. Kieron Testart

(Kam Lake)

Mr. Shane Thompson

(Nahendeh)

Mr. Cory Vanthuynne

(Yellowknife North)

Officers

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Tim Mercer

Deputy Clerk

Mr. Doug Schauerte

Committee Clerk

Mr. Michael Ball

Committee Clerk

Ms. Cayley Thomas (Acting)

Law Clerks

Ms. Sheila MacPherson

Mr. Glen Rutland

Ms. Alyssa Holland

Box 1320

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Tel: (867) 767-9010 Fax: (867) 920-4735 Toll-Free: 1-800-661-0784

<http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca>

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRAYER	2289
MINISTERS' STATEMENTS	2289
167-18(2) – Labour Force Development (Moses)	2289
168-18(2) – Securing International Markets for NWT Furs (Schumann)	2290
169-18(2) – Public Engagement on Open Government (Sebert)	2291
170-18(2) – Confirming our Commitment to Mining (Schumann)	2292
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	2292
Passing of Jason Berens (Beaulieu)	2292
2017 Beavertail Jamboree (Thompson)	2293
2017 Long John Jamboree (Vanthuyne)	2293
Sahtu All-Season Road (McNeely)	2294
Fort Providence Youth Centre Proposal (Nadli)	2294
Northwest Territories Agriculture Strategy (O'Reilly)	2295
Pre-school Program Funding Options (Green)	2295
Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway (Nakimayak)	2296
Funding for Apprenticeship and Trades Opportunities (Testart)	2297
'A New Day' Program Request for Proposals (Simpson)	2297
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY	2298, 2307
ORAL QUESTIONS	2298
PETITIONS	2307
MOTIONS	2307
32-18(2) – Referral of Petition 6-18(2): Elimination of Time Change in the Northwest Territories to the Standing Committee on Social Development (Testart)	2307
CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS	2308
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	2327
THIRD READING OF BILLS	2327
Bill 7 – An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act	2327
ORDERS OF THE DAY	2328

YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**Thursday, March 9, 2017****Members Present**

Hon. Glen Abernethy, Mr. Beaulieu, 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, Members. Item 2, Ministers' statements. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Ministers' Statements**MINISTER'S STATEMENT 167-18(2):
LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT**

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and its partners across government, in industry, and education are all working together to ensure that NWT residents have the information they need to be well positioned to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Our government made a commitment in its mandate to take steps to close the skills gap using the Skills 4 Success Strategic Framework. This framework focuses on ensuring Northwest Territories residents have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes for employment success. This strategy is part of the continuum of strategies at the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Working with industry, business, chambers of commerce, municipalities, Aboriginal governments, and interest groups, Skills 4 Success has been designed to respond to the needs of students, workers, employers, and the labour market.

In April 2016, working with the Conference Board of Canada, we released the Northwest Territories Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment and companion documents, the Labour Market Information Resource and the NWT Jobs in Demand: 15-Year Forecast. This information paints the picture of labour market needs in the NWT; the current status, and the projection. This is the first time we have had this information, and it will help us focus our efforts in education, training, and employment opportunities over the next several years.

Strengthening the apprenticeship program is another part of our mandate commitment to close the skills gap. We have drafted an apprenticeship strategy focused on improvements to the Apprenticeship, Trades and Occupational Certification Program in support of this. The strategy complements and supports those of Skills 4 Success.

We have extensively engaged through one-on-one interviews and surveys with certified journeypersons who are working in trades, current apprentices, employers, business, and industry. We look forward to engaging with the Standing Committee on Social Development in the coming weeks to share our work on the Apprenticeship Strategy.

The government has also made a commitment in its mandate to develop and implement a strategy to increase employment in small communities. Education, Culture and Employment's Small Community Employment Support Program funds projects in small communities for the development of workplace essential skills. Residents can participate through the Training-on-the-Job, or the Community Initiatives programs. In 2016-17, 269 individuals from all regions received support and training. In the next fiscal year, we will invest an additional \$3 million dollars to develop a Small Community Employment Strategy and expand the existing program to better support small community employment and development of transferable skills across the NWT. In doing so, we will work with our colleagues in other departments to ensure that infrastructure and economic development projects create new opportunities for small community residents.

In partnership with ITI, ECE administers the GNWT's immigration programs including the Employer Driven Program under the Nominee Program; part of our mandate commitment is to increase the number of immigrants working in the NWT. The program is comprised of three streams: Critical Impact Workers, Skilled Workers and NWT Express Entry. With extensive program improvements in 2014, there have been 340 nominees and dependents welcomed into the Northwest Territories over the past three years, and 128 in 2016 alone. It is through these streams that

we are able to attract people with critical skills to the NWT.

ECE is also working with ITI to develop a GNWT Immigration Strategy aligned with both the Nominee Program and the Skills 4 Success strategy. Work on this strategy will include engagement with business, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, immigrant service providers and cultural groups. This new strategy will help the GNWT respond to labour market needs in a way that can be sustained through fluctuating economies while ensuring that job opportunities are safeguarded for Northerners and Canadians.

In the next few months, we will be engaging with the Standing Committee on Social Development to review the Immigration Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, across the territory, we all understand the importance of collaboration and working towards a common goal. Recognizing the unique characteristics and cultural mosaic of our region, coupled with the understanding that Northerners want to see vibrant communities and a productive economy tells us that our shared approach has us on the right path. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister for Industry, Tourism and Investment.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 168-18(2):
SECURING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS FOR
NWT FURS

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Government of the Northwest Territories made a commitment in its mandate to increase exports by promoting NWT products to international markets. I rise today to update my colleagues on recent activities supporting this commitment.

I am pleased to inform Members that, following a long and concentrated lobby by our government and its partners, the Inuvialuit have been formally recognized under the Indigenous exception to the European Union's seal products prohibition.

This means that the immense purchasing potential of the European Union is now open to Inuvialuit-harvested sealskins and sealskin products.

It is a landmark agreement for Inuvialuit harvesters, and I would like to recognize the extraordinary role and partnership of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in the work that has resulted in this exemption.

We will now get to work to realizing the long-awaited benefits of this decision.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment will incorporate the marketing of NWT

seal products to the European Union under the existing Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand. Meanwhile, with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, we will be advancing a certification program to promote consumer confidence amongst European travellers who will now be able to return home with sealskin products purchased in the NWT.

I would also like to thank the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada for their assistance in reaching this landmark deal. The settlement is timely, as NWT seal products can now also benefit from planned marketing by the Government of Canada under the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, this is big news and it is certainly not the only work that our government has done to promote the interests of NWT furs in international markets.

Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs are currently on sale at the Fur Harvesters and American Saga Auctions in Helsinki, the world's largest fur auction sale, and the largest event for our government-supported brand each year.

In preparation for this auction, we also ensured representation for NWT trappers at the China Fur and Leather Products Fair in Beijing. The tradeshow is a major international event, with buyers from Europe, Asia, and North America coming together to evaluate stock from producers. Our showcase, this year, included luxury garments custom designed to demonstrate what can be done with Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur alongside pelts at various stages of dressing.

Our investment was able to secure new buyers in Chinese and Russian markets, two of the largest markets for fur in the world, and markets we believe will come through with purchases in Helsinki.

Mr. Speaker, maintaining the globally respected and recognized Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur brand cuts through the noise of a worldwide marketplace for NWT trappers.

Through this program, which we deliver in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, we provide a guaranteed price for furs harvested and submitted for sale. It ensures trappers aren't left in the lurch during the long gap between the bush and the auction hall. If the furs sell at a greater price, the difference is returned to the trapper. There are no losers: it's revenue-neutral for our government, and it provides stability and certainty for our trappers and their families.

Mr. Speaker, all of this supports an industry worth more than \$2 million dollars to our economy each

year. It puts money in the pockets of our trappers and brings diversity to our economy. The social and cultural benefit it provides citizens across our territory is priceless and irreplaceable.

Expanding international market access will only serve to enhance all of these benefits. It is why our government has chosen to remain ahead of the curve with one of the world's most comprehensive support systems for traditional economic activity.

We look forward to continuing to expand the international horizons for Northwest Territories fur to preserve and enrich the future of trapping in the NWT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Minister responsible for Public Engagement and Transparency.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 169-18(2):
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON OPEN
GOVERNMENT

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again update this House on some of the work our government is doing to further enhance public engagement and transparency. When I last updated Members in early November, I announced that I would soon be engaging directly with NWT residents about open government. I also committed to provide this House with an update.

Mr. Speaker, in December I began public engagement sessions on open government, and I am continuing to travel to various communities to hear directly from residents. At each of these public sessions, I have asked the local MLA to accompany me so that we can hear from the public together.

Discussions have included a review of key principles on open government previously considered by Caucus and are being guided by a consistent set of questions, including: how can government better include residents in decision making; how do residents access information about the government; are there areas where residents would like to see more information made available; and is the information government provides easily accessible.

Sessions with the public have already been held in Fort Smith and in Hay River. Both sessions were informative and the people who attended were very interested in the discussion. We are planning further public sessions for Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Nahanni Butte, Fort Resolution, Behchoko, and Yellowknife after session, Mr. Speaker. We are also planning targeted sessions in Yellowknife for media and a session for non-government organizations and

businesses to understand whether these groups have unique interests and needs with respect to open government.

Mr. Speaker, by asking residents how they interact with our government, we begin to get a better sense of how residents receive information from government, what type of government information is most valued, and -- most importantly -- how the government can improve two-way communications with residents. We will use this public feedback in the development of an open government policy to be implemented by all departments and to help guide the sharing of information, publication of data, and consistent approaches to engagement.

Mr. Speaker, even though this work is squarely focused on the needs and expectations of NWT residents, we realize that our work on open government is part of broader national and international efforts. In recognition of ongoing national dialogues about open government, last November I participated in a full-day roundtable hosted by Canada 2020, a national think tank, to seek input from non-governmental organizations, educators, business leaders, and students on the principles and practices of open government in Canada. Feedback from these sectors will also help in the formation of an open government policy, just as insights from the NWT will help in the formation of national ideas about open government.

Mr. Speaker, the development of an open government policy is just some of the work our government is doing to enhance transparency and engagement. This spring, in addition to a draft open government policy, I also expect to bring forward a legislative proposal to establish an independent parliamentary Office of the Ombudsman and a legislative proposal to amend our access to information laws. Later this year, the government will add an information portal about ways to appeal government decisions. We will continue to add open data sets, as we've already done with data on ministerial travel and meetings, board appointments, contract data, and environmental data. As well, the Premier and Cabinet will continue to hold open houses in various communities to hear directly concerns and questions from residents.

Mr. Speaker, improving the way that government provides information about its activities to residents and engages with citizens to help inform policies and decisions is an ongoing process, not a destination. We have begun that process and remain committed to updating the way that we do business consistent with our mandate and the priorities of this Legislative Assembly through the remainder of our term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MINISTER'S STATEMENT 170-18(2):
CONFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO MINING

MR. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, mining is the NWT's biggest industry and the engine of our economy. For decades it has created opportunities for NWT businesses, provided Northerners with good, quality jobs, and contributed significantly to government revenues.

With rich reserves of minerals still to be tapped, there is every reason to expect mining will continue to provide the same kinds of benefits, but that won't happen without an effort on our part, and our government remains committed to supporting an industry that is not just a part of our history, but which is also a part of our future.

In January, all Members of Cabinet and the MLA for Yellowknife North attended the Mineral Exploration Roundup in Vancouver, along with a number of Aboriginal partners.

GNWT officials attend this year's event as part of our ongoing work to support mining and demonstrate our government-wide commitment to protecting our largest industry. Our political show of force this year was an important way to underline our continued belief in mining and it was well received by many of our stakeholders and future investors.

Part of the objective of the trip was to draw attention to some important points that are at risk of becoming overlooked or forgotten. While our producers are working and investing to extend the lives of our territory's operating mines, the reality is that every mine has a limited lifespan. Before long, we will face a time when those mines and their economic activity will need to be replaced.

That is not something that can be done overnight, Mr. Speaker. Exploring for a viable mineral deposit takes time and it can take at least 10 years for a project to progress from its discovery to an operating mine.

While there are some prospects on our horizon, Mr. Speaker, they are not a sure thing. Unless we do more today to facilitate the exploration and discovery of new projects in our territory, we could find a day with no producing mines in the NWT. The benefits from mining are not a given. They are reliant on the continuing business case for NWT mining; a case that is currently threatened by today's difficult investment climate.

Exploration spending has decreased steadily since 2014. In the last two years, layoffs at our mines have left hard working men and women in limbo. Some have had to scramble to find new jobs. Some have left the territory entirely, taking even more from our economy.

These are real consequences, Mr. Speaker, and we are not taking them lightly. Our government recognizes what is at stake, and we are committed to improving the competitiveness of our jurisdiction.

We spent a great deal of time at Roundup speaking directly with members of the private sector about what can be done to revitalize and advance mineral exploration in our territory. Officials from ITI are continuing that conversation this week at the annual Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's annual convention in Toronto. It is a conversation that we see continuing for the foreseeable future.

We are prepared to look at every aspect of the NWT investment climate that we can influence. Tax incentives, royalties, regulations, everything must be on the table, and we must use the best knowledge available to guide our actions.

Last week, we committed to expanding the Mining Incentive Program, adding an additional \$600,000 to our investment this year to qualifying exploration and prospecting projects.

In response to continuing challenges, we are also extending the Work Credit Program, originally introduced in 2015, to offset costs for mineral explorers during this downturn in commodity prices.

Our goal is to restore and maintain a cycle of exploration and development. As our current diamond mines close in the future, others need to be entering into production. Investing in the well-being of our single largest industry is really an investment in our people and the services, community investments, and well-paid jobs they deserve. More than 10 per cent of our workforce is directly employed by the sector, and many more depend on its spin-offs. We must lead the charge to protect their futures.

Mr. Speaker, during this session I have heard almost every Member talk about the importance of mining to the NWT. I look forward to working with my fellow Members on our approach. I believe we will all benefit from directly engaging with the challenges we are facing, and I am confident that we will succeed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Ministers' statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Member for Tu Nedhe-Willideh.

Members' Statements

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PASSING OF JASON BERENS

MR. BEAULIEU: Marci cho, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart I speak today

about the passing of a young man, Jason Stephen Berens. While not related to Jason, I have strong ties with many of his family members, the Fabian, Berens, Russell, and Sanderson families.

Jason was born in Yellowknife on February 7, 1979, and sadly passed away on his 38th birthday. Jason is predeceased by his mother, Georgina Fabian, his grandparents, Albert and Rose Fabian, Billy Berens, Hervina Sanderson, and Joe Russell. Jason is survived by his father, Mark Berens, and his brother, Kyle Laviolette. Given the size of these families, I am sure you can imagine the number of aunts, uncles, and cousins who tragically lost a dear family member.

Everyone who knew Jason was immediately drawn to his naturally kind nature, which is something he learned from his late mother, Georgina. Much like Georgina, Jason would go without seeing someone for years and strike up a conversation as though they saw each other yesterday. He was a kind man who maintained strong and meaningful relations with those whom he held close. His family would joke he was like Polkaroo or Beetlejuice. You would just think about him and a few minutes later the phone would ring.

If you didn't know Jason, you would never expect it, but he could challenge you to a conversation with facts and a well-rounded point of view. He was naturally a brilliant young man with a photographic memory. What was even more amazing about Jason was that he could do this while he was making you laugh with his witty personality. Anyone who knew Jason would agree that he had one of those truly happy, contagious laughs, something that his friends and family will miss the most.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my condolences to Jason's family and friends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Our thoughts and prayers to the family, as well. Members' statements. Member for Nahendeh.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2017 BEAVERTAIL JAMBOREE

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is that time of year again where we see communities hosting their spring carnivals. This past Sunday, Fort Simpson opened up the Beavertail Jamboree with a sliding party, outdoor skating party, chili cook-off, bonfire, and fireworks. Monday, they started their three-on-three basketball tournament, first games of the Beaver Cup four-on-four hockey tournament, the annual single crib tournament, which led on to Tuesday where they continued the hockey tournament and the doubles crib tournament. Wednesday saw bingo, family

scavenger hunt, drum dance, and an Old-Timers versus Moosehide Mamas hockey game.

This evening, there will be a feast at the rec centre followed by the finals of the Beaver Cup tournament and the crowning of the Beavertail Prince and Princess. Closing off the evening will see a hypnotist, Scott Ward.

On Friday, the communities will be hosting the community barbecue, corporate challenge, games for youth and children, another bingo, youth talent show, and a family dance.

Saturday will start off with the council's hosting their annual pancake breakfast, snow drags, adult traditional game, the talent show, and for the first time a men's beauty contest, and an adult dance.

On Sunday, there will be a family fun run, a fish fry, and closing ceremonies where the king and queen crowning will take place. This year the crowning of the king and queen will be open to anyone over the age of 17 and will be based on points received for participation throughout the week.

I would like to thank the hardworking organizers for arranging a mixture of events for all ages and getting people outside in the fresh air. As well, I would like to thank all corporate sponsors for the many volunteer hours for making the jamboree a great event.

I encourage everyone in Fort Simpson and the surrounding areas to come out and enjoy themselves. I hope that the weather is great and that I get to see a lot of people. Mahsi cho, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON 2017 LONG JOHN JAMBOREE

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to speak about carnivals today. Mr. Speaker, last week I spoke about Snowking Winter Festival, a great unique winter event put on by a committed and creative group of Northerners. Today I want to congratulate another group of dedicated people who are working hard to put on another spectacular event. I am referring to the board and volunteers who are gearing up for the sixth annual Long John Jamboree, March 24 to 26.

Mr. Speaker, all around the North, communities get together this time of year to celebrate the lengthening of days, the return of warm sun, and the knowledge that winter is finally coming to an end. Yellowknife has a long and strong tradition of end-of-winter celebrations through Caribou Carnival. Sadly, when Caribou Carnival had to

close down, the city was without a winter festival for a few years.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have been a member of a group of volunteers who came together to revive the tradition. In 2012, the first Long John Jamboree started out. We didn't know what the response would be, Mr. Speaker. Even at the end of March as we can see right now, it can be really cold, but Yellowknifers came out in droves to celebrate and support their new festival.

For five years, jamboree has celebrated the best parts of being a winter city. Games on the snow stage, live music in the carnival tent, arts exhibitions, the heritage tent, la Cabane a Sucre, the Burn on the Bay, curling on the lake, and the international ice carving competition have made the Long John Jamboree a winter festival this city and territory can be proud of.

Importantly, the jamboree never charged a penny for admission. It has always been open to all for free. In two weeks' time, the sixth annual Long John Jamboree will kick off. The organizers of the jamboree have been working hard for months, and volunteers are dedicating hours of hard work and resourcefulness to create a winter festival that is accessible, fun, and celebrates the departure of winter and the coming of spring.

There is the jamboree and the Snowking Festival and the longest-standing Yellowknife tradition, the Canadian Championship Dog Derby. Yellowknife Bay teems with activity, fun, and celebration in late winter, great activities for Northerners and visitors alike to enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing our congratulations to the hardworking organizers and volunteers of the Long John Jamboree and all our northern carnivals. Celebrations like these make our communities great and they deserve our support and recognition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON SAHTU ALL-SEASON ROAD

MR. MCNEELY: I, too, Mr. Speaker, will talk about carnivals, but it wasn't coordinated, just for everybody's reference.

Mr. Speaker, signs of spring are here, and longer daylight. The Sahtu residents are using this last month of winter ice road usage to visit friends and relatives outside the region, restocking of groceries and dry goods and materials, participation in other region's events, like the Hay River carnival, the Fort

Simpson carnival, and the upcoming Hand Games Tournament in Behchoko this weekend.

Mr. Speaker, the same could be said by this government on fuel resupplies, project readiness, or completion of mobilization and demobilization of materials.

Mr. Speaker, once again, the Sahtu will experience the words "limited" and "isolation from road travel."

Mr. Speaker, store owners in the region can be assured to assess prices on the uncertainty of store product turnovers and expiry dates. This formula price setting can be assured that the client or customer will end up paying this cost.

As we draw closer to our budget session and wait for the federal budget announcement with optimism that the federal infrastructure funding will include the all-weather road application approval submitted by this government in 2014 for the section between Norman Wells and Fort Wrigley, Mr. Speaker, I, like many others, cannot wait for this favourable announcement with assumption.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I supported and will continue to support the Cabinet's initiatives on marketing, as they had done last November. Being proactive is an ingredient for success, and I only hope, in this case, we receive favourable results. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FORT PROVIDENCE YOUTH CENTRE PROPOSAL

MR. NADLI: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, students in the Northern Community Leadership Program at the Aurora College Community Learning Centre in Fort Providence have taken on an interesting new project.

The Introduction to Leadership course was jointly developed by Aurora College and the NWT Literacy Council, and is being piloted this year in six communities across the territory, including Fort Providence. Students learn how to better engage with their communities, and then build on that knowledge to develop leadership skills and practices. The six-week course helps students to foster leadership qualities within themselves and how to use those qualities to make their communities a better place.

Today, I would like to share what the program participants have brought to my attention. Today, I will be sharing their views on the need for a youth centre in Fort Providence.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Fort Providence is in dire need of a youth centre. Our community has not had an activity centre for the youth since 2012, when one was run by the friendship centre. This lack has led to many youth being involved in illegal and substance abuse-related activities in the community.

Presently, the school and the friendship centre offer their programs only once or twice a week. A hundred youth were surveyed, and since Fort Providence has roughly 160 residents between the ages of 10 and 14, I would say that was a pretty good sample. These youth identified they would like an accessible space open in the evening and on weekends.

Mr. Speaker, having a youth centre would get the youth involved in recreational, life skills, and pre-employment programs. This space would foster leadership opportunities, increase the youth's self-esteem and confidence, as well as giving them a sense of responsibility and belonging. It would also promote physical activity and, in turn, all this would help to make the youth more respectable community members.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Minister Responsible for Youth to support this community initiative and assist the community in making this vision come to life. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AGRICULTURE STRATEGY

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. It's not wishful thinking for me to have a Minister's Statement. Last Friday, the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment released the first-ever NWT Agricultural Strategy. This in itself is a very good thing and has the potential to help build food security and diversify our economy.

I offer some observations and recommendations having reviewed the document. I had hoped to see a more substantive effort on presenting the history of agriculture and its contribution to the NWT economy. There is nothing I could find about traditional harvesting of berries or medicines, on the missionary farms, or the experimental farm that was located in Fort Simpson. I was surprised at the lack of analysis of soils, weather, and climate change. All of that would have been helpful to identify potential areas for future agricultural land use.

The focus of the document is largely on food production and agriculture as a business rather

than food security. In fact, the only occurrence of the phrase "food security" are in the Minister's message and in the glossary. Perhaps, there is still a chance to broaden the focus of our efforts or at least identify a range of actions to meet the needs of the commercial sector, community-level agriculture, and household food security. For example, there is no mention of community food security plans or inter-settlement trade.

There is a lot of discussion of identifying legislation, regulations, and policies related to their implications for agriculture. I would have thought we could have done that work as part of the strategy itself and begin to identify priority areas for improvements and updating.

It is good to see that access to more land for agricultural purposes has been identified as an issue, but the discussion is at a rather high level with few solutions offered. There is nothing I could find in the strategy about research and development into northern agricultural techniques and technology or circumpolar cooperation or partnerships.

Perhaps the biggest issue with the strategy is the lack of any specific targets or goals, or actual resources to carry out any of this work. I had hoped to see something like "increase the value of agricultural production by 50 per cent in five years" or "complete food security plans for all communities in the NWT within five years" or something similar. Most importantly, no costs have been estimated in the action plan for any of the activities and, of course, no new funds are identified in the 2017-18 budget. How will this work be carried out if we are not going to devote any funds for it, and there are no estimates even if we wanted to attract potential partners?

I will have questions for the Minister at the appropriate time. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM FUNDING OPTIONS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday I spoke about the work the Standing Committee on Social Development will be doing during the break. We will be reviewing Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Education Act. In addition to reducing instruction hours, the amendments to the act will establish junior kindergarten as a territory-wide program.

Mr. Speaker in his response to my written questions earlier this week, the Minister failed to answer two questions. They concerned the viability of other,

non-school-based programs that serve four-year-olds.

Mr. Speaker, the larger communities like Yellowknife, Hay River, and Fort Smith -- Fort Smith, yes, but I was thinking of Inuvik -- the larger communities have non-profits that offer parents options for educating their pre-schoolers outside the education system. Here in Yellowknife, that includes Montessori School and the Yellowknife Play School; and in Inuvik, that is the Children First Association. These are fee-based programs. The cost of a full-day Montessori program is \$8,000 per year. That compares well with the cost of full-day childcare, but it is a lot of money for a low-income family, as you can appreciate, and many families who would like to send their children to the Montessori school cannot afford to do so. Of course, parents have to go with what they can afford, despite what they think is the best style of learning for their children.

Mr. Speaker, it does not have to be this way. The department could decide to fund individual four-year-olds rather than funding a whole program. What I mean is that the total money invested in JK, \$5.1 million, could be divided among the total number of four-year-olds in the NWT, which is probably about 500 students, or 500 children, which I think is a bit of a generous estimate. The cost per student, then, is \$10,200. In other words, it would cost less to attach the subsidy to the child than it would be to pay for the children to be in a school classroom. In fact, costs are less than half of those that are estimated by the department per child per year. I do not understand why the department would not consider this option; they have not given me a reason. It represents a real choice for parents about early childhood development, and it protects the financial viability of the non-profits.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, colleagues. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, how are existing pre-school programs going to stay in business without four-year-olds? This is a serious question. I am not aware that ECE is planning to increase early childhood development subsidies to these programs. A very real possibility from the introduction of JK is that parents will have less choice in the future than they have now, whatever their income. I will have questions for the Minister. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this winter is the last chance to drive the seasonal ice road between Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk. Next winter, the frozen path will be replaced by an all-season overland highway, a project that has been planned for decades.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway is an extension of the Dempster Highway, a famous road that follows an old dog sled trail and gets its name from Royal Canadian Mounted Police Inspector William John Duncan Dempster.

In 1958, the Canadian government decided to build a road through the Arctic wilderness from Dawson City to Inuvik when oil and gas exploration was booming in the Mackenzie Delta and the town of Inuvik was under construction. Mr. Speaker, this is one example of how important road infrastructure is to all regions of northern Canada and its people.

In 1959, there was another significant oil discovery at Eagle Plains and a highway across the Arctic Circle would be needed to transport equipment and infrastructure. Construction began in January 1959, but the highway's high costs and unresolved problems between the federal and Yukon governments slowed progress until the project was abandoned.

Then, huge reserves of oil and gas were discovered at Prudhoe Bay in 1968. Canada was afraid that the United States would develop the vast oil field without consultation, consideration, or benefits to Canadians and it wanted to assert sovereignty over the Arctic.

The Dempster Highway was officially opened on August 18, 1979. During the 2011 election campaign, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced his intention to complete the highway with a 140 km extension to Tuktoyaktuk.

Mr. Speaker, construction of the all-weather road has put hundreds of surveyors, equipment operators, and labourers to work. Residents of Tuktoyaktuk will benefit from a lower cost of living, as goods can be shipped year-round. There will be greater access to healthcare and educational, social, and recreational opportunities in the region. Residents are inviting the rest of the world to come to visit.

This year, the NWT promoted a unique selection of winter tourism packages:

- The Sunrise Festival, including dog sledding, ice road tours, and an overnight at a cabin outside Inuvik;

- The Canadian Arctic Reindeer package, which involves observing a reindeer herd visiting Tuktoyaktuk; and
- Welcome the Sun, from January 6 to 8, where visitors can catch the first view of the sun after 30 days of Arctic darkness.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuvik Tuktoyaktuk Highway will finally complete Canada's road network, from coast to coast to coast. Mr. Speaker, if you are around the region, please come to Tuktoyaktuk for the Beluga Jamboree. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON FUNDING FOR APPRENTICESHIP AND TRADES OPPORTUNITIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize the hardworking tradespeople of the Northwest Territories, who have pursued very important skills that are in high demand, not only here but throughout Canada. I also want to recognize that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment does support our tradespeople through apprenticeship programs, and the continuous support for the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupation Certification program.

The department assists and supports the development, maintenance, and delivery of designated trade and occupational training programs that contribute to the development of a skilled northern workforce, in partnership with industry professionals.

There is also a Certification Board with five trade advisory committees; carpentry, plumbing, electrical, heavy equipment technician, and housing maintainer trades. These committees are made up of representatives from industry leaders who can go on to employ these skilled workers.

My own riding of Kam Lake is known as the heart of small businesses in Yellowknife and, certainly, they have made use of these programs. Through the many businesses there, we have been able to see northern tradespeople given opportunities to develop their skills and enter our workforce, putting Northerners on the map for being some of the most skilled and dedicated tradespeople in Canada, and certainly the world. The benefits of the economic wellbeing of the entire territory driven by tradespeople are well-known, and this program will continue to have support from me and from business owners.

However, there are problems with it, Mr. Speaker. For example, in my riding, one of my constituents, a

business owner, has 27 apprenticeship positions, but only received funding for two of those positions. That is a 25 per cent opportunity, the remainder being lost, potentially, to the south of 60. Mr. Speaker, we need to do a better job of providing full funding for apprenticeships so they can not only learn and develop their skills, but so we can enhance our skill markets.

I know another constituent who has brought people from southern jurisdictions to work in the Northwest Territories, supplementing their own workforce, but also creating opportunities for Canadians, not just Northerners. These are good examples of how we can attract people to unique northern opportunities in the Territories, and enhancing this program, I think, is a crucial step forward to developing a skilled labour force for the Northwest Territories.

I will have questions for the Minister later on today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Members' statements. Member for Hay River North.

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON A NEW DAY PROGRAM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, two days ago, the Department of Justice released a request for proposal for a revamped A New Day program. At least, that is what the title says. However, those familiar with the current A New Day program might only recognize it as a gutted and sterilized approximation of the program they know.

A New Day is the NWT's only healing program for men who use violence in their relationships. It was developed after two years of research and investigation led by the Department of Justice, and included staff and leaders from Health and Social Services, the John Howard Society, the Status of Women Council, the Native Women's Association, the Salvation Army, the Tree of Peace, the Yellowknife Women's Society, the YWCA, and the RCMP. The program provides flexible individual and group counselling services that are respectful, collaborative, and hold people accountable. It is delivered by permanent, full-time staff who provide culturally-appropriate counselling based on traditional knowledge, and with the assistance of elders. Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it is accessible. It is easy for those seeking help to get help. These qualities are why the program is successful, why it fulfills dozens of requirements of the TRC Calls to Action, and why it is a Public Health Agency of Canada Aboriginal Best Practices program.

The Department of Justice was determined to end the program, but the Regular Members recognized the need for a men's healing program, and we rallied together and ensured that the program would remain until there was something equivalent to take its place.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the RFP that describes what that "something" is has profoundly disappointed many of those who were engaged in designing the original program. Its contents came as a surprise to them, as their consultation was not sought this time around.

The result appears to be a program stripped of all of the qualities that make it successful; its accessibility, flexibility, outreach, cultural components, and the ability to allow for trusting relationships between clients and counsellors to develop. The first point of contact for clients will now be a GNWT coordinator, who will determine whether or not those who want to enter the three-phase program will be allowed. If they are, they will be assigned to facilitators, who are on non-exclusive, when-and-as-needed contracts. Facilitators are not required to have a background in issues of domestic violence, Aboriginal culture, or intergenerational trauma. Instead of fostering opportunities to build trust, clients may be assigned to a different facilitator for each phase of the program. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

---Unanimous consent granted

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies. Further, facilitators must not have pre-existing professional relationships with clients. That virtually eliminates the ability of the current provider, as well as many of the others in the community, to participate in the program.

These are just a few of the issues that have been raised, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the Minister, to see if these concerns are just the result of a poorly written RFP, or if A New Day is really "A Completely Different Day." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to welcome Ms. Margaret Nokšana, who is the chaperone for the two pages from Sachs Harbour. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize Jonathan Beland, who is our page from Range Lake in the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. I, too, would like to recognize Marie Adele Football, here with us. She is a chaperone for our Wekweeti pages. Thank you for being here. Masi. Those who we may have missed, welcome to our Chamber. It is always great to have an audience. Masi. Item 6, acknowledgements. Item 7, oral questions. Member for Nunakput.

Oral Questions

QUESTION 719-18(2): INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Transportation. Mr. Speaker, earlier I had talked about the completion of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, and my first question to the Minister is: what work remains to be done on the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway before it is considered complete? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The contractors are working out there right now. They have 3.5 kilometres of embankment that they had to finish in the centre section of the highway. With that work, there are roughly 147,000 cubic metres of material that will be put in place to finish up those 3.5 kilometres. They had eight culverts to finish up, and two bridges, and all that work is nearing completion this winter. Moving on into the summer, operations have surfacing gravel, which will include crushing, stockpiling, and laying out the gravel, then finishing up the guard rails, signage, and such for the final touches. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response and the update. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister highlight the events that are being planned to celebrate the opening of the highway?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I have mentioned before in the House in one of my Minister's statements, there are three different celebrations going forward this year. The first one will be highlighting the completion of the Tuktoyaktuk ice road, which will be held on April 21st, and then there will be the grand opening of the highway on November 15th, the official opening of the highway, and then the final event would be in the summer of July 2018, which will be another opening, focusing on marketing travellers of the region on the highway.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: I appreciate the response. The Minister mentioned celebrations on April 21st and also the grand opening November 15th and the opening in July 2018. Mr. Speaker, I'm curious to know: how much will the territorial and federal governments contribute to opening ceremonies for the highway?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Department of Transportation has a budget for the grand opening in November, and the other two are going to be through sources funded through other allocations and different departments, including, probably, the federal government.

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

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the direction. Mr. Speaker, my final question for the Minister is: what is the government doing to commemorate the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk winter road and the people with expertise that went into this annual construction and maintenance? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the department is going to be participating in that celebration, closing the final ice road. We will be doing a screening on a documentary called "The End of an Ice Age," which will be depicting the history of the ice road and its transition to an all-season road.

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

QUESTION 720-18(2):
SOUTHERN TREATMENT SERVICES AND
COSTS

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services in relation to treatment facilities down south. I'm not sure if the Minister would be allowed to answer this question, but I'm wondering what the cost is for an individual going to one of the four treatment centres, the average or anything that kind of gives me a feel for what the costs would be for us to treat one individual for a full program in the treatment centres down in Alberta and British Columbia? Thank you.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I could get the Member some costs on the average cost for an individual who attends treatment. I don't have that information at my fingertips, but I can tell the Member that the cost that we pay to individual treatment facilities is

different between the different facilities. We have contracted amounts. We pay a per-day rate that ranges anywhere from \$160 per day to \$450 a day, depending on the institution or the facility that an individual is attending. Those are contracted amounts based on the range and scope of programming that each of the facilities provide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. BEAULIEU: One of the issues for long-term treatment where individuals may be taking various phases is that they're away from the NWT for long periods of time. I wonder if the Minister could tell me how individuals are covered insofar as medical or dental go while they're in treatment?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Residents of the Northwest Territories are Canadian citizens, so if they're travelling south to a treatment facility they are still able to get medical services in the jurisdiction of the province that they are receiving their services. We have reciprocal billing agreements with all the provinces and territories, so if our resident goes and receives health services there, we have a billing mechanism.

Not all residents of the Northwest Territories receive dental services from the Government of the Northwest Territories. We do have some extended health benefits for seniors and Metis that cover some range of dental services, and Indigenous residents are covered by NIHB for dental services. So the resident would have to utilize the dental services in the province that they're attending and they would have to seek billing through their insurance provider, and that could be your extended health benefits.

MR. BEAULIEU: Individuals who go to treatment often are going because of obvious issues. Many of them have no employment at the time they leave to finally go down to get treatment. I'm wondering if the Minister could tell me if there are any additional supports available for individuals in treatment; and by additional supports I mean things like individuals who are trying to get off heavy drugs and alcohol who smoke but don't have cigarettes and have no support to purchase cigarettes, or don't have any money to buy toiletries, and so on. I was wondering if the Minister could tell me if there is any of that type of support available from our government?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: The contracts that we have with the southern facilities basically cover treatment costs as well as we cover travel costs to get our residents to and from these facilities, and we also have per diem costs that cover things like the food they eat and provide with them a warm, safe place to sleep, but as far as incidentals, the ability or the cash to buy cigarettes or other things, we don't provide that support to residents who are travelling south. They would either have to have

other means, family supports, or, if they are eligible for or are on income support, they have a mechanism to seek some money through that avenue. They would have to talk to their income support officer to see what they are eligible for, and it is different depending on which community they're coming from, the amount that they might be able to receive, but they could use that as an avenue.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know it's very uncomfortable to ask the government to buy someone cigarettes, but there are reasons for me asking. I wonder if the Minister could commit to, not cigarettes, but commit to allowing some allowance for individuals to get at least basic toiletries, toothpaste and things like that, for individuals who are completely indigent and have no supports left in the Northwest Territories that they could draw upon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the honourable Member took cigarettes off the list. When it comes to things like toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, this is certainly something that I'm willing to look at and see how we might be able to roll those in to ensure that residents who don't have access to those materials or those products can gain access while they're in the treatment facilities. So I'll certainly commit to looking at that, Mr. Speaker, but once again, not cigarettes.

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

QUESTION 721-18(2):
FORT PROVIDENCE YOUTH CENTRE
PROPOSAL

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier I talked about the need for a youth centre, so my questions are for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Fort Providence youth have identified a need for expanded youth centre services, and other community members are interested in making that dream a reality. How can community stakeholders make application to the Youth Centres Initiative? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is more than willing to support any community that is looking at accessing any of our programs, so if the MLA would want, we would be willing to send a regional representative in to

help them actually fill in the application. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. NADLI: I'd like to thank the Minister for her commitment in terms of offering this staff member from another community to work with these local budding leaders. Apart from that, what other youth programs might stakeholders explore to access funds or other support for their youth centre vision?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has a variety of programs there, too, with the goal of supporting youth because we recognize that providing supports to youth is important for not only physical activity but also for mental wellness. So we have other initiatives such as the Children and Youth Resiliency Program that can provide supports, too. I am just speaking from what we have as a department, but I can commit to actually having the department work further with the Member if he would like to see if there are other external sources of support to support a youth centre in his community.

MR. NADLI: Basically, these are questions that these students have followed up, so I am kind of expressing on their behalf. It may sound naive, but they have to be asked. Residents might be confused by some programs sticking with MACA while we have a separate role for the Minister Responsible for Youth. How will the Minister work with the Minister Responsible for Youth to coordinate services for questions and proposals like this, and make sure Northerners' efforts and dollars are invested efficiently?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: The departments right across of the Government of the Northwest Territories make a serious effort to work together. We have a Deputy Ministers Committee that our deputy ministers sit on. The deputy minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, as well as the deputy minister of the Youth, and Education, Culture and Employment. As Ministers, we also have a social committee that we all sit on that both Ministers take part in, and we have actually met with the Minister of Youth to update him on our programs. As any programs change, we will let the Youth Minister know.

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

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is directed mostly to the Minister, and an opportunity for her to express, perhaps, in her wise wisdom in terms of any advice that she can offer these students to move the concept of a youth centre into reality. Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the Member for calling me wise and having wisdom. Sometimes, I wonder, as I age.

Other resources that are available to youth is not an answer I can give at this point. It would take some thought, but I will commit to actually sitting with the Member if he wishes and actually looking at other ways that the community can see this vision actualize.

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

QUESTION 722-18(2):
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AGRICULTURE
STRATEGY

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment. My Member's statement there, I said there are no measurable targets or goals in the NWT Agricultural Strategy or the action plan. Can the Minister explain why there are no measurable targets in the strategy and plan? I'll give a couple of examples; an increase in agricultural production by 50 per cent in five years, or completion of food security plans for all communities within five years. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The broad overall objectives, the one thing we've got to remember: this is our very first Agricultural Strategy in the Northwest Territories. What we are trying to do with this strategy, what other people have done in 20 years, we are trying to do it in 10 years. It was part of the mandate to try to grow the agriculture sector. We see it as an economic development agenda. We have heard that in community engagements, along with all these other things that are implemented within the strategy. This is a blueprint of what the communities, the growers, the farm people in the Northwest Territories have said they want, that outlines actions that must be taken, and investments that we must make into the strategy moving forward, and over time, we hope to implement the strategy that will advance these commitments that we have made in cost of living, fostering healthy families, and enhancing capacity, youth programs for youth, so these are many things that we put forward along with all the residents in the NWT that have participated in it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I thank the Minister for those aspirational statements, but I guess I'm looking for something measurable. I will give him another chance here. There are no cost estimates for any of

the activities identified in the action plan attached to the strategy and, of course, there are no new funds identified in the 2017-18 budget for implementation of the strategy. Can the Minister tell us whether we have to wait another year to find the money and start some of these activities?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I said, this is a high-level strategy designed to encourage the sector to grow and move forward. There are costs to some of these action items that we see in the strategy. The department is presently working on them and calculating what those are going to cost moving forward. At present, we work with the federal government and the Growing Forward partnership with \$1.2 million annually. We are trying to increase that. When we were down with our engagement with the federal government, I had a chance to meet with the Minister of Agriculture, and discuss this initiative moving forward, and I have also invited him to the Northwest Territories to have a look at our agriculture going forward. I talked to him about Gameti, the NFTI farm and initiatives like that, so we are hoping to be able to leverage some federal dollars moving forward. The GNWT has an agricultural working group within the departments, and we will help try to figure out how we can leverage dollars from all the departments to make this work.

MR. O'REILLY: Once again, thanks to the Minister for that response. I still have some carrots in my fridge, and I am happy to share them with the Minister, and he can pass them onto the Federal Minister as well. I could not find anything in the strategy about research and development into northern agricultural techniques and technology, or circumpolar cooperation or partnerships. Can the Minister tell me why research and development and circumpolar cooperation and partnerships are not found in the agricultural strategy?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Like I said, what has taken everyone 20 years to do, we want to do it in 10 years. In particular, I want to speak about the Yukon Government. We have engaged with them. Their strategy is quite a bit ahead of us. As most people know here, they have a robust agricultural industry in the Yukon, so we have engaged with them. We are learning from their best practices and experiences, so we are drawing on a lot of that. Plus, we have also sent representatives from the department recently to the circumpolar agricultural conference that was held in Iceland, and we want to continue to build on that partnership and relationship moving this forward.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the Minister. I am going to give him a few more

carrots now. I think we are heading on the right track, but one of the issues that has been on the books for years is the availability of agricultural land. What process is the Minister going to action right now to identify and make available more land for agricultural purposes? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, ITI cannot do this thing alone. We are working with Health and Department of Lands. In this particular question, the Department of Lands is a key department on moving this whole strategy forward. We are working with Lands on this issue. I believe they informed committee on a lot of the issues on moving forward with the regulations and stuff with that, and we will continue to work with that and be the partners with Lands, how we are going to figure this out to access more land for agriculture in the Northwest Territories.

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

QUESTION 723-18(2):
SINGLE WINDOW SERVICE CENTRES

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the Premier spoke about Single Window Service Centre Pilot Project with Service Canada. Mr. Speaker, today I will have some questions regarding the statement. With the new duties, does this increase the government service workers' workload and hours of work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government services officers record all service contacts they have with community members, and we are closely monitoring the number of service requests in each of the pilot Service Canada partnership communities. We are not expecting a large increase because, prior to this arrangement, most of the GSOs were handling a lot of Service Canada requests, and I believe the smaller communities average about five requests in any work day. If we do notice an increase in workload, we are prepared to look at extending our service hours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Premier for that answer. It is great that we are tracking stuff. Do not get me wrong. This is a really great program. I think it is doing what it is supposed to be doing in the small communities. Does the federal government provide additional funds for the cost to run these three positions and offices because of the new duties?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: For these three pilot programs, the federal government is operating on a

fee-for-service basis. For the six programs that we deliver on for the GSOs, they are paying us an average of \$25 per fee, so at the end of the pilot program we will evaluate the number of services and evaluate and determine the bill that was sent to Service Canada.

MR. THOMPSON: I thank the Premier for that answer. It is just a basic cost service approach, which is really good. With this being a 12-month pilot project, has the GNWT and the federal government developed an evaluation to see if this project is successful?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The government services officers and the three pilot Service Canada communities are recording all of their contacts, so after 12 months, we will sit down and evaluate all of the requests for the six program areas, and we will determine where we go, whether we go forward or not.

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

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Premier for his answer. I am actually very happy to hear that we are tracking this. This is a very good tool to help. When this pilot project is successful, and I think it will be successful, do the GNWT and the federal government plan to extend these services to other communities with GSOs in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is our longer-term goal to extend all of these services to all of the 21 communities that have GSO services. After this pilot project, we will evaluate it and we are hoping to extend it, even though, for the other committees that have GSOs, we continue to provide services to federal government programs. We are hoping that we will be able to expand it to all of the GSO communities.

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

QUESTION 724-18(2):
FUNDING FOR APPRENTICESHIP AND TRADES
OPPORTUNITIES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today, I spoke about apprenticeships, and I take note that the Minister also spoke about a new apprenticeship strategy that the department will be unveiling shortly, with both friends on the systemic committee and social development. Today, I would like to know a bit more about that apprenticeship strategy, specifically if the Minister can share: is there a financial commitment to support any parts of that strategy so we can get some real, tangible results by investing in our trades? Thank you.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do have a draft strategy moving forward that we are going to be sharing with the standing committee on developments. It entails a lot of items, but before we can table it in the House and really submit information, we have to go before a standing committee, and I encourage the Member to come to that presentation when we do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: I, of course, represent the business community that makes frequent use of trades. I have laid out some of the good work the department is doing already. I wonder if the department spoke with the people making use of this program and agrees that their businesses are unsupported, or not supported as much as they could be. I clock that at 25 per cent capacity of what they get. Does the Minister agree that, by providing more financial resources, we could get more people into the trades and more apprenticeships going with these businesses?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The strategy that we have developed is going to work on a strategy to improve training, certification, employment opportunities in skilled trades, as well as occupations in the Northwest Territories. Yes, we did go out and do our consultations. We did a bunch of one-on-one interviews; surveys with certified journeypersons who are currently working in trades; we have spoken with current apprentices, employers, business and industries that have developed into the strategies that we are going to be presenting to the standing committee.

MR. TESTART: One thing I have heard is that, if the funding followed the apprentice and was paid to the employer, it would be a more flexible program and you could have apprentices shifting employment to various things. For example, if they worked in the mine and came into Yellowknife or Hay River and worked in a manufacturing facility, they could still retain the benefits of government-funded apprenticeships but be able to spread that benefit across the Territories. Does the Minister support that approach, and can he share that detail, if it is included in the strategy?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, those are some of the things that we have been hearing as we were going out doing our consultation, and we will share that detail when we go before standing committee.

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

QUESTION 725-18(2):
NEW GENERATORS FOR YELLOWKNIFE
POWER PLANT

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week, I had some questions for the Minister responsible for the Power Corporation with regard to the delayed generators purchased out of California. Today, I am inclined to ask the Minister some questions about the Power Corporation's procurement policies. I am wondering, to start, if the Minister can indicate: when the Power Corporation receives bids or proposals for goods and services, what steps are taken to ensure that the bidder is reliable and qualified? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for NWT Power Corporation.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, the Power Corporation, as most government operations, does have a procurement policy. I can't speak to what steps were taken to ascertain, in the instant case, the qualities of the bidders. I do know, from what I have read, that they all were well-known bidders in this area, so I assume the Power Corporation took the regular steps in determining that when they reviewed the bids. I don't have any specific knowledge as to the steps that were taken in this specific case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. VANTHUYNE: That leads to my next question. When a bidder proposal is evaluated, sometimes it is not uncommon with government procurement that we could find a bidder to be what we call "non-responsive." That means that they somehow didn't fulfill the obligations of the bid. Another aspect that is sometimes brought into question is whether the bidder is what is called "non-responsible" and unlikely to work out. Maybe, in this instance, it is almost too good to be true. What does the Power Corporation do to determine if a bid proposal is responsible or not?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I imagine that evaluation is done at the time any bid is received. They could certainly look at whether it had past history with this bidder, how the potential bidder had done in other bids, and how they had done with other contractors. I have no idea what exact steps were taken in this case, but I imagine those steps would have been taken.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Just to be clear, can the Minister indicate that the Power Corporation does, in fact, follow GNWT procurement policies, or do they have their own procurement policies?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: The Northwest Territories Power Corporation does have its own purchasing policy. I don't imagine it is very different from that of the government.

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

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To that extent, then, there are probably opportunities or times when certain contracts are not going to be put out for public offering. Can the Minister describe if, in fact, the Power Corporation puts all of its contracts and services out for public offering, or are there circumstances where the Power Corporation sole-sources contracts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That information is, in fact, contained in the purchasing policy. The determination as to whether it will go out to the broad public or to sole-source is determined by a series of factors, including price. I know there is a sole-source contract awarded that would depend on factors such as emergency and other factors. There is a policy which the Power Corporation follows.

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

QUESTION 726-18(2):
HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT ASSESSMENT
PRACTICES

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. What premedical diagnosis policy is in place for patients coming into the average community health centre, for example? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am not 100 per cent sure that I understand the question. I am not sure what a premedical diagnosis would be. When it comes to residents of the Northwest Territories in the small communities attending a health centre, we have a number of standing orders that the nurses in the communities utilize when assessing an individual trying to determine what, if anything, is wrong with them. We also have a number of standing programs that are available in each of our health centre, Well Man, Well Woman, Well Baby, and there are some pretty defined guidelines and the types of things that the nurses are looking for when those residents come to those particular programs. We also have the codes of practice for nurses as outlined by the individual licensing bodies which outline the practice and the types of things that the RNs can do. There are a number of protocols, standing orders, and procedures that are used by our practitioners when assessing an individual. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. MCNEELY: I welcome the response from the Minister. My next question on that phase of medical checkup, if you want to call it, on the principle of quality control is: is this practice being monitored on an appointment-by-appointment case at the end of the month?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Prior to moving to a single authority in the Northwest Territories, we used different protocols by regions and communities on how things were monitored and assessed. We now have 32 performance indicators that we utilize in the Northwest Territories and collect on a regular basis. That information helps make some evidence-based decisions moving forward. We are continually trying to enhance the monitoring that we are doing of the services and program delivery to make sure that they meet the needs of our residents, and we will continue to move forward. I am happy to sit down with the Member and go through his concerns and questions to see if we can focus in on exactly the area he is looking for.

MR. MCNEELY: I welcome the Minister's invitation. As we all know, we live in a small area and communication is really fast, faster than RC's fibre link for example.

---Laughter

The fearful word we are commonly hearing now, and I have experienced it quite frequently on requests for medical services, is the word cancer. In some cases, the medical staff are saying, "Here is a jar of Tylenol. Go home and come back later" kind of thing, just to summarize it up. Later on, as tests are --

MR. SPEAKER: What is your question, Member for Sahtu?

MR. MCNEELY: I thought I was at number 5. Excuse me. Yes, I welcome the invitation from the Minister. As part of the invitation, would he provide some information on the cancer proceedings on a preliminary diagnostic assessment?

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: As I indicated, as we are moving forward and rolling out the single authority here in the Northwest Territories, we are trying to improve the protocols and standing orders that we have in all of our health centres. We also have a cancer strategy -- I think the Member is talking specifically about that -- that outlined some of the services that we provide, but also some of the standard testing that we do in cases where cancer may be suspected. I am happy to sit down with the Member and go through some of the protocols that we have so that he will understand what service are being offered both at the front

lines in communities but also all the way through the system to our territorial hospital here in Stanton.

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

QUESTION 727-18(2):
IMPACTS OF JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN ON
OTHER PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my Member's statement, I spoke about parents who want to maintain the current range of choices for early childhood development and I asked the Minister in writing to provide an analysis of how the implementation of JK will accommodate the existing programs. Unfortunately, I didn't get an answer. My question is: can the Minister say whether this analysis has ever been done, and if not, will he undertake it? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through our program, we run a lot of subsidy programs with our early childhood partners. As for the analysis, I would have to check with the department to see if something has been done. In terms of moving JK forward, this government has committed to fully funding junior kindergarten, and it was agreed on by this House when we passed the budget earlier this week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate the Minister's commitment to check with the department to see whether there has ever been an analysis done about the financial viability of the programs. It is my understanding that ECE offers a subsidy to existing programs like Montessori because they meet the department's licensing requirements. Does the Minister believe his department has any responsibility to ensure these programs remain viable?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Providing early childhood quality programs and services throughout the Northwest Territories is a mandate of this government. On October 1, 2016, we made a commitment to all early childhood providers across the Northwest Territories by making changes to our early childhood programs, the way we fund them. I also want to assure to the Member, as well as families with four-year-olds, that JK is an option for families and a choice for families where they want to have their four-year-olds get the early childhood program services that they need.

MS. GREEN: It is my understanding that ECE increased its subsidy for the first time in eight years last fall, but that no further increases are being planned, and yet these programs are going to lose

their four-year-olds, or some of them, come this fall. How is the Minister going to offset the loss of those children in the fee-based programs?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I can't look into the future and say how many students are going to be in early childhood programs throughout Yellowknife and our regional centres. We are dealing with what we need to do today. We want to provide services to all families across the Northwest Territories, give families in Yellowknife, in Hay River, in Inuvik, the same options and opportunities that we have in our small communities by providing quality early childhood programming through junior kindergarten in the schools.

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

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister's plan is going to provide the lowest common denominator of early childhood education, where there will only be junior kindergarten and plain daycare. An alternative to this would be to provide a subsidy for each child of four years of age rather than to a whole program. I asked him if he would examine this option, which on the face of it would save a lot of money -- it is less than half the cost of having a child in a school classroom -- and report on his research, but I haven't heard back. Does this research exist? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister responsible for Public Education, we have to provide the same programs and services to all communities across the Northwest Territories. As I mentioned, I can't look into the future and see where parents are going to put their children in terms of early childhood programming. What we are doing is we are addressing the needs of four-year-olds right across the territory, and we are going to continue to do that.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

QUESTION 728-18(2):
A NEW DAY PROGRAM REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far as the Department of Justice is concerned, the only benefit from the A New Day program has been to the 12 men who have completed the program start to finish. The department gives no weight to the benefits to the men who didn't graduate but who will attest that they can better control their anger and that they've slowed their drinking and that their lives are just generally better after participating in the program. It doesn't consider the fact that A New Day is the only program available in remand. So

what the department has done is structure the RFP to eliminate all these qualities and really sterilize it making it more palatable to government.

So my first question. The first point of contact for the program will be a GNWT coordinator. I said that accessibility is one of the strengths of the current program, so I'm interested to find out: where will this coordinator be located? Is it in the courthouse? Do people have to go to the courthouse to sign up for the program now? How will that initial contact take place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can advise this House that the coordinator will be located in GNWT offices. I don't think an actual address has yet to be determined; however, we did hear from contractors during the evaluation of this program that the administrative work was a burden, and for that reason it was decided to have a GNWT coordinator so that burden would be lifted from the deliverers of the program. Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: So far, it's not looking good. The evaluation of the program which we eagerly awaited last sitting states that probation services were particularly emphatic about the usefulness of the program and the importance of it. However, the RFP appears to indicate that the program will not accept referrals from outside agencies like Probation Services. Is this in fact the case?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I'm not absolutely sure about that. My impression would be that they would be accepting referrals from outside agencies, but I will look into that and get back to the Member opposite.

MR. SIMPSON: Oh for two. The program currently incorporates traditional knowledge and elders. Will there be a similar cultural component to this program? Because, again, the RFP is silent on this.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I can advise that the coordinator will actively support facilitators to include cultural supports in the delivery of the program, including connection with elders.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Hay River North.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A very bureaucratic answer. It's a ball. Two strikes and a ball; how about that?

---Laughter

The RFP is virtually silent as to what the new program will look like. It states that the information on the model of the long-term program is attached in Schedule A, but all I can find is a blank page that

says "Appendix A" at the top. So can the Minister commit to immediately making the details of this program public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I've not had an opportunity to review the request for proposals. I am confident, however, that all the necessary information is in the request for proposals. I have a competent staff; they spent considerable amount of time preparing this and I am content that the RFP does set out what is required by potential contractors.

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

QUESTION 729-18(2): GNWT PROCUREMENT PRACTICES

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, government procurement often comes up in my discussions with constituents, and particularly in supporting our economy, and our government has recognized that government procurement is an important driver. So now that the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment also has the responsibility for the Department of Transportation, soon to be the Department of Infrastructure, all under one roof will he commit to a comprehensive procurement reform for the Northwest Territories that involves stakeholders and creates a better system of government procurement? Thank you

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe I need to commit to that because I believe we have a robust system that's in place and procurement is well-documented in the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. TESTART: I think some business people might disagree, and certainly it's good but that doesn't mean it stops there. Good is the enemy of great, and I think we deserve a world-class procurement system.

So will the Minister commit to establishing a committee of businesspeople and procurement experts to evaluate objectively our procurement system here in the Northwest Territories?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I've said, I believe we have a robust, great procurement system in the Northwest Territories. As long as I've been the Minister, I have not had any complaints around the procurement or the process in the Northwest Territories and I will not commit to that.

MR. TESTART: Can the Minister tell us what is the complaint process for procurement in the Northwest

Territories? How do people complain about our procurement system?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: We're a small territory. Like everybody else in the Northwest Territories, if they have a complaint they either go to their MLA or go directly to the Minister.

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

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By the same token, perhaps my constituents aren't complaining directly to the Minister because they don't feel like they can. So will the Minister commit to establishing an arm's-length body that can properly assess whether or not our procurement system is maximizing the benefits it delivers to our economy and to Northerners? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how many creative ways I've got to say this. I said I believe our system is fine, it's working. The latest thing I can remember on the procurement side of things is we heard from businesses and industries in the Northwest Territories when we raised the sole-source amount from \$5,000 to \$25,000; but, like I said, I haven't had any complaints since I've been the Minister of Public Works.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Item 8, written questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to return to item number 5 on the order paper. Thank you.

---Unanimous consent granted

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery (Reversion)

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, we have been joined by several members of the Family Violence Coalition of the NWT, including David Wasylciw, Sami Thomas, Annemieke Mulders and Lyda Fuller. I'd like to welcome them to the House to hear our discussions. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to recognize Lyda Fuller; she's a constituent of mine. She is also the Executive Director of the Yellowknife YWCA. Welcome to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Item 8, written questions. Item 9, returns to written questions. Item 10, replies to

Commissioner's opening address. Item 11, Petitions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

Petitions

PETITION 7-18(2): FUNDING FOR JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN AND OTHER OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of funding for junior kindergarten and other options for families.

Mr. Speaker, the petition contains 184 electronic signatures of Northwest Territories residents and, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners request that the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment provide flexible, real choices for parents of four-year-olds by ensuring that all options for children are properly funded and that the money follows the child in whatever option is chosen. The petitioners also ask the Minister to fully fund junior kindergarten and other options so there are no negative impacts on the rest of the Northwest Territories' education system. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Petitions. Item 12, reports of standing and special committees. Item 13, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 14, tabling of documents. Item 15, notices of motion. Item 16, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 17, motions. Member for Kam Lake.

Motions

MOTION 32-18(2): REFERRAL OF PETITION 6-18(2): ELIMINATION OF TIME CHANGE IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, CARRIED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly identified a number of priority actions including fostering healthy families by focusing on wellness prevention and improved nutrition as well as creating opportunities for healthy lifestyles and community leadership for youth;

AND WHEREAS Petition 6-18(2): Elimination of time change in the Northwest Territories was presented to the House on Tuesday, March 7, 2017, and contained over 500 electronic signatures of territorial residents;

AND WHEREAS academic research has demonstrated that there may be negative effects on both the mind and body associated with changes to and from Daylight Savings Time;

AND WHEREAS the study and analysis of issues related to the bi-annual daylight time changes can be addressed in greater detail by a committee of this Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS regulations to address any variance from Mountain Standard Time to allow for the use of Daylight Savings Time are set in accordance with terms contained in the Interpretation Act;

AND WHEREAS the Interpretation Act is administered by the Department of Justice, which is one of the departments considered by the Standing Committee on Social Development;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife North, that the Assembly refer Petition 6-18(2): Elimination of Time Change in the Northwest Territories to the Standing Committee on Social Development for a comprehensive review and that the standing committee report back to this Assembly at their earliest opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Petition 6-18(2) is now referred to standing committee. Masi. 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, Committee Report 7-18(2), Committee Report 9-18(2).

Before I move on, I'd like to recognize Professor Graham White of the University of Toronto who is here with us today. He is one of the most well-known scholars of our consensus-style government and a friend to the North. Welcome. Masi.

---Applause

At this time, Member for Hay River North taking the Chair.

Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will 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 Committee Report 7-18(2), Report on the Review of

Members' Conduct Guidelines. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. Does committee agree?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. We will consider the document after a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I will call committee of the Whole back to order. Committee, we have agreed to consider Committee Report 7-18(2), Report on the Review of Members' Conduct Guidelines. I will turn to the chair of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for opening comments. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On February 28, 2017, the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures presented its Report on the Review of Member's Conduct Guidelines titled "You Are Standing for Your People." The report contained six recommendations to strengthen the standards of conduct for both candidates and Members of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly and increase Members' accountability to the public.

The committee advises changes to the Elections and Plebiscites Act, changes to the Executive Council and Legislative Assembly Act, a new oath of office, a more enforceable code of conduct, expansion of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner's duties to include matters of conduct and ethics, and a public review of the conflict of interest provisions in the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act.

Our in-depth review has taken over a year to complete. It included research on the strengths and weaknesses of our current system of government and elections by comparison with other jurisdictions in light of our history and social conditions. We canvassed relevant national, territorial, and municipal legislation. Much of this work was discussed in the committee's interim report tabled in October 2016.

A public discussion paper was released before public hearings were held in Hay River, Inuvik, and Yellowknife in November and December 2016. The committee benefited from very insightful public input. This stimulated additional research the committee required to fully consider public submissions and options for improving our standards of conduct and accountability. Of course, the committee worked closely with the law clerk to ensure that recommended changes to the

legislation are feasible and practical from a legal perspective.

The committee believes that, by adopting its six recommendations, our Assembly will strengthen our system of consensus government and set enforceable standards of conduct as good or better than any in Canada. Most importantly, these recommendations are truly made-in-the-North and inspired by the needs and aspirations of our territory.

We have before us today a tremendous opportunity for positive change. Committee members thank everyone who participated in its public hearings on this matter and all who submitted written comments. Your advice was vital in guiding the report we will discuss today. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I would like to introduce Deputy Law Clerk Alyssa Holland. Any legal questions that may arise, you may direct them to her through me. I will now open up the floor to general comments on Committee Report 7-18(2). Do we have general comments? Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As this is an important matter for the Legislative Assembly, the people of the Northwest Territories, and all Members including those in Cabinet, for that reason I wish to advise that the Executive Council will have a free vote on these motions. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier. Do we have any further opening comments? Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just want to go back to the point at which this motion was passed and sent to the committee on rules and procedures. We had not been here long enough to find the washrooms and most of us had come in as brand new Members following an unprecedented turnover of incumbent MLAs.

What I and others came in on was a wave of hope for change and increased accountability. There was a feeling among people in the electorate that people in this room were taking too much for granted in terms of their privilege and their position and that it was time for us to re-examine that and consider whether our code of conduct was effective in managing our conduct. That was the context for us taking this job on.

What we have done through the comprehensive deliberations that my colleague, the honourable Member for Frame Lake, described is to strengthen the code of conduct with recommendations that will make it more meaningful and more enforceable. It also provides clarity around measures that are not

clear at this time, or which could be strengthened if they were more clear. In other cases, we made recommendations to make the provisions of the code of conduct more specific so that Members are left not only to their own devices to interpret how they should behave, but to have specific guidance available to them. It also closes some holes that were opened by Members in previous Assemblies. A couple of recommendations deal with historic problems. They don't revisit these historic problems, but they acknowledge that they were there and they make recommendations to prevent them from reoccurring.

In short, Mr. Chair, it is my interpretation that we are taking steps to move this House from a collection of old boys who operate according to their own standards and to professionalize the whole enterprise and to bring the standard of conduct up to that which is regulated and enjoyed in other professions. There is going to be, if we adopt these recommendations, an end to any "nudge, nudge, wink, wink, you don't say about this, and I won't say about that." It will make our conduct more professional and, most importantly to me and to the people who elected me, more accountable. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Do I have any further opening comments? Seeing none. Mr. O'Reilly.

COMMITTEE MOTION 90-18(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2), STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS'
CONDUCT GUIDELINES – AMENDMENT OF
ELECTIONS AND PLEBISCITES ACT TO
PROVIDE COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OF
CONDUCT,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just for those that are listening or watching, what we are going to do is take the recommendations from the committee report and turn them into motions one by one. The committee motion is as follows, Mr. Chair: I move that this Assembly recommends that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to provide that, during the election period, candidates declare compliance with a code of conduct including the duties to abide by the laws of the Northwest Territories and Canada; to conduct his/herself with honesty, integrity, and respect for others; and to refrain from actions that would, upon election, create or be perceived to create a conflict of interest as set out in Section 74 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe this motion in particular will be hopefully non-contentious. We did have brought to the attention of the committee by one of the individuals who made the submission of a situation where, in the past, an individual had been elected, they had not yet been sworn in as an MLA, and there were some actions taken by that individual that were questioned in terms of the conduct. What we found was that the conduct guidelines did not apply to anyone who is a Member-elect until they are actually sworn in. So, the Committee turned its mind to this issue of what happens during this period of a gap. What we did was, we came up with the recommendation that you see, so that anybody who intends to be in Cabinet -- sorry, not into Cabinet, but a candidate -- wishful thinking on my part, perhaps. Anybody who would like to serve as a candidate would agree that they would abide by the same code of conduct as someone who would serve, so it would take it right back to an individual who would like to indicate that they would be prepared to serve as a candidate.

That is what the goal of this first motion is, is to fill in that gap period, and I believe that all Members should support this. I think it should not be a contentious matter. We just want to make sure that candidates, Members-elect, will hold themselves to the same sort of standards that sitting MLA would then. I would look forward to my colleagues to vote in favour of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I neglected to indicate that I will be seeking recorded votes for each of the motions, please. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion? The question has been called. Mr. O'Reilly, would you conclude debate of the motion?

MR. O'REILLY: Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE: (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Green, Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Moses, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Vanthuyne, Mr. Testart, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please

stand. Results are 16 in favour; zero opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 91-18(2): COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2), STANDING COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES' REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS' CONDUCT GUIDELINES – FIVE-YEAR LIMIT ON ELIGIBILITY FOR CANDIDACY, DEFEATED

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to move onto the second motion, which is the second recommendation from the Committee.

I move that this Assembly recommend that the Elections and Plebiscites Act be amended to include a five-year limit on eligibility for candidacy for anyone convicted of an offence of violence or threats of violence under the Criminal Code of Canada and who has not received a pardon or record suspension; and where the offence was committed against a person over whom the accused was determined by the presiding judge to be in a position of trust, authority, or intimacy; and, if applicable, that the limitation not apply to offences committed before the coming-into-force date of this amendment; and that a consequential amendment of Section 6 of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act ensure consistency of qualification of sitting Members and candidates. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let us be honest here. This is the one recommendation or motion that is likely to spur quite a bit of discussion and debate, and I look forward to that. I think it is very important that all Members speak on this issue so that their views are known, and we know where everybody stands.

I would like to start by going back to the original referral motion and cast our mind back to December 17, 2015. This is shortly after we were all elected. The very first motion that we passed in this House is we wanted to refer this issue to Members' conduct to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures. This was the very first piece of business that we conducted in this House, and it is a very important one. It was fresh on everybody's mind at the time, and what was asked was that the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures was asked to conduct a comprehensive and public review, including a thorough examination of

conduct guidelines from other jurisdictions, both parliamentary and non-parliamentary organizations, all relevant legislation, and the rules of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories Committee report back in the fall sitting of 2016.

We did do that. We had an interim report that highlighted many of the issues that had been brought to our attention through our research. Then we went out on the road and held public consultations with regard to those issues that were highlighted in a discussion paper as well. We received written submissions. We held three public hearings in Inuvik, Hay River, and Yellowknife, and we had lots of very careful, crafted submissions to us. As I earlier stated, I thanked all of the parties that participated in the process.

This was a long process for the committee as well, and I do want to commend all the committee members. We have been working on this for over a year, and it has come to a head today, and I look forward to the debate and discussion.

I would like to start by what, I think, the committee heard, and I do not think any of the committee members are going to disagree in any way that there is an expectation out there that Members of this House and those that would like to become Members of this House, there is an expectation of a higher standard for what we do and how we behave. I think that was universal from everybody that we heard from.

Now, people were varied in how best to do that. What we heard was that a variety of positions ranging from leave it basically to the electorate to decide, right through to anybody who has a criminal conviction should not be allowed to run ever again. That was sort of the range of opinion that we had presented to us in terms of eligibility for becoming a candidate.

Now, I think it is also fair to say that we did have some individuals talk to us to say, you know, it is common practice if you would like to become a security guard, a bylaw officer, a school bus driver, a substitute teacher, a childcare worker, even a volunteer in sports, that you have to have a criminal records check. If there is something on there, maybe even a record of non-conviction, that you may not get the job. You may not have the opportunity to serve as a volunteer.

We did have people say to us: why is it that somebody can become an MLA without that sort of criminal records check? Anyways, it was an interesting question that was posed to us. Now, I guess I would like to say that we fully understand that there is a basic Charter right to run for public office, and that any attempt to restrict that has to be very, very carefully considered. It has to be

justifiable. It has to be narrow, and we did seek the advice of the law clerk as we worked our way through that. I am glad the law clerk is here in the Chamber with us, and if there are any questions, I am sure she will be delighted to help us work our way through that.

I think it is fair to say that one of the biggest issues that we heard was concern around the epidemic of family violence that we have here in the Northwest Territories. The statistics are quite plain and clear. They are laid out in our report. Family violence rates here in the Northwest Territories are nine times the Canadian average. I am not going to go on about those, but some of the submissions that we received wanted to take us into a direction of -- well, as I said earlier, all of the submissions that we received, wanted to ensure that there was a higher standard of behaviour, higher standard of conduct for us all to make sure that politicians are in a position of trust, and there's public confidence on what we do and how we behave.

The committee looked at this issue very carefully, and we decided to help us show leadership to address this issue of the epidemic of family violence. We recommended that there should be a restriction in terms of eligibility, but it is a very narrowly defined restriction and you have to have been convicted of a Criminal Code offence that involves violence or threat of violence. If you've had a pardon this would not apply to you, but most importantly, it's a requirement in the Criminal Code that if you've been convicted of a crime of violence or threat of violence the presiding judge has to determine whether an individual was in a position of trust, authority or intimacy. So that's how the Criminal Code system works and there has to be determination about those things.

The majority of the committee members felt that this was reasonable and justifiable in terms of Charter rights to put this forward, and we do have other jurisdictions in Canada where this is the case. Nunavut has legislation, its Elections Act, that provides for something similar, and Nova Scotia as well. If you've been convicted of a criminal matter in Nova Scotia and the sentence could be greater than five -- sorry, I had better get this right; I'm going to go back to the committee report. If you have been convicted of an offence -- sorry, Mr. Chair, I've just got too many papers on my desk here, but if you've been convicted of a Criminal Code offence in Nova Scotia you would be restricted from running for a period of five years afterwards. So this is not unique; in fact, the Northwest Territories had similar provisions until that was removed in 2006 as well.

So all of that to say that I know this is a very difficult matter, but this was what the committee came up with. This was not a recommendation that we put

forward lightly; it involved a lot of discussion and internal debate, and I look forward to having that discussion and debate as part of the consideration of this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MOTION TO AMEND COMMITTEE MOTION 91-18(2),
DEFEATED

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that Committee Motion 91-18(2) be amended by inserting the words "except in cases of exceptional circumstances as determined upon application by the prospective candidate to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories" immediately after the words "position of trust, authority or intimacy" in the second paragraph. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. There is a motion to amend the motion. The motion is on the floor and being distributed. The motion to amend is in order. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I think one of the highest obligations of any legislator is to ensure that the rights of Canadians, and certainly in our case the rights of all Northerners, are protected including essential democratic rights, and the Charter is our guide to doing that.

I am concerned that the amendment as indicated in Committee Motion 91-18(2) does not adequately ensure that the constitutional rights of Northerners will be protected and potentially infringed by a ban for running for office, and I propose this amendment is a way to provide certainty that, should a ban be brought forward, those subject to it still have an avenue of recourse to apply by way of petition to the Supreme Court and request an exemption to the ban based on exceptional circumstances.

Should this amendment pass, there will be work required to determine those exceptional circumstances, but I believe this is the best way forward to ensure that this Assembly can both send a strong message about expected behaviour of responsible citizens in the Northwest Territories and respond to the epidemic of family violence, which is clearly indicated in both our mandate and priorities document and has been referenced many times by the honourable Members of this House on various occasions and on various topics.

We have an obligation to be role models, but we also have an obligation to make sure that the rights of Northerners are protected, and this seeks a balance to do both. I know this topic has not been without controversy, and as the honourable

Member for Frame Lake mentioned, that's a good thing. It's good that we can debate this fully and understand exactly what we're trying to achieve with recommendations such as these and motions such as these. I do believe that we have an onus to ensure without a doubt that rights are respected when we are making statements and changing the rules for the reason of addressing social ills in our territory.

So with that, Mr. Chair, I will yield my time, but I look forward to debate on this amendment and any other motion. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. To the amendment to the motion, Mr. Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I see this amendment as being very problematic. Surely the decision as to whether a person can stand for election is the job of this House. I don't think we should advocate to the judiciary that job.

The amendment says "except in cases of exceptional circumstances as determined upon application by a prospective candidate to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories," it doesn't even give any direction to the court as to what these exceptional circumstances might be. This would remove from us and put into the courts the decision as to whether a candidate can run, and in my view it's totally unacceptable and I'm urging Members to reject this motion. Thank you.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have a question on the original motion, so I will wait until the original motion comes back up for discussion.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Beaulieu. It may not, but you can wait. To the amendment to the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I would like to ask the law clerk, if I may. I know I had some concerns initially about this terminology of exceptional circumstances, but I'm just wondering if we might be able to hear from the law clerk in terms of what this would do in terms of the Charter right. Why don't we start with that? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. O'Reilly asked me to direct it to the law clerk, so I'll direct it to Deputy Law Clerk Ms. Holland. Ms. Holland.

DEPUTY LAW CLERK (Ms. Holland): Thank you, Mr. Chair, I'll speak briefly. Given that there is little detail in the amendment to the committee motion

regarding the meaning of "exceptional circumstances," it's difficult for me to say what implications this might have on the constitutionality more broadly of the proposed legislative amendments.

It is possible that something like this could potentially provide an avenue for judicial oversight in cases where the application of these legislative changes could raise concerns about Charter validity, perhaps with respect to arbitrariness or other kinds of concerns that tend to raise red flags about Charter compliance, but as drafted, I'm not able to provide an opinion on how that would apply in this case.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I'd like to ask through you, then, another question, if I may. I've got a couple of ideas of things that could be considered as exceptional circumstances, but I'll just go ahead and throw them out there. Somebody who may be a few days or a week short if they were caught within that five year period and an election had been called and they may be a few days short of something. Presumably that is the sort of thing that could be determined through this sort of process as an exceptional circumstance. Is that the sort of thing that could be defined in that way? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

DEPUTY LAW CLERK (Ms. Holland): My view is that, simply based on the discussion we are having now, that could be something that could be drafted into legislation as an example of an exceptional circumstance. Obviously, I think there would need to be more discussion regarding the particular harm that the legislature is seeking to avoid by invoking a provision like this. That said, allowing a mechanism for judicial oversight where the consequences of these legislative changes could have a particularly harsh consequence for a particular individual in their circumstances may have a consequence for the constitutionality of legislation in terms of making it less likely to be found to be contrary to the Charter. That said, again, to provide a more definitive opinion I would have to see the proposed language.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Holland. Anything further? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think I have put the Law Clerk on the hot seat long enough. I guess the other circumstance that might be construed as exceptional by some would be if someone had a Criminal Code conviction and was

prohibited from running. Assuming all the conditions were still there, if someone had been through a healing process journey and had completed that sort of treatment and so on, would this be another way of defining what an exceptional circumstance could be?

Where I am going with this, Mr. Chair, is I view this as a potentially friendly amendment and worthy of probably some further work. I think, as drafting instructions, general direction, in terms of amending the original motion, I think this is helpful. I haven't really had a chance to discuss this with any of my committee colleagues. That is my personal view. I think it would also probably address some of the issues and concerns that we have heard from some members of the public. I view this as a friendly amendment. I am prepared to support it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the amendment. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the amendment. Taking into account the integrity of this institution and listening to my colleague across the way who has legal background and looking at the amendment and the wording on exceptional circumstances, that could be defined in several ways, if passed, could go against the integrity of this institution to use something so vague that would be caught up in litigation for several weeks or several months depending on the court's schedule to really define what is exceptional. By that time, two Assemblies may have passed. To me, it doesn't strengthen the integrity of this institution to have acts of loopholes or defined as loopholes, and really not viewed to the reader as a real defined terminology on exceptional circumstances. I just point that out, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. McNeely. To the amendment. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I am not sure about how the procedure would work here. I wonder if we could amend the amendment to refer this motion back to the Rules and Procedures Committee to take on the task of defining exceptional circumstances and to bring that recommendation back after that work is considered. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. You need to put forward a motion to amend the amendment to the motion at this point in order to do that. Do you have a motion?

MS. GREEN: I could make one. I move that recommendation number 2 of the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures report entitled "You Are Standing for Your People" be referred

back to the Rules and Procedures Committee for further clarification. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): We are going to take a brief recess.

---SHORT RECESS

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): I call the Committee of the Whole back to order. We have a motion on the floor. Ms. Green, would you please read your motion?

COMMITTEE MOTION 92-18(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2), STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES'
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS'
CONDUCT GUIDELINES – MOTION TO REFER
COMMITTEE MOTION 91-18(2) AND
AMENDMENT THERETO TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES
FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION,
DEFEATED

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and just a quick thanks to the staff for drafting this on the fly. Mr. Chair, I move that Committee Motion 91-18(2) as contained in Committee Report 7-18(2): Report on the Review of the Members' Conduct Guidelines and the proposed amendment thereto be referred to the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for further consideration in accordance with Rule 58(e). Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. The motion is in order. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Chair, I have heard some justifiable concerns from my colleagues about the need for greater definition around the phrase "exceptional circumstances" and some clarity about how this is going to work in the context of eligibility for being a candidate in the territorial election. I think that that is a worthy question, and I believe it is worth the committee's time to examine it, and to provide some clarification to it, and bring it back to this House for further consideration. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. To the motion. Mr. Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do not know how many times this committee met. I was part of the committee, of course, but it was numerous. Many had different suggestions, and ultimately, we came forward with the report that is before us today. I do not think there is any point referring this matter back to the committee. We spent enough time on it. We need to resolve it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Sebert. To the motion. Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To me, it looks like a circular motion. It will just keep us going around in circles, so I would not support it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier. To the motion. I will return to Ms. Green to conclude debate on the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this, in fact, is not circular. This is the first time this motion has been considered by this House, and so we are asking to be able to respond to the feedback that we have received here in a constructive way, and to bring this motion back.

It isn't really circular, and it does introduce new information. If the original motion had contained the exceptional circumstances clause, I think there is a good chance we would have worked that out and worked it in, in the first place, as it provides a useful safeguard. I encourage the Members to support this motion, and I would like to ask for a recorded vote. Thank you.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE: (Mr. Schauerte): Ms. Green, Mr. O'Reilly.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those opposed, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE: (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Moses, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Vanthuyne, Mr. Testart, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those abstained, please stand. The results of the recorded vote are two in favour; 14 opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the amendment to the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the debate that emerged around this, and I just want to make a few comments. This proposal is not a loophole. It is, in fact, a safeguard,

and a critical protection of the rights of Northerners on a proposal that is designed to limit the ability of a candidate to contest an election.

We have reasonable limitations to Charter of Rights. For example, hate speech in this country is not allowed, and it is a reasonable limit on the right of free speech. That is just one example, and there are many more. The honourable Minister of Justice, and I respect him greatly, he made the comment that this Assembly should not be determining who gets to run. We do that through the Elections and Plebiscites Act, which was passed and gets amended by this Assembly as well, and it lays out the criteria for being a candidate. That act also lays out the ability for candidates who have conflicts with the act to make petitions to the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories in asking for exceptions. For example, if a candidate is late in filing their returns, they can petition the court to give them leave in the form of a reasonable excuse. This exception would follow a similar course and, further, this is a motion; it is not a bill or a legislative proposal. The details of exceptional circumstances could be worked out in such time, as if it were accepted and it was drafted into law.

I do appreciate the passion around this, but it is not designed to cause confusion; it is designed to assure the public that the rights of Northerners are protected, and minimal interference is imposed upon the Charter of Rights, as a result of this proposed recommendation. However, I am entirely respectful of the will of the House, and should the amendment not pass, I will then turn to the original recommendation and make comments thereof.

I do not believe that we can support the original recommendation without an amendment that ensures rights are protected, and still allows us to make a very strong statement on an epidemic that is destroying lives in the Northwest Territories. I urge my colleagues, the honourable Members of this House, to support this amendment. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Testart. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

COMMITTEE MOTION 91-18(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2), STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS'
CONDUCT GUIDELINES – FIVE-YEAR LIMIT ON
ELIGIBILITY FOR CANDIDACY,
CONTINUATION

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, committee. Back to Motion 91-18(2), the original motion. Mr. Nadli.

MR. NADLI: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I wanted to thank my colleagues for the report on the rules and procedures on the standing for your people on the review of Members' guidelines. I just wanted to thank them for the report. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

I am Dene; I am a father; I am a grandfather. I am human; I made a mistake; I am working on myself, and I have moved on. I wanted to speak to this motion. As representatives of our people, we have a duty to study and inform ourselves about the issues we face and take principled positions before we vote. In general, I think it is an obligation of duty for many of us to abstain on the question before us.

This having been said, I plan to abstain from voting on this recommendation, not because I am afraid to take a stand on this difficult issue, but because of the very personal connection I have with it. I don't plan to relive the history here, again, today, but I do want to provide a few observations on the recommendation before you.

I would like to start by pointing out the obvious: if this recommendation was part of the law two years ago, I would not be here today, speaking with first-hand knowledge of the road that has led so many Aboriginal people to lives of addiction, abuse, and hopelessness. Regardless of whether you feel I should be here or not, I hope you will find value in that unique perspective.

It is not the type of wisdom I am particularly proud of, but as with most of life's lessons, the truly valuable ones are learned the hard way: by making mistakes. What strikes me most about the recommendation before you now is the focus on the punishment: punishment that carries on after the offender has paid his debt to society; punishment that continues long after the offender has the opportunity to avail himself of the rehabilitative nature of our criminal justice system; punishment that adds an additional layer to the criminal law for a specific type of crime; and the holding of a specific type of public service.

We may be absolutely clear and wholeheartedly agree with the committee's conclusion that family violence is at epidemic-rate levels in the NWT. The committee provides compelling statistics that the vast majority of family violence cases are perpetrated by men against women and girls. It goes on to conclude, without evidence, that ethnicity does not play a role in determining the frequency of offenders or victims of family violence. The statistics may not be readily available, Mr. Chair, but it doesn't take a PhD to know the certainty that the incidence of family violence in our Aboriginal communities is far higher than elsewhere in the NWT and in Canada.

I know, from first-hand experience, that our correctional institutions are full of Aboriginal people convicted of this and other types of crime. A recent report on the Canadian correctional system found that the three northern territories have among the highest rates of incarceration in the world. The recommendation before you will not address this dire situation. In addition to ignoring the restorative aspirations of our criminal justice system, it extends the punitive nature of a very specific type of crime beyond what is already provided for in the Criminal Code.

Furthermore, it robs our people of their precious right to choose who they wish to represent them in this place. For many, voting for someone with a history of family violence will always be out of the question. I certainly wouldn't recommend it to anyone as a way to improve their chances of an electoral success. For others, however, including the people of the Deh Cho riding in 2015, electing the candidate who has made mistakes, paid their debt to society, learned valuable lessons, and is willing to bring his wisdom to the debate about issues such as this one, the choice is different.

How is it that we feel the need or the right to protect our people from themselves at the ballot box? Family violence is a serious crime; being an MLA is a serious job, but are they the only serious crimes and jobs? Why would we be more comfortable allowing someone convicted of drug trafficking, breaking and entering, bootlegging, fraud, or even a hate crime, for running for office after they have served their time? In fact, the proposed restrictions would not apply to persons convicted of random acts of violence, including assault, manslaughter, or even murder.

I say this not to lessen the importance or prevalence of family violence in the NWT, but to demonstrate the problems that come with trying to achieve important societal goals with such a blunt instrument. Why do the recommendations stop at a person's eligibility to run as a Member for the Legislative Assembly? Instead of rules in place for many types of professions and offices, do we expect some of the restrictions for people interested in running for municipal councils or education boards? What about teachers, social workers, house maintainers, water truck drivers, or appointees to territorial and regional boards and agencies?

Do they not hold positions of trust and authority in our communities? Are we calling on the Parliament of Canada to enact some of the restrictions to MPs or band councils? Where exactly do we expect people, who have committed crimes and served their sentences, to work? Do we want their elected assemblies to be so whitewashed that they have no

understanding of the reasons why our communities and people are struggling so much?

Mr. Chair, I don't want this to sound like there should not be consequences for those who perpetrate family violence. There must be, but there must also be hope for rehabilitation, for healing. I like to think that my first-hand experience with A New Day program added weight and gravitas to the successful arguments made in this House to keep that program alive.

I would like to think that, by taking responsibility for my actions and for my healing, I can serve as an example to other Aboriginal men that there is an alternative to violence; that there is hope after punishment; that there is only a way forward, other than shame and recidivism.

Mr. Chair, our current legislation is not "toothless," as some have suggested. As a sitting Member of the 17th Assembly, I lost my seat as a result of my actions. This would have happened whether my actions happened at the beginning or at the end of my term. Our current legislation allows the Legislative Assembly to discipline its Members at any time and for any reason, including expulsion. I fail to see how the proposed amendments would make the situation better. In fact, the recommendation places the onus on the judge to declare that the accused was in a position of trust, authority, or intimacy in order for it to take effect. What criteria do judges apply in making this determination? Are they aware of the implications of doing so for current and future electoral candidates? What if these exact words are not uttered or if they are not recorded as part of the sentencing? How do we expect election officials to monitor and enforce this?

The right to run for elected office is enshrined in Canada's Constitution. As legislators, we must be exceedingly careful whenever we attempt to limit such inalienable rights. Once a member of our society has served a debt to society, is it appropriate that we set additional limits on their return to full citizenship? Is it even desirable? Are better laws made by groups of individuals who have not made mistakes and learned from them? Should not our people be the final arbiters of who should and should not represent them in this place?

I will leave you with these questions to quote from former U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy who said, "Circumstances of crime vary. So do motives, and so do the prospects for rehabilitation. The number of imponderables makes it impossible to sentence by formula and still sentence justly."

Mr. Chair, I worry that, by voting against this recommendation, I would send a message that I do not take responsibility for my past actions or view

family violence as an epidemic problem in our territory. If I voted for it, I delegitimize my own presence here and the support of the people who elected me. I am happy that I am not a prisoner of my past, that I am able to use the lessons learned from my mistakes to better serve the people who I represent. This won't be the case with everyone, Mr. Chair.

We need to find creative and effective ways to address the root causes of family violence in our society. One-size-fits-all formulas that continue to punish people for their crimes long after they have paid their debt to society and deny electors the right to choose sounds to me like a step backwards and not forwards. I will be abstaining from this vote. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

---Applause

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Nadli. To the motion. Ms. Green.

MS. GREEN: I would like to thank my friend and my colleague Mr. Nadli for his words. I know that they are spoken in truth and from the heart. I also know that the voters of the Deh Cho made the right choice in returning him to this Assembly as their MLA because he is a very good MLA. I very much appreciate the wisdom that he brings to our debates, as he has done here today. That said, we are not on the same page.

I want to talk about a couple of things. The reason that we are talking about family violence and not drunk driving or theft or a number of other crimes is because of the prevalence of family violence and because of its destructiveness. There is hardly a family in the NWT, and mine is included, that has not been touched by the scourge of family violence. Once touched, it marks families forever. There has to be a way out of this. Our predecessors here have taken a stand on family violence before. It is time for us to do that again. This report was the way in which the Committee on Rules and Procedures decided to address this issue.

I want to tell you, Mr. Chair, that family violence is worse now than it was in 2006. Not only are the rates higher, there are an additional eight women who have been murdered since the end of 2011. This is a problem which is not going away. We are not making any inroads on it, no matter our good intentions and efforts and those of the people who serve both the women and the men who are caught up in this tragedy. This is the crisis of our time. It affects half the population directly and all the population indirectly. It is not acceptable. It is preventable.

We have an opportunity, as role models in the Northwest Territories, to say to our constituents and

to everybody who is listening that family violence is not acceptable, and we are prepared to be role models not accepting it.

I appreciate that this is not a view that is widely shared here. I know I am going to be disappointed by most of you. You are going to vote against this strong statement on family violence. I very much regret that. You can't unsay it. You can't make it go away by not talking about it. If it is not going to come to you in this form, it will come back again. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Ms. Green. Ms. Cochrane.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the right to vote is an important piece of what it means to be Canadian. Voting is not just a right guaranteed to you in our democratic system, it is also a responsibility that comes with receiving the benefits of that system. All the services, all the freedoms, all the good things that you enjoy every day, all come with a price: the responsibility of voting to ensure the strength of our system.

Mr. Chair, it wasn't long ago that the right to vote wasn't extended to all Canadians. Up until 1951, women were prohibited for running for their bands' councils under the Indian Act. Only in 1960 Indigenous people in this country were given the right to vote in a free election. 1960 is the year I was born. I consider the right to vote my birthday gift, and I do not take that gift for granted. Many of my relatives older than I remember not having the right to vote.

The right to vote comes with the freedom to be able to vote for the person in your community that you believe is the best person to represent you. It gives you the right to make a decision, to support a candidate that you have faith in to represent you, and to fight for the people that they represent.

Mr. Chair, limiting the rights of an individual to run for office for five years after a conviction for a criminal offence is a step in the wrong direction. What this will do, Mr. Chair, is limit the rights of voters to choose the best candidate. Who are we to do that? The Legislative Assembly is not the criminal justice system, and a ban of this nature limits the rights of our residents to make decisions on their own about which candidate they should and shouldn't elect.

Mr. Chair, as a voter in the Northwest Territories, I want to be able to make the decision myself. I want to be able to look at someone who has been convicted of an offence and judge them for myself whether they have been able to heal. If we restrict their ability to be a contributing member of society

even further, we are limiting their right to be on a healing path. We are all human, Mr. Chair. We all deserve the right to follow that path.

Do not get me wrong, Mr. Chair. I do not support family violence. We have a serious family violence problem in the Northwest Territories, one that requires the time and attention of this government, stakeholders, and our communities to help bring change. As the committee stated in its report, men make up 82 per cent of all domestic violence cases in the Northwest Territories from 2008 to 2012. These numbers are troubling. If we want to help men find the path to healing that I spoke of earlier, increasing their punishment is not the answer.

Mr. Chair, the committee stated in its report that they heard from residents that a truly rehabilitated offender might be capable of leadership and their transformation be assessed by the voters. We know all too well the impact domestic violence has, but, Mr. Chair, why are we trying to take the right from our communities to make these assessments on their own?

Voting connects citizens with the political process, Mr. Chair. It helps choose our leaders; those who share our views and those who may inspire us. The simple act of marking a ballot tells our leaders what we think about decisions that affect our lives. Marking a ballot also tells our leaders that we believe in them to be the person who we trust to lead us forward. Putting a limitation on who can run for office will take the power away from the voter and the right to make that decision on their own.

Mr. Chair, today I wear my Metis sash in honour of the day my people were granted the right to decide for ourselves; the day we got the right to vote. As a Metis woman and a Member of this Assembly I cannot, in good conscious, support a motion that would inhibit self-determination achieved through the democratic process nor the rights of candidates and voters to engage in it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Minister Sebert.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Firstly, I'd like to thank all Members and staff of the Committee of Rules and Procedures for their careful consideration of this very important issue.

In Canada all jurisdictions have legislation determining who can run for office and have prohibitions on the right of a citizen to run for office where that person has been convicted under the applicable elections legislation.

In our jurisdiction, under the Elections and Plebiscites Act and the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, there is a definition as to who is eligible for election and who may serve in

this Assembly. Our current legislation disqualifies candidates or Members who are convicted and imprisoned as a result of a criminal conviction, but this disqualification ends when the term of imprisonment ends and does not apply to offences which do not result in jail sentences, and a five-year prohibition on anyone convicted of a major election offence.

Our current legislation is similar to that of most jurisdictions and of all Canadian jurisdictions; only Nunavut and Nova Scotia have broader-based prohibitions on running for office. Under the House of Assembly Act in Nova Scotia, persons are barred from running or continuing to sit if they are convicted of an indictable offence punishable by imprisonment for a maximum of more than five years, and that prohibition lasts five years from the date of conviction. Again, we're talking about indictable offences. This proposal talks about indictable and summary conviction offences, applying to all offences.

In Nunavut, a Member convicted under the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act of an indictable offence is not able to be or remain to sit as a Member of their Assembly.

The standing committee's proposal is far broader, applying as it does to all offences of violence, summary and indictable, committed by a person over whom the accused was determined by the presiding judge to be in a position of trust, authority, or intimacy. I see this proposal as problematic in many ways. Unlike the legislation in Nunavut and Nova Scotia, it would apply to all criminal offences of violence, no matter how minor, and not only the more serious ones which are indictable.

There is a serious problem of domestic violence which we try to address in this Assembly, but the proposed legislation goes far beyond domestic violence and it includes all situations of violence where there is a position of trust, authority, or intimacy. So it would include parent-child, teacher-pupil, and employer-employee, among others.

The proposal, and this has been mentioned by Mr. Nadli, also requires the determination by a judge that the violent offence was committed against a person over whom the accused was determined by the judge to be in a position of a trust, authority, or intimacy.

A review of a criminal record will not provide this type of information, and it would be therefore necessary to examine a transcript of the case to determine the judge had made such a finding. This creates a practical problem, as transcripts are not always readily available, and as presumably the legislation would apply to an offence anywhere in Canada it would be necessary therefore to obtain

transcripts from other jurisdictions. A logistical nightmare.

Section three of the Charter of Rights and Freedom states: "Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of the House of Commons or of a Legislative Assembly and to be qualified for membership therein."

Certainly, the law in this area is not absolutely clear as to whether the proposed change would be subject to scrutiny under the Charter of Rights. I suggest that it likely would. Whether it would be set aside because of that, I do not know; the law and the cases are not recent nor clear.

Additionally, conceivably this legislation might be open to attack under our human rights legislation which prohibits discrimination on the basis of social condition. So there are several ways it might be attacked.

Jurisdictions outside Canada, including many in the United States, have excluded from voting or running for office those convicted of serious offences. I used to live in one of those jurisdictions, in Virginia. The effect of that type of legislation has been to disenfranchise large numbers of the poor and those from minority groups. We know that a disproportionate number of those appearing in our courts are Aboriginal, and it is logical to assume that the proposed recommendation, should it become law, would disproportionately impact our Aboriginal citizens and their right to be candidates.

As has been mentioned by Ms. Cochrane, the right to vote is sacred in our society. Canada has been a democracy for 150 years, but who has been allowed to vote has changed since 1867, when only men with property of a certain value were eligible to vote or run for office. Restrictions on voting or running for office have been relaxed over time, clearly, with women given the right to vote federally in 1918 and in all provinces by 1940; racial restrictions on voting were not fully ended until 1960, when treaty Indians were given the right to vote.

The whole thrust of our democracy since 1867 has been to allow more, not fewer, citizens to participate by voting and running for election. We should not reverse this progress by eliminating the right to vote in the manner proposed.

This government recognizes that there is an unacceptable level of violence in our territory. We are attempting to do things about it. It is included in the mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories and I feel that we are making progress. It's going to be difficult. We are making progress. This government is clearly committed to making progress. I suggest, however, in the end, as has

been mentioned by other speakers, that we should leave this very important decision to the voters. Let the voters decide and reject this proposal. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, this is a very touchy subject, and I was part of the committee that went around to the territories and listened to people. So first off, I would like to thank the committee for all the hard work that we put into this report. We met 19 times. We went and listened to people. We had submissions. So we have to realize this wasn't done willy-nilly; this was done through the work of a committee that was trying to make the code of conduct work well for the Members and for the people of the Northwest Territories.

I have to thank the research staff in the clerk's office for everything they did to complete this report. They worked hard, just as we did, and tried to represent what was heard.

As well, I would like to thank all the people and organizations that took the time to present to this committee. People went out of their own way to represent their viewpoints to us. Their time and thoughts were greatly appreciated, and helped us, the committee, to complete this report. Not just the one, but the whole thing.

For the record, I do not support or condone violence of any form, especially family violence. With this in mind, and as we worked on the final report, I could not support the recommendation; however, as a committee, the majority rules, and that is what is presented here today.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate what my honourable colleagues from Thebacha, Deh Cho, Range Lake, and Yellowknife Centre have spoken about here today. It is very passionate for people. It is from the heart, people spoke, and I appreciate that. I appreciate the honesty of people speaking here.

Are we going to get the answer right? Who knows? I honestly don't know. When we look at it, I have to vote with my heart, and what my gut is telling me. I have been up front from the very beginning that I did not support this motion, so it is not because of public pressure that I am changing my opinion. I understood, and had the opportunity to be a Justice of the Peace, so I got to witness it firsthand that family violence has an impact on the Northwest Territories. I have had the opportunity to see the devastation that has occurred. However, there are always two sides to the story, and people need to understand that.

When I was looking at this, through our whole process, our criminal justice operates that once an offender has been convicted and their debt to society has been deemed paid, that we can move on. If this motion is accepted, basically, we are charging that person a second time, or double jeopardy. I appreciate my honourable colleague from the Deh Cho in speaking about the situation. He has lived it, and I appreciate that. I have had a number of conversations with the honourable Member. However, it is not about him. I want that for the record. My decisions are not about what has happened in the past. It is on how we move forward.

We should focus on healing. We really should. Unfortunately, this is what we were tasked to assign. That wasn't our responsibility. Our responsibility was to work on a code of conduct. With this in mind, as my other colleagues have spoken about, the fail-safe is that the voters can make the decision if that person is who they want to represent them here in the Legislative Assembly. I cannot, in good conscience, make a decision for them. They make the decision on who is going to representing their riding, and sometimes they make good decisions, and we can live with that.

I have to say something that a fellow colleague spoke this to me today, and I believe it. If we had accepted this, as the honourable Member from the Deh Cho said, he would not be here today. His leadership and his experience is, in my opinion, greatly valued. If I looked at it, if we all got charged for things that we have done in our past, we would not have been here. We have all made mistakes. If you do not say you did, I would think I would call you a liar because I know there are things that I have done in my life that I should not have done, and we learn from it. It is the opportunity, as I say, to people in -- I will digress a second here. If we look at it, what is a good kid and a bad kid? Good kids learn from their mistakes, or are given that opportunity. That is what we are looking for, is good leaders, and sometimes you have to learn going down the road of hard knocks, and if you do not do that, we are not going to move forward as a society. I know this may not make the public happy with me at the end of the day, but at the end of the day, true leadership is to speak from your heart, and I have to give credit where credit is due. Everybody here is going to speak, and I respect that, but at the end of the day, I cannot support this motion, and that will be the end of it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. BEAULIEU: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I, too, served on the rules committee to present this report to the Assembly. As we travelled around, we heard a variety of views on this, many

views. Some views, I suppose, I personally did not disagree with. I felt that many of the views were not views that took into consideration the voting public. I feel that the public has the right to vote, and the public has the right to choose the best candidate that can represent them at this level in this Assembly. I feel that if the public indicates that they want a certain Member, then we should not put additional punishments in to not allow individuals to represent people.

It is very difficult to get individuals in the House who can speak Aboriginal language. If this is something, and the information that has come out that proportionately, this would affect Aboriginal candidates more than other candidates, and that is just from the statistics that I speak of.

When an Aboriginal group or community finds individuals who can communicate with everyone in the community, including individuals who only wish to speak Aboriginal language, it would be a shame that something like this could prevent that individual from continuing to represent the people who think so dearly of the language, and want to speak and communicate in that language. I know that I represent people in the various communities who prefer to speak the Aboriginal language when they speak to me about their issues.

I had spoken to an elder many times who had passed away two years ago who was a friend of my father's, who was in residential school with my father, and she had come to me one day and said, "You are going to run again, right?" I said, I might.

She said, "Well, you should, because we never need an interpreter with you. So, when I speak to you, I know exactly what I am saying is going to be presented to the government, or in the House, because that is exactly what I want to hear, and you understand 100 per cent of what I am saying."

If this law or this rule comes into effect, there is a possibility of that being impacted. There is a possibility that people who wish to be served by a person who is bilingual, and a person who speaks to them and about them and understands the language to a "T" that that person could be lost to them, as a person that could be possibly representing them. That, I had trouble with.

The other thing is more technical. I do not even know if it would be possible for individuals convicted of certain crimes to become eligible to have their records suspended or to be pardoned. I think that, in some instances, after the crime is committed and the punishment is served, that it takes maybe seven years, 10 years, whatever, in order for that individual to become eligible to apply for a pardon which, again, takes some time, and sometimes it is not issued. A record suspension, I

think, is easier to obtain, but that is also another one that may not be issued. Depending on crimes that we are not even talking about here, an individual could end up being unable to get a record suspension. An individual, who we are targeting, saying this is based on family violence, could commit another crime which doesn't allow them to get a record suspension. Something that is not intended to be achieved here will be achieved. As a result you could end up eliminating candidates that the people want representing them.

I don't want to rehash a lot of stuff. I agree with what the Members of the House said today. I think the main issue, from my perspective, is that people have the right to vote for the person they feel best serves their interest at this level. They shouldn't be saying you are not eligible. We shouldn't be saying, and the judge shouldn't be saying that in the court of law, that you are not eligible. Somebody who suspends records somewhere in Ottawa shouldn't be saying that individual cannot represent this group of Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories. For that reason I, too, will not support this recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Vanthuyne.

MR. VANTHUYNE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to everyone who has spoken today. I certainly want to commend the Standing Committee on Rules and Procedures for all the work that they have done.

I had a big script laid out. Of course, it speaks a lot to exactly what most everybody has already spoken about here today. It has points with regard to what we are working on as the government relevant to the systemic issues that we face, especially around violence. It was going to speak to how I see this recommendation as setting double standards. I was going to speak to how we have to protect democracy. I was going to speak to how we need to leave it to the electorate to make the decisions on who they best feel will serve them in this House.

Then my colleague from the Deh Cho spoke. At the end of the day, this is about how we conduct ourselves. That is what this recommendation and all these recommendations are about. I look to my colleague, and I can certainly advocate and I think that most here in this room see the honourable Member as a voice of reason. Certainly, someone who has shared not only his personal experiences with us in the last year and change that we have been here, but he leads by example as a political figure here and shares a lot of wisdom with us. If there is anybody in here who I feel that I have learned from, as it relates to conduct, it is the honourable Member from the Deh Cho.

I feel that when we use that word, "honourable," that it is something that we hold up in the highest regard. I can honestly say that when it comes to this particular individual, he has had probably the most effect on me as it relates to the standard that is expected to conduct yourself in this House. I think we learned once again today as to why it is we really feel that this Member from the Deh Cho is, and ought to be, held in the highest regard.

I won't add my voice as it relates to all of the other points that everybody has raised. I think that everyone knows that my position is that I cannot support this recommendation. For those reasons, I won't be able to support it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think, to anyone observing today's debate, it is very clear that the honourable Members of this House place the rights of Northerners at the highest possible level the paramount responsibility of this Assembly, and that is to be commended. Further, anyone who heard the honourable Member from Deh Cho speak knows firsthand that the experiences he brings to this House are irreplaceable and speak to many things. That experience informs the decisions of this Assembly and makes us a stronger Assembly by having that experience shared and infused into how we discuss very complex and often painful issues.

Family violence affects everyone, whether it is your family, your neighbours, or people near and far, and it is without a doubt that it needs to be condemned in all its forms and every time it is encountered. I believe that that principle is why the standing committee has brought forward this recommendation. It is well-intentioned in that they want to make a strong statement, as they say in their report, on "creating a strong statement on normative values for the Northwest Territories." However, when there is any fear or concern that it could impact on the rights of the individual, we have to question its validity.

In its current form, I cannot support this recommendation. One of the most important things about consensus government is that we are all here as independents. We are all here as individuals, and the only people we serve are our constituents. That is a very important principle that Northerners have chosen and expect from us. The strength of that system also means there are some trade-offs.

The committee, in its report, mentions specifically that in partisan systems, where there are political parties, there is a vetting process. In those cases, there is a higher degree of scrutiny on who can run for candidates on that party's ticket. We do not have

that vetting process. That is something we have to accept as a feature of consensus government. We can try to rejig rules and to change procedures as much as possible, but fundamentally there are just some things that our system cannot accommodate.

I personally think that that is a choice that Northerners have to make. They have made a choice for consensus. We are all here as consensus politicians. As a result, we have to be responsive to that. We can only bend or modify the rules so far. We have to respect that as well.

It is very clear from the statements that have been made in this House today that placing a limit like this goes too far. Without any assurances that rights will not be infringed, it cannot be considered. I think that is an important thing to consider when we address other issues with our code of conduct, our rules, and the very system of government that we have.

With that, I will just reiterate that I think that the committee was well-intentioned, but has put forward something that raises too many questions as to whether or not it infringes upon constitutional rights. I cannot support it in this form and will not support it when it comes to a vote later today. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Nakimayak.

MR. NAKIMAYAK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank the rules committee for bringing this forward and also to my colleague that I have sat next to here for some time and across the room in P and P.

Definitely, today was a lot of stress, a lot of pressure. You see a sense of healing when someone can speak like that to something so powerful, and especially when it feels like someone is being zeroed in on. I definitely felt that. I think there is a sense of healing and a sense of moving forward.

We talked about candidacy and eligibility. I know I don't support family violence, but at the same time, we don't talk about healing. The Northwest Territories consists of so many different Aboriginal groups from all walks of life and the differences from poverty to wealth are so extreme that sometimes I look at something like this and I think they're so far from the actual -- some live life in poverty it's so far-fetched from that that there's nothing that reflects people who live in poverty or live in smaller communities who don't really have a voice.

I've worked with men's healing groups, you know, in different parts of Canada and I see that men are totally, in a sense, are less looked at. As far as healing, I just had a text here from one of the

leaders in my region saying that someone was just sent home. Okay, where's the after care? I think we need to focus on the after care programs for people who have attempted suicide and people who have offended and people who are struggling. We don't look at those aspects of their lives but we judge them right away at an instance, and I think that's totally unfair and I think it takes away from what an Indigenous person has to offer.

My colleague Mr. Beaulieu mentioned having Indigenous people who can speak their languages. Yesterday, we had some people talking about revitalizing language and that's something we have to focus on. Look at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; they're looking at ways to implement that. Even here in the Territories we're so far behind from colonialism and other pressures of Indigenous people from other sources. The GNWT includes Indigenous people with the mining industry, so in a sense there are some good positives there that we can focus on and build on and look at those as examples of working together.

There are Indigenous groups who are negotiating their land claims. We need to focus on those and say, okay, well, how is the system working and is it working for the people of their respective regions across the territory?

I work with Indigenous groups around the world and I see that Indigenous peoples are totally unrepresented and sometimes don't even have a voice. So, in a sense, in Canada here we're lucky that we're focusing on Indigenous peoples, including making them a priority. We need to ensure that they have a voice and that the people who they decide to elect for office is up to the people. I believe that if we take that away from Indigenous peoples or from non-Indigenous peoples then we're taking a step backwards.

Mr. Sebert mentioned earlier about the timeline of when women were able to vote or when people of different ethnicity were able to vote. I think that's a good example of which way we're going and we need to continue going that way. In that sense, I won't be voting for this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I've been listening carefully as everyone has been talking this afternoon and this is clearly a tough one, a tough discussion for many individuals. I hear two conversations that I believe are separate conversations but they're being morphed into one, and those are the right of individuals to run for election, but also the major problem we have here in the Northwest Territories of domestic violence. I

truly appreciate the work that the committee did, and I know what they did was not easy and they put their hearts and souls into this report, and I truly appreciate that, but at the end of the day, I'm not prepared to take away the ability of residents to choose who they want to vote for, and I also don't want to penalize or punish somebody for something that they've already been convicted for and done their time and paid their debt to society.

That in no way, shape, or form changes how I feel about domestic violence in the Northwest Territories or my desire to fight and combat domestic violence. It is a major problem in this territory, and I would be disappointed if anybody would suggest that we don't care about domestic violence in this House if we don't support this recommendation. I find that deeply troubling.

I've listened to people in this House talk both today and at other times, and this House cares and is committed to doing work to combat domestic violence. Do we do enough? No. Do we need to do more? Yes. As a House of 19 can we do better? Certainly. Should we? Absolutely, and I think we need to continue to have this dialogue around domestic violence here in the Northwest Territories.

One of the things we know about domestic violence is not enough people talk about it. Not enough people question it. Not enough people challenge those who might be committing acts of domestic violence.

I think today in this House we've heard a real desire to talk about it, to start working together to find more solutions at a community, at a regional, at a personal level, and I think that's important and I think that's something we could take away from today and I feel we should and I feel we can, but it doesn't change the fact that I can't support this motion as it's written. I can't support this recommendation.

I think people need the ability to choose and I think, once you've paid for your crime, you should have the opportunity to heal and move forward.

So I thank the Members for the work they did on this. I know it wasn't easy; I know they poured their hearts and souls into this. We simply have a disagreement that this is the right forum to address domestic violence in this territory, and I look forward to working with all my colleagues in this House as we work to strengthen our response and our prevention and work with our residents, Aboriginal governments, community governments, people to combat domestic violence in this territory. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. McNeely.

MR. MCNEELY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, too, would like to thank the committee for their work and efforts put into this and, admirably, I respect my friend and colleague from the Deh Cho in sharing his experiences and heartfelt statement. I truly continue and will support him, and I respect everybody's words and wise words of thought and statements. So rather than re-state them in my own presentation, I endorse everybody's statement and respect the rights of the voters, and to respect the rights of the voters I just don't see myself supporting this motion here. Keeping in mind, I do not want to see my representatives or my riding voting members dis-privileged of that; I would encourage them by giving them a ride to the poll instead. Having said that, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Minister McLeod.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think it's become quite evident in the Chamber today everyone's feelings on family violence, and I share those feelings. I grew up in an era where there was a lot of drinking in the community and I've seen the change in people who have gone through this and how they've turned themselves around, and I can guarantee you that I would put my X beside their name any day. There are some people, I wouldn't give them the time of day. I appreciate the comment from the Member from Deh Cho; I think he manned up to it and took full responsibility, and I've got a lot of respect for that.

I'll be very brief, Mr. Chair. We've heard comments going around the Chamber, and I was looking at the title of the document, and the title of the document says that you are standing for your people, which is true. My position is the people who I stand for, who we all stand for, will be my judge and determine whether or not I'm qualified to stand for them or not. I will leave that decision in their hands. Who am I to judge? Who am I to judge? I think for the most part I think we respect the will of the people.

Sometimes they take a look at what people have been through, what they bring to the table, and the lessons they learned from it and they elect him, and I think we should respect that, because who are we to judge? I mean, what are we going to do next; only people born in the Northwest Territories can run? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): To the motion. To the motion. We will return to Mr. O'Reilly to close the debate.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess I will start with some acknowledgments of my friend the MLA from Deh Cho. I have known the Member for Deh Cho for more than 25 years, and I have the utmost respect for him. He has been a very

valuable Member, and I am happy to work with him in the House committees. I regret any stress that this has caused him and his family and, certainly, that wasn't the intention of any of our work, but I want to go on the record as saying that.

I do find it necessary to address a few of the issues that were raised by my colleagues. I recognize that everybody knows that this was a difficult process for everybody on the committee, and for all of us to actually go through, but we are talking about a narrowly defined restriction on a Charter right. It is not for all Criminal Code offences. It is not a permanent prohibition; it is a five-year one. The rationale for the five years actually came from an existing prohibition for anyone who is convicted of major electoral offences. That is the rationale for the five years.

The committee felt that that was a valid prohibition, and a restriction of a Charter right than for the issue of Criminal Code convictions, where the judge finds that you were in a position of authority or intimacy with the victim. Then we felt that there should be a similar prohibition.

My colleague from Kam Lake talked about how we don't have a political party system here, so there is no vetting of candidates. We don't have that here, and we struggle with a consensus government, at times, and this is one of those struggles. I think the way that this would actually be operationalized, if it was voted on, and I certainly have the sense that that is not the case, is it would be a self-declaration process, much like the nomination forms that you fill out now for a candidate, where you indicate that you were a resident for 12 months, you are a Canadian citizen, and so on.

This would just be another part of that self-declaration process, and if anybody wanted to challenge it, the onus would be on them to bring forward evidence that somebody would not be eligible to become a candidate. I don't think there are any operational limitations to this. I think the one thing that I really want to address is that, certainly, our committee was not asked to address the issue of family violence, or overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in the justice system.

We were asked to deal with the issue of trust, public confidence, and leadership, and that is what the issue was. I think these other matters are equally important and, certainly, they have received a lot of attention in this House, and for me personally. I know that I brought forward the issue of additional funding for the men's healing program, to allow that to be spread across the Northwest Territories, and that became part of the ask by the Regular MLAs. I certainly support those efforts, but the committee itself was asked to deal with this issue of trust and public confidence.

That is, I think, what this recommendation is about. I guess I want to make a few other remarks here, that this has been a very important debate, and I do think all of the Members who have spoken publicly about this – these are very important matters, and I recognize that this hasn't been an easy discussion or debate. It's been quite divisive, but it is a very important one to have, for the public to see our thinking on this, and to have this discussion and dialogue.

I regret that this sort of came to a head in this kind of a setting. I think it probably will be part of a continuing dialogue that we all will work together on. I guess I had hoped for a respectful and informed debate, and I think I can say that this exceeded my expectations. Thank you.

A couple of other things I want to say; that, you know, we are not all going to agree on this, and I hope that we can all find ways to respect the differences that have been expressed in House today. I know that we are all going to continue to work on these issues of conduct, family violence, and overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in the justice system. You should all vote with your conscience, and that is what is going to happen. Thank you for the debate and discussion, and I sincerely thank all of the Members for their thoughtful comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. All those in favour. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to request a recorded vote.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. I will allow it.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): The Member requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schuerte): Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Green.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those opposed, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schuerte): Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Moses, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. McLeod of Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod of Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Vanthuyne, Mr. Testart, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those abstaining, please stand.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Schauerte): Mr. Nadli.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): The results of the recorded vote are two in favour; 13 opposed; one abstention. The motion is defeated.

---Defeated

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 93-18(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2), STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS'
CONDUCT GUIDELINES – REVISION OF
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OATH OF OFFICE,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to move that this Assembly recommend that the Legislative Assembly's oath of office be revised in schedule B of the Legislative Assembly, an Executive Council Act, as follows:

"I (Member's name) do swear or affirm that

a) I am fully qualified to hold the office of the Member for the district of, to which I have been elected;

b) I have not knowingly contravened the Elections and Plebiscites Act respecting any matter in relation to my election;

c) I will faithfully, to the best of my ability, perform the duties and responsibilities of my office, and will not allow any direct or indirect monetary or other personal or private interest to influence my conduct or affect my duties in public matters;

d) I hereby affirm, subscribe to, and agree to follow the Members' Conduct Guidelines, or Members' Code of Conduct, if applicable, adopted by the Legislative Assembly, in the case where the oath is sworn, so help me God."

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, I know we have gone on a long time. I think that the important point that I would like to make, for those who are watching or listening, is that this change to the oath will provide a link to the other sorts of tools that we do have available to guide Members' conduct, including the Elections Act, and the code that is the subject of the next motion. It is weaving together all of these pieces, and including those in the oath, and I hope

and expect that all the Members will support this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister McLeod, Inuvik Twin Lakes.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I can't support this motion. I see what the intent is, but I think it goes without saying that some of the discussion that is in here -- I was looking at the old Members' Code of Conduct, the first one, and it should be the most important one that this Assembly can abide by, is hear the voices of our people. Sometimes, we cannot hear the voices of our people over our own talking. Then, the rest of it goes on, and you have all read the Members' Code of Conduct, and I think that it is one that I will continue to support, and some of the ones in the motion, it just goes without saying, none of us are -- I don't need to sign a Code of Conduct saying, well, yes, I am not going to do this because it is in the Code of Conduct.

I believe in the old Code of Conduct. To the public, I owe responsibility to work for the well-being of residents in the Northwest Territories makes no mention of that in there. I will respect and abide by the laws of Canada and the Northwest Territories, and I will not act in any ways which will violate these laws. I believe in the old Code of Conduct, and it goes to everything that is in the new one. I am not sure if the intent is to replace the old one with the new one, because I do not need this to tell me how to conduct myself. I think that is just your nature. I fully support the old conduct, especially to hear the voices of our people. It is something we should remember to do, and that why we are here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I came in. I expected that I would be able to support the final four motions, but then I hear there were references to, oh, we have to fix "old boys club," "nudge, nudge, wink, wink," and there are references to not allowing direct or indirect monetary or other personal private interests, suggesting that there is something really wrong. So, in my view, the Code of Conduct and the Oath of Office before us worked fine for me, so I will not be supporting this motion. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier. I will remind everyone that the motion refers to the Oath of Office, which is separate from the Code of Conduct. To the motion. Mr. Testart.

MR. TESTART: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am not sure if my understanding of this is that it is a replacement of the Code of Conduct, but it is rather

linking the Oath of Office to the Code of Conduct, so we are, as Members, after we swear our Oaths, we will be held accountable to the Code of Conduct. A great deal of discussion was had about how to give the Code of Conduct teeth, more or less actual, enforceable, and tangible results, and that was a discussion that we had in Caucus early on, and we all agreed was important, so the motion was more than aspirational, but actually had some impact on our behavior as Members of this House.

It has been said before; the fact that we are honourable Members of this House is not taken lightly, and we hold each other, and the public certainly holds us to a higher standard, and this ensures that the Code of Conduct we lay out for ourselves is not aspirational but, in fact, has direct, applicable results on our behaviour, and further, gives that Code of Conduct real consequences should it be violated. I do support this motion, and I think the committee came up with a very effective way to meet that objective. I respectfully disagree with the honourable Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes. I think that this is an enhancement, and it does meet that objective of giving teeth to the Code of Conduct, which is something that we, as a Caucus, agreed to do. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. To the motion. Over to Mr. O'Reilly to conclude debate.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think there is just a bit of a misunderstanding here. I would urge Members, if they have got the report in front of them, if you can turn to page 9 of the report. You will see at the top of it, and I will just take a moment, Mr. Chair, to read.

What we are proposing here, what the committee proposed is replacing the current Oath of Office. The current Oath of Office is found at the top of page 9, and it is pretty short. I will just read it as follows -- we are not proposing changing the conduct guidelines themselves, although that is the subject of the next recommendation. The current oath which is what we are talking about replacing here, it reads as follows:

"I, Member's name, do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear that I will duly and faithfully, and to the best of my skill and knowledge, execute the powers and trust proposed as a Member of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly so help me God."

That is what is in the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act. It is a requirement to assume offices and you have to swear this oath.

What the Committee has recommended is some additional items to add into the oath to tie together the conduct guidelines, the Code of Conduct. That

is what this is really aimed at. We are not trying to sneak anything by anybody. It is about tying together the tools that we have available to us to ensure that the Code of Conduct, if we develop one, and I think that is the subject of the next recommendation. It is about tying these things together. I hope that all Members can support this. We are not trying to do anything here. This was actually adopted from Newfoundland and Labrador. This is the Oath of Office, essentially, that they used. What we did was adopt their Oath of Office. We are just simply replacing, or suggesting that the current oath be beefed up to reference the Code of Conduct, the Members' Conduct Guidelines. That is all it is. Thanks, Mr. Chair. I hope that everybody can support this. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to request a recorded vote again. Thank you.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: (Mr. Mercer): Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Green, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. Sebert, Mr. Vanthuyne, Mr. Testart, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson, Mr. O'Reilly.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: (Mr. Mercer): Mr. Nadli, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Moses, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, and Mr. McNeely.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote are nine in favour; seven opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

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

COMMITTEE MOTION 94-18(2):
COMMITTEE REPORT 7-18(2), STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RULES AND PROCEDURES
REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS'
CONDUCT GUIDELINES – MEMBERS'
CONDUCT GUIDELINES AS BASIS FOR NEW
MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT,
CARRIED

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that this Assembly recommends that the Members' Conduct Guidelines serve as the basis for a new Members' Code of Conduct including more specific and enforceable provisions; and further, that the

new code be presented to the Assembly for consideration and adoption. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. O'Reilly. We have less than two minutes.

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I certainly will not require that amount of time. What we did as a committee was we looked at how other jurisdictions deal with conduct guidelines, Codes of Conduct. It was a wide-ranging review that was assisted through our able staff. We looked at how the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association deals with some of these matters, so we looked at a number of examples around the world actually, and certainly, most jurisdictions had made a move to a more detailed Code of Conduct rather than just guidelines. This is common in other governments, as I said, in other sectors including the volunteer sector. This is in an effort to improve enforceability and accountability. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I look forward to support of all Members again on this, and I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

RECORDED VOTE

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. To the motion. Question has been called. The Member has requested a recorded vote. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Mr. O'Reilly, Ms. Green, Mr. Nakimayak, Mr. Moses, Ms. Cochrane, Mr. Abernethy, Mr. McLeod – Yellowknife South, Mr. McLeod – Inuvik Twin Lakes, Mr. Schumann, Mr. Sebert, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Vanthuyne, Mr. Testart, Mr. Beaulieu, Mr. Thompson.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): All those opposed, please stand. All those abstaining, please stand. The results of the recorded vote are 15 in favour; zero opposed; zero abstention. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Noting the time, I will now rise and report progress.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. 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 Committee Report 7-18(2), Report on the Review of the Members' Conduct Guidelines. I would like to report progress with three motions being adopted and, Mr. Speaker, I

move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Do you have a seconder? Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh.

---Carried

Item 22, third reading of bills. Minister of Transportation.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 7:

AN ACT TO AMEND THE REVOLVING FUNDS ACT

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member from Inuvik Twin Lakes, that Bill 7, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act be read for the third time. Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RECORDED VOTE

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Member is requesting a recorded vote. The motion is in order. To the motion.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. SPEAKER: Question has been called. All those in favour, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Hay River South, the Member for Thebacha, the Member for Hay River North, the Member for Sahtu, the Member for Nunakput, the Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, the Member for Range Lake, the Member for Great Slave, the Member for Yellowknife South, the Member for Inuvik Twin Lakes.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those opposed, please stand.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): The Member for Yellowknife North, the Member for Kam Lake, the Member for Tu Nedhe-Wiilideh, the Member for Nahendeh, the Member for Frame Lake, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Member for Deh Cho.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. All those abstaining, please stand. Masi. The results of the recorded vote, 10 in favour; seven opposed; zero abstentions. The motion is carried.

---Carried

Bill 7 has had its third reading. Third reading of bills. Mr. Clerk, orders of the day.

Orders of the Day

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. Mercer): Orders of the day for Friday, March 10, 2017, 10:00 a.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
 - Motion 33-18(2), Extended Adjournment of the House to May 25, 2017
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Committee Report 7-18(2), Report on the Review of the Members' Conduct Guidelines
 - Committee Report 9-18(2), Report on the Review of the 2016 Report of the Auditor General of Canada on Support to Communities for Municipal Services – MACA
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 Friday, March 10, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.

---ADJOURNMENT

The House adjourned at 6:06 p.m.